

South Dakota Monthly Crop Weather Report

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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE and
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY

South Dakota agriculture was hit with extremes of major winter storms and in some places a week of above-average temperatures. Average snow depth for the state on March 29, 2009 was 1.4 inches. County road conditions in the state were rated at 81 percent open, 16 percent difficult, and 3 percent closed. Township road conditions were rated at 79 percent open, 15 percent difficult, and 6 percent closed. Farm activities focused on calving and lambing, preparing for spring fieldwork and tending to livestock.

This report is based on information from county extension educators, Farm Service Agency county directors, and other reporters across the state.

WEATHER INFORMATION

Several winter storms (typical of March) have affected the state, according to the State Climate Office of South Dakota. But only parts have seen the worst of them so far during the month. The western third of the state is experiencing their third major storm of the month. Northeast parts of the state received snow from one of these storms and an isolated heavy rainfall event on March 22, which dropped over 4 inches of rain from Kingsbury to Codington and Deuel Counties. These storms left areas of the west and northeast with above-average precipitation for the month, with several places having 150-200% of average precipitation. Much of the rest of the state was much drier with some locations having less than 50% of average precipitation. All western reservoirs except for Angostura are near full. Clear Lake reported the largest total precipitation at 3.34 inches. Winner reported the lowest at 0.27 inches.

Although temperatures across the state were generally below average, temperatures did warm enough to melt off most of the snow pack. Average temperatures ranged from 1 to 8° F below average. One more major cold spell from March 10-12 helped keep overall temperatures down. Britton recorded the coldest temperature of the month at -30° F during this stretch. Porcupine had the warmest temperature of the month at 81° F. The overall warm-up did lead to flooding along the main rivers across the state and some overland flooding in the northern and northeastern parts of the state where snow pack and rains were heavier. This led to some inundated soils, erosion and road damage in some northern areas.

SOIL CONDITION

Soil temperatures at 4-inch depths for the month averaged below freezing at several locations. But as of the end of the month all stations were above freezing across the state, but still generally below 40° F.

The US Drought Monitor continues to rate a small area of the state as D0 (Abnormally Dry) in far southwest Fall River County, due to longer term dryness.

FIELD CROPS REPORT

While there were reports of some producers able to seed some early small grain in mid-March, much of the state is still dealing with snow cover and cooler soil temperatures, preventing spring fieldwork. Concerns about varying temperatures in March causing winterkill in winter wheat and alfalfa were seen in many areas of the state, but the actual damage at this point is unknown. Some areas in South Dakota are dealing with washed-out roads and excessive soil moisture. Statewide, the average date to begin spring fieldwork is estimated to be April 12, 2009. Twenty-three percent of the winter wheat acreage is reported to be breaking dormancy. Snow cover for winter wheat is rated at 65 percent poor, 32 percent adequate, and 3 percent excellent. Alfalfa snow cover is rated as 56 percent poor, 42 percent adequate, and 2 percent excellent.

LIVESTOCK, PASTURE, AND RANGE REPORT

March winter storms have created some issues for livestock producers dealing with calving and lambing and access to some feed and water supplies. Cattle conditions are rated at 79 percent good to excellent, with cattle deaths since March 1 rated at 10 percent below average, 85 percent average, and 5 percent above average. Calf death losses since March 1 were rated at 9 percent below normal, 83 percent normal, and 8 percent above normal. Calving is estimated to be 36 percent complete and 2 percent of cattle have been moved to pasture. Sheep conditions are rated 75 percent good to excellent, with sheep and lamb deaths since March 1 rated 8 percent below average, 70 percent average, and 22 percent above average. Lambing is estimated to be 60 percent complete.

Feed and Water Supplies Comparison as of March 29, 2009

Rating	Feed Supplies			Stock Water Supplies		
	This Week	Last Year	5 Yr. Avg.	This Week	Last Year	5 Yr. Avg.
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very Short	1	1	7	1	14	20
Short	11	12	15	5	15	21
Adequate	83	80	73	74	66	57
Surplus	5	7	5	20	5	2

Soil Moisture Condition Comparison as of March 29, 2009

Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This Week	Last Week	Last Year	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very Short	0	NA	7	1	NA	11
Short	1	NA	13	7	NA	19
Adequate	62	NA	77	69	NA	67
Surplus	37	NA	3	23	NA	3

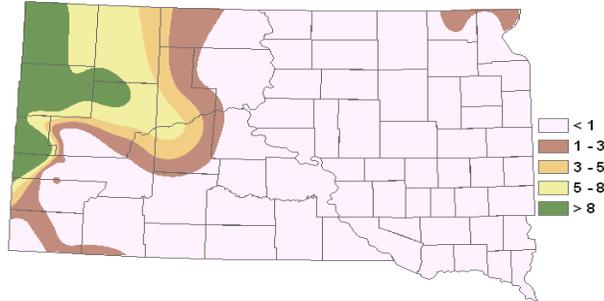
Crop and Livestock Conditions as of March 29, 2009

Item	V Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excel
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Winter Wheat	1	5	42	46	6
Cattle	1	3	17	66	13
Sheep	2	3	20	64	11
Range & Pasture	2	13	31	48	6

Average Soil Temperatures for Month of March 2009 (4-inch Depth)

Location	Temp	Location	Temp
Aberdeen	28	Nisland	34
Beresford	32	Oacoma	34
Bowdle	30	Parkston	33
Brookings	31	Pierre	33
Caputa	31	South Shore	29
Cottonwood	33		

SNOW DEPTH (inches)
As of Sunday, March 29, 2009



TEMPERATURE and PRECIPITATION
Month Ending March 29, 2009

District And Station	Temperature Past Month				Precipitation		
	Average	Departure from Normal	High	Low	Monthly Total	Total Since Oct 1, 2008	Departure from Normal Since Oct 1, 2008
	<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Inches</i>	<i>Inches</i>	<i>Inches</i>
Northwest							
Bison	26	-6	66	-18	1.68	8.62	4.05
Buffalo	29	-2	75	-15	1.86	6.10	2.25
Dupree	28	-4	69	-14	1.56	7.03	2.67
McIntosh	23	-8	58	-16	1.11	6.53	2.69
Newell	29	-4	78	-11	2.23	5.54	1.53
Timber Lake	26	-6	65	-19	1.06	8.28	3.42
North Central							
Aberdeen	26	-4	63	-19	0.66	7.97	3.01
Faulkton	28	-2	67	-15	0.64	4.74	-0.60
Mobridge	27	-4	65	-16	0.61	6.54	2.37
Roscoe	23	-5	58	-17	0.72	7.42	2.57
Northeast							
Britton	25	-4	56	-30	1.63	10.69	5.81
Clear Lake	26	-1	62	-11	3.34	11.42	4.45
Sisseton	26	-4	59	-20	1.45	10.57	4.38
Watertown	27	-1	60	-19	2.11	8.46	3.01
Webster	26	-3	60	-13	1.24	8.03	2.69
West Central							
Faith	28	-5	70	-12	0.86	5.64	1.03
Milesville	29	-5	68	-17	1.65	6.53	1.68
Philip	35	1	79	-10	0.93	6.00	1.88
Rapid City	33	-1	77	-12	1.11	5.73	1.57
Spearfish	36	1	77	-6	2.29	8.63	2.29
Central							
Chamberlain	36	2	71	-6	0.69	5.66	0.03
Highmore	30	-1	68	-19	0.50	4.00	-1.11
Huron	31	-1	70	-20	0.70	8.50	3.04
Onida	30	-2	69	-14	0.64	5.95	0.47
Pierre	33	-1	71	-8	0.98	5.25	0.28
East Central							
Brookings	28	-2	66	-10	0.84	8.36	3.41
Forestburg	32	-2	72	-16	0.67	7.82	1.96
Madison	31	1	70	-11	0.91	7.32	0.87
Mitchell	35	2	71	-4	1.43	7.90	1.97
Sioux Falls	33	1	70	-7	1.13	9.15	2.67
Southwest							
Custer	34	1	65	-9	0.46	3.63	-1.02
Hot Springs	39	2	76	-7	1.28	3.95	0.16
Oelrichs	38	3	78	-7	1.23	6.49	2.32
Porcupine	35	1	81	-13	1.83	6.84	2.66
South Central							
Kennebec	34	-1	73	-23	0.50	5.82	1.50
Mission	33	-1	72	-16	1.22	6.28	1.68
Murdo	33	-1	73	-8	0.91	6.84	1.43
Winner	37	0	74	-6	0.27	3.89	-2.27
Southeast							
Armour	33	-3	72	-12	0.59	6.72	0.37
Centerville	32	-2	73	-13	1.48	9.18	3.02
Pickstown	35	-1	75	-13	1.44	8.19	2.48
Vermillion	35	-2	74	-13	0.93	10.83	4.37
Yankton	33	-2	75	-10	0.65	10.41	4.21

DATA AND MAP SOURCE: State Climate Office of South Dakota