



NATIONAL
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United States
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Agriculture

WEATHER & CROPS



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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR MARCH, 2015

March was a difficult month for Virginia's producers. Temperatures varied significantly throughout the month. Snow fall was also present throughout the month. The quick changes in the temperature, including some areas at subzero temperatures, contributed to some wine grape damage, increase in death lose for livestock, and slower than normal pasture growth. Hay stocks are tight, but in some areas pastures were able to be grazed. Towards the end of the month, fruit trees were in the bud swell stage; some peach growers are worried that subzero temperatures might have damaged the crop, but other growers are still optimistic that peach crop will be unaffected. Tobacco growers have begun seeding tobacco in greenhouses. Field work was limited due to wet and muddy fields; however, in some places small grains were topdressed with nitrogen, burn down chemicals were applied in preparing for row crops, and fertilizer and lime were applied on cropland. Other farming activities included starting vegetables under cover, tending to the strawberry crop, and maintaining farming equipment.

Crop	CROP CONDITION PERCENT				
	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Winter Wheat	1	3	32	59	5
Oats	2	5	51	41	1
Barley	1	5	42	49	3
Pasture	5	30	40	23	2
Livestock	2	10	35	46	7

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Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

Virginia Tech

Virginia State University



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VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 29, 2015

City	Temperature						Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Last Week	Since Mar. 1	Mar. 1 dep. from normal *	Jan. 1 to date	Jan. 1 dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	56	36	72	21	46	-2	0.57	3.27	-0.17	7.65	-2.41
Norfolk	55	42	71	32	48	-3	0.26	2.49	-1.17	8.67	-2.30
Richmond	60	39	77	28	50	0	0.46	3.73	0.04	11.00	0.82
Roanoke	57	40	75	26	48	-1	1.22	4.31	0.89	8.22	-1.56
Wash/Dulles	51	33	74	25	42	-4	0.77	4.04	0.89	9.07	0.09

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY

Comments are based on comments reported by extension agents, farmers, commodity specialists, and other knowledgeable individuals.

NORTHERN

FAIRFAX (Adria Bordas)

We have had a roller coaster of weather conditions.

FREDERICK (Mark Sutphin)

Several sub-zero minimums over the winter months may have damaged some peach blossoms, but optimism remains that most growers will still be able to set a full crop. These same winter temperatures may have caused some damage to cold sensitive grape varieties.

PRINCE WILLIAM (Paige Thacker)

Field conditions are muddy and wet.

ROCKINGHAM (Doug Horn)

Topdressing wheat due to wet soil conditions.

WESTERN

HIGHLAND (Rodney Leech)

Maple production down significantly due to weather conditions this season. Feed supply remains very tight for livestock and grass appears to be behind normal spring pace.

ROANOKE (Barbara Leach)

Warming spell followed by wet heavy snow cover made for some light damage to emerging plants like flower bulbs and perennials. Many shrubs browning from effects of harsh winter winds, especially broadleaf evergreens. My Kale, turnips, and spinach are happy as a clam, even after the snow load. They simply flattened out then stood back up. Soil moisture fairly good most of the month. I think I only watered once or twice and it was probably not critical to do so. Right now (end of month) we are starting to get more substantial rains. Kale starting to really grow, not just maintain. Grass greened as soon as snow melted off. Lots of pockmarks in the lawns (and calls regarding such) from retreating frost. Winter annual weeds really became visible last week.

CENTRAL

AMELIA (Laura Siegle)

Wheat and barley have greened up considerably in the past two weeks. Pastures are lagging behind a bit, but green-up has begun especially in fescue pastures and we expect growth to accelerate shortly. Livestock producers are beginning to graze this spring growth and many have noted a reduction in hay feeding this week.

BUCKINGHAM (Jennifer Ligon)

Very wet conditions with widely varying temperatures has been hard on crops, livestock and pastures.

CAROLINE (Mike Broaddus)

It's been a very long, cold, wet and delayed winter. Due to this, I expect spring to be delayed at least two weeks until the ground warms up for spring planting.

HENRICO (Karen Carter)

Pastures are beginning to green up and slow growth is noted.

NELSON (Michael LaChance)

Tree fruit in bud swell and winter pruning coming to a close. Still assessing the extent of wine grape bud damage from subzero temperatures of past winter.

EASTERN

ESSEX (Keith Balderson)

Snowy, wet, and cold conditions delayed field work in March. Producers were finally able to get some work done late in the month, but field work is still behind. Field work included topdressing small grains with nitrogen and applying fertilizer and lime for spring crops. Due to lower commodity prices and level input costs, profit potential for grain and soybean producers in 2015 is a concern. Pastures and hay fields have been slow to start spring growth due to the cold conditions, and vegetable planting is also behind. Producers also spent time during the month to analyze the ARC and PLC provisions of the farm bill.

GLOUCESTER (David Moore)

Producers getting ready for spring planting. Corn planting should begin in about 10 days to 2 weeks. Wheat has received the first nitrogen application of the split. Soil sampling, liming, burndown are the activities of the week. Producers still making farm program decisions and also seed and supplies decisions. Some greenhouse seeding has begun. Hay supplies are very limited.

SOUTHWESTERN

CARROLL (Steve Pottorff)

Temperatures dropped into the high teens and low 20's Saturday evening.

RUSSELL (Scott Jessee)

Extreme weather over the past month has made livestock production difficult. Many calves, lambs, and goat kids lost to subzero temperature and heavy snowfall. Animals still being lost due to damage inflicted during bad weather. Producers are frequenting Farm Service Agency to report livestock losses and apply for Livestock Indemnification Program.

SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Over 22 inches of snow in the month of March has made farming difficult. Damages have been estimated at nearing \$1 million in collapsed barns, lost animals, and extra feed needed. Strawberry crop strong, with little damage noted.

SOUTHERN

FRANKLIN (Cynthia Martel)

The up and down temperatures are hard on farmers and animals. Farmers are really wanting to get started working the fields, but with recent rain, fields are wet. Franklin County upcoming programs: Summer Youth Livestock Program - 6 programs through the spring and summer. April 11 first date, 10 am Franklin County Parks and Rec Dept. Open to youth ages 5-19. Come learn about livestock and work to prepare animals for showing in livestock show. Please contact for information. cmartel@vt.edu. May - VFGC Basic Grazier School - May 5 & 6, Cost \$100 per person. Please contact for flyer. cmartel@vt.edu

PITTSYLVANIA (Jamie Stowe & Stephen Barts)

Farmers are trying to get fertilizer spread in between the spring showers. It has been hard to get on the land and everyone is behind in getting fields prepped and fertilizer spread on hay and pasture lands.

SOUTHEASTERN

BRUNSWICK (Cynthia Gregg)

Most tobacco greenhouses are planted. Many producers are getting in early vegetables and planning which Farmer's Markets to attend. Fertilizer and lime are being spread when trucks and equipment can get into fields.

MECKLENBURG (Taylor Clarke)

Wet soil conditions continue to hinder field work, fertilization and tillage.

PRINCE GEORGE (Scott Reiter)

Field work has been very limited in March due to wet conditions. Some producers were able to get their first nitrogen on wheat this winter during March. Wheat is growing with warmer temperatures with a few fields just getting to Zadoks Growth Stage 30 by late March.

SURRY (Glenn Slade)

Up and down temperatures have strawberry growers watering on cold nights to protect blooms. Small grains are slow due to cooler than normal temperatures.

SUSSEX (Kevin Wells)

Spring like weather has promoted wheat and pasture growth. Nitrogen applications are being made as fields dry out. Growers are getting prepared for corn planting and burndown applications.

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY (Roy D. Flanagan)

Frequent rains still hampering some growers from being able to top-dress and/or make herbicide applications to their small grain fields.