



# New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service  
United States Department of Agriculture

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## Crop Weather

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For week ending 5/5/02

### Cool, Wet Conditions Delay Spring Planting

**GENERAL CONDITIONS:** For the week ending May 5, 2002, there were 4.8 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 3% very short, 9% short, 82% adequate, 6% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 9% very short, 25% short, 65% adequate, 1% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 3% very poor, 13% poor, 23% fair, 54% good, 7% excellent.

Cool, rainy weather prevailed last week, delaying most field activities in New England. Reports of frost damage to early fruit and vegetable crops have surfaced. Major farm activities included: planting field corn, early vegetables, sweet corn, potatoes and berries; spreading manure; seeding; applying fertilizer; disking; plowing and harrowing; laying plastic; fixing fences; and setting up irrigation systems for frost protection.

**FRUIT:** Fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries were planted last week. Apple growers pruned and sprayed orchards, and monitored for disease and insects. Frost caused damage to some fruit crops. Pruning of wild blueberry fields in Maine was about finished last week, and growers continued to apply pre-emergence herbicide and fungicide for mummyberry disease. Massachusetts cranberry growers also applied herbicides and fungicides last week.

#### FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	Stage	Fruit Set	Condition
Apples	Bud/Early Bloom	Avg/B.Avg	Good/Fair
Peaches	Full Bloom	B.Avg/Avg	Fair/Good
Pears	Full Bloom/PF	B.Avg/Avg	Poor/Fair
Blueberries			
Highbush	Bud	--	Good/Fair
Wild, ME	Bud	--	Good
Cranberries, MA	Bud	--	Good/Fair
Strawberries	Bud	--	Good/Fair

\*PF = Petal Fall

**VEGETABLES:** Planting of early sweet corn, peas, onions, carrots, beans, lettuce and cabbage continued. Asparagus, fiddleheads and spinach are being harvested. Frost last week damaged some crops of sweet corn. Tomatoes continue to be transplanted into high tunnels.

#### SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	-- Percent --		
	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
<b>Topsoil Moisture</b>			
Very Short	3	4	21
Short	9	12	38
Adequate	82	74	38
Surplus	6	10	3
<b>Subsoil Moisture</b>			
Very Short	9	11	16
Short	25	32	16
Adequate	65	51	66
Surplus	1	6	2

**FIELD CROPS:** Field and sweet corn were planted on the days when weather allowed field activities. Potato planting in Rhode Island remains well ahead of last year and normal, and some of the crop has already emerged. Massachusetts potatoes continued to be planted last week, and Maine farmers are gearing up for their planting. Maine oat and barley growers are just getting started planting their crops; planting should pick up once fields have had a chance to dry out. Silage corn planting is behind last year and normal.

#### FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2002	2001	5-yr Avg	Percent Emerged	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --				
Barley, ME	<5	5	10	--	Good
Oats, ME	<5	5	10	--	Good
Potatoes					
Maine	0	5	5	--	--
Mass	30	40	50	0	Good/Fair
Rhode Isl	85	30	40	15	Good
Silage Corn	<5	10	5	--	Fair/Good
Sweet Corn	10	25	15	5	Fair/Good
Tobacco					
Shade	0	0	0	--	--
Dry Hay	-- Percent Harvested --				
First Cut	0	0	0	--	Good/Fair

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 5, 2002

The 41 stations shown below are limited by space but are well distributed across the region. All 86 stations appear on the Internet and in e-mail subscriptions.

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				CUM SINCE MAR 1 GROWING DEGREE DAYS				1-WEEK PRECIP			4-WEEK CUM PRECIP			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	BASE-50F		BASE-60F		TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL		DFN	DAYS
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN				INCHES	DFN		
<b>MAINE</b>															
Augusta_ME	32	62	43	-7	39	+16	1	+1	1.20	+0.29	4	4.61	+1.06	12	
Bangor	29	61	43	-6	25	+11	0	+0	1.08	+0.29	5	4.61	+1.51	13	
Bethel	29	64	40	-9	51	+36	8	+8	1.73	+0.89	4	5.56	+2.20	10	
Cari bou	27	54	41	-5	11	+2	0	+0	0.38	-0.27	4	2.00	-0.36	15	
Dover-Foxcroft	25	59	38	-9	9	+0	0	+0	0.87	+0.03	3	2.81	-0.54	13	
Frenchville	25	52	39	-5	4	+0	0	+0	0.56	-0.12	4	2.23	-0.25	14	
Houlton	28	56	41	-5	16	+7	0	+0	0.58	-0.12	5	2.86	+0.32	17	
Livermore_Falls	26	60	41	-7	32	+23	5	+5	1.47	+0.60	4	4.89	+1.29	11	
Moosehead	22	57	37	-7	10	+9	0	+0	1.15	+0.40	4	3.58	+0.65	13	
Portland_ME	33	65	44	-6	44	+32	3	+3	1.14	+0.24	3	3.31	-0.49	12	
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>															
Benton	31	61	39	-10	75	+47	24	+24	1.03	+0.33	4	4.63	+1.97	11	
Berlin_AG	30	61	41	-7	48	+27	8	+8	1.48	+0.70	4	4.92	+1.71	10	
Concord	29	67	43	-8	124	+94	40	+40	1.56	+0.86	3	3.03	+0.25	12	
Diamond_Pond	22	54	37	-6	17	+12	0	+0	1.09	+0.30	5	4.60	+1.64	17	
Keene_AP	28	64	42	-11	138	+90	45	+43	1.85	+1.03	5	4.35	+1.30	15	
North_Conway	30	64	42	-8	70	+48	18	+18	1.64	+0.72	4	6.18	+2.33	13	
Rochester	30	68	43	-9	91	+54	23	+23	1.61	+0.65	3	3.72	-0.24	9	
<b>VERMONT</b>															
Burlington_VT	30	65	43	-9	119	+75	40	+38	1.12	+0.44	5	2.99	+0.36	12	
Island_Pond	27	58	38	-8	55	+42	12	+12	1.20	+0.48	5	4.27	+1.63	14	
Montpelier	27	61	40	-9	98	+72	33	+33	1.25	+0.61	6	3.97	+1.61	14	
Pownal	32	65	43	-7	116	+86	42	+42	1.48	+0.43	5	3.88	-0.23	15	
Rochester	29	65	40	-8	86	+65	26	+26	1.90	+0.92	3	6.68	+3.06	10	
Rutland_AG	29	65	41	-12	103	+44	29	+23	0.87	+0.16	3	5.09	+2.48	10	
Sutton	30	60	38	-8	56	+47	18	+18	1.66	+0.93	5	3.61	+0.82	14	
Townshend_Lake	34	65	42	-9	115	+76	41	+41	1.86	+1.08	4	4.38	+1.29	13	
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>															
Ashburnham	33	67	43	-7	118	+97	34	+34	1.61	+0.83	4	3.30	+0.13	12	
Boston	36	68	48	-6	164	+102	43	+43	1.03	+0.24	3	2.08	-1.23	10	
Greenfield	30	72	45	-9	135	+76	48	+48	1.76	+0.88	5	3.99	+0.54	17	
New_Bedford	37	65	48	-6	161	+96	38	+38	1.22	+0.35	5	3.28	-0.47	13	
Otis_AFB	37	63	49	-2	117	+94	16	+16	1.34	+0.44	3	3.06	-0.57	8	
Plymouth	33	68	47	-5	121	+95	28	+28	0.98	+0.00	4	2.98	-0.97	11	
Walpole	35	66	46	-7	145	+104	47	+47	1.19	+0.32	4	2.66	-1.19	13	
Westover	30	68	46	-10	191	+91	70	+64	1.63	+0.72	5	3.44	-0.20	15	
Worthington	30	63	41	-9	118	+91	42	+42	1.37	+0.32	5	3.50	-0.40	17	
<b>RHODE ISLAND</b>															
Providence	38	68	48	-5	170	+120	47	+47	1.30	+0.39	5	2.68	-1.11	14	
Woonsocket	36	69	47	-6	155	+118	51	+51	2.28	+1.31	5	3.67	-0.24	13	
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>															
Bridgeport	39	66	51	-4	168	+100	44	+42	2.56	+1.65	4	4.03	+0.47	14	
Hartford_AP	37	69	47	-8	211	+129	79	+73	1.46	+0.55	5	3.40	-0.24	16	
Norfolk	34	64	45	-4	128	+105	47	+47	1.66	+0.61	5	4.76	+0.56	16	
Thomaston_Dam	34	66	47	-6	163	+115	58	+58	1.50	+0.45	5	3.88	-0.15	15	
Willimantic	31	67	46	-7	181	+136	63	+63	1.24	+0.26	5	2.52	-1.40	16	

**STATE WEATHER SUMMARY**  
For the Week Ending Sunday, May 5, 2002

Summary based on NWS data.  
DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).  
Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.  
Precipitation Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.  
Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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State	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	19	67	40	-7	0.00	1.74
NH	11	72	40	-9	0.96	3.28
VT	22	66	40	-9	0.76	2.28
MA	27	72	46	-6	0.95	1.92
RI	36	69	48	-4	0.73	2.28
CT	30	70	47	-7	1.24	2.67

Prepared by AWIS, Inc.

**REPORTERS COMMENTS, By County:** Reporters are from Extension Service (Ext), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), or other knowledgeable individuals.

**CONNECTICUT - Howard Rood (FSA), Fairfield/Litchfield:** Farmers are busy plowing corn land and spreading manure. Heifers have been put out to pasture. Heavy frost may have harmed fruit crops. **Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland:** Rain during week totaled about one inch which helped in most cases. Sweet corn, strawberries and tree fruit showed significant damage from frost for previous week. Seeding oats and hay fields. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Despite the drought, rain has slowed planting. Farmers were still spreading manure on the drier areas but little corn went in. Well fertilized grass - pasture or hay land looks full and lush, while fields that were not as well maintained are coming on much slower. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Fields continue to be dry despite recent rains. Spring started out very hot at 90 degrees and then has slipped back to cold and damp with Friday (5/3) bringing high winds. Farmers continue to plant vegetables and field corn, prune and spray orchards, spread manure, seed grassland, and harvest asparagus. **Joyce Meader (Ext), Windham:** Brown fields look beautiful against the emerging green leaves. Ready for planting all over. Great weather coming.

**MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook:** Potatoes and small grains: When is spring going to arrive in northern Maine? Cold, showery weather delayed any field activity. Some lime being spread. A few acres of small grains have been planted. Several growers have begun cutting potato seed. Cold soil temperatures are discouraging growers from planting potatoes. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** Soils are still too wet and cold for crop planting. Some potato seed is starting to be cut. If temperatures improve and weather cooperates, some grains could start to be planted by Friday (5/10). Basically, another week before much planting happens. **Steve London (Ext), Southern Aroostook:** Potatoes and small grains: Field conditions improved with the rain we received. Not much could be done out in the fields because of the wet conditions, but farmers should be moving ahead with planting this coming week. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Pastures are not quite ready for grazing. Soil moisture is good. Farmers have been spreading manure. **Donna Lamb (Ext), Piscataquis:** Manure spreading and plowing have been the week's activities. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** With the recent rain everything is starting to grow. Land is still very dry, hope the rains this coming week will help. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Cold, wet weather has slowed field work. Some manure spreading has taken place with some tillage work. Warmer weather will get things going this week. Soil temperatures are still in the 40's. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Some sweet corn is in the ground, but not up yet. Most activity is in greenhouses. Trees, shrubs and seedlings are now available. Blueberry field burning is winding down. **David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild Blueberries: Pruning finished on most fields. Pre-emergence herbicide and fertilizer being applied. Fungicide being applied to protect plants from mummyberry disease. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** And now we are complaining about rain! I guess we agricultural folks are never satisfied. My Dad always told me that if a farmer isn't complaining about the weather he is probably retired and in Florida. A few people have put some seeds in the ground, but not many. Many producers have been slinging manure and preparing land for planting. We're off to a damp start but the weatherman says the weather will warm up. **Parker Rand (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Still wet and cold but some crops are being planted - sweet corn, silage corn, oats and early vegetables. The lakes and rivers have rebounded from the drought, but ground water levels are still low. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** Let the sun shine! Soils need to warm up. Some grass land seedings done. **Laura Rand (FSA), Oxford:** Producers are busy getting the ground ready to plant and manure is being spread. Tractors are all gassed up and ready to plant. Greenhouses have been busy preparing for Mother's Day with beautiful arrays of flowers. Seedlings ready for the gardener to pick up and plant. Cool and windy days have been the usual - come on spring!

**MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire:** Very little field work due to wet conditions. Some plowing in heated cabs. It was a cold, wet week. **Paul Russell (FSA), Southeast Massachusetts:** Received some much needed rain which filled most reservoirs, but ground water is still down. Cranberry growers

are running sprinkler systems to protect from frost, growers are spreading fertilizer. Vegetable growers are planting all crops and dairy farmers are planting field corn. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: Cranberry vines continue to emerge from dormancy and to initiate new upright growth. Some areas in beds are off-color due to various factors. Some leaf drop due to last year's drought rather than oxygen deficiency in the winter flood. Many beds could not be flooded through the winter months, but fortunately the temperatures were not severe to cause vine injury. Adequate rainfall this spring so far. A couple of close frost nights this week. Herbicides and fungicides for root rot currently being applied. **Kip Graham (FSA), Worcester:** Recently fixing fences and doing repairs from wind damage. Finished pruning blueberries and peaches, and fungicides are now being applied. Plowed land for early crops. Expecting a great crop season. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** Everyone continues to get fields ready for planting. Last week was very cool with 2 days of rain. Planting is going very slow at this point. Fruit crops look pretty good at this time. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Producers have reported crop losses with asparagus and many of the early varieties of sweet corn. Hot weather followed by two weeks of scattered frost have affected all but the most hardy crops. Frosts this past week have also affected early strawberries. Much of the sweet corn that wasn't under row cover has been harrowed and replanted. Tree fruit has been hurt by frost, but we're not sure about the total damage yet. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** A mostly cool and rainy week. Farm activities were at a very slow pace due to the wet week. Planting potatoes, sweet corn and some cabbage. Harvesting fiddleheads and spinach. The asparagus was not growing because of the cold temperatures. Sunday (5/5) was the best day of the week and greenhouse flower sales were excellent. **Gary Guida, Worcester:** Plowing, planting corn and laying plastic (not on Friday!) keeping everyone busy. Greenhouse sales of perennials and annuals had strong sales weekend. Hanging baskets appearing everywhere. Soil here already drying up fast as subsoil water table is very low.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap:** Wet conditions slowed field work. Soil temperature as low as 39 degrees reported mid-week. Early corn seeded and transplanted in warmer soils. Garden centers reported slow business due to strong winds on Friday and Saturday. Beautiful weather on Sunday resumed business. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Grasses and forage crops growing well. Soil temperature slowly warming, now in the low 40's. Corn planting continues slowly but should pick up this coming week. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Field Crops: Fixing pasture fences during raining weather. Spreading manure, plowing, disking fertilizing and planting corn. Liming and fertilizing hayfields. Vegetables: Early season vegetables are being planted, along with sweet corn and potatoes. Laying down plastic and drip irrigation. Weed spraying sweet corn fields. Fruits: Made sure bees were in apple orchards beginning of week. Peaches were in petal fall stage and apples are nearing full bloom in the Hollis area as of Sunday (5/5). Planting fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries. With all the rain during the week, orchardists are making sure to have protective fungicide sprays applied. Weather: Still evaluating if damage occurred and the amount of damage due to freezing temperatures over the week of April 22. **David Seavey (Ext), Merrimack:** Some manure spreading, but mostly put on hold due to wet field conditions. Orchardists making dormant oil applications at tight cluster stage and applying fungicides during scab infection periods. Fruit growers applying fertilizer to tree fruits, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries. Apple and blueberry pruning about finished. Spotty frost injury to stone fruits. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Liming and fertilizing hayfields; spreading manure, plowing and disking field corn fields. Seeding new pastures and hayfields. Preparing vegetable fields by liming, disking and fertilizing. Planting some early vegetables in fields and high tunnels. Planting strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, grapes and fruit trees. A good percentage of the peach blossoms have been killed during last week frost. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Somewhat cold, wet and windy week ending with better weather this weekend. Corn fields beginning to dry up for planting, but still some ponds forming in scattered locations. April flooding causing some washing, banks have collapsed on areas of the Connecticut River. Manure hauling in preparation for corn planting. Dormant oil

on apples. Fields and pastures starting to green up, orchard grass growth fairly noticeable at this point. Bud break of fruit, no flowering yet. General observation that plants seem to have made it through a relatively mild winter in good condition. **Geoffrey Njue (Ext), Strafford:** The temperatures were still low for people to start planting. However some people started to transplant tomatoes into greenhouses. Nurseries were busy getting ready for the bedding plant season. Apple growers were monitoring for signs of scab and for insect pests such as leaf miners and tarnish brown bugs. **Bruce Clement (Ext), Cheshire:** Cool, wet weather has prevailed this week. Early warm weather in late April pushed an early bloom of plums, pears and some apples. Too early to tell if cold nights that followed have hurt fruit set. Farm activities include: manure spreading, fence repair, plowing and harrowing, seeding, corn planting, vegetable raised bed forming, plastic laying, spraying, and some early vegetable transplanting and seeding.

**RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport:** Rain kept some field work from being done, but was welcomed. Potatoes almost finished being planted, manure still being spread. Haying stopped due to wet weather - good sun over the weekend will resume that activity. Sweet corn being planted, cole crops going strong. Roadside stands very active over the weekend. Greenhouses are bursting. **Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties:** Plowing, harrowing, harvesting asparagus. Some orchards reporting frost damage. Trees bloomed extra early. Temperatures dropped to mid-20's over last weekend. Frost damage seems minimal to moderate, depending on location. Asparagus also affected. Hail reported in one orchard on 4/24/02.

**VERMONT - John St. Onge (FSA), Lamoille:** There was still

snow in the air last week, but that didn't stop the progress of spring fieldwork. Manure spreading and harrowing kept many dairy farmers busy last week. When it gets a little warmer, some seed will start hitting the ground. **Bill Snow (Ext), Orange:** Spring activities of spreading manure and fertilizer. Ground preparation for corn planting. New seeding of hay land in progress. Fence fixing and turning out of cattle. Cold week with snow on two days with the ground white in higher elevations above 1300 feet. Spring work still ahead of schedule. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** Rain, snow and cold weather slowed field work and grass growth this week. Some animals are now out on pasture. Some manure being spread over the weekend. **Lynette Hamilton (FSA), Windham:** A large sweet corn grower has 4 leaves on his sweet corn under plastic. Most all fruit growers have report some frost damage on the buds. Farmers are planting field corn, and some alfalfa will be ready to cut in about two with a little warmer temperatures. **George Cook (Ext), Lamoille:** Cold and wet through Friday. Nice weekend weather with good drying air and sunshine. Many fields too wet to work yet. **Dennis Kauppila (Ext), Caledonia:** Good week with plenty of rain. Snow, too. Farmers spreading manure, harrowing ground, fixing fence. A number of water supplies were recharged over the winter. Forage inventory very low. **Richard Noel (FSA), Grand Isle/Franklin:** Cool and damp in Franklin County. Manure being spread and tillage work ongoing. Some field corn planted Sunday on some sandy soils. Vegetables planted under plastic. Ground kind of cool as of yet! **Sherwin Williams, Rutland:** Plowing under a nice crop of winter rye. Commercial fertilizer being harrowed in for special crops. Asparagus beds are waiting for some warm weather. Good frost for three days. Early in the week it was too cold for seeds to germinate. Put in second planting of sweet corn and peas.

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