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USDA/NASS/Virginia Field Office
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<http://www.nass.usda.gov/va>

WEATHER & CROPS



Month: March 2009

Number: 3

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR MARCH, 2009

Soil moisture conditions continued to show improvement throughout the month of March, as moderate rain and snow showers continued to accumulate across the state. Both topsoil moisture and subsoil moisture showed a marked increase, with ratings at 70% and 64% adequate, respectively. Pastures and hayfields are beginning to show signs of new growth, and some of the hardest-hit regions are showing signs of recovery from the previous year's drought. In some areas, producers are beginning to apply burn down applications to corn fields in preparation for early planting, which should begin within the next couple of weeks. Field activities in small grain fields continued, with many producers applying spring nitrogen applications. Vegetable growers began planting early-season varieties, although wet fields in some areas have delayed planting for several growers.

TOPSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
March, 2009	3	20	70	7

SUBSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
March, 2009	5	29	64	2

CROP CONDITION PERCENT

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Pasture	4	12	50	32	2
Livestock	2	5	28	60	5
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	1	5	37	53	4

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES

Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	16	10
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	5	12
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	10	22

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VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 29, 2009

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 *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	55	36	63	27	46	-2	0.74	3.21	-.20	07.48	-2.62
Norfolk	55	38	68	28	47	-4	1.26	5.26	1.61	08.34	-2.63
Richmond	57	36	63	28	47	-3	1.63	4.21	.52	06.44	-3.78
Roanoke	58	39	68	30	48	-1	1.12	3.44	.04	07.39	-2.33
Wash/Dulles	54	34	63	27	44	-2	1.52	2.40	-.75	05.42	-3.61

* 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.

NORTHERN

CULPEPER (Carl Stafford)

Small grains and perennial forages are greening up, spring seedings are active, and soil fertility adjustments have been taking place.

WESTERN

HIGHLAND (Rodney Leech)

Maple production for the season was average to average plus.

CENTRAL

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Soil moisture conditions are improved over last month. Pastures are greening up and small grain crops are putting on some growth. Farmers are killing cover crops in preparation for corn planting. Early corn planting should begin some time this week. Vegetable farmers are planting onions and early peas and greens. Transplants, which have been started in greenhouses, are being readied for late April and early May.

FLUVANNA (John Thompson)

Fluvanna is still experiencing drought conditions. There is hay supply remaining, but with inadequate moisture in 2009 thus far, spring grazing and the first cutting of hay may be inadequate. Current rainfall has helped, but is far short of needed moisture.

SPOTSYLVANIA (John Howe)

March was a dry month.

EASTERN

MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

Corn planting will be starting next week for some. Weekend rains will help the moisture situation. Although topsoil moisture is adequate right now, we are behind in rainfall for this year. Producers are preparing land for corn planting, applying fertilizers and lime, deep tillage prior to corn planting, and topdressing small grains. Scouting continues for insects and

(Middlesex continued)

diseases in small grains. Activities include equipment repair, seed purchases, farm clean up and spruce up, herbicide application before corn, pasture and hay crop renovation and hay planting.

SOUTHEASTERN

BRUNSWICK (Cynthia L. Gregg)

Rain has helped with crops and ponds. The wind is drying it up quickly. Producers are breaking up land, spreading lime, spreading manure and other fertilizer, and working on equipment. Cool season crops are beginning to grow well. Fall calves, along side their mothers, are picking grass that is beginning to grow.

PRINCE GEORGE (Scott Reiter) Producers are applying the last nitrogen to small grains late in March. Many are also beginning to apply burn down herbicides to corn and cotton fields.

CHESAPEAKE CITY (Watson Lawrence)

We have good soil moisture with the rains. More rain is expected, but it should recharge groundwater adequately before planting season. Most wheat acreage has now received spring Nitrogen applications. Wheat crop is less than normal as far as tiller count this time of year.

VIRGINIA BEACH (Cal Schiemann)

Cold weather and 5 - 7 inches of rain over the last three weeks has slowed early field work. Early corn planting will be delayed. Wet fields have delayed planting for broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower for several growers. Strawberry growers are frost protecting early blooms, tissue testing and applying nitrogen.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY (continued)

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

SOUTHWESTERN

MONTGOMERY (Barry Robinson)

We have received good precipitation this month (snow and moderate rains), so soil moisture is good, although it will make it difficult to make spring fertilization applications until some drying occurs. Pastures and hayfields are beginning to green-up. Damage due to winter's severe cold weather events are becoming evident as dieback and plant death of ornamental crops.

SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Rainfall has increased significantly, and pastures are showing signs of recovery from the past two years. Strawberry production looks well, with significant crown production and some light flowering. From talk in the communities, it appears tobacco production will increase approximately 100 acres, and more homeowners are looking for information on home gardens.

TAZEWELL (John Blankenship)

We are getting an abundance of rain but the weather is too cold to grow forages.