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USDA/NASS/Virginia Field Office
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WEATHER & CROPS



Month: January 2009

Number: 1

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR JANUARY, 2009

Although precipitation throughout January remained relatively low, rain showers late in the month helped replenish groundwater, with topsoil moisture rated at 90% adequate to surplus and subsoil moisture rated at 71% adequate. With producers concerned about increasing input costs for 2009, many are implementing soil sampling before making final decisions about fertilizer and seed purchases. The cold temperatures and moderately dry weather have slowed small grain growth, and some producers have already started winter nitrogen applications. Across the state, producers are tending to off-season duties such as attending winter meetings, finalizing planting decisions, meeting with crop insurance adjusters, as well as, finishing tax preparations. The moderate weather has also allowed the opportunity for other laborious duties such as orchard pruning, fixing fences, equipment maintenance, and attending auction sales.

TOPSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
January, 2009	0	10	77	13

SUBSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
January, 2009	6	19	71	4

CROP CONDITION PERCENT

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	2	6	25	60	7
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	2	6	34	52	6

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES

Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	12	25
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	5	9
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	14	33

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VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 1, 2009

City	Temperature						Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Last Week	Since Dec. 1	Dec. 1 dep. from normal *	Jan. 1 to date	Jan. 1 dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	39	24	46	18	32	-3	0.89	6.66	-0.13	03.14	-0.38
Norfolk	45	31	69	26	38	-2	0.48	5.65	-1.32	01.82	-2.13
Richmond	43	27	65	19	35	-1	0.69	5.57	-1.06	01.52	-2.01
Roanoke	42	28	52	23	35	-1	0.60	4.99	-1.09	02.74	-0.48
Wash/Dulles	36	21	44	14	29	-3	0.61	5.27	-0.85	02.64	-0.39

* Normal based on 1971-2000 data. Source: NCEP/NOAA Climate Prediction Center <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>. Source: USDA, NASS, Virginia Field Office.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY

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

CENTRAL

AMHERST (William W. Seay)

Producers are full feeding their livestock now. Recent rains are helpful adding to the ground water. Tax preparations are under way.

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

After a relatively wet fall, we have not had a lot of precipitation in December and January. We need more rain or snow going into the coming growing season. However, despite the lack of rainfall, owing to the fact we are in the dormant season, pastures look fairly good. Cold temperatures, dry conditions and late planting have had a debilitating effect on small grain stands, which have not shown much development over the last few months. Farmers are attending winter meetings, fixing fences, pricing and buying inputs for next years crops (seed, fertilizer, etc.)

PRINCE EDWARD (Brent Clayton)

Prince Edward had below normal precipitation for the month of January, including no measurable snow fall (we average 6 inches in Jan.), which is essential for groundwater recharge. January 17 marked the lowest recorded temperature in Farmville since 1996 at one degree above zero.

SPOTSYLVANIA (John Howe)

It has been a colder than normal January by a few degrees.

EASTERN

ACCOMACK (Jim Belote)

Very cold and wet weather has kept field work to a minimum. Farmers are actively attending grower meetings, working on equipment, trimming hedgerows, taking soil samples and some are taking a vacation. Potato farmers are preparing for the 2009 production year. Planting time is only four weeks away. The same goes for peas, onion and strawberry growers.

MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

Soil sampling, lime spreading, small grain topdressing are the main things happening. Farm spruce up and equipment fix-up continues. Producers are contemplating seed and fertilizer expenses and trying to make planting decisions. Some folks are making grain deliveries to graineries. Poultry and hog operations are filling contracts. Input costs and grain prices have producers very concerned about 2009. Vegetable producers are making planting decisions. Winter production meetings continue.

NEW KENT (Paul Davis)

Producers are attending Winter Production Meetings and getting Pesticide Recertification Credits, meeting with crop insurance adjusters, ordering corn and soybean seed and getting ready to top-dress small grains with nitrogen.

NORTHERN

RAPPAHANNOCK (Kenner Love)

Apple orchard pruning continues.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY (continued)

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

SOUTHEASTERN

BRUNSWICK (Cynthia L Gregg)

Cost of fertilizer has increased the number of producers doing soil samples this year. Producers are attending winter meetings to try and get a handle upon good, quality information for the 2009 season.

PRINCE GEORGE (Scott Reiter)

Small grain producers have started to apply some winter nitrogen as fields dried out by mid-month. Plant growth has been slow with the mixture of very cold conditions with a few warm days mixed in. Farmers are also taking soil tests and making plans for fertilizer and seed purchases. Peanut growers are still waiting for contract announcements from peanut shellers for the 2009 crop. Generally, new crop peanut contracts are available soon after the harvest season.

CHESAPEAKE CITY (Watson Lawrence)

Some small grains have weak stands due to wet soil conditions at planting. Farmers are making decisions which fields to apply fertilizer for grain production. Farmers are attending winter meetings, making decisions about spring seed and fertilizer, repairing equipment and attending auction sales.

SOUTHWESTERN

GRAYSON (Kevin Spurlin)

Frequent precipitation during the month has improved topsoil moisture. Muddy conditions characterized a typical winter locally. This is the first muddy winter we've had in recent years. Subsoil moisture continues to be dry.

LEE (Harold Jerrell)

So far this month I have recorded 6.4" of rainfall.

MONTGOMERY (Barry Robinson)

Good precipitation received in January, so winter grain crops have benefited well.

SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Much needed rain has fallen in January, and springs, streams, and wells seem to be flowing heavily again. Cold weather and late planting has held most small grains in an inactive state. Hopefully, warmer weather and a boost of spring fertilizer will bring them on strong. Fertilizer prices continue to be the area of most talk and concern in the farming communities. Speculations on the supply, price, and availability have most farmers concerned. More soil samples than normal have been sent off and numerous nutrient management plans have been written for poultry litter use.