



## USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Texas Field Office

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TX-CW1106

### **Texas Crop Weather**

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For the week of March 6 - 12, 2006

**Agricultural Summary:** A massive wildfire was scorching the Panhandle. As of this report, over 600,000 acres had burned. Numerous structures were destroyed and towns were evacuated. The fire, burning just east of Amarillo, was being called one of the worst in Texas history. Above average temperatures, low humidity and high winds made conditions ideal for grass fires. Dry grasslands and pastures provided abundant fuel for the fires due to lingering drought. In other parts of the state, temperatures were above normal and rainfall was short. Spotty thunderstorms blew through Central and East Texas with precipitation amounts generally under ½ inch. Very isolated locations in the northeast corner of the state received up to 2 inches of rain. Other regions that reported moisture were the Panhandle, Low Rolling Plains and North Central Texas. Accumulations ranged from a trace to isolated ½ inch amounts. Central and eastern areas continued to show spring green-up as many locations have been receiving light rain amounts and mild temperatures for the past few weeks. Planting of summer crops increased and preparations were ongoing on the Plains. The severe drought persisted in most regions. Irrigation of crops and pastures was active. Cattle producers continued to thin out herds for lack of grazing. Hay supplies were short statewide and bales were imported from other states.

### **Field Crops Report**

**Small Grains:** Producers on the Plains continued to irrigate wheat. Dryland fields were mostly grazed out and stockers were only grazing under pivots. Wheat on the Blacklands was showing some promise after a few weeks of scattered rain but much more moisture will be needed. The crop was expected to head-out shortly in most southern areas. Heading had already begun in the Winter Garden. A few fields on the Coastal Bend were baled for hay. Statewide, wheat condition was rated mostly poor to very poor. Statewide, oat condition was rated mostly very poor.

**Cotton:** Preparations for planting were ongoing on the Plains. Planting was active in the Rio Grande Valley and Coastal Bend. Many producers were holding out for rain as late as possible before seeding. Some producers indicated that cotton would be a more attractive option than corn or sorghum due to the lingering drought. Planting has begun on the Upper Coast.

**Corn:** Planting was in full swing in all regions except the Panhandle and South Plains. Most growers faced dry field conditions but others took advantage of the limited moisture that had been received the past few weeks. Irrigation in South Texas was active. It remained to be

seen if enough moisture would be available over the growing season. All areas still suffered from long-term drought.

**Sorghum:** Blackland growers began to plant sorghum. Seeding continued in the Rio Grande Valley, Coastal Bend, Upper Coast, and South Texas. Irrigation was active where available. Some fields were emerging but much more precipitation would be needed for further development. In other areas, land preparations were ongoing.

**Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report**

In the **Rio Grande Valley**, harvest of citrus and winter vegetables continued.

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

In **East Texas**, cool season vegetables were in decent shape. Sweet potato growers continued their preparations.

**Peaches and pecans** were beginning to bud out in some areas. Irrigation was heavy in pecan orchards in the Winter Garden. Peach growers were weary of early blooming trees due to the probability of another freeze.

**Livestock, Pasture and Range Report**

Native range and pastures in eastern and central regions continued to benefit from the warm temperatures and scattered rain. Pastures in western and southern regions were in very poor shape. Hay was still scarce and imported from other states. Some hay growth was realized in eastern locations but was still a long way from the first cutting. Small grain pastures were grazed to the ground in dryland areas. Only irrigated grazing remained. Cattle body conditions continued to show signs of poor forage availability and herd liquidation was still necessary. Sheep shearing began in some areas. The wildfires were of primary concern as Texans were looking for some way to recover from this natural disaster.

**Crop Progress Table - March 12, 2006**

Crop	Stage	2006	2005	Average 2001-2005
- Percent -				
Corn	Planted	18	12	16
Cotton	Planted	3	1	2
Sorghum	Planted	9	9	13

**Top Soil Moisture by District – March 12, 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	93	83	89	80	40	29	3	15	39	64	71	96	4	94	90
Short	6	15	10	20	58	49	23	45	49	33	22	4	28	6	10
Adequate	1	2	1	0	2	22	70	32	12	3	7	0	60	0	0
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	0	0	0	0	8	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 12, 2006**

Crop	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Index <sup>1/</sup>	
	Percent					2006	2005
Wheat	0	4	8	23	65	17	82
Oats	1	4	12	26	57	21	--
Range & Pasture	0	4	19	31	46	--	--

<sup>1/</sup> 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 <sup>1/</sup>**

National Weather Service Climatic Divisions	Previous Week (Mar 6 - 12) Accumulation	Month-to-date (Mar 1 - 12) Accumulation	Year-to-date (Jan 1 - Mar 12) Accumulation	1961-90 Annual Normal	Previous Three Months (Dec - Feb) Percent of Normal
High Plains	0.01	0.05	0.20	18.87	10
Low Rolling Plains	0.14	0.14	0.50	23.78	13
North Central Texas	0.21	0.21	3.62	34.00	61
East Texas	0.50	0.50	7.79	45.69	78
Trans Pecos	0.00	0.04	0.23	12.96	23
Edwards Plateau	0.10	0.10	1.10	24.01	33
South Central Texas	0.01	0.01	1.44	34.48	29
Upper Coast	0.04	0.04	2.91	47.63	48
South Texas	0.10	0.10	0.19	23.49	7
Lower Valley	0.00	0.00	0.29	25.34	27

<sup>1/</sup> Average of all stations reporting precipitation data.

For more weather information, please visit the following web sites:  
[www.srh.noaa.gov/rfcshare/precip\\_analysis\\_new.php](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/rfcshare/precip_analysis_new.php) and [www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html](http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html)

**Cooperating Agencies:**

Texas Agricultural Extension Service

Texas Department of Agriculture

National Weather Service

