



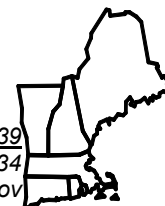
New England Agricultural Statistics Service

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Crop Weather

Volume 23, Number 3

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May 12, 2003 - 4 pm

For week ending 5/11/03

Cool Conditions Delay Crop Season

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending May 11, 2003, there were 5.8 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 1% very short, 4% short, 81% adequate, 14% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 4% very short, 5% short, 83% adequate, 8% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 0% very poor, 7% poor, 37% fair, 52% good, 4% excellent. Average temperatures with a mix of sun and rain greened up grass and accelerated pasture growth. Cold soil temperatures and excessive moisture in the north are keeping farmers' planting progress 1-3 weeks behind schedule. Major farm activities included: planting vegetables, sweet corn, field corn and potatoes; spreading lime and manure; applying fertilizer and herbicides; pruning; mowing orchards; plowing; tilling; discing; and fixing fences.

FRUIT: Most tree fruit crops progressed to early bloom stage last week and were rated in good to fair condition. Orchardists applied fertilizer and fungicides, pruned trees and mowed orchard floors. Fungicide and pre-emergence herbicide applications continued in Maine wild blueberry fields last week, along with field burning. Cranberry producers in Massachusetts irrigated to protect from frost and applied fertilizer and herbicides.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

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

VEGETABLES: Farmers planted vegetables last week, such as cabbage, carrots, lettuce, parsnips, peas and other early vegetables. Asparagus, fiddleheads and rhubarb were harvested. Sweet corn under plastic began to emerge in some locations. Farm stands and garden centers attracted good business in many locations over Mother's Day weekend.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	-- Percent --		
Topsoil Moisture			
Very Short	1	2	3
Short	4	2	11
Adequate	81	71	72
Surplus	14	25	14
Subsoil Moisture			
Very Short	4	2	10
Short	5	9	22
Adequate	83	79	62
Surplus	8	10	6

FIELD CROPS: Hayfields and pastures have experienced accelerated growth due to the combination of sun and rain over the week. Field corn was rated in fair to good condition last week, with ten percent of the crop in the ground. Rhode Island potato planting was well behind normal schedules at 25 percent, while progress in Maine and Massachusetts was only slightly behind. Maine small grain farmers continued to wait for favorable planting conditions; in a typical year, 30 percent of oat and barley crops would be planted at this point.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2003	2002	5-yr Avg	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --			
Barley, ME	0	25	30	--
Oats, ME	0	20	30	--
Potatoes				
Maine	0	5	15	--
Mass	55	60	65	Good
Rhode Isl	25	80	70	Good
Silage Corn	10	15	20	Fair/Good
Sweet Corn	20	20	25	Good/Fair
Tobacco				
Shade	0	0	0	--
Dry Hay	-- Percent Harvested --			
First Cut	0	0	0	Good/Fair

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 11, 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	TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS
MAINE														
Augusta_State_A	35	72	52	+0	51	+7	4	+4	0.39	-0.51	1	1.91	-1.69	7
Bangor_Intl_Arp	33	72	52	+3	49	+20	4	+4	0.44	-0.39	1	2.05	-1.11	9
Bethel	29	76	51	+0	38	+6	2	+2	0.25	-0.56	2	2.84	-0.49	9
Caribou_Municip	30	62	45	-3	1	-19	0	+0	0.71	+0.01	4	2.39	-0.09	14
Dover-Foxcroft	31	69	47	-2	19	-1	0	+0	0.32	-0.51	1	1.61	-1.74	9
Frenchville	31	59	43	-4	0	-10	0	+0	0.49	-0.21	2	0.89	-1.71	11
Houlton	27	68	47	-1	13	-7	0	+0	1.04	+0.30	2	2.96	+0.26	12
Livermore_Falls	29	77	50	+2	34	+14	1	+1	0.27	-0.57	1	2.36	-1.18	8
Moosehead	29	69	46	+1	9	+2	0	+0	0.24	-0.53	2	2.58	-0.41	11
Portland_ME	33	69	51	+0	62	+36	10	+10	0.31	-0.53	4	2.47	-1.21	12
NEW HAMPSHIRE														
Benton	35	69	51	-1	50	+1	0	-1	0.12	-0.61	2	1.64	-1.11	9
Berlin_AG	34	73	49	+0	46	+8	5	+5	0.25	-0.52	2	1.66	-1.55	8
Concord	33	72	53	+1	111	+57	15	+15	0.49	-0.21	3	3.20	+0.40	11
Diamond_Pond	30	66	44	-2	18	+7	0	+0	0.45	-0.39	4	4.34	+1.26	15
Keene_AP	32	72	53	-2	114	+32	9	+1	0.13	-0.71	2	1.77	-1.40	7
North_Conway	34	75	51	+0	47	+4	0	+0	0.50	-0.41	4	3.01	-0.79	10
Rochester	33	76	52	-3	67	+2	4	+1	0.50	-0.41	3	2.62	-1.28	8
VERMONT														
Burlington_Intl	34	73	53	-1	123	+49	14	+6	0.01	-0.69	1	2.42	-0.27	11
Island_Pond	30	70	48	-1	39	+14	0	+0	0.43	-0.34	3	3.22	+0.44	13
Montpelier	31	70	50	-1	68	+22	8	+8	0.02	-0.68	1	1.62	-0.86	8
Pownal	33	69	52	+2	85	+34	6	+3	0.12	-0.88	3	1.90	-2.22	9
Rochester	28	71	50	+0	58	+19	5	+5	0.07	-0.91	2	2.93	-0.81	11
Rutland_AG	33	72	51	-4	73	-22	8	-4	0.23	-0.54	3	2.70	-0.07	9
Sutton	32	70	49	+2	45	+24	0	+0	0.28	-0.49	3	3.13	+0.24	15
Townshend_Lake	31	70	51	-2	62	-4	0	-5	0.27	-0.57	3	2.46	-0.69	9
MASSACHUSETTS														
Ashburnham	34	72	53	+2	97	+57	5	+5	0.15	-0.62	2	2.40	-0.77	9
Boston/Logan_In	45	77	55	-1	166	+68	30	+30	0.19	-0.58	3	1.70	-1.55	10
Greenfield	33	75	53	-3	122	+25	13	+7	0.35	-0.49	3	2.43	-1.02	9
New_Bedford	33	75	53	-4	102	+1	3	+3	0.32	-0.52	4	2.69	-0.94	9
Otis_AFB	34	68	52	+1	82	+40	0	+0	0.32	-0.52	4	1.80	-1.77	9
Plymouth	31	74	53	+1	108	+60	4	+4	0.25	-0.67	4	2.56	-1.33	10
Walpole	35	78	55	+2	135	+66	16	+16	0.21	-0.58	4	2.31	-1.35	12
Chicopee/Westov	34	77	55	-4	168	+20	23	+10	0.40	-0.51	3	3.23	-0.41	9
Worthington	32	72	51	+0	78	+31	3	+3	0.42	-0.63	3	1.98	-2.05	9
RHODE ISLAND														
Providence	39	72	55	+0	151	+69	17	+17	0.22	-0.65	4	2.63	-1.06	10
Woonsocket	34	78	55	+2	114	+49	6	+6	0.18	-0.75	3	2.19	-1.67	8
CONNECTICUT														
Bridgeport/Siko	41	72	55	-2	132	+25	10	+2	1.07	+0.16	4	2.62	-1.00	12
Hartford/Bradle	37	79	57	-1	198	+71	31	+19	0.46	-0.45	3	2.31	-1.33	10
Norfolk	35	72	52	+1	85	+42	4	+4	0.49	-0.54	3	1.87	-2.31	9
Thomaston_Dam	32	79	55	+2	131	+51	15	+11	0.77	-0.28	4	2.75	-1.34	12
Willimantic	34	78	56	+2	150	+73	13	+10	0.32	-0.66	3	1.95	-1.97	10

STATE WEATHER SUMMARY
For the Week Ending Sunday, May 11, 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.

State	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	23	77	49	-1	0.00	1.22
NH	21	78	50	-1	0.12	0.56
VT	23	77	51	+0	0.01	0.47
MA	26	79	53	+0	0.09	0.46
RI	34	78	53	-1	0.11	0.26
CT	32	82	55	-1	0.19	1.07

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

CONNECTICUT - Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland: Planting field corn, sweet corn, potatoes and cabbage. Some still spreading manure and plowing. Greenhouse sales were strong with hanging baskets for Mother's Day. Most tobacco seedlings look good in greenhouses and beds. Dairy farmers struggling with the choice of sticking it out or selling out. **Marsha Jette (FSA), New London:** Farmers taking advantage of weather for planting in spite of unusual cold spell, with planting and harrowing. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Pears and peaches are in full bloom, apples in early bloom. Pruning continues on peaches and apples. Mowing grass in orchards, spraying for fungus, insects. Scab is out. Bees are in orchards. Picking asparagus and winter raspberries. Corn planting underway. **Nancy Welsh/Karen Lockman (FSA), New Haven:** Cool days and nights are causing havoc. Pollination has not been happening, bees are waiting for the warm days. Crops are not growing in the fields. Bedding plants are in bloom and are ready to be planted. Sales are down due to the unusually cool spring. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Planting corn and fertilizing grass were the dominant dairy farm activities. Apple trees blooming well. Bee activity seems to be below normal.

MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook: Potatoes and small grains: Very little activity done on the ground. Some lime spread but no crops of any kind have been planted as fields are still wet. Soil temperature is only about 40 degrees. Growers for the most part are ready to go to the fields once this weather breaks. Equipment is practically ready to go. Perhaps spring will arrive in Northern Maine soon. Still some snow left in the woods and ice on the lakes. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** A few small grains planted south of us. Soil temperatures are still cold. Rainy weather continues. Let's hope for some good weather soon so that our farmers can get their crops planted. **Steve London (Ext), Southern Aroostook:** Potatoes and small grains: No activities last week. Ground is still too cold and too wet for planting. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Some farmers have begun tilling the land. Grass growth seems slow coming. Some have begun manure spreading. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** Very slow start and cold spring this year. Some field work has started. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Some decent weather allowed manure spreading and some planting to get under way. Pastures are greening up and animals are getting outside. Winter injury on strawberries, peaches and highbush blueberries is evident as buds begin to green up. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Fungicides for mummyberry applied on blueberry fields that crop this year. Fertilizer being applied on fields that crop next year. The weather has made burning fields difficult. The ground is still too cold for many crops. Another sunny weekend following a week of showers and overcast has greened up pastures and hayfields. Still waiting for the first fresh greens of the season! **Dr. David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild blueberries: Fields are being burned for pruning and pre-emergence herbicides are being applied. Leaves are emerging on cropping field stems. Fungicides are being applied for mummyberry disease control. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** The past week allowed many farmers to spread manure, harrow fields and prepare to put some crops into the ground. Most I talked to said that the ground was still too cold for corn. Market garden producers were putting some crops in the ground and covering them with plastic. Early indications are that apples will be plentiful and strawberry plants appear to have survived the winter. We're on our way. **Parker Rand (FSA), Cumberland/York:** A very busy week, spreading manure, tilling the soil, and planting. Ground has dried out fast, but the season is way behind last year. **Elaine S. Moceus (FSA), Franklin:** Early varieties of highbush blueberries are starting to show their leaves and the beginnings of buds. Manure is being spread and some ground has been tilled. The pastures and hay fields are greening up with help from the spring rain and the warm temps. **Laura Rand (FSA), Oxford:** Planting started... potatoes, sweet corn and cold crops are being planted. Spreading manure, fixing fence lines, and greenhouses up and selling beautiful arrays. Some sun and lots of wind. Cool nights.

MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire: Cultivating, planting, tilling and fertilizing are all in process right now. Forage planting is nearly done. Fields are turning green and growing for harvest. Landscapers and nursery businesses are hard at work. Cool weather vegetables growing well, along with root crops. Rainfall 3/8 to 1/2 inches this week onto still moist ground. Early sweet corn up to 3 inches on May 5. Farmers' markets well stocked with early vegetables for transplant and annual flowers. Temps averaged 30-40 at night and 50-60 daytime. **Paul Russell (FSA), Southeast Massachusetts:** Things are starting to warm up, growers are in the fields preparing ground and planting crops. Cranberry growers are running irrigation systems to protect from frost, applying fertilizer, herbicide, etc. Dairy farmers are spreading manure and preparing to plant corn. We are still 7 to 14 days behind schedule but as the weather warms there is hope we can catch up. **Kip Graham (FSA), Worcester:** Still fertilizing corn land, 30% finished. Too early to apply weed and pest control. The higher areas where there is clay soil won't be planted with corn for another 1-2 weeks. These areas are behind the valley areas. No insect problems yet. Cooler and rainier than usual. For the cold winter we've had, so far everything is looking good. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: Cool but dry week, leading to slow but continuing development of the plants' expansion of the buds from dormancy. Late cultivars are showing some greening. Only one frost night. Herbicide applications continue. Some insects (cranberry weevil, blossom worm, black-headed fireworm) being caught in sweep nets. Fungicide applications for upright dieback and Phytophthora root rot being applied. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** The season continues to be about three weeks behind normal. No silage corn has been planted yet. Hay crop looks good. Sweet corn under plastic has emerged. Fruit trees in bloom as well as strawberries. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Cool and windy conditions continued this week. This has improved field conditions for most tillage operations but soil temperatures remain cool. Potato, sweet corn and cole crop plantings are all in high gear this week. Some silage corn has been planted but most farms are still behind schedule. Local asparagus tastes great! **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** Another rainy and cool week. Harvesting asparagus, fiddleheads and rhubarb. Planting lettuce, cabbage, carrots, peas, and parsnips and these crops are growing well with the current weather conditions. Fruit trees are in early bloom stage. Setting up irrigation in strawberry fields for frost protection. Also planting new strawberry and asparagus beds. Farmers are plowing, subsoiling, and spreading lime and manure for field corn and summer vegetables. **Gary Guida, Worcester:** Yet another good week! Field work progressing well but too cold for transplanting and corn emergence yet. Activity at farm stands very brisk as hanging baskets and other plants did exceptionally well. Consumers along with growers are glad that winter is finally over (I hope) and there seems to be a positive outlook on the economy as sales finally went crazy!

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap: More cold-tolerant crops like spinach and lettuce are in. Successive plantings of corn under plastic continue. New strawberry crowns planted. Pastures are greening up nicely in most places. **Tina Savage (Ext), Carroll:** Rain, sun and mild temperatures have greened up the pastures, lawns and hayfields. Good grass growing weather. Temperatures have been mild, ranging from the high 30's at night to the low 70's during the day. Plant sales at greenhouses and nurseries are in full swing, Mother's Day weekend sales were brisk. Apples, pears and peaches are beginning to green up. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** Hayfields are growing nicely, and all farms have animals out on pasture by now. Spring seedings starting to emerge. Farms along CT River are tilling fields for corn, some have started to plant. Fruit growers starting to spray for scab, mummyberry. Vegetable growers finishing up planting cool weather crops. Greenhouses are full of bedding plants, etc. and doing a brisk business. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Field prep continues for corn planting. Lower areas along Connecticut River still too wet for working. Pastures greening up with a little more grazing becoming available, orchard grass noticeable. Cleanup of orchards following

pruning. Garden centers in high gear with good openings for Mother's Day. Vegetable growers getting early vegetables planted. A little dry up in the northern part of the county. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Corn planting rushing ahead as weather permits. Field prep continues. Hay growing slowly due to dry conditions. Light rain helped growth some. **Steve Schmidt (FSA), Grafton:** Light showers have helped maintain topsoil moisture conditions, however we are still in need of more rain. Available subsoil moisture is still well below normal. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Fruits: Plums were at petal fall beginning of the week. Peaches were in full bloom during the week and petal fall at week's end. Pears were in full bloom. Apples were in bloom the weekend of May 10-11. Planting fruit trees, bushes and plants. Fertilizing orchards. Protective fungicide sprays applied on fruit trees. Field Crops: Farmers are liming and fertilizing hayfields, spreading manure, plowing, discing, fertilizing and planting corn. Vegetables: Continued early season vegetable planting (peas, lettuce, greens), along with sweet corn and potatoes. High tunnel tomatoes looking good. Liming, fertilizing, plowing, discing and getting ready to plant fields. Laying plastic mulch and drip irrigation tape. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Crops in need of warmer and sunnier days. Early cool vegetables such as peas, lettuce are 3-4 inches high. Preparing vegetable fields and planting vegetables. Pasture and hay crops growing slowly. Grubs (European chafer and others) are damaging hay crop fields. Spraying with protective fungicides in fruit orchards and small fruit fields. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** Many early vegetables continue to be planted along with sweet corn. With recent rain showers, the alfalfa fields are growing up fast and looking very green and healthy. Top-dressing of other hayfields continues, as well as preparations for corn fields including liming and fertilizing. Many cornfields still too wet to be planted. After a long winter, animals are enjoying feeding off fast growing pasture fields. **Geoffrey Njue (Ext), Strafford:** There were both rain showers and sunshine through the week. Farmers were busy preparing their fields for planting. Due to the mix of rain and sunshine the grass is growing well. Garden centers and nurseries had a slow week of sales due to cloudy and cool weather. The season so far has been slow for them. Most garden centers hoped that sales will pick up after Mother's Day weekend.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: Planting potatoes, catching up on field work, planting sweet corn and most cole crops in. Most farmers are still behind due to cool and wet weather. Lots of activity at roadside stands for Mother's Day

weekend. Spring flowers and vegetable plants available. **Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties:** Crops are late, weather is cold and wet.

VERMONT - John St. Onge (FSA), Lamoille: Was a nice week for field work. Farmers were busy spreading manure and tilling fields in preparation for planting. First acres of corn were planted along with grass and small grain seedings. Weekend rain was just what the doctor ordered for grass growth and should help pastures. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** Landowners are working their corn fields for seeding. Soil temperature is still in the low 40's. The larger corn growers hope to start seeding this week. Starting to see cows out in pastures, although the grass is short due to the cool soil temperatures. **Lynette Hamilton/Perley Sparrow (FSA), Windham:** Farmers in the county planted corn at high speed last week under good weather conditions. Heifers are out on pasture now after the warmer weather of the past week to allow excellent pasture growth. Alfalfa stands had very little winter kill and are growing fast with the cool weather. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Very little farming activity. Some manure spreading. Some fertilizer applications on hayfields and some corn fields. Very little spring tillage. **Gary Braman (FSA) Orange/Windsor:** Cropping is more of the same, manure spreading, planting and fence fixing. New seedings and corn planting along the cropland of the Connecticut River coming along nicely. Some cows out to pasture and grass greening up. About one week or so behind a typical year, on the dry side, would like some more rain and warmer days to give a boost to the crops. Some strawberries with buds in the crown about two weeks from bloom. Apple growers seeing early bloom and hoping to get past the full moon on Friday and avoid a frost. **Dennis Kauppila (Ext), Caledonia:** Spring's work coming along: spreading manure and fertilizer, preparing corn ground, fixing fence. I saw some dairy cows out on pasture this morning (5/12). About 2/3 inch of rain last night. It had been a dry week, perfect for getting out there. Unfortunately we are also seeing a number of auctions for cattle and equipment. **Sherwin Williams, Rutland:** Still plowing under nice crop of winter rye for mid-season corn. Potato land ready to plant. Fourth planting of peas in ground. Received 0.719 inches rain. Set out new bed of strawberries, land in great shape. Planted first of early vegetables. Asparagus beds ready, need warmer weather. Early peas germinated well, can follow rows in good shape.

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**

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