



# Wisconsin Crop Progress

April 9, 2012

Vol. 12, No. 1

## Early Spring Boosts Crops but Frost Remains a Concern

The new growing season is upon us, which means that it is once again time for USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office to begin reporting the progress of crop planting, growth and development, harvesting, and current crop conditions.

Temperatures remained above average this week, continuing the trend of this unusually mild winter. February average temperatures ranged from 6 to 9 degrees above normal this year and March average temperatures ranged from 14 to 16 degrees above normal. Farmers took advantage of the warm spring to get an early start on tillage and planting, though many producers remain concerned about the possibility of April frosts. The lack of snow cover this winter also contributed to dry conditions in some areas. There were 5.1 days suitable for fieldwork this week.

Across the reporting stations, average temperatures last week were 3 to 10 degrees above normal. Average high temperatures ranged from 50 to 63 degrees, while average low temperatures ranged from 34 to 38 degrees. Precipitation totals ranged from 0.00 inches in Milwaukee to 1.20 inches in Eau Claire. If you are interested in further weather data, please reference the following sites:

- <http://www.noaa.gov/>
- <http://www.aos.wisc.edu/~sco/>
- <http://www.cocorahs.org/>
- <http://www.weather.gov/>

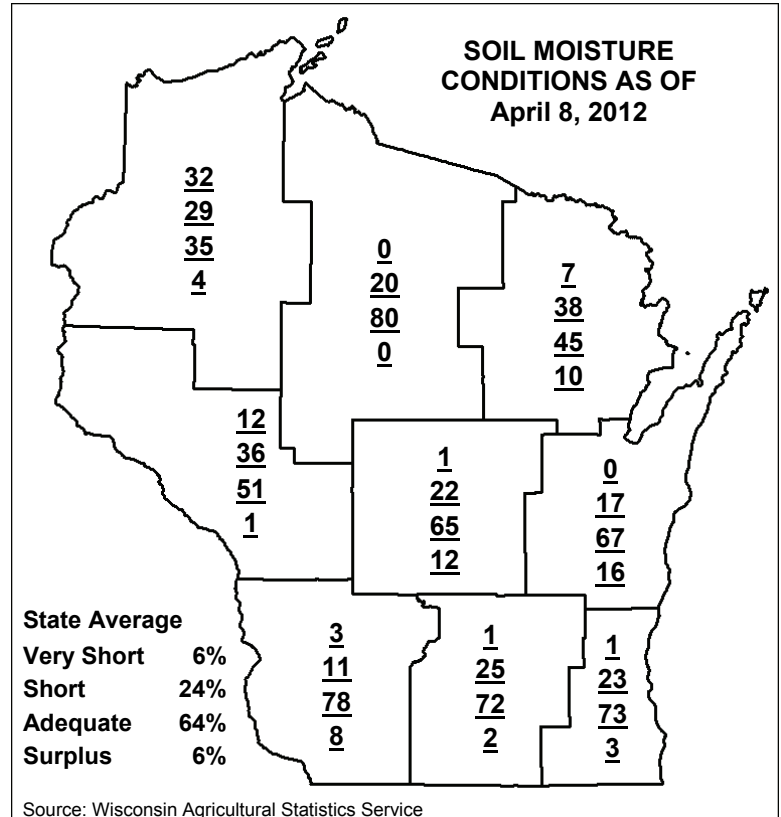
Statewide, **spring tillage** was at 19 percent complete, compared to 1 percent last year and 4 percent for the 5-year average. **Manure spreading** and **fertilizer applications** were ongoing across the state.

**Oat** planting started quite early this year, with several reporters noting fields planted in mid-March. Statewide, 26 percent of oats were planted, compared to 1 percent last year and 8 percent for the five year average.

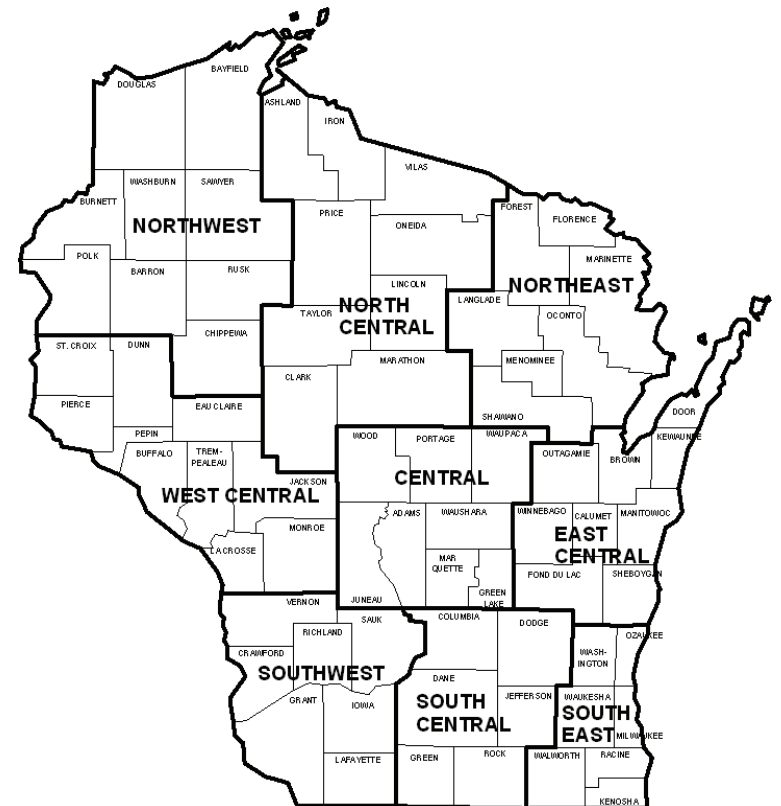
A few fields of early planted **corn** were reported in Dodge and Green Counties. Several reporters noted that corn planting will begin in the next few weeks.

**Alfalfa** and **winter wheat** reportedly came through the winter in very good condition despite the lack of snow cover. Many reporters commented that established fields were getting tall, though frost damage remained a concern.

The **maple syrup** season was reportedly very short with poor yields this year. Reporters noted that the earliness of the season took producers by surprise and night time temperatures above freezing kept sap from flowing. Unusually warm March temperatures meant **apples**, **cranberries**, **cherries** and other fruit crops were budding extremely early. Fruit producers across the state reported taking steps to prevent frost damage to vulnerable buds and blossoms. Frost damage to fruit trees was reported in Washington and Rock Counties. There were reports of **potato** planting in Portage and Marquette Counties.



Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service



## Wisconsin Crop Conditions as of April 8, 2012

Item	V Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Pasture	2	10	31	44	13

Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office.

## Wisconsin Crop Progress, April 8, 2012

Crop and percent of acreage	District average									State average			
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE	This week	Last week	Last year	5-year average
Oats planted	11	4	21	20	7	13	54	53	11	26	n.a.	1	8
Spring tillage	16	5	13	27	14	9	33	23	18	19	n.a.	1	4

Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office.

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

All comments are used in creating this report, but only a few are published below.

**CHIPPEWA-J.C.:** Small grains and alfalfa are being planted on light soils. Apple trees flowering 30 days earlier than normal. Maple syrup yields down 80 percent.

**POLK-A.M.:** Maple sap production was down nearly 75 percent compared to historical average. The extreme unseasonably warm temperatures did not allow the flow of sap. The season that is usually 25-30 days was less than 10 days. Winterkill on alfalfa appears to be minimal even with the lack of snow cover.

**ASHLAND-C.B.:** Very little activity on clay soils yet, still drying out. Small amount of activity on the lighter soils.

**ONEIDA-B.E.:** Most of the frost is out of the cranberry beds here now with just a thin layer remaining, about 4 inches down from the surface. We flooded the cranberry beds during the unseasonably warm weather we had, to prevent them from coming out of hibernation too early. We drained all of the water, dried out the beds, and completed reassembly of our sprinkler irrigation system last week. All cranberry varieties here are in the bud break or cabbage head stage of growth now, where the buds have swelled and begun to open, making them vulnerable to cold. We had our first frost protection session on Monday, April 9 this year. We anticipate having to protect the vines from frost earlier and more often than normal, and have closed the gates on the beds, to hold the water from the sprinklers.

**FOREST-L.O.:** Maple sap season very poor. Production losses 50 percent and greater.

**OCONTO-N.S.:** Winter Wheat fields are in good shape. Some new seeding is going in. Warm temperatures in March gave wheat fields an early start. Alfalfa plants had experienced an early start, but recent colder temperatures have halted growth for now. Last week saw little precipitation.

**JACKSON-T.W.:** No frost in the ground. The alfalfa was looking excellent, however this week temperatures are predicted to be lower than 24 degrees. This may cause damage to new young leaves.

**ST CROIX-D.K.:** Alfalfa came through winter in excellent shape. Had one neighbor that planted oats March 17 and they are up 3 inches.

**MARQUETTE-D.B.:** Potatoes, peas, mint, and the few acres of small grains planted in the area are going in.

**WAUPACA-D.L.H.:** The amazing "jump start" to spring has crops four weeks ahead of normal. Alfalfa and wheat broke dormancy in mid-March. Maple syrup season was very brief - yield about half of normal. Manure hauling and planting oats on lightest soils going full tilt.

**KEWAUNEE-A.O.:** Not much winter kill in wheat or alfalfa. Field work is limited to hauling manure right now since the fields are generally still too wet to work them.

**MANITOWOC-M.R.:** Spring tillage has not really started yet - still a little early, but if it stays dry this coming week, there will be some tillage completed to prep fields for new seeding and oats. Alfalfa and winter wheat appear to have survived the winter in good shape, however ongoing monitoring is occurring with the colder nights to make sure no frost damage is occurring. It was reported in the county that the maple syrup season was about a month early and if you had your taps out in early February, you had a good year.

**SAUK-J.P.:** This was the shortest maple syrup season in memory. We missed a few days in February when we didn't think it would last. We could have started on south slopes. As it were, we ended up with only four days of actual sap running which is about a quarter crop. Only tillage so far being done with horses.

**VERNON-K.L.:** No frost remaining in the ground. Temperature fell below freezing one night. No winterkill reported to date. Alfalfa, winter wheat and rye look good. Received a couple days of rain this past week. Cooler temperatures have slowed pasture growth.

**DODGE-S.B.:** There hasn't been frost in the ground for weeks. The alfalfa and winter wheat look awesome. There are reports of corn acres already planted in March!

**GREEN-J.T.:** Some have planted small acreages of corn mostly to test planters. Oats and seeding is mostly complete and was started on March 15. Most oats/alfalfa was planted the week of March 26 and most of it is greening up. Fertilizer and manure applications have been completed.

**OZAUKEE-K.A.:** Wheat is the best I have ever seen - 6 inches to 8 inches tall, no frost damage. Alfalfa is over 6" tall, no frost damage. Ground is very cold. No oats planted to speak of, just a small field on high, light soil planted. Frost predicted for Thursday and Friday.

**WAUKESHA-C.W.:** Record early spring, alfalfa is nearly foot tall, winter wheat grew 4 inches in last 3 weeks. Had a week of 80s in February. Apple trees are starting to bloom. Very dry spring so far and many ponds/small river are low or just about dried up.



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**Wisconsin Weekly Weather, Selected Cities, Ending as of 7:00 a.m. on April 8, 2012**

City	Temperature						Growing degree days (modified base 50) 1/		Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Mar. 1 to Apr. 7	Mar. 1 to Apr. 7 normal*	Last Week	Since Mar. 1	Mar. 1 dep. from normal *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Eau Claire	62	35	68	27	49	10	255	12	1.20	2.74	0.28	5.12	0.82
Green Bay	56	34	63	27	45	6	201	12	0.18	2.39	-0.26	4.91	0.05
La Crosse	63	38	70	31	50	8	296	28	0.06	1.58	-1.14	4.10	-0.78
Madison	61	35	64	26	48	7	292	31	0.02	2.63	-0.39	5.06	-0.50
Milwaukee	50	37	60	32	44	3	212	n.a.	0.00	3.19	-0.24	6.04	-0.90

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. Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office.