



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

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April 28, 2003 - 4 pm

For week ending 4/27/03

Cool, Wet Start to Season

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending April 27, 2003, there were 3.9 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 2% very short, 6% short, 72% adequate, 20% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 4% very short, 9% short, 76% adequate, 11% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 6% very poor, 23% poor, 49% fair, 22% good, 0% excellent. Temperatures were slightly below average last week and precipitation levels above normal, causing farmers to delay field work until conditions improve. Spring weather has pushed field activities two or three weeks behind in some areas. Major farm activities included: planting early vegetables, sweet corn, and potatoes; spreading manure; prepping seed beds for planting; applying fertilizer; pruning; plowing; and fixing fences.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	-- Percent --		
Topsoil Moisture			
Very Short	2	--	4
Short	6	--	12
Adequate	72	--	74
Surplus	20	--	10
Subsoil Moisture			
Very Short	4	--	11
Short	9	--	32
Adequate	76	--	51
Surplus	11	--	6

FRUIT: Most fruit crops were in dormant to bud stage last week. Growers fertilized orchards, applied protective fungicide sprays and pruned trees. Reports of possible frost damage to strawberries and highbush blueberries have surfaced. Maine wild blueberry fields were burned for pruning and applications of pre-emergence herbicides were made. Cranberry growers in Massachusetts cleaned ditches and applied herbicides.

FIELD CROPS: Fields were found to be either too muddy or too frozen last week, hampering activities across the six-state region. Potato planting in Rhode Island had yet to begin by week's end, placing it well behind last year's early start, but only slightly behind normal. Massachusetts potato farmers were slightly behind last year and normal. Potato growers in Maine continued to wait for the ground to thaw to signal the beginning of their planting season. Tobacco farmers spread fertilizer on fields last week.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

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

VEGETABLES: Planting of early vegetables, such as beets, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, peas, radishes, and others has begun. Growers also planted early sweet corn under plastic last week. Tomatoes were transplanted into high tunnels.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2003	2002	5-yr Avg	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --			
Barley, ME	0	0	0	--
Oats, ME	0	0	0	--
Potatoes				
Maine	0	0	0	--
Mass	15	20	25	Good
Rhode Isl	0	20	5	--
Silage Corn	0	0	0	--
Sweet Corn	5	5	<5	Good/Fair
Tobacco				
Shade	0	0	0	--
Dry Hay				
First Cut	0	0	0	Fair/Good

For the Week Ending Sunday, April 27, 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	33	64	44	-3	12	+6	2	+2	1.02	+0.11	4	1.83	-1.61	8	
Bangor_Intl_Arp	28	64	45	-1	10	+7	0	+0	1.14	+0.37	4	2.37	-0.71	9	
Bethel	32	70	44	-2	15	+12	2	+2	1.51	+0.67	4	2.53	-0.82	8	
Caribou_Municip	26	62	43	+2	1	+0	0	+0	0.87	+0.29	5	1.45	-0.81	10	
Dover-Foxcroft	24	65	41	-2	4	+3	0	+0	0.39	-0.45	5	1.40	-1.87	8	
Frenchville	29	58	42	+2	0	+0	0	+0	0.15	-0.48	4	0.24	-2.11	7	
Houlton	23	63	44	+3	2	+1	0	+0	1.00	+0.36	5	1.91	-0.47	11	
Livermore_Falls	27	70	44	+1	12	+11	1	+1	1.17	+0.26	4	2.01	-1.61	8	
Moosehead	25	68	42	+3	2	+2	0	+0	1.30	+0.53	4	2.50	-0.34	8	
Portland_ME	31	57	44	-3	21	+19	7	+7	2.09	+1.14	6	3.05	-0.77	12	
NEW HAMPSHIRE															
Benton	24	68	43	-2	22	+12	0	+0	0.77	+0.08	5	1.70	-0.82	13	
Berlin_AG	32	72	45	+2	27	+20	5	+5	1.16	+0.32	4	2.14	-1.01	8	
Concord	30	69	46	-2	38	+28	7	+7	1.96	+1.26	6	4.19	+1.49	13	
Diamond Pond	29	68	43	+5	8	+8	0	+0	1.23	+0.47	5	4.04	+1.22	15	
Keene_AP	25	72	48	-2	42	+24	4	+4	0.72	-0.05	3	2.63	-0.29	12	
North_Conway	33	70	46	+2	15	+9	0	+0	1.40	+0.42	4	2.72	-1.11	11	
Rochester	30	65	44	-5	20	+7	3	+3	1.87	+0.89	4	4.37	+0.42	12	
VERMONT															
Burlington_Intl	27	75	48	+0	61	+44	7	+7	1.61	+0.93	5	2.31	-0.23	13	
Island Pond	30	69	44	+2	20	+16	0	+0	1.20	+0.53	5	2.04	-0.42	10	
Montpelier	29	71	44	+0	30	+22	2	+2	0.55	-0.04	3	0.90	-1.33	9	
Pownal	29	72	46	+2	34	+23	3	+3	0.49	-0.56	4	2.66	-1.35	13	
Rochester	27	75	45	+1	32	+25	5	+5	1.62	+0.71	5	3.30	-0.12	11	
Rutland_AG	24	74	46	-4	37	+10	4	+4	1.33	+0.66	4	3.06	+0.62	10	
Sutton	28	70	44	+3	19	+18	0	+0	1.37	+0.67	5	2.48	-0.20	14	
Townshend_Lake	27	72	46	-2	20	+5	0	+0	1.11	+0.34	4	3.60	+0.55	13	
MASSACHUSETTS															
Ashburnham	28	68	46	+0	25	+18	2	+2	1.22	+0.38	5	4.28	+1.13	14	
Boston/Logan_In	37	65	48	-4	65	+37	11	+11	1.39	+0.55	5	4.44	+1.08	16	
Greenfield	28	72	49	-3	37	+12	5	+5	1.11	+0.23	4	4.22	+0.86	12	
New_Bedford	27	60	47	-4	33	+2	0	+0	2.27	+1.34	4	7.17	+3.30	16	
Otis_AFB	28	57	45	-3	21	+13	0	+0	1.43	+0.52	3	6.87	+3.28	14	
Plymouth	25	65	46	-3	36	+28	1	+1	2.24	+1.26	5	7.82	+3.88	17	
Walpole	28	72	47	-3	52	+36	9	+9	1.61	+0.64	5	5.24	+1.29	17	
Chicopee/Westov	28	72	50	-3	77	+24	12	+12	1.28	+0.37	4	3.12	-0.46	15	
Worthington	26	69	45	-1	26	+17	3	+3	0.91	-0.07	4	3.70	+0.06	14	
RHODE ISLAND															
Providence	32	63	49	-2	58	+36	8	+8	2.22	+1.29	4	5.20	+1.34	14	
Woonsocket	27	65	46	-3	33	+20	0	+0	1.85	+0.87	4	5.32	+1.47	15	
CONNECTICUT															
Bridgeport/Siko	38	63	49	-3	39	+7	1	+1	1.35	+0.44	4	3.65	+0.17	13	
Hartford/Bradle	34	71	51	-1	81	+41	10	+10	1.22	+0.31	4	2.75	-0.83	14	
Norfolk	30	70	46	+1	27	+20	0	+0	0.78	-0.27	4	1.82	-2.32	13	
Thomaston_Dam	32	72	49	+0	37	+17	4	+4	1.01	+0.00	4	2.44	-1.48	14	
Willimantic	29	69	49	+0	64	+47	8	+8	1.27	+0.29	4	2.99	-0.89	15	

STATE WEATHER SUMMARY
For the Week Ending Sunday, April 27, 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	71	43	-1	0.00	2.29
NH	10	74	44	-1	0.72	3.04
VT	18	79	45	+0	0.44	3.59
MA	24	73	47	-2	0.54	2.40
RI	27	65	47	-3	1.00	2.85
CT	28	72	48	-2	0.46	2.58

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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 - Howard Rood (FSA), Fairfield/Litchfield: Farmers were busy this past week spreading manure. Most land is still too wet to plow for field corn. **Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland:** Fixing fence on pasture, spreading manure, plowing, spreading fertilizer on hay and tobacco fields. Some no till plantings of hay. Some looking to plant field corn on light ground this week. Sweet corn planted with row cover germinated but not emerged. Light frost this morning. **Marsha Jette (FSA), New London:** Producers are reporting pastures needing crack seedings. Cold, wet weather is resulting in crop preparations running 2 to 3 weeks behind schedule. Greenhouse growers are being very conservative opening houses due to high cost of fuel. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Cold, wet weather has delayed planting and likely first cut of haylage by at least two weeks. Efforts are focused on spreading manure, harrowing and getting fields ready for planting. Maple syrup production was poor due to constant cold and very few warm days to allow sap to flow. Fruit trees are getting ready to take action providing weather cooperates. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Unsettled weather still affecting operations. Manure spreading and field preparation underway. Mud is hampering field work in some areas.

MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook: Potatoes: It is still winter in northern Maine. Snow banks are on the edge of fields, next to woods and along fence rows. Lots of frost still in the ground, need prolonged period of warm weather or a warm rain. Growers bringing seed home, getting planting equipment ready for the fields and signing processing contracts. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** No farm activities happening in Aroostook County as of yet. We are still waiting for snow to disappear and for the fields to dry after the long winter. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Some farmers have spread a little manure and have rutted the fields due to wet conditions, so have discontinued until fields are drier. Frost is still coming out in some places. Mornings that are clear have temperatures of around 30 degrees still. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** Very cold spring. The deep frost is still coming out. Some farmers are spreading manure on fields. Need some more rain. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Cold winter has caused some damage to sensitive crops. Some damage to highbush blueberries and strawberries. Fields may turn green this week with rain over the weekend and warmer weather predicted. Some manure was spread before the rain, but fields are too wet to work right now. Pastures are turning green, but no animals out yet. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Cool, wet weather has held up most farm activities. Some burning of blueberry fields taking place on the occasional dry days. Greenhouse sales are still slow, waiting for warm weather. A few early crops are in the ground but nothing is up yet. **David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild Blueberries: Fields are being burned for pruning and pre-emergence herbicides are being applied. Bud scales on cropping fields buds are just beginning to separate. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** This past week was cold, wet and miserable. Not much field work to report; the ground is still wet and cold. The season is getting off to a slow start, but the upcoming week sounds promising. Stay tuned! **Parker Rand (FSA), Cumberland/York:** The season has been very slow to arrive, cold and a little dry. There has been some tilling and even some sweet corn planted. The greenhouses are bursting at the seams, and I thought spring might never come. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** There is some early seed bed preparation for vegetables on very well drained soils. The major activity for livestock producers is spreading of manure. In this area, the subsoil is still very dry on well drained soils. Recent rain was welcome. Maple syrup production was average to slightly above average after a very late start.

MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire: Operators getting equipment ready for spring work. Only a little ground tilling (still cold and wet). A little sweet corn planting under plastic, also some potato planting. Some removal of mulch on berry fields and planting of cold tolerant fruit and vegetables. Orchard growers are still pruning their trees and some are spraying. Warm temperatures a few weeks ago shifted the trees to budding. Reports are that orchard trees wintered very well. Maple syrup production was on and off during a late sap run with below normal volume but some high quality syrup. Half an inch of snow

midweek and a quarter inch of rain on the weekend. Agricultural land wintered very well because of good ground cover of snow. Frost was not too deep in these fields. Operators have very little funds for spring planting requirements. **Kip Graham (FSA), Worcester:** Some of the higher located fields plowed and harrowed. Some fields still too wet to drive in. A little too early to plant crops. Fruit trees still being planted, raspberries, strawberries, peas, carrots and Swiss chard. Some farmers using chicken manure holding from year to year. The season for planting is about two weeks behind due to the cold winter and excessive snow. We had a cooler than usual winter. Many crops started in greenhouses. A little early to tell if any loss on peaches. The cold winter "may" affect the peach crop - little early to tell. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: One year ago, water levels were a great concern, but there is plenty of water going into this growing season. Reservoirs are back to normal or above-normal levels. Cranberry vines appeared to have wintered very well. A good percentage of the acreage was ice-sanded in January. Early cultivars are greening up nicely, but later cultivars still have their dormant red color. One frost night of significance last week. Weeds are starting to appear. Growers are applying pre-emergent herbicides, cleaning ditches, finishing renovation projects prior to vine planting. Much more optimism in the industry than 12 months ago. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** The season is way behind due to the cold, wet weather. Very little is planted. Apples just beginning to show bud break. But we have plenty of water. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Cool temperatures have delayed most farming schedules in Franklin County. Most farmers agree that we're about two weeks behind schedule but that will change quickly after the weather improves. Activities this week include pruning, sub-soiling, burning low bush blueberries and uncovering strawberries. Potato and sweet corn growers are just getting started with their early plantings. **Paul Fischer (FSA), Essex/Middlesex:** Cool, wet weather has hampered field work. Very little sweet corn under plastic has been planted. Forecast calls for warmer weather which should allow for increased field work. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** A cool week with rain showers off and on. Many farmers reported this rain was needed. Vegetable farmers were planting sweet corn under plastic, potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, carrots and parsnips. Dairy farmers were spreading manure, repairing fence and seeding new alfalfa fields. Easter flower sales were excellent at the farm stands. Lime was also being applied to many fields.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap: Soil is still very cold and wet. Peas are planted in some places. High tunnels prepared for tomato transplants. New raspberry plants planted and existing ones pruned. Lots of greenhouse activity - seeding vegetable and flower transplants and preparing for bedding plant sales. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** Generally fair and dry conditions for most of the week, with a nice soaking rain on Saturday. Looks like most crops made it through the winter nicely. Farmers spreading manure (spring is in the air!), top-dressing fertilizer on hayfields, and putting in spring seedings. A few are getting ready to plow fields for field corn. Fruit growers finishing last bits of pruning. A few vegetable growers have started to plant such cool-weather crops as peas, radishes, and beets. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Warming days with cool nights still, increasingly wetter as week progresses with some snow accumulations. Rain welcome as season beginning somewhat dry. Manure moving to fields and fitting of lighter soils by some growers. Finishing up pruning activities. Greenhouses gearing up for Mothers' Day openings. Appears to have been less than desirable winter for bee keepers with more than average hive losses attributed to weather. **Steve Schmidt (FSA), Grafton:** The ground water is still below normal. Surface soils were much drier than normal earlier in the month. Field work has started as early as April 14th, due to unusually dry soil conditions. A little over a half-inch of precipitation fell over the past couple of weeks. Many streams and tributaries to the Connecticut River have remained lower than would be normal for this time of year. The possibility of continuing drought remains a very genuine concern. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Field Crops: Between rain showers - liming and fertilizing hayfields, spreading manure, plowing, disking, and getting ready to plant corn. Fixing pasture fences. Also, getting ready to make new pasture and hayfield seedings. Vegetables: Transplanting

tomatoes into high tunnels. Early season vegetables (peas, lettuce, greens) are being planted, along with early plastic sweet corn. Liming, fertilizing, plowing, disking and getting ready plant fields. Many fields too wet to work yet. Fruits: Pruning continues in apple and pear orchards, along with pruning blueberry bushes and raspberry patches. Orchardists are chopping brush in orchard or push pruning out of the orchards. Apples are at half-inch green stage in earliest blooming areas. Peaches are starting to swell. Strawberry plants starting to grow. Planting fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries. Fertilizing orchards. Protective fungicide sprays applied on fruit trees. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** It has been a long and very cold winter followed by a cool spring. Growers are preparing the fields by plowing, spreading manure, fertilizing and liming. Tree fruits, small fruits and forages are growing very slowly because of cold weather. Dairy cows and livestock eager to be outdoors on pastures. Growers assessing winter damage: winter burn on blueberries, dead peach buds, split lower trunk on fruit trees, winter killed forage crops. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** A new season has begun. Field work is beginning with manure spreading and some drier fields being plowed up. Recent rains have kept the soil moist. Hay fields are greening up nicely. **Geoffrey Njue (Ext), Strafford:** This past week saw some fine days and some cloudy days with rain showers. There was more rain over the weekend. The weather has been fairly cold and the grass is just starting to grow. Farmers were busy plowing their fields although some fields are still too wet to work. Most farmers were also busy collecting soil samples to test their fields for pH and nutrients. Some fruit growers were applying dormant oil against mites, others were busy finishing with pruning. Most garden centers and nurseries opened the season with sales of cool season plants.

RHODE ISLAND - Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties: The weather is finally breaking after a long winter! Lots of precipitation. This Saturday was a wash out. Upcoming weather reports show a good week ahead, this will allow more time in the fields.

VERMONT - Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans: Landowners are spreading manure on their driest fields and have also begun chisel plowing their cornfields. Pastures and hayfields are just starting to turn green. **Lynette Hamilton (FSA), Windham:** Windham County crops are about two weeks later than last year. Some new seeding alfalfa has been done, but no corn planted yet. Manure spreading and plowing, getting soils ready for the first signs of the cropping season. Some vegetable growers have planted sweet corn under plastic along with other hardy crops. Still very cold and wet in southern Vermont. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Hay crops starting to green up. Some manure spreading on lighter soils. Started tillage in a few fields. Some fertilizer starting to spread. **Gary Braman (FSA) Orange/Windsor:** Farmers are busy spreading manure, harrowing and fixing fence. Mother Nature gave them a mixture of sun, rain and snow. However, the fields are now drying out nicely from the wind. Spring has sprung from the long, cold winter! **Chris Benedict (Ext), Chittenden:** Last week's cold, wet weather slowed apple bud development. Since we had some green tissue present, apple scab infection was of concern. Ascospore development checked over a week ago and is well underway. The extended winter-like weather has slowed arthropod development. The outlook of weather for this week is quite promising.

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Aubrey R. Davis, Director
Statisticians: Emily McAllister, Dave Mikelson

Joe Samson, Deputy Director
Stat Assistant: Wayne Colpitt

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