



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

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United States Department of Agriculture

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Crop Weather

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For week ending 4/25/04

Planting Off To A Slow Start

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending April 25, 2004, there were 4.9 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 2% short, 70% adequate, 28% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 4% short, 71% adequate, 25% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 18% very poor, 25% poor, 31% fair, 19% good, 7% excellent. Temperatures were slightly above average last week but turned to more seasonable conditions towards weekend. Precipitation levels are adequate. Major farm activities included: planting early vegetables, sweet corn, and potatoes; spreading manure; prepping seed beds for planting; applying fertilizer; pruning and plowing.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	-- Percent --		
Topsoil Moisture			
Very Short	0	--	2
Short	2	--	6
Adequate	70	--	72
Surplus	28	--	20
Subsoil Moisture			
Very Short	0	--	4
Short	4	--	9
Adequate	71	--	76
Surplus	25	--	11

FRUIT: Most fruit crops were in dormant to bud stage last week. Growers were busy fertilizing orchards and applying protective fungicide sprays when possible. Apples and strawberry growers were worried about possible damage from winter weather. Maine wild blueberry fields were burned for pruning as weather permitted. Cranberry vines seem to have wintered very well. Growers in Massachusetts stayed busy with applying pre-emergent herbicides and cleaning ditches.

FIELD CROPS: Fields are starting to green in many areas around the six - State region. Potato planting in Rhode Island has not begun, placing it behind last year's early start but only slightly behind normal. Massachusetts potato farmers were slightly behind last year and normal. Potato growers in Maine were waiting for warmer temperatures and drier conditions to begin their planting season. Tobacco farmers spread fertilizer on fields last week.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	Stage	Condition
Apples	Dormant/Bud	Fair/Good
Peaches	Dormant/Bud	Fair/Good
Pears	Bud	Fair/Good
Blueberries		
Highbush	Dormant/Bud	Good/Fair
Wild, ME	Bud	Good
Cranberries, MA	Dormant	Good
Strawberries	Dormant/Bud	Fair/Good

VEGETABLES: Early season vegetables, such as cabbage, carrots, peas, lettuce and greens, were planted last week. Growers also planted early sweet corn under plastic.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2004	2003	5-yr Avg	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --			
Barley, ME	0	0	0	--
Oats, ME	0	0	0	--
Potatoes				
Maine	0	0	0	--
Mass	10	15	21	Good
Rhode Isl	0	0	5	--
Silage Corn	0	0	0	--
Sweet Corn	4	5	<4	Fair/Good
Tobacco				
Shade	0	0	0	--
Dry Hay				
First Cut	0	0	0	Poor/Fair

For the Week Ending Sunday, April 25, 2004

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.

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				CUM SINCE MAR 1 GROWING DEGREE DAYS				1-WEEK PRECIP			4-WEEK CUM PRECIP			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	BASE -50F		BASE -60F		TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL		DFN	DAYS
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN				INCHES	DFN		
MAINE															
Augusta_State_A	27	72	49	+4	23	+18	0	+0	0.13	-0.78	4	3.28	-0.14	12	
Bangor_Intl_Arp	23	68	47	+3	12	+10	0	+0	0.07	-0.70	3	2.65	-0.43	12	
Bethel	25	84	49	+5	26	+24	3	+3	0.05	-0.79	1	4.39	+1.05	9	
Caribou_Municip	17	69	42	+1	1	+1	0	+0	0.61	+0.04	3	1.85	-0.40	10	
Dover-Foxcroft	20	69	43	+1	4	+4	0	+0	0.05	-0.79	2	2.33	-0.92	10	
Frenchville	15	67	40	+2	1	+1	0	+0	0.61	-0.02	4	2.06	-0.28	11	
Houlton	18	63	42	+1	2	+2	0	+0	0.69	+0.06	3	2.35	-0.01	10	
Livermore_Falls	25	83	49	+7	26	+26	3	+3	0.01	-0.90	1	4.58	+0.97	9	
Moosehead	18	74	43	+4	7	+7	0	+0	0.36	-0.40	3	2.99	+0.17	12	
Portland_ME	29	72	51	+6	22	+21	2	+2	0.10	-0.86	2	6.00	+2.18	9	
NEW HAMPSHIRE															
Benton	25	83	49	+6	22	+14	1	+1	0.21	-0.47	2	2.61	+0.11	9	
Berlin_AG	26	84	49	+6	21	+15	2	+2	0.28	-0.56	4	3.19	+0.06	12	
Concord	30	90	55	+9	74	+66	18	+18	0.46	-0.24	2	6.51	+3.82	10	
Diamond_Pond	23	78	47	+9	11	+11	0	+0	0.42	-0.33	4	3.07	+0.27	15	
Keene_AP	28	88	54	+6	63	+48	10	+10	0.50	-0.27	2	4.05	+1.14	8	
North_Conway	26	87	51	+7	30	+25	7	+7	0.21	-0.77	3	4.57	+0.75	10	
Rochester	25	88	52	+5	35	+24	6	+6	0.43	-0.56	2	7.32	+3.38	11	
VERMONT															
Burlington_Intl	28	82	51	+5	40	+25	1	+1	0.30	-0.37	3	2.14	-0.38	12	
Island_Pond	23	76	47	+6	8	+5	0	+0	0.39	-0.27	5	2.02	-0.42	16	
Montpelier	26	81	50	+7	33	+26	0	+0	0.17	-0.41	4	2.13	-0.09	15	
Pownal	31	86	55	+10	57	+48	7	+7	0.66	-0.39	4	4.10	+0.11	12	
Rochester	28	84	51	+8	31	+25	3	+3	0.33	-0.58	4	2.91	-0.49	14	
Rutland_AG	29	85	52	+4	49	+25	4	+4	0.29	-0.37	4	2.04	-0.38	14	
Sutton	21	77	45	+5	7	+7	0	+0	0.78	+0.08	5	2.66	-0.01	15	
Townshend_Lake	30	89	53	+6	43	+30	6	+6	0.48	-0.29	4	4.47	+1.42	13	
MASSACHUSETTS															
Ashburnham	32	82	53	+8	42	+36	4	+4	0.78	-0.05	2	6.96	+3.82	10	
Boston/Logan_In	38	86	56	+7	83	+58	22	+22	1.01	+0.17	2	9.68	+6.32	8	
Greenfield	33	89	55	+6	60	+38	11	+11	0.61	-0.26	2	6.42	+3.08	9	
New_Bedford	33	70	53	+3	41	+13	1	+1	0.44	-0.50	2	5.45	+1.57	9	
Otis_AFB	34	68	51	+5	23	+16	0	+0	0.42	-0.49	1	4.12	+0.54	7	
Plymouth	32	75	52	+6	40	+33	3	+3	0.61	-0.37	3	5.83	+1.90	11	
Walpole	34	86	55	+7	66	+52	10	+10	0.98	+0.00	2	8.30	+4.35	9	
Chicopee/Westov	36	91	58	+6	96	+48	20	+20	0.33	-0.58	2	4.72	+1.15	11	
Worthington	26	87	52	+7	43	+35	5	+5	0.78	-0.20	4	6.48	+2.87	12	
RHODE ISLAND															
Providence	39	81	56	+7	69	+50	11	+11	0.50	-0.44	2	7.10	+3.23	9	
Woonsocket	36	86	56	+9	67	+56	15	+15	0.86	-0.12	2	8.02	+4.18	10	
CONNECTICUT															
Bridgeport/Siko	44	74	57	+7	70	+41	9	+9	0.31	-0.60	2	6.96	+3.48	12	
Hartford/Bradle	36	86	58	+8	96	+60	20	+20	0.64	-0.27	2	5.77	+2.20	11	
Norfolk	32	85	53	+8	56	+50	8	+8	0.90	-0.15	3	4.76	+0.63	10	
Thomaston_Dam	37	88	58	+10	84	+66	15	+15	0.39	-0.61	2	5.93	+2.03	10	
Willimantic	35	83	57	+9	84	+69	15	+15	0.53	-0.45	2	7.34	+3.47	12	

STATE WEATHER SUMMARY
For the Week Ending Sunday, April 25, 2004

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.

State	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	15	88	45	+3	0.00	0.80
NH	5	90	50	+6	0.02	0.93
VT	15	89	50	+6	0.17	0.88
MA	26	91	54	+7	0.24	1.04
RI	36	86	54	+6	0.02	0.86
CT	31	88	57	+8	0.31	0.96

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REPORTERS COMMENTS, By County: *Reporters are from Extension Service (Ext), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), or other knowledgeable individuals.*

CONNECTICUT - Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland: Planting peas, snap beans and sweet corn in the valley. Spreading manure where possible. Tillage on tobacco ground. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Manure spreading evident on the green landscape. Field preparations slowed by four to six inches of rain the previous week. Pastures beginning to respond to rain and the sun's heat. Winter damage to peaches a concern. Optimism over rising milk prices. Heifer prices high. **Karen Vozarik (FSA), New Haven:** New Haven County received over six inches of rain in the past two weeks. Producers tilling fields and fixing equipment. Farm stands are selling perennials quickly and annuals are ready for market. **Joyce Meader (Ext), Windham:** Corn growers getting equipment ready. Could be planting this weekend. Evaluated fertilizer sources for far off fields. Biosolids offered at a cheap rate. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Some plowing and manure spreading getting done in the valley. Rest of the area waiting for fields to dry out.

MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook: Potatoes and small grains: No field activities in northern Maine. Most of the snow has melted, however, there is still a lot of frost left in the ground. Field conditions are very wet. Growers bringing seed home and getting planting and tillage equipment ready so they will be able to go when the fields are ready. 15 degrees early Saturday morning with light snow in the evening. Some warm weather is needed. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Frost is still coming out. Haven't seen any field work yet. **Donna Lamb (Ext), Piscataquis:** Cold wet weather moved into the area this weekend. Farmers are mostly working on equipment. Some folks tried spreading manure on their driest fields. Strawberry, apple and Christmas tree growers report significant damage from deer in the past few months. This will result in lower yields this summer. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Not much happening yet. Soil is dry on top as we have not had much rain. Some small grains planted. Some winter injury on alfalfa in low areas that had standing water in December. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Blueberry fields are being burned on days when weather permits. Greenhouses growing seedlings, flowers, and tomatoes, but not open for business yet. We had a full week of cool, damp spring weather. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** Field work has begun. Several farmers have spread manure; they have done some plowing and harrowing to get the ground ready for planting. Many farmers have concerns about the legumes. The winter weather may have killed the crop. Everything is beginning to green except for the legumes. Apple and strawberry growers are worried about possible winter weather problems. The deep frost may cause poor production and small fruit. It's just another growing season for the Maine farmer. Let's see how it goes. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** It has been a cool spring. Trees leaves are just starting to bud and grass is just starting to green. Franklin County got from 10 to 12 inches of rain in both October & December 2003. Flooding and ice cakes caused severe damage. Farmers are currently working on debris removal and fencing. Manure is being spread on well drained fields. **Laura Rand (FSA), Oxford:** Cold and wet conditions are hanging on in Oxford County. Many crop fields along the Androscoggin and Saco Rivers have flood debris and large formations of ice left from last December's flooding. Field conditions are too wet to attempt clean up just yet.

MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire: Some plowing and tilling. Some sweet corn was planted. Orchardists are trying to spray between showers. No word on any winter kill yet, still early. Uncovering strawberry beds of straw cover. Ground is mostly dry with wet spots. Starting to mend fences. Can't wait to get out to the pastures. **Frank Caruso/Debbie Cannon (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: There is plenty of water going into this season. Water levels in most reservoirs are normal or above normal levels. Growers are busy with pre-emergent herbicides, ditch cleaning and frost protection. Cranberry vine appeared to have wintered very well. Cultivars have broken dormancy and early cultivars are greening nicely. There was one frost on Saturday night. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** Sweet corn under plastic has emerged and peas are up. Fruit trees are just beginning to show life. Farmers busy plowing and preparing land. Plenty of rain right now and colder than it needs to be, a little ice mixed in rain yesterday. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Field conditions remain

very cool and wet. Most farms are spreading manure and starting to till where possible. Several farmers have contacted our office this week about winter-kill on their alfalfa. One farmer said that he had at least 40% damage on all alfalfa stands! Orchardists have also called to say that this year's peach and plum crop suffered severe freeze damage during this past winter. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** Vegetable farmers were planting sweet corn under plastic, potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, spinach and parsnips. Some sweet corn up already under plastic. Dairy farmers spreading manure, repairing fences, and seeding new hay fields. Wild blueberry fields are being burned for pruning and pre-emergence herbicides are being applied. Lime is being applied to many fields. Orchardists were applying fertilizer and a protective fungicide spray. **Gary Guida, Worcester:** Another busy week in the greenhouses. Retail sales of perennials starting to pick up. Many people window shopping. Fields getting plowed but rain will slow harrowing and planting.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap: Growers worked on field preparation and seeding transplants this week. Peas are planted. Apple and blueberry IPM is underway. **Tina Savage (Ext), Carroll:** Pastures and hayfields greening up slowly. Winter kill may have claimed most all alfalfa, a little early to tell, but it doesn't look promising. Peach blossom buds appear to have suffered extreme damage. Recent rains are welcome to compensate for the lack of moisture this winter. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** So far, looks like a decent spring. Winter injury seems to be minimal in apples and blueberries. Little or no winter injury in alfalfa; hay fields and pastures are greening up nicely. Farmers are spreading manure, putting in forage seedings, top-dressing fertilizer on grass and getting ready for planting corn. Early vegetable crops are going in, with some sweet corn planted under plastic. Greenhouses are full of bedding plants, and sales are starting to pick up. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Aroma of manure in the air, it must be spring as farms begin spreading and discing in manure on cornfields. Preparing fields for planting. Just lighter soils along Connecticut River for now. Hay fields beginning to green up, orchard grass several inches tall now, alfalfa also starting to waken. Armyworm traps in fields in various locations throughout county, picking up some moths in Lancaster area. Generally cold, wet weather, yet seems a drier start so far. **Steve Schmidt (FSA), Grafton:** Some plowing and planting on a limited basis. Soils are dry, temperatures are still a little cool. Total rainfall less than two inches. Topsoil adequate. Subsoil lower than expected. Precipitation from beginning of year to now is below normal. Expect to see planting in full swing shortly. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Field Crops: Liming and fertilizing hayfields; spreading manure, plowing, discing, fertilizing and getting ready to plant corn. Fixing pasture fences. Also, getting ready to make new pasture and hayfield seeds. Vegetables: Transplanting tomatoes into high tunnels. Early season vegetables (peas, lettuce, greens) are being planted, along with early plastic sweet corn. Liming, fertilizing, plowing, discing and getting ready plant fields. Fruits: Pruning continues in young apple and pear trees, along with pruning blueberry bushes and raspberry patches. Orchardists are chopping brush in orchard or push pruning out of the orchards. Fertilizing orchards. Protective fungicide sprays applied on fruit trees. Hot weather over the weekend forced apple buds from silver and green tip to tight cluster. Peach buds that are still alive, are starting to swell. Strawberry plants starting to grow. Planting fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries. Some weather-kill on blueberry and raspberries, and major peach and sweet cherry bud damage due to extreme cold winter temperatures. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** Field preparations are trying to be completed in between rain showers. Many fields have been top-dressed with manure, plowed and harrowed in preparation of corn silage seeding. Grasses and legumes are coming up very green this spring and are also being top-dressed. This years' maple syrup season turned out to be a good year, above average.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: Spreading manure, digging nursery stock and planting Christmas trees, cleaning up hedge rows. Some fields still to wet to work, peas, onions, etc. are all in. Garlic is coming up. Lettuce in row cover and high tunnels looks good. **Marila Soileau (FSA), All Counties:** The

fields are pretty soggy from the previous weeks rain, but temperatures warmed up nicely, over 80 degrees early in the week, then chilling again. The gradual increase to warmer weather has been good so far, for the fruit trees. Most fields are too wet to start tilling and planting.

VERMONT - John St. Onge/Kim Peterson (FSA), Lamoille: Last weeks main activities centered around manure spreading and harrowing. Fields in grass and pastures are starting to green up and could use some sunshine. Temperatures have been generally cool and rainfall moderate. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** Field conditions are wet around the county with spring runoff and recent rain. There is still frost in the ground in the higher elevations. Manure is being spread on the drier fields. Some corn fields have had manure applied and have been tilled. Pastures are starting to get green. **Perley Sparrow (FSA), Windham:** Manure spreading in full swing some seeding of alfalfa and grass. Fence repair for pasture and fertilizing fields hoping for warmer weather. Some early sweet corn is planted under plastic. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Fertilizing grass hay fields, some manure spreading on corn fields, no tillage yet. Pasture and hayfield grass starting to

green up, alfalfa starting to elongate shoots. Alfalfa survival good through winter, good snow cover. Most fields saturated but drying quickly. **Dennis Kauppila (Ext), Caledonia:** Spring coming along. Kind of dry. Some farmers working on fencing, some are getting a start on spreading manure. **Chris Benedict (Ext), Chittenden:** With some green tissue present and solid wetting periods, first of the season disease concerns have become common place. With an outlook of warmer temperatures this week, further bud development should proceed. **Heather Darby (Ext), Franklin:** Dry and pleasant weather has stirred much spring activity on the farm. Liquid and solid manure being spread on lighter textured soils. Manure being spread on both corn and hay ground. Some corn fields being plowed and disced. **Sherwin Williams, Rutland:** Farmers spreading manure. Market gardeners plowing early fields, plowed under a nice crop of winter rye. First planting of early sweet corn, peas, carrots and onion sets. Spring has sprung. Sugaring done, time to start a new season. 0.931 inches of rain for week. Ground in good shape for this time of year.

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