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USDA/NASS/Virginia Field Office
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WEATHER & CROPS



Month: December 2008

Number: 39

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER, 2008

Throughout most of the month of December, Virginia received much needed precipitation. In parts of the Commonwealth, ground water and stream flow were restored. However, there are still areas in the State that need more water. Temperatures have been variable. The month consisted of cold snaps with occasional warm days. Overall, the small grains have benefited from the rain and temperatures. Farmers are busy determining what crops to plant for next year; the price of soybeans and corn are closely watched and will contribute to the final decision farmers make. Other farming activities included renewing pesticide applicator licenses, preparing taxes, and fertilizing small grains.

CROP CONDITION PERCENT					
Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	1	5	27	59	8
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	0	5	30	60	5

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES		
Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	20	39
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	7	10
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	23	45



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VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 3, 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	52	28	64	14	40	6	0.01	3.52	0.17	00.00	NA
Norfolk	53	35	76	22	44	5	0.17	4.01	0.86	00.17	0.05
Richmond	53	33	74	21	43	7	0.06	4.11	0.85	00.06	-0.07
Roanoke	55	33	67	19	44	9	0.00	2.25	-0.71	00.00	NA
Wash/Dulles	49	30	68	21	40	7	0.01	2.64	-0.54	00.00	NA

* 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)

December rains have helped to restore the stream flow. Livestock have grazed further into December than most years. By the end of the month most livestock producers had begun to feed stored hay.

APPOMATTOX (Bruce Jones)

Agricultural producers are happy regarding the rainfall we continue to receive. Farmers are attending meetings to gain renewal credit on their pesticide applicator licenses, making seed purchases for the spring and working on taxes. Equipment maintenance continues to be a top priority. Cattle farmers are concerned about the current market prices and how fertilizer prices will be in the near future.

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Good rainfall and moderate temperatures have improved all field conditions. Pastures, hayfields, and small grains are much improved since the late summer drought of 2008.

EASTERN

ESSEX (Keith Balderson)

Producers spent December soil sampling, attending pesticide recertification workshops and seed company meetings, applying fertilizer to some small grain fields, tax planning, and cleaning up equipment. Small grains look good for the most part. Seed sales were active during the later part of the month, but producers seem somewhat unsure about cropping plans for 2009. Commodity prices and input prices in the next couple of months will help finalize plans, but some producers will probably reduce corn acres in 2009.

MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

Activities remain slow for now. Crop planning continues; marketing opportunities, seed and fertilizer purchasing, etc. Soil sampling continues. Some soybeans are still out. Farmers were scouting small grains. There are some applications of nitrogen and insecticides.

NEW KENT (Paul Davis)

Small grains are growing slower than we would like even with all the warm temperatures. Producers are watching the fertilizer and grain prices before committing to corn or soybeans this spring. Small grain acreage that did not receive pre-plant fertilizer is getting applied now.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY (continued)

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

SOUTHWESTERN

GRAYSON (Kevin Spurlin)

Periodic rains throughout the month helped recharge groundwater slightly. At the same time, overgrazed dormant pastures have been unable to respond significantly to the moisture.

MONTGOMERY (Barry Robinson)

We received approximately 4" of precipitation in December. That rainfall coupled with relatively mild temperatures for most of the month provided winter

grain/cover crops an excellent opportunity to get well established, especially after a dry fall.

SMYTH (Walter Robinson)

Much needed rain has fallen this month but we need more to bring dry wells and springs back to full flow.

WYTHE (Duane Farthing)

We have had rain and snow and bitter cold this month, the moisture has really been good.