



USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Texas Field Office

Post Office Box 70, Austin, Texas 78767
Voice: (800) 626-3142 * Fax: (800) 842-1331
nass-tx@nass.usda.gov * www.nass.usda.gov/tx

TX-CW1006

Texas Crop Weather

Released March 6, 2006 (3:00 PM CST)

For the week of February 27 - March 5, 2006

Agricultural Summary: High temperatures over the week had many wondering if winter was transiting into summer; skipping spring all together. High temperatures skyrocketed into the upper 80's and 90's nearly statewide. Wichita Falls had the distinction of being the state's hotspot with the thermometer topping out at 98 degrees. The record breaking heat was a result of very low humidity. Severe drought conditions over the past several months left the air extremely dry and less resistant to daytime heating. Only a few locations received rainfall. The Plains reported rain gauge readings ranging from a trace to over ½ inch accumulation. Precipitation amounts of ¼ to ½ inch fell over very isolated locations in North Central Texas. Many areas that received moisture the previous week were now beginning to see the benefits. Along with the full sun and warm temperatures, the increased rain brought some grasses out of dormancy and greened-up the countryside. Most improvement was realized in central and eastern regions where planting of summer crops gained momentum. The rest of the state remained extremely dry and was still in dire need of moisture. Pre-planting and pasture irrigation increased in western areas. Supplemental feeding was still necessary in all areas but decreased in locations that saw pasture improvement. The scarcity and expense of hay forced many cattle producers to continue herd reductions. Burn bans were temporarily lifted in some counties, but unless a substantial soaking rain occurs in all corners of the state, fire danger remains a very serious concern.

Field Crops Report

Small Grains: Many irrigated wheat producers on the Plains were deciding whether or not to apply top dressing fertilizer to marginal fields. Stockers continued to graze under pivots in the region. Remaining dry land wheat in western areas was nearly all grazed out. In Central and North Central Texas, fields began to break dormancy and green-up. In South Texas, some fields have begun to head out while others were baled for hay. Statewide, wheat condition was rated mostly poor to very poor. Statewide, oat condition was rated mostly very poor.

Cotton: Producers on the Plains were busy listing fields and some were applying yellow fertilizer. Many growers were still awaiting rain before beginning any field work. Planting was ongoing in the Rio Grande Valley and was expected to begin gaining momentum on the Coastal Bend.

Corn: Planting began on the Blacklands and continued throughout all southern regions. Producers took advantage of rain that fell last weekend. It remained to be seen if enough moisture would be available over the growing season. All areas still suffered from long-term drought. On the Plains, land preparation continued.

Sorghum: Planting continued in the Rio Grande Valley and Coastal Bend. Some earlier planted fields were emerging. Land preparation was ongoing in other areas. Planting began on a limited basis on the Upper Coast and was expected to start in Central Texas shortly.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report

In the **Rio Grande Valley**, harvest of grapefruit and naval oranges continued.

In the **San Antonio-Winter Garden**, cabbage and spinach harvest continued. All crops remained under heavy irrigation.

In the **Trans Pecos** Region, good stands of winter onions were reported. Grapes were being watered for the first time this season.

In **East Texas**, onion planting was ongoing. Preparations continued for spring vegetables. Sweet potato growers were plowing fields.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report

Native range and pastures were recovering and coming out of dormancy in areas that benefitted from rainfall last weekend. Any improvement would be temporary unless a lot more additional precipitation is realized. Small grain pastures were grazed to the ground in dry land areas. Only irrigated grazing remained. Cattle body conditions continued to show signs of poor forage availability. Herd liquidation was still necessary. Spring calving and kidding were ongoing. Shrimp producers were trying to predict market conditions before filling ponds in the Trans Pecos region. Grass fires remained an ever present danger across Texas and prevention was of primary concern.

Crop Progress Table - March 5, 2006

Crop	Stage	2006	2005	Average 2001-2005
- Percent -				
Corn	Planted	8	8	9
Cotton	Planted	2	--	--
Sorghum	Planted	5	5	8

Top Soil Moisture by District – March 5, 2006 *

Condition	1-N	1-S	2-N	2-S	3	4	5-N	5-S	6	7	8-N	8-S	9	10-N	10-S
- Percent of Acreage -															
Very Short	97	80	85	77	38	25	7	12	47	62	80	92	8	83	93
Short	3	18	14	15	58	51	35	38	41	36	14	8	35	16	7
Adequate	0	2	1	8	4	23	54	49	12	2	5	0	51	1	0
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	1	0	6	0	0

* High Plains: 1-N, 1-S; Low Rolling Plains: 2-N, 2-S; North Central Plains: 3, 4; East Texas: 5-N, 5-S. Trans-Pecos: 6; Edwards Plateau: 7; South Central Texas: 8-N, 8-S; Upper Coast: 9; South Texas: 10-N; Lower Valley: 10-S.

Crop Condition Table – March 5, 2006

Crop	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Index ^{1/}	
	Percent					2006	2005
Wheat	0	4	9	28	59	19	81
Oats	1	4	11	22	62	20	--
Range & Pasture	0	2	15	32	51	--	--

^{1/} The formula for the condition index is $I = (5V + 25P + 60F + 90G + 110E)/100$ where I=crop condition index and V, P, F, G, E = percentage of crop rated very poor, poor, fair, good, excellent.

Weather Information Table ^{1/}

National Weather Service Climatic Divisions	Previous Week (Feb 27 - Mar 5) Accumulation	Month-to-date (Mar 1 - 5) Accumulation	Year-to-date (Jan 1 - Mar 5) Accumulation	1961-90 Annual Normal	Previous Three Months (Dec - Feb) Percent of Normal
High Plains	0.04	0.04	0.19	18.87	10
Low Rolling Plains	0.00	0.00	0.36	23.78	13
North Central Texas	0.00	0.00	3.41	34.00	61
East Texas	0.00	0.00	7.29	45.69	78
Trans Pecos	0.04	0.04	0.23	12.96	23
Edwards Plateau	0.00	0.00	1.00	24.01	33
South Central Texas	0.00	0.00	1.43	34.48	29
Upper Coast	0.00	0.00	2.87	47.63	48
South Texas	0.00	0.00	0.09	23.49	7
Lower Valley	0.00	0.00	0.29	25.34	27

^{1/} Average of all stations reporting precipitation data.

For more weather information, please visit the following web sites:
www.srh.noaa.gov/rfcs/share/precip_analysis_new.php and www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html

Cooperating Agencies:

Texas Agricultural Extension Service
 Texas Department of Agriculture
 National Weather Service

