

Crop Summary

2007 Crop Summary: Cooler temperatures dominated the month of January. Snow pack for the winter had been dismal. Snow pack was 49% less than normal in some counties. Farmers and ranchers were worried that they wouldn't have enough water for their livestock and irrigated crops. Dairy producers were concerned about the high prices of corn and barley for their feed mixes. Operations in some counties had trouble keeping livestock water from freezing.

Late February brought winter storms to parts of Utah. Several snow storms greatly improved the snow pack in some areas. A meeting was held in Park Valley to plan the pest management strategy in anticipation of the battle against Mormon Crickets in the upcoming spring. Calving was well underway in most counties. Some Counties reported that, unless they saw significant snow in March, they would be short on water supplies in the summer.

April began with some farmers worried about irrigation water supplies because of the below normal snow pack in their area. Irrigation water levels in Box Elder were at 57 percent of normal, Grand County, 40 percent of normal, and in Emery County, about 36 percent of normal. There were reports that there had been little to no moisture received to get any kind of feed production on range lands. Irrigation, fuel and fertilizer costs seem to be a major concern with producers.

In mid-April, fruit growers were very concerned that they had suffered damage to the fruit crop due to the cold weather. Irrigation supplies remind short in some areas. There were reports that range conditions in desert areas looked good in the beginning, but started to deteriorate due to a lack of precipitation. Operations in many other counties reported that topsoil moisture was deteriorating due to the lack of precipitation. Hay prices were high and stayed that way all year because of limited irrigation supplies.

Warm dry weather around the state during June made the drought situation worse. Farmers sprayed for alfalfa weevil in order to get the 2nd crop of alfalfa hay up. Range conditions were worse than they had been in 20 or 30 years in some places. Livestock water supplies were stressed and producers hauled water to livestock to keep them on the range.

In July a fast-moving wildfire in northeast Utah burned more than 47 square miles, additional firefighters and calm winds aided in firefighting efforts. In August an estimated 450,000 acres of public and private rangeland burned in the Milford Flat, Neola North and Salt Creek fires. An estimated 90 farmers and ranchers were affected. Approximately 200 cattle and 70 sheep were killed in the Utah fires. An additional 7,000 cattle were displaced by the fires, and had to be moved to other range or pasture land. Emergency Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program acreage was approved for Box Elder County. Some of the grass in burned areas began to grow back but, near Milford, the wind started to erode away the topsoil, and farmers were hoping that reseeding would be done in September. Cache County reported that most cattle had come in from summer ranges. Federal "grass banks" in five counties were released for emergency grazing as ranchers struggled to feed their livestock after record setting wildfires. The availability of hay at reasonable prices was a big concern going into the fall and winter seasons.

In mid-August, some ranchers had to sell their calves because of their unwillingness or inability to pay high prices for feed. Ranchers reported that calves weighed from 30 to 100 lbs less than normal because of the lack of quality feed. As beef cattle came back from public grazing lands, producers were disappointed that feeder cattle prices had dropped dramatically.

In November and December some ranchers were facing the decision of selling at current prices or feeding the cattle and hoping prices would improve. Hay was still in short supply, and prices had risen dramatically.

Crop Production Index (1977=100):Crops, by Commodity Grouping Utah, 2000-2007

Year	Small Grain	Hay	Fruit ¹	Other Crops	Total Crops
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
2000	101	136	127	105	125
2001	86	138	60	96	117
2002	65	124	20	87	101
2003	72	135	85	89	114
2004	79	134	78	87	113
2005	78	143	95	88	120
2006	72	138	73	98	116
2007	13	145	62	90	109

¹ Fruit production index is derived from total production.