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# WEATHER & CROPS



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## WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER, 2009

Throughout December, the weather continued to challenge producers across the Commonwealth, with cold temperatures and surplus precipitation both taking a toll on crops and livestock. For many livestock producers, the extended snow cover has made grazing impossible and stockpiled forages inaccessible to livestock, resulting in a heavier than normal amount of feeding from hay stocks. The unusually cold temperatures have also caused difficulties for livestock to utilize water sources. While the freezing temperatures have allowed grain producers to make some progress on the completion of their corn and soybean harvest, in some cases, heavy snow fall pushed soybeans to the ground, which will make harvest nearly impossible. Some field will have to be tilled this spring to correct ruts left by combines. Throughout the state, soybeans, corn, and cotton remain in the fields, with producers at the mercy of the weather to determine when and if they will be completed.

### TOPSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Week Ending	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
December 27, 2009	0	0	50	50
December 13, 2009	0	0	34	66
December 6, 2009	0	1	58	41
November 29, 2009	0	2	64	34
November 22, 2009	0	3	58	39

### CROP CONDITION PERCENT

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	0	3	24	64	9
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	3	17	37	38	5

### FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES

Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	20	20
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	7	7
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	18	23

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VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING December 27, 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 *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	42	24	50	14	33	-4	0.86	6.59	3.97	46.70	3.86
Norfolk	47	34	60	26	40	-3	0.92	6.65	4.27	63.74	18.54
Richmond	46	27	57	17	37	-2	0.89	7.79	5.31	47.94	4.76
Roanoke	41	30	45	24	35	-3	1.44	7.96	5.60	53.53	11.39
Wash/Dulles	40	23	47	13	32	-2	1.03	4.87	2.34	47.54	6.21

### REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY

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

#### NORTHERN

##### SHENANDOAH (Bobby Clark)

There is still some corn standing in the field, about 500-800 acres.

#### WESTERN

##### ROCKBRIDGE (Jon Repair)

Prolonged snow cover and below normal temperatures has challenged livestock producers for several weeks. What appeared to be adequate supplies of stored feed are being fed at a much heavier daily rate. Some are becoming concerned if supplies will hold out till grazing begins. Stockpiled forages are inaccessible to livestock at this point, resulting in all livestock being fed 100% with stored feed. Corn and soybeans that have not been harvested continue to stand in the field, with little chance of harvest until all the snow is gone. There is still a fair amount of both corn and beans to be harvested.

#### CENTRAL

##### AMHERST (William Seay)

Snow cover and colder temperatures have forced livestock producers to feed heavier than normal.

##### CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Grain producers are still cleaning up some areas they were not able to harvest due to standing water. Farmers are planning for next year's crops, working on machinery, and delivering grain to buying points.

##### HANOVER (Jim Tate)

After the wettest November on record, we followed with the wettest December on record which was capped off by an 18 inch pre Christmas snow fall in the western end of the county and perhaps 12 inches in the eastern end. This was followed by a warm spell with more rain and resulting in flooding. Soybeans not harvested were pushed to the ground which will make harvest nearly impossible. The new year brought freezing temperatures and some relief from the mud.

##### SPOTSYLVANIA (John Howe)

Heavy snow the last part of December damaged standing soybeans and corn. It is doubtful that any unharvested soybeans can be salvaged.

#### EASTERN

##### ACCOMACK (Jim Belote)

It is very wet. In our area, 10 to 15 percent of soybeans are unharvested because it has been too wet to get over the ground. They will have to be harvested on frozen ground instead. Thirty-five percent of wheat has not been planted and there are stand reductions in many fields. Some farmers are collecting preventive planting payments for wheat. This will probably be my last report as Extension Agent. Unless problems with paper work I retired December 31 after almost 34 years. It has been a pleasure. Thank you and good night!

##### MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

There are still some soybeans to be harvested. I would expect that about 95% have been harvested with some wetter areas still out. This past weekend and early week's freezing temps will hopefully allow for completion. Yields and quality for the most part has been very good to excellent. Producers are finishing up with equipment clean up and repair, making plans for next season, soil sampling, and making early season purchases. Some are moving some grain out of storage for sales in 2010. Small grains have been somewhat neglected due to weather and delayed soybean harvest. Folks will begin to spend more time managing those real soon. There is lots of talk and concern over possible proposed regulation regarding TMDLs and the Bay.

##### RICHMOND (Kelly J. Liddington)

The cold, north wind is drying things out and hopefully allowing field work to resume.

### 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)

After a mid-month snow storm, unusually cold weather and snow cover has remained, limiting grazing. Livestock owners are feeding substantial amounts of hay earlier than they would like.

##### LEE (Harold Jerrell)

We are experiencing continued cold weather and snow.

##### MONTGOMERY (Barry Robinson)

There were record amounts of precipitation in December and the last week had record low temperatures. The snow still covers many pastures and those that aren't are quite frozen, so lots of hay is being fed. Sub-freezing temps are making it difficult to get livestock watered as well. Fruit tree and ornamental growers are watching for wildlife damage to root flares due to long-lasting snow cover.

##### SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Most farmers are trying to cope with the bitter cold. Most areas in the county were without electricity for 8 to 11 days from the winter storm that hit Dec 18, and are still cleaning up debris.

#### SOUTHERN

##### FRANKLIN (Beverly Cox)

Wetter than usual conditions for December have been problematic. Some livestock fatalities occurred during the 14" snowfall on December 18, 2009. This includes calves lost to exposure during or shortly after calving, as well as, a few reported fatalities from structural collapses with the heavy snow.

#### SOUTHEASTERN

##### BRUNSWICK (Cynthia L. Gregg)

Cold and snow is how December will be remembered. Some soybeans are still in the fields and with the freeze maybe some can be salvaged. Producers are feeding hay to livestock and trying to keep water sources open. Producers are also working on equipment.

##### MECKLENBURG (Taylor Clarke)

Producers are hoping to finish beans this week on frozen ground.

##### PRINCE GEORGE (Scott Reiter)

Most soybeans have been harvested across the county but there are still a few out. The cold and windy conditions have helped to dry out the soybeans and fields. This has been a long and tough harvest season. Many fields will have to be tilled this spring to level ruts made by combines. Wheat acreage is down about 20% due to wet conditions and an unfavorable price outlook.

##### SURRY (Glenn Slade)

Continued wet weather has delayed soybean and cotton harvest, with quite a few acres in the field into the New Year. Small grain seeding was also limited due to excess moisture. More of the crop will come out as the ground freezes.