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

WEATHER & CROPS



Month: March 2010

Number: 3

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR MARCH 2010

Weather patterns throughout the month of March have been conducive for early growth. Wheat and barley field conditions have appeared to be improving. Pasture and small grains have responded well to the temperate weather and have greened up nicely. Growers are gearing up for corn planting with anticipation of consistent spring weather conditions. There has been an increase in spring field work with applications of nitrogen and lime, and some spreading of liquid manure to ease pressure on full manure storage structures. Producers continue to feed livestock and repair fences for turn-out time. Although weather has improved, wet fields continue to interfere with field preparation in some areas. Indications of delayed fertilization of winter grains and forages appear to be evident. Strawberry development has been delayed about two weeks due to the cold weather.

TOPSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT				
Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
March 2010	0	1	56	43
February 2010	0	0	41	59
SUBSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT				
Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
March 2010	0	0	59	41
February 2010	0	0	48	52



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Virginia Cooperative Extension
A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University www.ext.vt.edu



VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

CROP CONDITION PERCENT					
Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	1	6	42	44	7
Pastures	4	21	34	34	7
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	6	15	40	35	4

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES		
Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	19	16
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	5	5
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	13	10

VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 28, 2010

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 *	Mar. 1 to date	Mar. 1 dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	62	38	69	29	50	2	0.70	3.58	0.27	10.66	0.70
Norfolk	65	45	75	40	55	5	0.54	2.99	-0.52	11.01	0.22
Richmond	67	42	76	31	55	6	1.17	3.93	.039	10.35	0.31
Roanoke	61	40	69	29	51	2	1.26	2.88	-0.43	9.56	-0.09
Wash/Dulles	64	40	78	30	52	7	0.69	2.12	-0.90	8.67	-0.17

* 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

ROCKINGHAM (John Welsh)

The month of March has brought more moisture and warmer temperatures to the County. Pastures and small grains have responded well to the temperate weather and have greened up nicely. The last two weeks have seen an increase in spring fieldwork with applications of nitrogen and lime, and some spreading of liquid manure to ease pressure on full manure storage structures. We have also seen a flurry of activity with early produce crops (peas, onions, potatoes, broccoli and some sweet corn) going in the ground under plastic row covers. Better cattle prices have caused a brisk movement of cattle to market in the last few weeks.

WESTERN

HIGHLAND (Rodney Leech)

Maple syrup production is 50% of average. Weather shortened the season considerably, with most producers unable to get trees tapped till late February or early March.

ROCKBRIDGE (Jon Repair)

Rains have been great; however, we are 3-4 weeks behind with spring work such as fertilization of winter grains and forages. Spring forage seeding has also been delayed by several weeks. Existing early forage growth has been relatively strong when the sun shines and temperatures remain warmer in the evenings.

EASTERN

MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

Things are growing again. Wheat and barley look good. Some possible nutritional deficiencies are showing up as plants grow due to warmer weather but they should not be a major problem. Producers are scouting their fields. Some lime and fertilizer applications are going on for corn and people are anxious to get started planting. Some planting should begin next week. Cattle folks are winding down their hay supply and pastures are greening up. Equipment repair and farm spruce up continues. Final N applications will begin going on small grains next week.

CENTRAL

AMHERST (William Seay)

Good moisture in soil. Pastures and hayfields are beginning to green-up. Producers continue to feed livestock and repair fences for turn-out time. Fertilizer is being applied to forage when field conditions permit.

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Fields are very wet. Grain farmers are trying to get into wheat and barley fields to fertilize, but must wait for dryer weather. Livestock is in generally good shape, but muddy conditions are taking a toll.

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)

Continued precipitation, sometimes heavy, has kept most out of their crop and forage fields. Winter grains still in need of side-dress fertilization. Fruit crops are progressing well. Wildlife damage from the winter is moderate.

SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Cool, cloudy days still dominate the weather pattern, and as a result many small grain cover crops and greenhouse plants are stunted and 1-2 weeks behind schedule. Strawberry plants are beginning to set heavy bloom with some fruit formation visible. Fertility levels are at recommended levels for this time of year. Cattle farmers are cautiously optimistic about the slow increase in prices.

SOUTHEASTERN

BRUNSWICK (Cynthia L. Gregg)

The month of March was busy with preparation of land for planting; greenhouses were in full swing with vegetable and tobacco production. Hay is still being fed to livestock; grass is greening up but slowly. Some producers are finishing up with winter workshops and other types of paperwork so they will be ready for the upcoming season. We are having some minor flooding this week, due to heavy rains Sunday evening and night.

PRINCE GEORGE (Scott Reiter)

Growers have concentrated on the small grain crop this month. Many fields have uneven stands due to drowning from late fall and winter rains. Some fields will be abandoned and planted to full season soybeans. Most growers have been able to top-

dress nitrogen this month with some fields receiving two applications. Growers have also been busy making final decisions on their crop mix for 2010 and buying inputs. A few peanut growers have tried some spring plowing with limited success due to soils still being wet.

SURRY (Glenn Slade)

March saw limited field work with fertilizer applied to small grain and some land preparation where combines made ruts from soybean harvest. Corn planting will begin this week if weather cooperates.

SUSSEX (Kelvin Wells, Sussex ANR Agent)

Scattered light showers fell over of the area this week. Lime and fertilizer applications continue along with nitrogen applications on small grains. With warmer weather small grains and cover-crops have taken off and look good. Corn planting should begin next week if weather permit.

CHESAPEAKE CITY (Watson Lawrence)

Farmers have begun some tillage the last of March repairing some ruts left from soybean harvest last fall/winter. Wheat crop is a bit delayed because of late planting and poor growing conditions this winter. Tiller counts are low in most fields. Groundwater levels are still high, but beginning to recede now.

VIRGINIA BEACH (Cal Schiemann)

Spring field work is behind due to wet field conditions. Strawberry development is 10 - 14 days delayed due to cold weather. Very poor winter wheat crop. Wet fall weather allowed only 50% of acreage to be planted. Wet conditions caused poor germination with some field flooding during winter months.