

Texas Crop Weather Report

The Texas Field Office released the following report regarding Texas agriculture for the past week.

Agricultural Summary

Parts of East Texas received up to 3 inches of rain.

Most of the state observed 0.01 to 0.50 inches of precipitation.

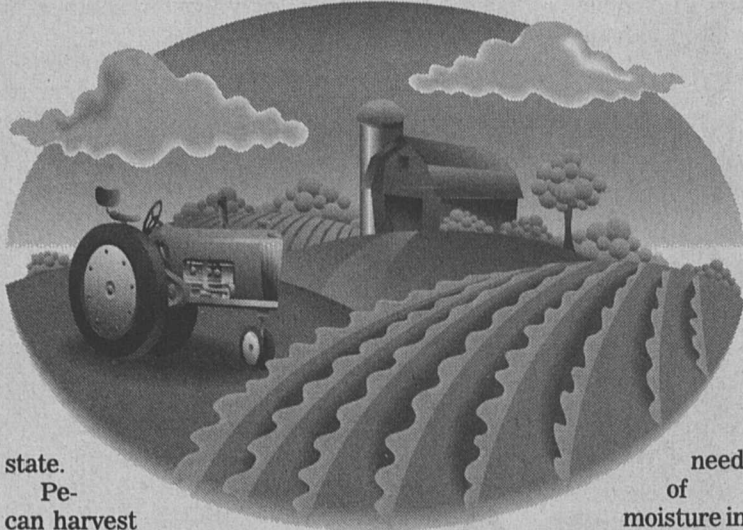
Wheat and oats planting neared completion across most areas of the state and was in need of moisture.

Cotton harvest in the Southern High Plains continued, while producers in the Southern Low Plains were beginning to harvest some of the early fields, which survived the June storms.

Corn harvest in the Northern High Plains continued, while some corn stalks were already being plowed under.

Sorghum harvest in the High Plains was almost complete and yields varied.

Peanut harvest was near completion in most areas of the



state. Pe-can harvest continued in the Cross Timbers, Blacklands, Trans-Pecos and Edwards Plateau and showed poor yields.

Livestock were in fair to good condition across the state with supplemental feeding taking place.

Pasture and range land was in

need of moisture in South Texas.

Topsoil moisture was mostly very short to adequate across the state.

Field Crops Report

Wheat in the High Plains had established a good root system but was in need of moisture.

Wheat in the Southern Low

Plains was in need of moisture as there were increased concerns over falling conditions.

Wheat in the Cross Timbers and Blacklands was concerning producers because the crop could be lost due to dry conditions.

Statewide, wheat condition was mostly fair to good, and oat condition was mostly poor to fair.

Cotton harvest in the Northern Plains was in full swing, showing decreasing yields and quality from previous years.

Harvest in the Southern High Plains continued, while producers in the Southern Low Plains were beginning to harvest some of the early fields, which survived the June storms.

Harvest in the Blacklands, Trans-Pecos and South Central Texas was almost complete.

Cotton condition was mostly fair to good statewide.

Corn harvest in the Northern High Plains was almost complete,

while some corn stalks were already being plowed under.

Sorghum harvest in the High Plains was almost complete and yields varied.

There were some fields of sorghum in the Southern High Plains that were not going to be harvested.

Peanuts continued to be harvested in some areas of the state and harvest was near completion.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report

Pecan harvest continued in the Cross Timbers, Blacklands, Trans-Pecos and Edwards Plateau and showed poor yields.

Cabbage and spinach harvest took place in South Texas

while onion and spinach harvest showed good progress due to cooler weather.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report

Livestock were in fair to good condition across the state with supplemental feeding taking place.

Pasture and range land were in need of rainfall in the Low Plains.

Pasture and range land was in need of moisture in South Texas.

Grass growth was slow in the Upper Coast due to late planting and cooler weather.

Range and pasture condition was mostly poor to fair statewide.

Tips For Perfect Holiday Party Hosting

It's that season for making party rounds and opening up homes to friends and family.

Maybe it's your turn to play host or hostess and you're not sure where to start or how to set your party apart from the others.

More importantly, you want to ensure guests have a good time.

Even if you've waited until the last minute for party planning, you can still host a memorable and fun event.

Here are a few ideas how.

–Secret Santa gift exchange: Part of the enjoyment of the holidays is exchanging gifts with others.

Instruct guests to bring along an inexpensive gift.

You can set the price limit at \$10 to \$15.

Place all of the gifts in a big red bag and play Santa, handing out a gift to everyone who attended.

–Play games: Scour the game aisle of your favorite store for board or action games that would work well in large groups.

Or, modify baby or bridal shower games to fit a holiday theme.

Door prize games or “Pin the Red Nose on Rudolph” are silly ideas that can add up to fun, especially when the cocktails are flowing.

–Create the mood with lights and music: Christmas and New Year's are celebrated in most

areas during the darkest days of winter.

So shed light on your festivities with plenty of twinkling lights and votive candles.

Create a holiday playlist on your MP3 player and make sure the tunes continue all night long.

–Involve guests in decorating: Short on time?

Gather up supplies for decorating and advertise that you're having a tree-trimming or house-trimming party on your invitations.

Allow guests to get crafty and be involved in dressing up your home.

–Don't fret about food: You don't have to be a gourmet chef to host a winning party.

If food isn't your forte, don't worry about catering the event or looking to pre-packaged appetizers and snacks.

As guests mingle and hop from party to party, they're not going to be looking for an elaborate sit-down dinner.

Fresh veggies and dips, bite-sized finger foods and the like are standard party fare.

If you want to get creative, take any of your favorite foods and just make them in miniature.

Tiny burgers, bite-sized pizzas and even small peanut butter and jelly sandwiches can delight.

–Cocktail savvy: Stock the bar with the old standards for variety



and come up with one signature drink you can make in bulk.

Why not try a frosty punch and give it a theme-inspired name, such as “Winter Wonderland”?

Be sure to have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks on hand for those designated drivers.

–Dessert bar: Top off the evening with a dessert bar where guests can create and garnish

their own desserts.

Set out ice cream and fixings, a fondue pot with skewers of fruit, different pies with nuts and whipped cream or any other combination you can think of.

Try out a couple of these tips for a memorable evening that doesn't take much planning.

TXDot Launches New Web Site

Demonstrating a commitment to becoming a more transparent agency, the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDot) redesigned its Web site to make information-gathering easier for Texans.

The new site (www.txdot.gov), which is organized by topics rather than departments, makes navigation less cumbersome.

The site is also much leaner, with 30 percent less content than the former version.

“An agency is transparent when it becomes easy for the public to find information and interact with employees,” explained Deirdre Delisi, Texas Transportation Commission chair.

“The Web site redesign is just one of many changes that TXDot will be making through the next few years to achieve this.”

Links to frequently visited pages will be prominently displayed at the top of the page.

For example, information on vehicle registration or how to get specialty plates or a driver's license will show up on the home page, along with other popular

topics such as road conditions, hearings and meetings and TxTag information.

Other categories include careers, doing business with TXDot, local information, public involvement, safety, travel and projects.

At the “TXDot Library,” citizens will discover forms, publications, videos, brochures and newsletters.

TXDot's Web site has 20,000 pages and receives about 46 million hits per month, with Vehicle Titles and Registration (VTR) and information on driver's license being the most popular subjects.

Said Delisi, “Lawmakers and others have asked us to be more open and to make our Web site more consumer-focused and streamlined.

“With the launch of this new site, I believe we are well on our way to fulfilling that request.”

A new feature called Project Tracker provides detailed information on TXDot projects statewide.

Citizens simply click on the “Projects” link and identify the district.

In addition to specific infor-

mation on each project, the list includes information on TXDot's statewide transportation-improvement program, the agency's strategic plan and the long-range transportation plan.

Citizens may also subscribe to e-mail updates, selecting the type of information they are interested in.

Initial feedback from TXDot employees and other government agencies has been extremely positive, added Delisi.

“Those who have reviewed the Web site are saying that it's user-friendly and intuitive,” she noted.

TXDot will continue taking comments and suggestions from the general public.

The suggestions will be used to make additional improvements to make sure the agency's website is as user-friendly as possible.

Click on the “Tell Us What You Think!” link on the new site's home page (www.txdot.gov) and send TXDot your thoughts.

For more information, contact TXDot's Government & Public Affairs Division, at (512) 463-8588.

Monthly Oil And Gas Stats.

October Permits To Drill

The Commission issued a total of 2,693 original drilling permits in October 2008, compared to 1,737 in October 2007.

The October total included 2,325 permits to drill new oil and gas wells, 83 to re-enter existing well bores and 285 for re-completions.

Permits issued in October 2008 included 566 oil, 613 gas, 1,439 oil and gas, 62 injection, zero service and 13 other permits.

September Crude Oil Production

Texas preliminary September 2008 crude oil production averaged 859,781 barrels daily, down from the 870,250 barrels daily average of September 2007.

The preliminary Texas crude

oil production figure for September 2008 is 25,793,419 barrels, a decrease from 26,107,529 barrels reported during September 2007.

October Oil And Gas Completions

In October 2008, operators reported 988 oil, 1,277 gas, 220 injection and three other completions, compared to 379 oil, 1,020 gas, 17 injection and one other completion during October 2007.

Total well completions for 2008 year to date are 14,030, up from 11,877 recorded during the same period in 2007.

Operators reported 652 holes

plugged and four dry holes in September 2008, compared to 774 holes plugged and 11 dry holes in October 2007.

September Natural Gas Production

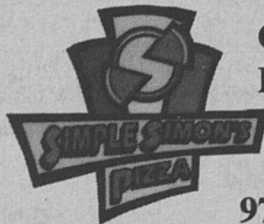
Texas oil and gas wells produced 503,579,264 Mcf (thousand cubic feet) of gas based upon preliminary production figures for September 2008, up from the September 2007 preliminary gas production total of 461,913,124 Mcf.

Texas production in September 2008 came from 137,868 oil and 83,342 gas wells.

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Flu season is here.....it's not too late to roll up your sleeve and get your flu vaccination like the employees of First National Bank - Eagle Lake recently did. Liz Duarte, RN (left) of Rice Medical Center shows her ouchless technique!!!!

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