Fieldwork Underway

Some progress was made in tillage and planting this past week. Rainfall was minimal, with rainfall totals ranging from 0.05 inches in Milwaukee to 0.73 inches in LaCrosse. Average high temperatures were in the mid to high 60s. Average low temperatures were in the high 30s to the mid 40s. Ground temperatures have been slow to rise in many areas, as average temperatures were 0 to 2 degrees below normal last week. Soil Moisture conditions were at 0 percent very short, 1 percent short, 63 percent adequate, and 36 percent surplus. There was an average of 4.3 days suitable for fieldwork last week.

Corn planting progress increased to 29 percent complete, a jump of 25 percentage points from last week. This is well below last year's average of 65 percent complete, however, and is at the lowest level since 1996. Farmers were able to plant on lighter soils and higher fields, while heavier soils and lower fields remained too wet to work.

Soybeans planted was at 6 percent complete, below both last year's average of 24 percent and the 5-year average of 20 percent complete. This is also the lowest total since 1996. Many of the soybeans planted were in the southern third of the state.

As with corn and soybeans, oats planted and oats emerged are at their lowest percents since 1996. Oats planted was reported at 49 percent complete, while oats emerged was reported at 21 percent. These levels are well below last year’s averages of 91 percent planted and 53 percent emerged.

Spring tillage was reported at 38 percent complete, the lowest since 1993. Dry, warmer weather is needed for spring tillage to progress. Last year’s average at this time was 74 percent complete.

There was a report of some early peas emerging. Potato planting continues to progress. Fruit trees were reported as being behind last year, but are starting to leaf out and blossom.
The only problem with planting crops this week was the precipitation. Corn planting began on lighter soils. Oats and new hay seedings are being planted. Alfalfa looks good overall with some winterkill on low fields. There is a frost watch on May 8. *Normal based on 1971-2000 data. Source: NCEP/NOAA Climate Prediction Center <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>.

**Quotes from Farm Reporters and County Ag Agents**

**BARRON-R.C.:** Wheels have finally started turning across the county. Manure spreading and fieldwork are ramping up; corn planters are now a common sight. Most farmers feel they are still 6-10 days behind. For the most part alfalfa fields are in good shape.

**BAYFIELD-J.F.:** The spring is wet and cool compared to the last few years. Farmers are just now able to top-dress hayfields. Soils are still too wet for any tillage or planting.

**CHIPPewa-J.C.:** Corn planting began on lighter soils. Oats and new hay seedings are being planted. Alfalfa looks good overall with some winterkill on low fields.

**PRICE-M.K.:** Finally enough rain-free days to allow for some fieldwork, but many soils are still too wet to work. Too early to assess winterkill injury yet. Trees are just starting to show signs of leafing out.

**TAYLOR-D.E.:** Tillage finally began this past week despite the rain. Fortunately, the rain amounts were small, so it only delayed tillage a day or so. Some oats are in the ground and a few fields of corn have been planted. Hayfields are looking good. There is still a lot of moisture in low fields and the ground is very cold.

**SHAWANO-B.R.:** Isolated areas within fields are showing evidence of winterkill. Ground is still very cold. Progress on planting is slow. Areas are very wet with more rain in the forecast.

**PORTAGE-J.W.:** Wet and cold weather have nearly stalled planting progress. There is a frost watch on cranberry marshes. Manure hauling and tillage is occurring only on sandy or hilltop fields.

**KEWAUNEE-T.S.:** Alfalfa is looking great, while wheat is turning a little yellow with all the moisture in the fields. A few farmers were able to do some tillage. A little planting was done this week, but overall it is still pretty quiet in the fields.


**WAUKESHA-D.W.:** Most spring tillage is done except for low spots and valleys in any given field. We are planting at full speed ahead, but are going around wet spots and are losing 0.5 to 3.0 acres per field.

**WISCONSIN WEEKLY WEATHER, SELECTED CITIES, ENDING AS OF 7:00 A.M. ON MAY 11, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Growing degree days (modified base 50°)</th>
<th>Precipitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avg. max.</td>
<td>Avg. min.</td>
<td>High max.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eau Claire</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Bay</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Crosse</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>.

Robert J. Battaglia  
USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office  
P.O. Box 8934  
Madison, WI 53708-8934  
(608) 224-4848  
http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/  

Craig Christianson  
Statistician  
This report has been made possible through the cooperative efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and the National Weather Service.