

# *Crop Summary*

**2009 Crop Summary:** Utah producers reported the 2009 crop year January weather brought freezing temperatures the first part of the month, day time highs considerably above freezing by the end of the month. Farmers had little chance for field activity because of the weather. February storms contributed to good moisture in the spring. Snow pack in the mountains was good at that time and soil moisture was adequate in most areas of the state. However, because of the snow cover, some producers were concerned about snow mold. Many areas continued to receive snow during March and farmers hoping to plant onions were hampered by snow continuing to cover their fields. The weather did break in some areas, and snow melted to reveal some snow mold damage.

Fruit growers reported that trees had not begun to blossom by the first of April and the cold had not yet hurt the fruit crop. Very cold weather slowed grass growth and spring farm work underway in some areas. During the month, alfalfa growers applied herbicides and fertilizer, however, spring planting was somewhat delayed due to wet and cool conditions. In a few areas moisture conditions were critically dry, and cold windy conditions delayed grass growth on ranges and worsened the moisture situation. Peach and apricot crops received minimal damage due to weather conditions.

Weather continued cool and wet in northern areas, but some areas in central and southern Utah were concerned about the lack of moisture at the beginning of May. Peaches seemed to have weathered the cold temperatures in late April and early May, but sweet cherry crops in northern Utah received heavy damage. Farmers reported pest problems with black grass bugs and grasshoppers in pasture and range lands. Spraying was done in Box Elder County, and grasses seemed to bounce back from the bug pressure. Producers were preparing to spray in Juab County as range land was beginning to receive damage from the pests. Grasshoppers were heavy in Duchesne County. Rain and snow were reported mid May, and the cooler temperatures hindered the growth of alfalfa hay. Some farmers were frustrated with their inability to get into fields and plant spring crops because of the moisture. Moisture received, however, improved the irrigation water outlook. Some central and southern areas of the State continued to be dry, and spring work was completed in a timely manner, however, producers were concerned about the prospects of a short irrigation season because runoff was relatively light in spite of the adequate snow pack reported in other areas. Canal repairs delayed irrigation in Uintah County.

Weather conditions were wetter than normal during the month of June. Many hay producers had their first crop alfalfa rained on while in the windrow and much of the crop's quality was poor. The cool weather was an advantage to small grains, but corn was slow to grow because of the low temperatures. Some hail was reported which resulted in damage to fruit trees and fruit crops, and some field crops were also damaged by hail in northern areas. Reports of alfalfa weevil were frequent, and the inability of operators to harvest hay because of the wet weather allowed the pest to cause further damage. Operators waiting for the rain to stop had to wait until the last week of the month to cut hay. By that time much of the alfalfa was either damaged by weevil or old and of poor quality. Many of the dryer counties in the south received rain during June which relieved some of the dry conditions experienced earlier in the season, but hampered the effort to harvest alfalfa. Grasshoppers were reported in most counties by the end of June. Infestations were reduced somewhat because of the cool wet weather and spraying efforts. Sweet cherry crop was a total loss in some areas because of rain and hail. Rangeland and dry farm crops were the best they had been in many years.

Warm temperatures and dryer weather allowed farmers to finish harvesting their first crop of alfalfa in early July. By the end of the month most had harvested second crop alfalfa, but the crop was light because of the delay in harvesting first crop. Most second crop hay was harvested without incident, but some was reported to have been rained on, and some rare second crop weevil damage occurred in one area. Grass hay looked to be an excellent crop because of the cool wet weather in June. Corn, which prefers warmer weather, began to perk up, and small grains were ripening rapidly due to the warmer temperatures. As the month progressed a new batch of grasshoppers emerged in some areas and concerns of crop damage escalated in areas which were not sprayed. In some areas spraying in June seemed to be ineffective, possibly because of the frequent rains when spraying was attempted.

August started hot, dry and windy. Some operators experienced hay rolling in windrows and small grain lodging because of the wind. Corn lodging was also reported. Heavy yielding grain crops also contributed to the lodging problem in small grains. Because of the dry weather, third crop alfalfa harvest was relatively uneventful with few experiencing problems getting it out of the field. Isolated thunder showers infrequently interrupted the relatively dry weather with the exception of one heavy down pour in the north which halted the grain harvest for a few days. Operators also began planting winter wheat during the month. Warm weather continued into September and many were hoping for a long fall to allow the corn to mature before a frost.

Late September and early October brought reports of frost, but it didn't seem to affect the crops. Some began harvesting high moisture grain corn and safflower. Some were able to get a 4<sup>th</sup> cutting of alfalfa, but most were content with 3. Some rain showers occurred, but most operators were able to continue working throughout the month.