



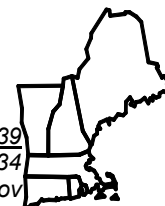
New England Agricultural Statistics Service

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

22 Bridge St. Third Floor
PO Box 1444
Concord, NH 03302

Aubrey R. Davis, Director
www.usda.gov/nass

603-224-9639
Fax: 603-225-1434
nass-nh@nass.usda.gov



Crop Weather

Volume 23, Number 2

(issued weekly on the Internet, May - October)

May 5, 2003 - 4 pm

For week ending 5/4/03

Planting Off to a Slow Start

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending May 4, 2003, there were 5.3 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 2% very short, 2% short, 71% adequate, 25% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 2% very short, 9% short, 79% adequate, 10% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 5% very poor, 14% poor, 38% fair, 39% good, 4% excellent. Warmer temperatures with some precipitation helped thaw out the ground, moving most field crop farmers closer to planting. Most crops' planting schedules remain behind normal for this region. Major farm activities included: planting early vegetables, sweet corn under plastic, field corn and potatoes; spreading lime and manure; prepping seed beds for planting; applying fertilizer; pruning; plowing; tilling; discing; and fixing fences.

FRUIT: Peaches and pears were in bud stage last week, while most other fruit crops were found in dormant to bud stage. Orchardists applied fertilizer and protective fungicide sprays and pruned trees. Plum trees were blooming last week. Growers continued to prune Maine wild blueberry fields and apply fungicides and pre-emergence herbicides. Massachusetts cranberry growers have been pleased with vine conditions this spring; last week growers continued cleaning ditches and applying herbicides.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	Stage	Condition
Apples	Dormant/Bud	Fair/Good
Peaches	Bud	Fair/Good
Pears	Bud	Fair/Good
Blueberries		
Highbush	Dormant/Bud	Fair/Good
Wild, ME	Dormant/Bud	Good
Cranberries, MA	Dormant/Bud	Good/Fair
Strawberries	Dormant/Bud	Fair/Good

VEGETABLES: Farmers planted such early vegetables as asparagus, cabbage, carrots, fiddleheads, lettuce, onions, peas and others last week. Growers planted sweet corn under plastic and continued to transplant tomatoes into high tunnels. Roadside stands sold early spring plants.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	-- Percent --		
Topsoil Moisture			
Very Short	2	2	3
Short	2	6	9
Adequate	71	72	82
Surplus	25	20	6
Subsoil Moisture			
Very Short	2	4	9
Short	9	9	25
Adequate	79	76	65
Surplus	10	11	1

FIELD CROPS: Farmers in the southern New England states enjoyed favorable conditions for field work last week, while northern areas continued to wait for the ground to thaw and dry out. Farmers top-dressed hayfields with fertilizer. Rhode Island potato planting got off to a good start, with ten percent complete by week's end. Potato farmers remain behind normal schedules with 35 percent planted as of last week. Potato and small grain growers in Maine are slightly behind schedule for planting, as they await warm, dry weather. Shade tobacco producers made preparations to put on side and top cloths.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2003	2002	5-yr Avg	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --			
Barley, ME	0	5	10	--
Oats, ME	0	5	10	--
Potatoes				
Maine	0	0	5	--
Mass	35	30	50	Good
Rhode Isl	10	60	45	Good
Silage Corn	5	5	5	Fair/Good
Sweet Corn	10	10	15	Good/Fair
Tobacco				
Shade	0	0	0	--
Dry Hay				
First Cut	0	0	0	Good/Fair

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 4, 2003

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		
MAINE															
Augusta_State_A	36	74	51	+2	32	+12	4	+4	0.50	-0.41	2	1.67	-1.87	7	
Bangor_Intl_Arp	29	76	49	+3	27	+15	4	+4	0.44	-0.35	2	1.65	-1.45	9	
Bethel	29	80	47	-1	24	+11	2	+2	1.08	+0.24	3	2.66	-0.70	8	
Caribou_Municip	27	58	41	-5	1	-7	0	+0	0.71	+0.07	4	1.69	-0.65	11	
Dover-Foxcroft	27	73	43	-3	14	+6	0	+0	0.90	+0.06	3	1.32	-2.02	9	
Frenchville	27	52	39	-5	0	-3	0	+0	0.24	-0.43	4	0.40	-2.06	9	
Houlton	24	71	43	-3	8	+0	0	+0	0.77	+0.07	3	1.93	-0.59	11	
Moosehead	24	75	42	+0	9	+9	0	+0	0.77	+0.02	3	2.34	-0.58	9	
Portland_ME	32	78	52	+5	45	+35	10	+10	0.07	-0.84	2	2.18	-1.64	9	
NEW HAMPSHIRE															
Benton	28	77	49	+2	36	+11	0	+0	0.75	+0.05	2	1.66	-0.99	9	
Berlin_AG	29	78	49	+3	36	+17	5	+5	0.25	-0.53	2	1.52	-1.69	7	
Concord	29	82	56	+7	87	+60	15	+15	0.75	+0.05	2	3.31	+0.54	10	
Diamond_Pond	26	75	44	+3	16	+12	0	+0	1.86	+1.08	3	3.96	+1.02	13	
Keene_AP	28	81	56	+5	89	+46	9	+8	0.92	+0.11	2	2.12	-0.91	8	
North_Conway	30	80	50	+2	28	+9	0	+0	1.11	+0.18	2	2.74	-1.11	8	
Rochester	29	83	53	+3	49	+16	4	+4	0.25	-0.72	1	2.85	-1.12	6	
VERMONT															
Burlington_Intl	30	80	52	+2	94	+54	14	+13	0.77	+0.09	4	2.47	-0.15	12	
Island_Pond	26	73	47	+3	33	+22	0	+0	1.35	+0.64	3	2.79	+0.18	10	
Montpelier	27	76	49	+2	55	+32	8	+8	1.04	+0.41	3	1.64	-0.70	8	
Pownal	31	76	53	+6	66	+39	6	+6	1.29	+0.24	2	2.37	-1.73	9	
Rochester	28	79	50	+3	49	+30	5	+5	1.24	+0.27	4	3.09	-0.51	11	
Rutland_AG	28	78	50	-2	58	+4	8	+3	1.14	+0.44	2	2.48	-0.10	7	
Sunderland	26	78	51	-1	56	+1	11	+9	1.07	+0.32	2	2.15	-0.61	9	
Sutton	27	75	47	+4	33	+25	0	+0	1.43	+0.71	5	2.93	+0.16	14	
Townshend_Lake	30	81	53	+4	48	+13	0	+0	1.08	+0.31	2	2.65	-0.43	9	
MASSACHUSETTS															
Ashburnham	33	79	56	+9	73	+54	5	+5	1.03	+0.24	2	3.82	+0.65	10	
Boston/Logan_In	42	81	58	+6	126	+69	26	+26	0.12	-0.68	2	3.34	+0.02	11	
Greenfield	34	82	58	+6	95	+41	13	+13	0.97	+0.08	2	3.21	-0.24	8	
New_Bedford	34	76	56	+3	77	+17	1	+1	0.10	-0.78	1	5.45	+1.68	10	
Otis_AFB	36	73	54	+5	60	+39	0	+0	0.05	-0.86	2	4.31	+0.67	10	
Plymouth	30	77	54	+5	78	+55	3	+3	0.07	-0.91	1	5.53	+1.58	11	
Walpole	34	81	56	+6	98	+61	13	+13	0.48	-0.40	2	4.08	+0.21	13	
Chicopee/Westov	34	81	58	+3	133	+40	20	+15	1.55	+0.64	2	3.78	+0.14	10	
Worthington	32	77	54	+6	60	+36	3	+3	0.65	-0.40	2	2.51	-1.36	9	
RHODE ISLAND															
Providence	39	78	58	+6	114	+68	16	+16	0.19	-0.72	2	4.21	+0.41	10	
Woonsocket	34	82	56	+6	80	+47	3	+3	0.16	-0.81	1	3.74	-0.17	10	
CONNECTICUT															
Bridgeport/Siko	43	77	58	+6	99	+36	8	+7	0.20	-0.71	4	3.62	+0.07	13	
Hartford/Bradle	37	81	60	+6	149	+73	24	+19	0.63	-0.28	3	2.85	-0.79	12	
Norfolk	35	77	55	+7	64	+44	3	+3	0.60	-0.45	2	1.74	-2.46	10	
Norwich	36	83	57	+4	97	+32	7	+5	0.27	-0.81	2	5.10	+0.84	11	
Thomaston_Dam	35	81	57	+6	89	+45	8	+8	0.97	-0.08	4	3.12	-0.90	13	
Willimantic	34	79	56	+6	110	+69	9	+9	0.36	-0.62	3	2.72	-1.20	12	

STATE WEATHER SUMMARY
For the Week Ending Sunday, May 4, 2003

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.

Copyright 2003: AWIS, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
For detailed ag weather forecasts and data visit the AWIS home page at www.awis.com or call toll free at 1-888-798-9955.

State	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	21	84	46	-1	0.00	1.50
NH	16	84	50	+3	0.25	1.86
VT	23	81	50	+2	0.56	2.00
MA	27	82	56	+6	0.01	1.55
RI	34	82	55	+5	0.11	0.19
CT	31	83	57	+5	0.14	1.81

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: Dairy farmers were busy spreading manure, plowing some of the drier land and getting ready to plant field corn. **Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland:** Spreading manure, plowing and discing. More sweet corn planted and some field corn planted. Working tobacco ground well underway. Still cool mornings with isolated frost. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** A little heat this week opened up a lot of ornamental blossoms, with fruit trees right behind, honey bee activity is good, corn fields are slowly transferring from a carpet of green to a rich, earthy glow as harrows make way for planting to begin. **Nancy Welsh/Karen Lockman (FSA), New Haven:** Soils are cold and wet. Fruit is five to seven days late. Peas and beans have been planted as well as some sweet corn. Greenhouses are full of flowers getting ready for Mother's Day. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Corn planting is underway with the early birds finished already. Field prep and spreading fertilizer this past week.

MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook: Potatoes and small grains: Still no field activities. Most of the snowbanks are gone but fields remain very wet. However, warm temperatures and wind Saturday and Sunday were needed to dry ground out. Growers hauling home seed. Some growers have begun cutting their seed. Preparing tillage and planting equipment. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** The weather continues to be on the cool side. After rain this week, fields continue to be on the wet side. Hopefully, in the next week we will get some warmer temperatures to help farmers get on the fields to start planting. **Steve London (Ext), Southern Aroostook:** Fields have not dried up enough to plant and soil temperatures still too cold. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Frost still coming out so farming operations have been held up due to soil condition. **Donna Lamb (Ext), Piscataquis:** Spreading manure is the major activity for the past week. Some livestock have been turned out onto sacrifice paddocks until the grass gets a little taller. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** Growers are still spreading and tilling. Still too wet and cold for much activity in the field. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Some sweet corn planted despite cool soil temperatures. Manure being spread on the drier fields. Pastures really greened up after brief period of sun and warm last week. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Sweet corn, peas and greens have been planted under crop cover. Greenhouse grown potted flowers are for sale at farm stands. Fertilizer application on blueberry fields underway. Lots of sun on the weekend helped green up pastures. Some land still too wet to till. Showers during the week held up burning blueberry fields. **Dr. David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Fields are being burned for pruning and pre-emergence herbicides are being applied. Bud scales on cropping fields. Buds are breaking and fungicides are being applied for mummyberry control. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** We finally got a week where you could put away the long johns and still work outside. Lots of manure spread, some fertilizer put on, many acres of tillage - all events of the week. Some folks were able to seed down some early crops and grass. Most think the ground is still too cold for the corn seed. Some farmers are running into wet areas that slow down the process. We're on our way to another year of growing crops, with or without Mother Nature's help. Hang on. **Parker Rand (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Things are drying out fast. Lots of manure being spread, early ground being worked, and even some sweet corn and early vegetables in the ground. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** This area received one of the most beneficial rainfalls that we have had in a long time. Time to fix those fences before the flies come out. Farmers' markets are selling seedlings. The sunshine was fantastic at Fenway Park yesterday.

MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire: Some hay seeding being done and farmers are spreading lime on the land. Tilling is being done for corn and there may be planting soon. Local FAV farmers selling bedding plants. Nurseries are busy with landscaping plant sales. No report from orchard owners, apples beginning bud stage. A large sweet corn producer is auctioning the sweet corn equipment plus other goods on May 3. Rain fall varied countywide from 0.25 to 1.25 inches in two heavy rain events this week, of short duration. Temperatures slightly below freezing at night, 50's during the day. **Paul Russell (FSA), Southeast Massachusetts:** Conditions remain unreasonably cool, however this past week was dry. A few growers could get into the drier fields to start planting vegetables etc. Cranberries are starting to awaken from their winter sleep. The season is approximately two weeks behind,

however growers have been applying herbicides, installing sprinkler heads and preparing for frost season. Shellfish growers are planting seed and starting harvest. Shellfish are showing signs of growth, though market is still soft. **Kip Graham (FSA), Worcester:** Weather about 2-3 weeks behind. The cooler, wet weather delaying planting for most farmers. Some early crops are planted. The dairy farmers are still plowing, harrowing and spreading manure, lime and fertilizer. Greenhouses are preparing for hopefully huge sales for Mother's Day. Fence fixing around pastures and fields still a never-ending task. All in all, a slow start to the 2003 season. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: Only one rainy event and one frost night (Saturday into Sunday). Vines are greening up nicely. Every grower I have spoken to so far has been very pleased by the condition of the buds and satisfied by how the vines wintered. Growers are putting on herbicides, digging out ditches and finishing renovation projects. Insects are just getting active and soon some will be trapped in sweep nets. A significant percentage of the acreage was ice sanded in January. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Moderating temperatures have quickened the pace of field work this week. Sweet corn and potato farmers have been going full speed to make up for lost time. Most dairy farms are trying to get manure spread, fields tilled and grass seedings planted. Most farms with forage crops are planning to start planting corn this coming week. Shade tobacco producers will be putting on side and top cloths this coming week. Most plants in greenhouses are getting a little leggy. **Paul Fischer (FSA), Essex/Middlesex:** Cool weather combined with some scattered showers slowed plant growth. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** Another mostly cool week with some rain showers. Harvesting fiddleheads and asparagus. 45 percent of the potato crop is planted. Also, planting sweet corn, lettuce, cabbage, carrots and parsnips. Fruit trees still in bud stage except plums are blossoming. Farmers are plowing, subsoiling and spreading lime and manure. **Gary Guida, Worcester:** Another great week for farm work. Everyone planting and plowing. Fields being fitted for plastic mulch. Plant sales picking up. Annuals in greenhouses look great and are in flower. Hanging baskets are awesome.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap: Fields being prepared for planting. Still waiting for many fields to dry out. Peas, onions, greenhouse tomatoes, and early sweet corn (under plastic) planted. Pastures are greening up, while being soil tested, limed and fertilized. First spray on apple trees. **Tina Savage (Ext), Carroll:** Still early for much activity in Carroll County. Hayfields and pastures greening up. Some work being done in the field. Apple trees in parts of the county ready for first scab spray. Heavy deer feeding damage in some orchards, and extreme cold this past winter was unkind to peaches. Moisture levels are just adequate despite the snowy winter, rain in recent days can only help. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** Mostly sunny, warm conditions except for a few showers on Thursday and some heavy rain and thunderstorms Friday afternoon. All the hayfields and pastures are green and growing rapidly. Farms are continuing to spread manure and finish top-dressing fertilizer on hayfields. More farms are starting tillage on corn ground - may plant later this week? **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Farms continue to prep fields for corn planting, with majority on higher ground now done. Some fields along the Connecticut river under water from recent heavy rains, a normal occurrence this time of year. High tunnels for vegetables getting planted. Greenhouse operations busy with openings this weekend. Pastures beginning to green-up. A few animals being grazed. Quite heavy rains during the week, still cold at night with occasional frosts. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Rain late in the week helped alleviate the dryness. The dry weather has allowed for field work to progress, although it is still cool. New seedings, manure spreading and tillage to prep for corn planting were activities that occurred this week. **Steve Schmidt (FSA), Grafton:** Light rain at the end of last week helped a little with top soil moisture, however, we are still in a deficit situation. Subsoil moisture is still a very real concern. Corn is being planted, field conditions are further ahead due to drier than normal field conditions. According to one farmer, he was able to spread manure everywhere on the farm in the middle of April due to dry soil conditions. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Field Crops: Farmers are liming and fertilizing hayfields; spreading manure, plowing, discing, fertilizing and getting ready to plant corn; fixing pasture fences; making new pasture and hayfield seedings. Vegetables: Early season vegetables (peas, lettuce, greens) are being planted, along with sweet corn and potatoes. Transplanting tomatoes into high tunnels. Liming, fertilizing, plowing, discing and

getting ready plant fields. Starting to lay plastic and drip irrigation tape. Fruits: Apples and Peaches are at pink stage in earliest blooming areas. Plum trees are blooming. Planting fruit trees and fertilizing orchards. Protective fungicide sprays applied on fruit trees. **David Seavey (Ext), Merrimack:** Blueberries, raspberries, tree fruits and nursery stock were planted. Also planted were onions and asparagus. Field preparation for field corn and vegetables. Manure spreading underway. Orchardists still pruning. Blueberries and raspberries pruned. Dormant oil sprayed in apple orchards. Lots of winter injury on highbush blueberries and raspberries. Nursery stock arriving from the south also showing winter injury symptoms. Late spring has hampered garden center sales and landscaping projects. Pastures and hayland were fertilized. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Sunny and a warmer week. A couple of nights, temperatures were as low as 31 degrees F. Pasture and hayfields are growing well. Preparing fields for planting. Liming and fertilizing crops. Planting very early vegetables, small fruits and tree fruits. Pruning blueberries and apples. Applying protective fungicides. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** Heavy rains came on Friday followed by sunshine, helping to green up the pasture and hay fields. Many cornfields have been plowed and fertilized, getting ready to be seeded. Very few acres have already been planted. Pruning of apple trees just about done. Crop fields being prepared for early vegetables.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: Rain midweek stalled some field work putting farmers even more behind. Active planting of potatoes. Cole crops being planted and fields being worked for additional summer crops. Roadside stands fully open and stocked with early spring plants, hanging baskets and vegetables.

VERMONT - John St. Onge (FSA), Lamoille: Main farm activities last week included manure spreading and tilling of corn fields in preparation for planting. Crop conditions are looking good so far. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** Landowners are repairing pasture fence, spreading manure and plowing corn fields. Planting has not yet begun. Livestock have not gone to pasture yet but will soon. **Perley Sparrow (FSA), Windham:** Week two in Windham County and the weather has not gotten any warmer. Last Friday we received about 3 inches of rain over the southern half of the county. Field corn ground is about ready, farmers are waiting for hotter days. Some sweet corn is planted and spiking through, early potatoes and other early vegetable are also planted. Apple orchardists are spraying the early application in anticipation of a good year. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Started spring tillage for seed bed preparation. Manure spreading on some fields. Some fertilizer spread on hay fields. Liming of fields. No planting yet. Wet soils. **Gary Braman (FSA) Orange/Windsor:** A beautiful week to work the soil and prepare for planting. Farmers have been working full speed spreading manure, in some areas about 75% complete. Fencing is also a very busy project. Vegetable growers are enjoying the sunshine with rain the end of the week for good germination. Apple growers are reporting over one half in early bud stage. **Dennis Kauppila (Ext), Caledonia:** We welcomed the inch of rain on Friday. Farmers working on spreading manure, forage seedings, corn ground preparation, fencing. Grass starting to grow now. It was a long, cold winter, milk prices are low, not many dairy farmers are optimistic now. **Chris Benedict (Ext), Chittenden:** We had a solid warm-up last week. With a couple days up near 70 degrees, bud development has improved dramatically. Additionally, good amounts of moisture have proved helpful in getting the season underway. However, the rain last week was met with cooler temperatures and therefore disease issues were of concern. Nice week to work outdoors.

April 2003 Crop Weather Summary: Below average temperatures prevailed throughout most of April in New England, pushing the spring planting season behind normal schedules at many locations. Maple sugaring activities were mostly complete by mid-month; the maple industry anticipates reduced production due to extreme temperature changes during the spring. Higher than normal levels of precipitation were received throughout the region at month's end, putting a damper on fieldwork. Farm activities during the month included manure spreading, applying fertilizer, tending livestock, assisting with spring calving, prepping seed beds for planting; and performing general maintenance in preparation for spring planting.

To receive this report every Monday evening, send an e-mail message to listserv@newsbox.usda.gov and in the body, type **subscribe usda-new-eng-crop-weather**

Aubrey R. Davis, Director
Statisticians: Emily McAllister, Robin Helrich

Joe Samson, Deputy Director
Stat Assistant: Wayne Colpitt

PERMIT NO. G-38
 USDA
 POSTAGE & FEES PAID
 FIRST CLASS
 PRESORTED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
 POST OFFICE BOX 1444
 CONCORD NH 03302-1444
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED