Cool, Wet Conditions Delay Spring Planting

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending May 5, 2002, there were 4.8 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 3% very short, 9% short, 82% adequate, 6% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 9% very short, 25% short, 65% adequate, 1% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 3% very poor, 13% poor, 23% fair, 54% good, 7% excellent.

Cool, rainy weather prevailed last week, delaying most field activities in New England. Reports of frost damage to early fruit and vegetable crops have surfaced. Major farm activities included: planting field corn, early vegetables, sweet corn, potatoes and berries; spreading manure; seeding; applying fertilizer; disk; plowing and harrowing; laying plastic; fixing fences; and setting up irrigation systems for frost protection.

FRUIT: Fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries were planted last week. Apple growers pruned and sprayed orchards, and monitored for disease and insects. Frost caused damage to some fruit crops. Pruning of wild blueberry fields in Maine was about finished last week, and growers continued to apply pre-emergence herbicide and fungicide for mummyberry disease. Massachusetts cranberry growers also applied herbicides and fungicides last week.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

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<td>Pears</td>
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*PF = Petal Fall

VEGETABLES: Planting of early sweet corn, peas, onions, carrots, beans, lettuce and cabbage continued. Asparagus, fiddleheads and spinach are being harvested. Frost last week damaged some crops of sweet corn. Tomatoes continue to be transplanted into high tunnels.
## STATE WEATHER SUMMARY

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 5, 2002

**New England Agricultural Statistics Service, NASS, USDA**

The 41 stations shown below are limited by space but are well distributed across the region. All 86 stations appear on the Internet and in e-mail subscriptions.

### AIR TEMPERATURE

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

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**S T A T E  WE A T H E R  S U M M A R Y**

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 5, 2002

Summary based on NWS data.

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.

Precipitation Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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Prepared by AWIS, Inc.
Connecticut - Howard Rood (FSA), Fairfield/Litchfield: Farmers are busy plowing corn land and spreading manure. Heifers have been put out to pasture. Heavy frost may have harmed fruit crops. Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland: Rain during week totaled about one inch which helped in most cases. Sweet corn, strawberries and tree fruit showed significant damage from frost prior to last week. Seedings oats and hay fields. Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative: Despite the drought, rain has slowed planting. Farmers were still spreading manure on the drier areas but little corn went in. Well fertilized grass - pasture or hay land looks full and lush, while fields that were not as well maintained are coming on much slower. Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham: Fields continue to be dry despite recent rains. Spring started out very hot at 90 degrees and then has slipped back to cold and damp with Friday (5/3) bringing high winds. Farmers continue to plant vegetables and field corn, prune and spray orchards, spread manure, seed grassland, and harvest asparagus. Joyce Meader (Ext), Windham: Brown fields look beautiful against the emerging green leaves. Ready for planting all over. Great weather coming.

Maine - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook: Potatoes and small grains: When is spring going to arrive in northern Maine? Cold, showery weather delayed any field activity. Some lime being spread. Small amount of barley and oats planted. Cold, growers have begun cutting potato seed. Cold soil temperatures are discouraging growers from planting potatoes. Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook: Soils are still too wet and cold for crop planting. Some potato seed is starting to be cut. If temperatures are discouraging growers from planting potatoes. Some manure spreading has taken place with some tillage work. Warmer weather will get things moving. Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative: Despite the drought, rain has slowed planting. Farmers were still spreading manure on the drier areas but little corn went in. Well fertilized grass - pasture or hay land looks full and lush, while fields that were not as well maintained are coming on much slower. Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham: Fields continue to be dry despite recent rains. Spring started out very hot at 90 degrees and then has slipped back to cold and damp with Friday (5/3) bringing high winds. Farmers continue to plant vegetables and field corn, prune and spray orchards, spread manure, seed grassland, and harvest asparagus. Joyce Meader (Ext), Windham: Brown fields look beautiful against the emerging green leaves. Ready for planting all over. Great weather coming.

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on apples. Fields and pastures starting to green up, orchard grass growth fairly noticeable at this point. Bud break of fruit, no flowering yet. General observation that plants seem to have made it through a relatively mild winter in good condition. Geoffrey Njue (Ext), Strafford: The temperatures were still low for people to start planting. However some people started to transplant tomatoes into greenhouses. Nurseries were busy getting ready for the bedding plant season. Apple growers were monitoring for signs of scab and for insect pests such as leaf miners and tarnish brown bugs. Bruce Clement (Ext), Cheshire: Cool, wet weather has prevailed this week. Early warm weather in late April pushed an early bloom of plums, pears and some apples. Too early to tell if cold nights that followed have hurt fruit set. Farm activities include: manure spreading, fence repair, plowing and harrowing, seeding, corn planting, vegetable raised bed forming, plastic laying, spraying, and some early vegetable transplanting and seeding.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: Rain kept some field work from being done, but was welcomed. Potatoes almost finished being planted, manure still being spread. Haying stopped due to wet weather - good sun over the weekend will resume that activity. Sweet corn being planted, cole crops going strong. Roadside stands very active over the weekend. Greenhouses are bursting. Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties: Plowing, harrowing, harvesting asparagus. Some orchards reporting frost damage. Trees bloomed extra early. Temperatures dropped to mid-20's over last weekend. Frost damage seems minimal to moderate, depending on location. Asparagus also affected. Hail reported in one orchard on 4/24/02.

VERMONT - John St. Onge (FSA), Lamoille: There was still snow in the air last week, but that didn't stop the progress of spring fieldwork. Manure spreading and harrowing kept many dairy farmers busy last week. When it gets a little warmer, some seed will start hitting the ground. Bill Snow (Ext), Orange: Spring activities of spreading manure and fertilizer. Ground preparation for corn planting. New seeding of hay land in progress. Fence fixing and turning out of cattle. Cold week with snow on two days with the ground white in higher elevations above 1300 feet. Spring work still ahead of schedule. Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans: Rain, snow and cold weather slowed field work and grass growth this week. Some animals are now out on pasture. Some manure being spread over the weekend. Lynette Hamilton (FSA), Windham: A large sweet corn grower has 4 leaves on his sweet corn under plastic. Most all fruit growers have report some frost damage on the buds. Farmers are planting field corn, and some alfalfa will be ready to cut in about two with a little warmer temperatures. George Cook (Ext), Lamoille: Cold and wet through Friday. Nice weekend weather with good drying air and sunshine. Many fields too wet to work yet. Dennis Kauppila (Ext), Caledonia: Good week with plenty of rain. Snow, too. Farmers spreading manure, harrowing ground, fixing fence. A number of water supplies were recharged over the winter. Forage inventory very low. Richard Noel (FSA), Grand Isle/Franklin: Cool and damp in Franklin County. Manure being spread and tillage work ongoing. Some field corn planted Sunday on some sandy soils. Vegetables planted under plastic. Ground kind of cool as of yet! Sherwin Williams, Rutland: Plowing under a nice crop of winter rye. Commercial fertilizer being harrowed in for special crops. Asparagus beds are waiting for some warm weather. Good frost for three days. Early in the week it was too cold for seeds to germinate. Put in second planting of sweet corn and peas.

To receive this report every Monday evening, send an e-mail message to listserv@newsbox.usda.gov and in the body, type subscribe usda-new-eng-crop-weather

Aubrey R. Davis, Director
Statisticians: Emily McAllister, Robin Helrich

David Luckenbach, Deputy Director