

Texas Crop Weather

Crop conditions improved in Central, East, North and parts of the Rolling Plains thanks to rain, according to reports from Texas AgriLife Extension Service agents.

However, much of the rest of the state remains short of moisture.

The cost of fertilizer remains a critical issue for many producers throughout the state.

"Still no changes in weather; it's dry!" said J. D. Ragland, Texas AgriLife Extension Service agent in Floyd County, near Lubbock.

"The only chance we had this week of any kind of moisture was on Wednesday evening, and it looked like we had every opportunity, but we missed and drew a goose egg."

"A few wheat fields are hanging on but will need moisture in the next week," said Danny Nusser, AgriLife Extension agent in Randall County, south of Amarillo. "Most dryland fields are being 'disastered' because of the lack of moisture and insect pressure earlier in the year."

"Pastures will need moisture to begin spring growth."

"Many cattle producers are continuing to feed due to shortage of grass or no grass growth due to drought," said David Graf, AgriLife Extension agent in Sherman County in the northern Texas Panhandle.

"Some cattle are being grazed on wheat due to poor wheat conditions (too poor to harvest as grain) and high feed prices."

"Pastures are making excellent growth, but fertilizer applications are not taking place," said Randy Reeves, AgriLife Extension agent in Harrison County in East Texas.

"Those that are applying fertilizer are doing so at super-reduced rates due to high cost."

The following summaries were compiled by Texas AgriLife Extension Service District reporters this week:

Central

Rain came to most of the re-

gion, filling stock tanks, greening up pastures and replenishing soil moisture.

Some counties received hail with light damage to corn.

The condition of cattle has greatly improved.

Coastal Bend

Warm, windy and dry weather was the rule.

Lack of soil moisture slowed the growth of cotton and small grains.

The wheat harvest began.

Some hay was harvested, and livestock producers had to supplementally feed because of lack of forage.

East

Pastures made excellent growth despite scattered showers.

Many producers are not applying fertilizer to improved pastures because of the high cost.

Those that are fertilizing are only using low rates.

Pasture weed control began with applications of herbicides.

Livestock producers were working cattle.

Reports of fly problems came from some counties.

Blueberry and blackberry growing season was off to a good start in Henderson County.

Spraying of peach trees continued.

Rolling Plains

The eastern part of the Rolling Plains has received good moisture from thunderstorms this past week, though some areas had major hail damage.

The western part is still in need of more moisture, as high winds are causing problems not only with drying topsoil, but also with spraying weeds.

The wheat is starting to turn fast, with the hot and dry winds reported over the last few weeks.

This crop is looking good across most of the district.

Flies are becoming a nuisance to most cattle herds, and producers are beginning to treat for them.

Green grass is becoming

abundant.

Preparation work is being done for cotton planting.

Grain sorghum is emerging, and small grain fields are looking good.

Stock tanks are full, and cattle are in fair to good condition.

Weeds are aggressively growing and need spraying.

South

Short to very short soil moisture conditions continued to be the rule through much of the area.

The northern parts of the region, however, did receive several inches of rain.

Other counties received light showers that may slightly improve growing conditions.

The western parts of the region are wrapping up onion harvesting, and spring vegetables are progressing.

However, dryland crops might be as much as a 90 percent loss due to the spring drought.

Livestock are in fair condition, but only because of continual supplemental feeding.

South Plains

Scattered showers brought from a trace to 4 inches of moisture.

Parmer, Dawson and Scurry counties received high winds and hail up to the size of golf balls.

These storms damaged structures, wheat and alfalfa.

Damage estimates are still being processed.

Soil moisture was short to very short.

Corn planting was in full swing.

Producers continued to prepare fields for cotton, with a possible start-planting date in early May.

However, dryland crop plant dates will depend on whether rain is received.

Winter wheat was in heading to flowering stages, but in poor condition.

With poor yield potential, some wheat is being cut for hay.

Pastures and ranges were in

poor condition.

Livestock were mostly in fair condition, with supplemental feeding continuing.

Southeast

Cool-season annual grasses have run their course, and seed is maturing.

No significant moisture was received.

Rice planting continued and should end the early part of next week.

Mexican Rice Borer moths are being caught in traps.

Numbers averaged in the thirties per trap this week, which is not a big number compared with what's expected later this year.

There are still hay reserves.

Producers are continuing to fertilize pastures despite high nitrogen prices, but producers are applying less.

Livestock were doing well.

Stamps To Go Up A Penny

The price for a one-ounce first-class stamp will increase from 41 to 42 cents on May 12.

Prices for other mailing services, such as standard mail, periodicals, package services (including single-piece parcel post) and special services will also change.

The average increase by class of mail is at or below the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

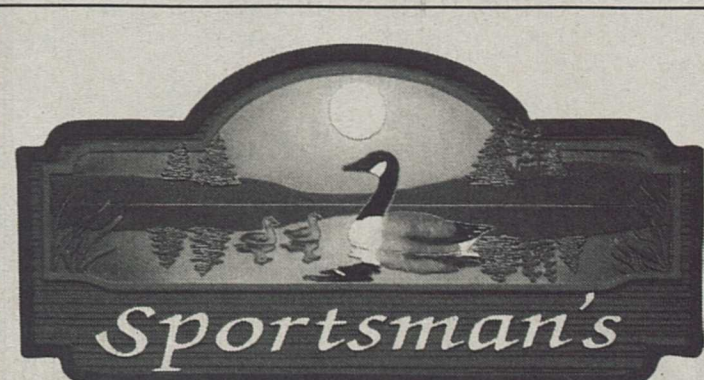
"The Postal Service developed the Forever Stamp for consumers to ease the transition during price changes," said Weimar Postmaster Thomas Falke.

"We encourage Americans to buy Forever Stamps now for 41 cents because, like the name suggests, they are good forever."

The price goes up to 42 cents on May 12.

The Postal Service has sold five billion Forever Stamps since the launch last April and plans to have an additional five billion in stock to meet the expected demand before the May price change.

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February, March Oil Stats Given

The Texas Railroad Commission issued a total of 1,754 original drilling permits in March 2008, compared to 1,711 in March 2007.

The March total included 1,517 permits to drill new oil and gas wells, 48 to re-enter existing well bores and 189 for re-completions.

Permits issued in March 2008 included 318 oil, 432 gas, 950 oil and gas, 49 injection, two service and three other permits.

February Crude Oil Production

Texas preliminary February 2008 crude oil production averaged 939,897 barrels daily, up from

the 905,111 barrels daily average of February 2007.

The preliminary Texas crude oil production figure for February 2008 is 26,317,119 barrels, an increase from 25,343,105 barrels reported during February 2007.

March Oil and Gas Completions

In March 2008, operators reported 456 oil, 800 gas, 42 injection and zero other completions, compared to 370 oil, 697 gas, 12 injection and five other completions during March 2007.

Total well completions for 2008 year-to-date are 4,018, up from 3,683 recorded during the same

period in 2007.

Operators reported 580 holes plugged and three dry holes in March 2008, compared to 536 holes plugged and seven dry holes in March 2007.

February Natural Gas Production

Texas oil and gas wells produced 479,246,697 Mcf (thousand cubic feet) of gas, based upon preliminary production figures for February 2008, up from the February 2007 preliminary gas production total of 435,771,712 Mcf.

Texas production in February 2008 came from 136,807 oil and 80,556 gas wells.

Cattle, Corn Prices Up For Week

For the week ending May 3, feeder cattle prices at Texas auctions were again mixed, from \$4 per hundredweight lower to as much as \$10 higher compared with a week ago.

Fed cattle prices were slightly higher.

Texas cash cotton prices were lower, as prices continue to adjust to higher global supplies. Corn prices increased as planting progress fell farther behind in the Midwest.

As for futures markets, wheat, corn and lumber prices closed the week higher, while feeder cattle, finished cattle and cotton ended lower.

Some areas of East, South and South Central Texas recorded up to an inch of rain, but weather for most of the state was dry and windy.

Cotton planting was underway on the Plains and now stands at 24 percent complete statewide. Corn is 72 percent planted, be-

hind the normal 83 percent, with the emerged acreage reported in mostly good to fair condition.

Grain sorghum planting is 66 percent complete, ahead of the normal 56 percent.

The wheat crop is 56 percent headed and remains in fair to very poor condition.

The ratings for soil moisture are very short to short on the Plains and in the Trans-Pecos region and adequate to short elsewhere.

Texas Has Half Of US Oil Rigs

The Texas average rig count as of April 18 was 873, representing about 50 percent of all active land rigs in the United States.

In the last 12 months, total Texas reported production was 340 million barrels of oil and 6.6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Texas natural gas production represents approximately 29 percent of total U.S. natural gas demand.

The Commission's estimated final production for February 2008 is 27,788,246 barrels of crude oil and 493,669,008 Mcf (thousand cubic feet) of gas well gas.

The Commission derives final production numbers by multiplying the preliminary February 2008 production totals of 26,317,119 barrels of crude oil and 420,967,859 Mcf of gas well gas by a production adjustment factor of 1.0559 for crude oil and 1.1727 for gas well gas.

These production totals do not include casinghead gas or condensate.

Texas natural gas storage reported by the Commission for March 2008 is 223,277,982 Mcf, compared to 273,663,502 Mcf in

March 2007.

The April 2008 gas storage estimate is 231,638,076 Mcf.

The Texas Railroad Commission's Oil and Gas Division set initial May 2008 natural gas production allowables for prorated fields in the state to meet market demand of 18,137,377 Mcf.

In setting the initial May 2008

allowables, the Commission used historical production figures from previous months and producers' demand forecasts for the coming month and adjusted the figures based on well capability.

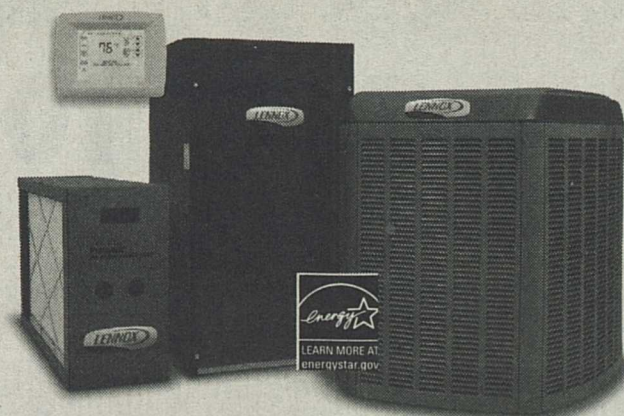
These initial allowables will be adjusted after actual production for May 2008 is reported.

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