

# Crop Progress & Condition



**NEW ENGLAND**  
Agricultural  
Statistics



53 Pleasant Street  
Room 2100  
Concord, NH 03301

A field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service  
United States Department of Agriculture

Gary R. Keough, Director

Phone: 603-224-9639

Fax: 603-225-1434

www.nass.usda.gov/nh

nass-nh@nass.usda.gov

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For week ending 5/6/12

## Fields Recovering Nicely from Dry April

**GENERAL CONDITIONS:** For the week ending May 6, 2012, there were 4.4 days available for fieldwork across New England. Pasture condition was rated 3 percent poor, 21 percent fair, 60 percent good, and 16 percent excellent. The week began cold and rainy with frosty conditions reported in all six New England States. Precipitation and below average temperatures, predominantly in the 50s, persisted throughout the middle of the week for most of New England. Temperatures warmed up to seasonal levels by Friday and sunshine returned at the end of the week. Total precipitation for the week ranged from 0.10 to 1.25 inches. Average temperatures for the week ranged from 41 to 55 degrees.

**FRUIT:** Wet weather had orchardists concerned about apple scab. Pollination of fruit trees slowed due to weather conditions but picked up during the weekend with development ranging from bud stage in northern Maine to petal fall in southern States. Frost damage to fruit trees was reported throughout New England. Magnitude of losses due to frost was undetermined as of last Sunday. Frost damage to berry fields was variable as many growers were able to protect their crops with nighttime irrigation. Growth of the cranberries was slowed by the cool, cloudy weather. Cranberry growers were sweeping and spraying for insects, applying herbicides, cleaning ditches, finishing bed renovations, and planting vines. Bees were moved into most wild blueberry fields for pollination. There was a mummyberry infection period during the weekend in all growing areas of Maine. Orchardists were planting strawberry beds and fruit trees, fertilizing orchards, and applying protective fungicide sprays on fruit trees and blueberries.

**VEGETABLES:** Sweet corn growers reported substantial frost injury to early planted fields. Some emerged sweet corn was over a foot high in southern New England. Farmers were planting asparagus, cole crops, fiddleheads, leafy greens, parsnip, peas, and rhubarb. Some growers were harvesting asparagus, arugula, cilantro, kale, rhubarb, spinach, and Swiss chard. Cool soil temperatures kept some plants in greenhouses until soil temperatures become warm enough for transplantation.

**FIELD CROPS:** Dry hay was recovering well from lack of rainfall in April. Hay fields that were fertilized early showed better development. Tillage operations continued but were delayed in areas that received the most rainfall. Some farmers were waiting for soil temperatures to rise prior to planting corn. Nevertheless, planting of field corn was significantly ahead of schedule by week's end. Planting of potatoes and small grains in Maine began last week with the earliest crops starting to emerge by the end of the week. Grasslands and pastures were recovering from earlier dry conditions but were growing slowly due to lack of heat. Farmers were busy spreading manure, plowing, disking, and fertilizing fields.

### SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
-- Percent --			
<b>Topsoil</b>			
Very Short	0	3	0
Short	9	19	0
Adequate	73	61	67
Surplus	18	17	33
<b>Subsoil</b>			
Very Short	1	3	0
Short	10	22	1
Adequate	76	60	64
Surplus	13	15	35

### FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	Stage of Development	Condition
Apples	Early Bloom/Petal Fall	Good/Fair
Peaches	Full Bloom/Petal Fall	Good/Fair
Pears	Early Bloom/Petal Fall	Good/Fair
Blueberries		
Highbush	Bud Stage/Full Bloom	Good/Fair
Wild	Bud Stage/ Early Bloom	Exc/Good
Cranberries, MA	Bud Stage	Good
Strawberries	Bud Stage/ Early Bloom	Good/Fair

### FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2012	2011	5-yr Avg	Condition
-- Percent Planted --				
Barley, ME	20	0	10	N/A
Oats, ME	20	0	10	N/A
Potatoes				
Maine	15	<5	5	N/A
Mass	95	20	45	
Rhode Island	65	40	45	
Silage Corn	15	<5	5	
Sweet Corn	20	15	15	
Tobacco				
Broadleaf	0	0	0	N/A
Shade	0	0	0	N/A
-- Percent Emerged --				
Potatoes				
Mass	5	0	0	Good
Rhode Island	20	0	<5	Good
Silage Corn	<5	0	0	Good/Fair
Sweet Corn	15	5	5	Good/Fair
-- Percent Harvested --				
Dry Hay				
First Cut	0	0	0	Good/Fair

**Weather Summary For New England Agricultural Statistics**

Prepared By AWIS.com

For the Period: Monday April 30, 2012  
 To: Sunday May 6, 2012

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 INCHES	DFN	DAYS
	---	---	---	---	TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	---	---	---	---	---	---
<b>MAINE</b>														
Augusta_State_A	32	63	46	-5	130	+101	26	+26	0.77	-0.14	4	5.19	+1.62	13
Bangor_Intl_Arp	33	62	47	-3	99	+81	13	+13	0.78	-0.01	3	4.76	+1.64	13
Bethel	31	66	46	-5	93	+73	10	+10	0.76	-0.08	5	4.39	+1.03	13
Caribou_Municip	30	65	45	-2	56	+44	4	+4	0.14	-0.53	1	4.29	+1.89	11
Dover-Foxcroft	30	61	43	-5	53	+41	2	+2	0.69	-0.15	3	5.07	+1.71	10
Frenchville	27	64	44	-2	46	+40	8	+8	0.16	-0.54	1	3.17	+0.65	14
Houlton	28	64	44	-2	59	+47	2	+2	0.10	-0.60	3	3.07	+0.49	12
Livermore_Falls	25	65	45	-2	85	+73	5	+5	0.92	+0.07	5	4.89	+1.31	11
Moosehead	25	60	41	-3	30	+27	0	+0	0.33	-0.42	3	5.08	+2.13	11
Portland_ME	30	61	47	-3	115	+99	19	+19	1.05	+0.17	5	5.75	+1.99	12
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>														
Benton	27	63	45	-5	89	+55	13	+13	1.25	+0.55	5	4.86	+2.18	14
Berlin_AG	28	64	46	-3	95	+69	12	+12	0.80	+0.02	5	4.36	+1.15	11
Concord	30	70	49	-3	195	+158	46	+46	1.02	+0.32	5	3.63	+0.83	10
First_Conn_Lake	23	63	43	-1	46	+39	2	+2	0.77	-0.04	4	4.20	+1.20	15
Keene_AG	25	68	49	-5	160	+102	32	+28	0.99	+0.15	5	3.12	+0.03	11
North_Conway	32	70	47	-4	115	+87	17	+17	1.13	+0.22	5	4.83	+0.99	12
Rochester	29	70	48	-4	177	+132	48	+48	0.86	-0.08	4	4.29	+0.35	10
<b>VERMONT</b>														
Bennington_AP	25	73	52	+4	178	+142	30	+30	1.07	+0.03	4	3.05	-1.07	13
Burlington_Intl	27	67	51	-2	190	+137	47	+43	1.06	+0.38	5	3.86	+1.21	14
Island_Pond	24	59	45	-2	78	+61	12	+12	0.89	+0.15	5	3.82	+1.12	13
Montpelier	26	62	47	-3	114	+82	20	+20	1.10	+0.44	5	3.74	+1.34	13
Rochester	26	68	48	-1	98	+71	12	+12	1.16	+0.18	5	4.52	+0.86	14
Rutland_AG	26	74	49	-5	127	+57	17	+9	0.72	-0.01	5	3.37	+0.70	11
Springfield_VT	25	67	50	+1	174	+139	34	+34	0.88	-0.03	5	3.63	+0.01	11
Sutton	28	56	44	-2	84	+71	12	+12	1.07	+0.32	5	4.29	+1.46	17
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>														
Boston/Logan_In	41	59	50	-5	267	+194	69	+69	0.74	-0.03	5	3.59	+0.30	9
Fitchburg	30	68	52	+3	278	+251	79	+79	0.85	+0.07	5	3.78	+0.61	12
Greenfield	29	72	51	-3	190	+119	46	+44	0.79	-0.07	4	3.19	-0.26	9
New_Bedford	28	60	51	-4	189	+113	31	+31	0.67	-0.18	5	3.45	-0.26	11
Otis_AFB	34	57	49	-2	128	+99	15	+15	0.52	-0.36	3	1.85	-1.76	6
Plymouth	28	61	50	-2	208	+176	44	+44	0.52	-0.44	4	2.55	-1.38	9
Walpole	30	64	51	-2	219	+170	54	+54	0.81	-0.03	5	4.37	+0.57	11
Chicopee/Westov	24	73	53	-4	237	+122	53	+45	0.75	-0.16	5	3.04	-0.60	12
Worthington	27	73	49	-2	129	+96	18	+18	1.03	-0.02	5	3.58	-0.37	14
<b>RHODE ISLAND</b>														
Providence	35	60	52	-2	218	+158	39	+39	0.80	-0.11	5	4.13	+0.36	13
Woonsocket	31	63	51	-2	236	+191	58	+58	0.73	-0.24	5	4.54	+0.64	9
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>														
Bridgeport/Siko	39	67	55	+1	220	+140	20	+16	1.19	+0.28	4	3.89	+0.31	11
Hartford/Bradle	33	71	54	-2	280	+184	69	+61	0.90	-0.01	6	3.77	+0.13	14
Norfolk	28	69	51	+2	152	+123	19	+19	1.02	-0.03	6	3.50	-0.70	13
Thomaston_Dam	27	77	54	+1	197	+139	36	+36	0.68	-0.37	4	3.22	-0.83	11
Willimantic	28	68	53	+1	248	+193	56	+56	0.93	-0.05	5	3.45	-0.47	11

**State Weather Summary**

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 6, 2012

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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STATE	AIR TEMPERATURES				PRECIPITATION	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	21	70	45	-4	0.09	1.19
NH	10	70	47	-2	0.46	1.58
VT	22	74	48	-2	0.27	1.80
MA	24	73	50	-2	0.48	1.31
RI	31	63	51	-2	0.57	0.80
CT	26	77	53	-1	0.64	1.19

**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:** Frost last Monday had berry producers irrigating for frost protection. Tree fruit producers tried to protect trees with varied success. Persistent cool temperatures kept plants in greenhouses for warmer soil temperatures before transplanting with the exception of some cole crops. Pastures and hay starting to recover from earlier dry conditions. **Richard Meinert (Ext), Litchfield:** Another inch or so of rain is creeping us closer to normal soil moisture levels. Field corn planting has started in most of the area. Some cooler soil farms are waiting a little longer to start. Several early morning frosts have been reported - but no crop losses reported. Manure spreading is winding down already due to the mixed up weather. **Kathryn Gostyla (FSA), New Haven:** Producers continued to irrigate berries for frost protection. Soil still too cold to transplant crops. **Jude Boucher (Ext), Tolland:** Some fruit growers in the CT River Valley reported losing all of their remaining tree fruit. Sweet corn growers reported severe frost injury to early planted fields, even close to Long Island Sound. Received another inch of rain in the past week. Looking forward to more this week. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Cool, wet weather. Scab conditions for apples. Late blooming blueberries may not pollinate well. All fruit crops affected by freeze/frost. Farmers markets beginning with plants and greenhouse grown vegetables. Starting to mow grass, some excellent, some short and headed out. Lower milk income and higher grain cost a concern.

**MAINE – Marcia Hall (FSA), Androscoggin/Oxford/Sagadahoc:** Received some much needed rain last week, but producers are still reporting that more is still needed. Crops have begun to be planted like: potatoes, field corn and some early vegetables. Livestock have been put out to pasture in areas of the counties, but some fields have limited grass growth due to the dry spring. Producers in all three counties have reported that the frost last week (with temperatures in the mid to high 20's) may have caused problems for their fruit and berries. Greenhouses are going strong with potted plants and vegetables. **Larry James (FSA), Central Aroostook:** Many operations have been in full swing since last week. Most of the fields are dry. A few fields still have dark spots as springs are slow to dry up. Most operations are sowing grain and few have been planting potatoes the last couple of days. A few grain fields have emerged in the southern part of the county. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** Few farmers in Central Aroostook area have planted grain. Grounds are being plowed and rocks being picked for other crops to be planted soon in the next week. **Don Audibert, (FSA) Northern Aroostook:** Was cold and windy most of the week. Farmers started planting grain on higher fields. No potatoes planted yet, but should be starting next week, weather permitting. Looks like crops will be planted at least a week earlier than last year. **Sandy Truslow (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Rainy and cool most of the week. Fortunately the sun came out on Friday and the bees started getting more active pollinating the apple trees. There are some losses reported due to the frost last weekend. The weekend was very busy for garden supply stores selling plants and supplies. Farmers were planting the early crops and crops under cover. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** Some frost this morning could have had some effect on apple trees in early bloom. Soil moisture is back to normal with the recent rainfall. **Donna Coffin (Ext), Piscataquis/Penobscot:** Continue tillage operations. Some folks are breaking out the corn drill to start planting. **Elaine S Moceus (FSA), Somerset:** Apple producers are indicating that the cold temperatures over the last weekend of April 2012 may have caused damage to the buds, currently at pink stage. The combination of early heat in March followed by three consecutive days of below 30 degree temperatures during the end of April, continuing with cloudy, cold and wet beginning of May weather is expected to have some effect on the apple blossoms. The concern is whether or not the fruit will set. Strawberries that have sent their buds up through the crowns were irrigated over the colder nights. High bush blueberries

are at bud break stage. Crop damages are difficult to predict at this time, due to the extreme weather fluctuations this spring. Field work was limited this past week due to wet conditions. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Lots of rain and cold weather slowed crop progress. Hard frost on evening of May 6 may have caused some damage to early flowering strawberries, blueberries and maybe some apples. **Dr. David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild blueberries: A dry and warm spring has the plants about two weeks ahead of normal growth, most fields have been pruned and herbicide applied to non-bearing fields. Bees are being moved into most fields for pollination. There was a mummyberry infection period this past weekend in all growing areas of the state. Mature cups are probably still in most fields but they are almost finished in Waldo, Lincoln and Knox counties but still probably around. There are lots of mature cups producing spores in Hancock and Washington counties. A fungicide application needs to be applied within 72 hours of the beginning of the infection period to protect the plants. Current information on the disease progress may be obtained at: <http://mainewildblueberries.blogspot.com/>

**MASSACHUSETTS – Heather Baylis (FSA) Franklin:** First half week cool with some rain, warming at the end of the week. Vegetable farmers were harvesting asparagus, rhubarb, greens, spinach and parsnips. Field prep continued; subsoiling, liming and plowing. Planting continued including lettuces, cabbage, spinach, peas, corn and potatoes. New beds of strawberries were being planted. Apple orchards were being treated with fungicides. **Ted Smiarowski Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** Very cool, wet, rainy week. Dairy farmers spreading manure and preparing corn fields to plant. Vegetable growers are subsoiling, plowing, and spreading lime. They are also planting peas, sweet corn, potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, and spinach. Fruit growers were applying a protective fungicide spray on their apples. Small fruit growers were planting new beds of strawberries for next year's harvest. Vegetable farmers were harvesting asparagus, fiddleheads, rhubarb, parsnip, greens, and spinach. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: Cool, cloudy weather meant that growth of the cranberries was slowed down and there was only one frost night, last night (Sunday into Monday) after the weather had cleared. Growers were sweeping (and spraying where necessary) for insects, treating for root rot and upright dieback, applying herbicides, cleaning ditches, finishing bed renovations and planting vines. Although many of the vines look funky, the bud looks good. There continues to be great concerns about water supplies down the road, as the numerous frost nights have used up a lot of water and kept the beds excessively wet.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE – Donna Juneau (FSA) Belknap/Merrimack:** Last week brought a welcome 1+ inch of rain in most areas of the two counties, however, surface water levels are still reportedly below normal. Farm stands are opening up. Some farmers have been out preparing fields for spring planting. Frost is still a concern in the hollows. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** Lots of rainy weather all week, with the sun starting to poke out again over the weekend. Pastures and hayfields are recovering nicely from lack of rainfall. Some farms starting to plant field corn. Planting also continued on vegetable operations with sweet corn, lettuce, cole crops, etc. Apples still look OK, but strawberries showing some substantial frost injury in some places. Farm stands and farmers' markets starting up. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Fairly cool, wet week, turning drier and sunny at week's end. Still quite cold soil conditions, temperatures below freezing in the 20's many nights. Manure spreading at a good pace as conditions permit. Meadows greening up. A little drier and warmer conditions and corn planting should go quickly. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Fruits: Apple, pear, cherry, peach and plum trees were at petal fall to fruit set in the Hollis area. Latest of blooming apple varieties are at petal fall. Blueberries are at blooming. Wet weather has many fruit growers concerned about future apple scab and blueberry mummy berry disease problems. Orchardists are fertilizing orchards and are

applying protective fungicide sprays on fruit trees and blueberries. Planting fruit trees. Field Crops: Farmers were spreading manure, plowing, disking, fertilizing, and planting corn. Vegetables: Continued early season vegetables (peas, lettuce, greens, onions, cole crops) planting, along with sweet corn and potatoes. Liming, fertilizing, plowing, disking and getting ready to plant fields. Harvesting of asparagus. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Plowing, disking, and spreading fertilizer and lime and laying plastic mulch. Planting cool vegetable crops and tomatoes in high tunnels. Harvesting lettuce, spinach, rhubarb, cilantro, kale, arugula and Swiss chard. Monitoring pests in orchards and spraying protective fungicides. Spreading manure, liming, and seeding some hay fields and pastures. Cool, cloudy and misting with little sun during the week and some cold nights; the week-end was sunny and warmer. **Jenn Zaleski (FSA), Sullivan:** Much needed rain fell during the week. Farmers were able to get a good start on planting field corn prior to the showers. Fields were also dry enough to continue work during the sunny weekend. A cold snap at the start of the week put fruit producers on alert. Hay and pastures are greening up nicely with all the rain.

**RHODE ISLAND – Paul Brule (FSA), All Counties:** We had a couple of mornings with frost this past week in the northern part of the state. Just about all of the potatoes are planted in RI now. The early potatoes are already coming out of the ground. Checking up on strawberries, the early strawberries are all ready starting to make a berry. We probably will be picking strawberries by the end of May and this is a month early! We received about an inch of rain here last week, depending on where you are in the state. The next three days, rain is expected, along with cool weather. With the frost last week, no one is planting any vegetable crops (other than cold crops, i.e. lettuce, cabbage etc.). We have sweet corn that is over a foot high under remay. Pastures are green, but growing slow as we now need some heat. We had a good portion of rain, but need sun now.

**VERMONT – Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Rain delayed tillage work, just now starting again to prepare seed beds to plant corn on lighter soils. Some corn in for three weeks and now can see spikes. Hay growth seems slow but adding height. Grass hay that got fertilized early is much better. Some new seeding nurse crops are up a few inches. Pasture grazing started. **Heather Darby (Ext), Franklin:** Some rain last week slowed field operations. More corn being planted but still slow. Wheat and other grains emerging. New seedings also beginning to fill in. Cows are being put out to pasture. Many planning for an early first cutting of forage. **Paul Stanley (CCA), Franklin:** Typical spring weather has brought in May for Franklin County this week. Most of the manure and primary tillage is done and now waiting for some weather to get corn planting in full swing. Still some grass seeding being done between the showers. Tree fruits are still in the green leaf territory. Some sweet corn planted under plastic. Pastures are doing really great with ideal weather conditions in this area. Still time for our spring planting as we work with Mother Nature. If we treat her right on Mother's Day maybe she will be nice and give us a good spring for our planting and first cut hay harvest. **Heather Mateja (FSA), Lamoille/Washington:** Fields are ready for planting, animals are on pasture, and the hay is growing. **Terence Bradshaw, (UVM):** Cool, damp weather during bloom last week did not provide optimum conditions for pollination. Apple scab is still a threat with ascospores still maturing. Those orchards that have reached petal fall will need to consider management of plum curculio and codling moth. Relatively low bloom density, frost damage, and potentially poor pollination should have growers considering a mild thinning strategy this year. Thinner application timing at 8-10 mm fruit size may be more optimal than petal fall in order to assess fruit set.

**APRIL SUMMARY:** The month of April brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 0 to 5 degrees above normal. Almost all of New England reported very little precipitation during the first three weeks of April. Precipitation for the month ranged from 1.4 to 5.2 inches throughout. The first week began dry and windy, fueling brushfires across New England. Northernmost latitudes of New Hampshire and Maine reported over 3 inches of winter precipitation at the end of the week. The second week of April did not produce adequate precipitation needed to alleviate brush fire danger conditions. A major heat wave began at the end of the second week, bringing record-breaking temperatures ranging from the low 70s to mid-90. Dry conditions and above average temperatures provided favorable conditions for brush fires during the third week. Significant precipitation during April 21-23 alleviated drought concerns. The last week of April brought cool temperatures, resulting in multiple frosty nights. Some locations reported record-breaking nighttime temperatures in the 20s. When combined with high winds, New England reported abnormally cold wind chill measurements. General farm activities included working in nurseries and greenhouses, spraying fertilizers, spreading manure, disking, plowing, irrigating, and planting a variety of vegetable crops and field crops. The maple syrup season ended early in March for most maple producers and early in April for remaining sugarmakers. General crop development was 1 to 3 weeks ahead of schedule by the end of April.

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**Gary R. Keough, Director**  
**Hernán Ortiz, Statistician**

**Ty Kalous, Deputy Director**  
**Deirdre Davis, Stat Assistant**