Rain Slows Harvest

Rain, statewide, slowed harvest progress last week, as the wet weather made it difficult for farmers to get into the fields. Rainfall totals ranged from 0.59 inches in Eau Claire to 1.48 inches in Milwaukee. Temperatures ranged from 3 to 6 degrees below normal. Average high temperatures were in the high 40s to low 50s across the state. Lows averaged in the low 30s to low 40s for the week. Soil moisture conditions were reported at 1 percent very short, 3 percent short, 67 percent adequate, and 29 percent surplus. Last week there was an average of 3.9 days suitable for fieldwork.

Corn harvested for grain was at 26 percent complete, behind last year’s 43 percent and the 5-year average of 31 percent, according to the Wisconsin Field Office of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. Nearly all corn silage has been put up. Corn conditions were rated as 6 percent very poor, 12 percent poor, 20 percent fair, 40 percent good, and 22 percent excellent. Many farmers are waiting for corn to dry before they continue harvesting it for grain. Most high moisture corn has been harvested.

Soybeans harvested was at 65 percent, lower than last year’s 80 percent, as well as the 5-year average of 67 percent. Soybean conditions were rated as 2 percent very poor, 10 percent poor, 19 percent fair, 49 percent good, and 20 percent excellent. Soybean harvest progress slowed considerably last week as a result of the wet conditions.

Fourth cutting alfalfa was at 82 percent complete, ahead of both last year’s 79 percent and the 5-year average of 75 percent.

Pasture conditions were rated as 3 percent very poor, 15 percent poor, 40 percent fair, 37 percent good, and 5 percent excellent.

The wet weather also slowed fall tillage, which was reported at 16 percent complete, less than last year’s 23 percent and the 5-year average of 22 percent.

Winter wheat planting has stopped completely in some areas due to the weather. Farmers hope to continue when conditions improve. Most pumpkins and squash have been harvested. In the central part of the state, cranberry harvest is nearing completion.
BARRON-R.C.: Dry corn harvest is getting underway, with yields better than expected for many, ranging up to 135 bushels per acre across the county. Some story with soybeans as yields are ranging from 10-45 bushels per acre. Things seem to be slow-going as it relates to corn harvest. Many are waiting for corn to dry-down another few points to save on drying cost.

WINNEBAGO-R.H.: Corn for grain and soybeans are in full swing as to harvesting and have been progressing when the weather cooperates. Sweet corn harvest is over for this year. Some late sweet corn is left in the fields, and so it is being harvested for silage. Had a hard frost this past week that killed the corn, and soybeans ripened overnight.

MARATHON-M.K.: Poor week for harvesting.

GRANT-R.R.: Rain every day makes it very difficult to get any fieldwork done.

SHAWANO-B.B.: About one-fourth of the soybeans are left to combine in the county, and it just keeps getting wetter in the fields. Those that did do some form of harvesting, left ruts in many places. Most of the corn is still over 25 percent moisture, so no combining for drying yet.

BUFFALO-R.S.: Cloudy, wet week has stopped soybean harvest, so then a lot of corn was harvested. There is concern that soybeans not harvested may mold from wet conditions. Very little fall tillage or corn stalk bedding is being made.

IOWA-K.V.: Wet weather has slowed soybean and corn harvest. Growers are struggling to complete winter wheat planting.

TREMPEALEAU-D.D.: No sunshine has halted soybean harvest. Corn for grain moistures are mostly in low 20s, and yields are at least 20 plus bushels per acre below last year.

COLUMBIA-R.S.: Everything is moving slowly; wet fields are a problem. Had over 1.50 inches of rain last week. Some ear corn picking is being done. No soybeans being harvested.

PORTAGE-D.Z.: Soybean harvest is about a third done with excellent yields, considering the drought and heat this summer. Some soybean field yields are going over 60 bushels per acre. Corn harvest is just getting underway, with field moistures running from 17-23 percent. Yields are all over the place. Rainy weather has slowed things down this week.

JEFFERSON-R.W.: Soybeans are yielding good to excellent. One harvested field yielded 67.5 bushels per acre of soybeans. High moisture corn is pretty much finished. Most corn is 20-25 percent moisture. It should be a good crop. It is too wet for fall tillage. Winter wheat that was no-tilled is planted. Fields that had to be worked for winter wheat planting have not been planted yet.

WAUPACA-D.L.H.: We had a hard frost. Most soybeans are harvested. Silo filling is finished by most farmers. Some fall tillage is going on.

RACINE-L.F.: Too much rain. It needs to stop so that harvest and tillage can continue. Yields of the crops harvested to date are well above the past few years in our county. Just a small amount of white mold and drought-affected areas on hills.

WAUSHARA-J.J.: Wet weather has slowed corn harvest. Doesn’t seem that any more hay will be harvested.

WAUSHARA-J.J.: Things seem to be pretty good in this area. Fourth crop hay is a light crop, but has good quality. Fall tillage was going well, but too wet right now.

SHEBOYGAN-E.P.: Harvesting corn for grain and soybeans is starting, but was stopped by rain and cold, muddy soil. Soils are very wet and have stopped tillage due to showers every day.

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WASHINGTON-R.B.: Too wet to do soybeans. Some farmers are doing corn; yields are 150-190 bushels per acre, with moisture at 20-30 percent. Need dry weather to finish planting wheat.

Wisconsin Weekly Weather, Selected Cities, Ending as of 7:00 a.m. on October 22, 2006

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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Growing degree days (modified base 50)</th>
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<td>Avg. max.</td>
<td>Avg. min.</td>
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1/Formula used: GDD = (daily maximum (86°) + daily minimum (50°))/2 - 50°; where 86° is used if the maximum exceeds 86° and 50° is used if the minimum falls below 50°. *Normal based on 1971-2000 data. Source: NCEP/NOAA Climate Prediction Center <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>. N.a. = not available. T = trace.