

# Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin State Stories

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**ALABAMA:** The state received rain in many areas during February. Conditions were favorable for land preparation of early spring planting in areas where rain was not a factor. Chill hours required for peach blooms have been met for all commercial varieties in Central state. In areas where cotton is still being harvested, ginning is also nearing completion. Cattle were fed hay because of colder than normal weather. Activities: Were general care of livestock, poultry, catfish.

**ALASKA: DATA NOT AVAILABLE:**

**ARIZONA:** Temperatures for most of the state were below average for the week. Alfalfa conditions ranged from fair to mostly good. Sheep continued to graze on alfalfa fields for winter pasture. Small Grains emergence is near completion, while heading is underway. Range, Pasture feeds have improved due to the recent precipitation. There were 9 of the 18 reporting stations above normal levels.

**ARKANSAS:** A "severe weather" cold front entered into state on the first Monday of February bringing cold, wet weather. Heavy snow developed on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, with the heaviest amounts (2"- 4") found in the northern, northeastern counties. The central parts of the state had one to two inches of snow with the the southern portions of the state receiving rain. The pattern repeated itself on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month. After several days of clearing weather, a winter weather advisory was reenacted mid-month. With this next pattern of winter weather came mostly light freezing rain, drizzle mixed with light snow flurries. Also, by mid-month many reporting stations had recorded over two inches of precipitation above the monthly norms. Temperature highs averaged in the lower 50's with lows in the teens during this time. The third week of the month saw light snow flurries enter into the southern, eastern counties of the state, while most of the rest of the state continued to have light freezing rain, drizzle. By the time this storm ended at weeks' end another cold front bringing snow, sleet entered the state from the north. The 22<sup>nd</sup> saw snow, ice in the northern counties which pushed south through the next two days. Then, on the 24<sup>th</sup> freezing rain, sleet, snow entered the state from the west, southwest blanketing most of the state from that date through the end of the month. Snow amounts ranging from 4"-10" were reported from this front. This later cold front also brought temperatures that ranged from the mid-teens at night to the upper-40's (southern state) during the daylight hours. The latest cold front brought temperatures that were significantly below the norms, averaging 22° lower than the norm for several consecutive days. Northern, Central state had several days where the temperature did not rise above freezing. Overall, February has been consistently one of the coldest on record. It was the coldest February since 1989 and the 21<sup>st</sup> coldest on record since 1880. The average temperature was less than 42° with one daily temperature broken with a high of 28° on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Also, February was the 24<sup>th</sup> wettest on record since 1880, the 6<sup>th</sup> snowiest since 1885. Several river areas had reported flooding before the last cold front entered the state, the precipitation from the last snowfall only added to this flooding. Producers were able to do very little field work with cleaning, maintenance of farm machinery being the major activity. Livestock are considered to be in fair to good condition, although practically all cattle are being fed hay and/or supplements.

**CALIFORNIA:** Pre-plant irrigation was underway in a few cotton fields by early February. By mid-month, rainfall was restricting work in many grain fields, but was proving beneficial to crop development. Wheat, barley, oat plantings were thriving. There were some reports of lodging due to rain, primarily in early-planted grain fields. Vigorous growth was noted in fields of alfalfa hay. Some alfalfa fields were treated with herbicide to control broadleaf weeds, with pesticides to control alfalfa weevils. The season's first cutting of alfalfa hay took place early in the month. Sugar beet fields were weeded, irrigated, treated with herbicides. Sweet potato hotbed fumigation was mostly complete by the end of the month. Potato harvesting continued. Blooms were reported in many peach, nectarine orchards. By late February, some early variety fruit trees in Southern state were well past full bloom. Freeze damage to blooms from cold weather was reported in some areas. Bloom sprays were applied as weather conditions allowed. Bees were placed in orchards to aid in pollination. However, bee activity was hindered in late February by rainfall, cold weather. Peach orchards received San Jose scale treatments. Pruning activity was winding down in tree fruit orchards by the end of the month, but continued in many vineyards. Brush shredding was ongoing in orchards, vineyards as conditions permitted. Wine, raisin grape vineyard removal continued. Grafting of new tree fruit varieties continued. Strawberry plants showed steady growth. Olive trees were pruned, continued to bloom. Navel oranges, lemons, tangerines, pummelos, and grapefruit were picked, packed. Rainfall in late February slowed the packing of citrus fruit, which helped packing houses to clear inventories. There were some problems with rind puff, granulation in the navel crop early in the month. In the latter half of February, cooler mornings helped to reduce rind problems. The Central Valley valencia orange crop was developing normally. The quality of the lemon crop was good, with strong color, maturity reported. Almond trees began to show blooms in early February. By the middle of the month, many trees were in full bloom. Fungicides were applied to almond blossoms. Bees were placed in orchards for pollination. Pruning, brush shredding, removal continued in some almond orchards. Replacement trees were planted in some orchards. Walnut orchards were treated for San Jose scale. In early February, warm weather prompted good growth in many vegetable fields. Fields of broccoli, lettuce, garlic, onions thrived in the warmer conditions. Later in the month, frosty mornings, rainfall hindered planting and other field work, the cooler temperatures slowed crop development. Tomatoes for fresh, processing use were planted. Planting began in pepper, eggplant, bean fields. Tomato, melon fields were sprayed for weeds. Broccoli harvesting continued. Asparagus harvesting was underway in central California by late February. Harvesting of greenhouse vegetables continued. The following vegetables were also harvested: Napa cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, mustard greens, kale, leaf lettuce, green onions, parsley, radicchio, spinach. Winter pastures were in good overall condition throughout the month. The best conditions were reported in the northern half of the State. However, some pastures in central state deteriorated in mid-February due to a lack of rain. Livestock were in good condition. Supplemental feeding of cattle took place in a few locations. Sheep grazed in alfalfa fields, pastures in the central part of the State. Lambs grazed in alfalfa fields in the southern desert area. Later in the month, lambs in the southern desert were moved to market or to other areas for further feeding.

**COLORADO:** February temperatures were below average during the early and late parts of the month, seasonal during mid-month. Snowfall

was limited to the mountain areas during the first half of February, however, the last half of the month provided snowfall to a majority of the state, including drought stricken Eastern state. Even with recent moisture, the Eastern Plains remain very dry. Water officials continue to make plans to restrict allocations for spring, summer 2003, as reservoir levels remain very low. Statewide mountain snowpack measurements have climbed to about 83% of average, which is a dramatic increase from 56% at this time last year. Winter wheat remains dormant in mostly fair condition, but vulnerable to blowout and freezing temperatures. Activities: Continue to center around feed, care of livestock in preparation for the upcoming lambing, calving activities.

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**DELAWARE:** The area received a large amount of snow during the month of February. This resulted in some damage to barns, sheds, poultry houses. Pastures, hay are in short supply. Small grains are in good condition due to the snow, rain. Livestock are in fair condition. Activities: Snow removal, repairing damaged barns, machine buildings, feeding livestock, working on farm equipment.

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**FLORIDA:** Cool temperatures during the first half of February 2003 slowed the development of vegetables, pastures while dry, windy conditions lowered soil moisture supplies. Dusty conditions, fluctuating temperatures caused some respiratory problems in cattle. Cold weather, colder than normal soil temperatures, drought, a virus in the oats forage lowered the pasture feed in the northern half of the State. Hay feeding was active but the poor quality of hay contributed to poor cattle condition in some areas. In the southern areas, drought lowered the condition of grasses for grazing. Significant rains fell around mid month, at the end. These showers replenished soil moisture in most northern, central Peninsula, most Panhandle localities but left some central, most southern Peninsula areas dry. Pasture feed suffered in many areas as soils dried. Temperatures warmed during the last half of February which boosted vegetable, pasture growth, especially in central, southern Peninsula localities. Hay making was active in some central areas as temperatures reached summertime levels. Potato digging started in the southern Peninsula about mid month while corn, peanut, soybean producers started to prepare land for spring crop planting in the Panhandle, northern Peninsula areas. Tobacco growers tended hot beds throughout the period, began to prepare land for transplanting during the last half of the month. Sugarcane harvesting in the Everglades continued throughout the month with the milder weather helping young plants, the ratoon crop recover from the late January freeze. Some grove caretakers ran irrigation systems early in the month to minimize the effect of the cool temperatures. Pin head citrus bloom buds began to show on terminal leaf axles at the beginning of the month while virtually all citrus trees showed feathery new growth by the end. Citrus harvesting was very active in early February but slowed by the end as producers picked virtually all supplies of early, mid season oranges. A very limited amount of Valencia harvesting started by the end of the month with most processors waiting for better acid to sugar ratios before accepting the fruit. Fresh fruit packing houses shipped grapefruit, tangerines, oranges throughout the month. Activities: Mwing, chopping, discing of cover crops, removing dead trees, resetting new trees, hedging, topping, applying of pre-bloom fertilizer, spring herbicides, the setting of bee hives in preparation for the pollination of open blooms.

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**GEORGIA:** Constant December rains slowed most farming activities for the State. According to David Stooksbury, State Climatologists, the long-term drought that has impacted state since 1998 is all but over. The State ended the year with more than 90% of normal yearly rainfall. Some areas experienced damage due to high winds, extreme cold weather. Wet soil conditions delayed small grain and wheat planting, cotton harvesting. Onion planting was behind schedule due to weather. Ryegrass, small grains, wheat were damaged from cold weather in some areas. Rains had replenished ponds, streams and added to soil moisture levels. Cotton harvesting approached completion. Rye, wheat, oat planting progressed nicely. Mild temperatures toward the end of the month improved grazing conditions. Activities: Growers continued winter grazing, routine care of livestock, poultry continued.

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**HAWAII:** Generally favorable weather for agriculture prevailed throughout the State during the past week. East state banana harvest remained active. Lower Puna papaya orchards continued to recover from

the previous weeks' dry conditions. Vegetables remained in generally fair to good condition with the beneficial showers, regular irrigation.

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**IDAHO:** Topsoil 15% very short, 23% short, 61% adequate, 1% surplus. Winter wheat 1% poor, 14% fair, 82% good, 3% excellent. Hay, Roughage supply 2% very short, 3% short, 64% adequate, 31% surplus. Lambing 67% complete. Calving 44% complete. Livestock was reported to be doing well. Continued mild winter weather has allowed for more winter wheat to emerge from dormancy in various areas of the state. Activities: Hauling manure, preparing taxes, machine maintenance, attending educational programs, pivot repair, preparation, marketing, feeding livestock.

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**ILLINOIS:** Topsoil 4% very short, 28% short, 61% adequate, 1% surplus Colder than normal temperatures continued across the state last month which helped the livestock remain healthy, allowed for ample grazing. Average temperature departure was one to 4° colder than normal. Soil moisture deficits across the state are a concern as farmers prepare for spring planting. The northern half of the state received little or no precipitation, while the southern half of the state received as much as one to two inches above normal. Wheat crop improved this month with 2% poor, 30% fair, 58% good, 10% excellent. Due to the extreme cold weather during the middle part of the month many wheat growers are concerned with how much of the crop has been damaged. Activities: Signing up for the farm program, preparing income taxes, hauling grain, spreading fertilizers, preparing equipment for spring field work.

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**INDIANA:** Dry subsoil conditions exist in most of the northern regions of the state. Frequent snow showers with some areas receiving heavy amounts during the month limited field activities. Snow amounts for the winter period ranked third highest on record for state. Southern regions of the state received more precipitation, 70% more than normal, than the central, northern areas during February. Precipitation was 20% below normal in the northern areas. Temperatures averaged 5° below normal for the state. Precipitation averaged about 3.00 inches, mostly in the form of snow. This was 0.72 inches above normal. Some areas received rain. Snow cover existed in most areas during the month which helped protect wheat during days of cold temperatures. Farmers continued to work on taxes, prepare reports for the FSA farm program. Farmers are spending a lot of time at local FSA offices. Some fertilizer was spread in a few areas of the state when soils were frozen enough to support heavy equipment. Activities: Snow removal, hauling manure, moving grain to market. Winter wheat is in mostly good condition. Some top dressing was accomplished. Livestock are in mostly good condition. Livestock were under some stress during the cold weather. Feedlots are muddy. Farm ponds are low, northern areas. Hay supplies remain in short supply. Hay prices are high. Lambing, calving is underway on some farms. Activities: Repairing equipment, attending meetings with fertilizer, seed dealers, visiting FSA offices, purchasing supplies, seeding clover, tiling, cleaning ditches, selling tobacco, spreading lime, taking care of livestock.

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**IOWA:** February's mid-month winter storm brought precipitation in the form of rain, snow to most of state. It appears that this precipitation improved soil moisture availability slightly, as 37% of the state was reported as being adequately supplied. This level increased from 29% of the state being reported as adequate during the month of January. At the end of February, the average depth of snow cover across state was 1 inch, similar to values from last month, last year at this time. The average depth of frost penetration for the state was 17 inches, compared to 16 inches last month, 4 inches at the same time last year. Movement of grain for the state was 24% none, 38% light, 35% moderate, 3% heavy. Hog, pig losses in February were 16% below avg.; 75% avg.; 9% above avg. Cattle, calf losses were 19% below avg.; 79% avg.; 2% above avg.

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**KANSAS:** Topsoil 16% very short, 44% short, 37% adequate, 3% surplus. Rain, snow improved soil moisture conditions Statewide. Wheat mostly holding its own, but will need good spring rains as it comes out of dormancy. Wheat 6% very poor, 20% poor, 45% fair, 26% good, 3% excellent. Wind, freeze damage to wheat has been mostly light so far. Spring calving is in full swing. Some problems reported in areas which had heavy, drifting snow or heavy precip which caused unusually muddy conditions. Hay, forage supplies 11% very short, 38% short, 50%

adequate, 1% surplus. Feed grain supplies 5% very short, 19% short, 74% adequate, 2% surplus.

**KENTUCKY:** A sharp fluctuation of temperatures occurred at the beginning of February, with much of the State seeing highs in the upper 50s, and even the low 60s for the first 4 days. Highs dropped back into the mid 30s, and by the 8<sup>th</sup>, lows had dipped all the way back into the single digits. Two storm systems brought precipitation to the State over the course of the first week. The first system resulted in precipitation as rain. The second system arrived late in the week, brought 1 to 2 in. snow to most of the State. Temperatures for the period averaged 32° across the State which was 2° below normal. Precipitation for the period totaled 0.72 in. statewide which was 0.17 in. below normal. The second week was punctuated by a powerful storm system that brought copious amounts of precipitation to the entire State. Areas in the north were plagued by paralyzing freezing rain on the weekend, while the south saw mostly rainfall, southeastern sections of the State faced flooding threats even into the 17th. Temperatures for the period averaged 34° which was 2° below normal. Precipitation totaled 3.21 in. statewide which was 2.32 in. above normal. In the aftermath of the previous week's ice storm, many sections of northern, central state spent a good part of the third week removing downed limbs, trees, working to restore power. For the southern half of the State, farmers faced concerns with flooding - including pumping basements, moving livestock, trying to stay ahead of the rising waters in many low-lying areas. Two additional weather systems during the week brought rainfall to what was already saturated ground, worsening previously existing flooding problems in south-central, eastern sections of the State. Temperatures averaged 36° which was 2° below normal. Precipitation totaled 1.73 in. statewide which was 0.85 in. above normal. The final week of February brought numerous periods of precipitation in the form of rain, freezing rain, sleet, snow across much of the State. Following the exit of a weak storm system that brought precipitation to a majority of the State on the 24th, arctic high pressure swept into the area, was the prominent weather feature for the first half of the week, helping to make this period the State's 4th week in a row with below normal temperatures. Southern sections saw a majority of the precipitation as disturbances grazed southern parts of the area from time to time, before a stronger system ushered high pressure eastward, brought a majority of the State rainfall again by the 28th. This week ended what was the 7th wettest and 30th coldest February in the last 108 years for the State. Temperatures for the period averaged 33° across the State which was 6° below normal. Precipitation for the period totaled 0.29 in. statewide which was 0.64 in. below normal. Farmers keep busy all month dealing with the changing weather conditions. Ice, snow hampered caring for livestock, other farm work. Many farmers had to deal with debris disposal from either flooding or ice damage to trees. Muddy conditions made calving more difficult, caused some losses. Transportation of grain, tobacco, livestock to market was difficult for extended periods during the month due to snow, ice, flooding. Some north-central, north-eastern communities had to deal with power losses for up to a week due to an ice storm. The 2002-2003 Burley tobacco auction season came to a close February 20. Contract centers ended their season on February 21. Clean up sales are scheduled for several days in March. Belt-wide contract sales totaled 219.5 million pounds returning \$198.51 per cwt. Belt-wide auction sales totaled 82.0 million pounds with, average price of \$195.14 per cwt. Resales amounted to 4,424,110 pounds for the season-to-date. State contract sales totaled 168.6 million pounds returning \$198.72 per cwt. state auction sales totaled 62.3 million pounds with and average price of \$195.97 per cwt. State resales amounted to 3,785,685 pounds for the season-to-date.

**LOUISIANA:** Extremely wet conditions in many areas slowed producers in making preparations for spring planting. During the week of February 17-23, many areas in our state received more than 4 inches of rain. Although this may have been too much rain at one time, the wet conditions were welcomed in most areas as the month of January was very dry for state (less than 2 inches for the entire month's state average). Sugarcane producers continued digging ditches, repairing turn rows that were rutted up during last season's harvesting. Other field crop producers were getting equipment ready for the upcoming season. Livestock producers were fertilizing winter pastures, feeding hay. Strawberry producers continued harvesting, selling their crop. Crawfish producers continued harvesting one of the best crops in recent years.

**MARYLAND:** A huge snow storm hit the area in the middle of February that resulted in over 20 inches of snow in most locations. The storm caused some damage to barns, sheds, greenhouses, poultry houses. Livestock, poultry are in fair condition despite the snow, cold temperatures. Hay supplies are becoming low but no serious problems. Small grains appear to be in good condition. Activities: Planning for spring plantings, repairing barns, farm equipment, attending conferences.

**MICHIGAN:** Snow, cold weather during the month of February had producers scrambling to provide adequate feed and water to animals. Livestock consumed feed at a rapid rate. Hay is still available in most areas of the State. Hay prices are up from last year. Some producers anticipate hay shortages this spring. In areas of the State where snow cover was minimal, growers were spreading manure. Early calving began. Growers in the south central, southeast were concerned with wheat condition due to lack of insulating snow early in the month. Precipitation, temperatures were below normal throughout state in February. Activities: Bookkeeping, equipment repair, maintenance, snow plowing, cutting wood, signing up for farm programs, thinning fence rows, completing 2002 taxes.

**MINNESOTA:** Conditions for winter have been relatively mild with minimal snow, some cold days. Very little snow cover, deep ground frost, minimal moisture is a concern. Wind erosion is also a concern due to lack of snow cover. Winter injury to alfalfa, other perennial crops is a possibility with frost going deeper into the soil because of the lack of snow cover. Dry conditions could cause moisture problems this coming crop season. Feed supplies, livestock conditions are good overall.

**MISSISSIPPI:** Soil 13% adequate, 87% surplus. Wheat 100% emerged, 25% jointing, NA 2002. Hay supply 13% short, 79% adequate, 8% surplus. Feed Grain 10% short, 87% adequate, 3% surplus. Excessive moisture conditions have delayed fieldwork, will push back anticipated plantings of row crops. Reports are numerous that feed cattle has become a major undertaking due to the saturated pastures.

**MISSOURI:** Precipitation during February averaged about 2.91 inches, well above the 1.90 inch 30-year average, but amounts were relatively light in northern counties while many east-central, southern counties were sharply above average. The abnormally cold weather, snow during the last half of the month caused some stress to livestock, but most areas have adequate feed supplies. The wheat crop remains dormant, with most of the State having received snow cover protection prior to when the coldest temperatures occurred. Precipitation was beneficial to wheat except for some areas of the Bootheel where amounts were excessive. Farmers are caring for livestock, getting ready for fieldwork.

**MONTANA:** Topsoil 23% very short, 44% short, 33% adequate, 0% surplus compared to 2002 49% very short, 38% short, 13% adequate, 0% surplus. Subsoil 41% very short, 38% short, 20% adequate, 1% surplus compared to 2002 56% very short, 34% short, 10% adequate, 0% surplus. During the month of February, precipitation in state has been above normal with a few exceptions. Winter wheat 4% very poor, 18% poor, 60% fair, 16% good, 2% excellent. This is better than last month's rating of 3% very poor, 25% poor, 42% fair, 28% good, 2% excellent. This year's winter wheat better than 2002 19% very poor, 30% poor, 43% fair, 8% good, 0% excellent. Wind damage to the winter wheat crop is currently rated at the following levels: 14% none, 57% light, 25% moderate, 4% heavy. Freeze, drought damage for the crop 12% none, 34% light, 45% moderate, 9% heavy. Snow cover for winter wheat 20% very poor, 15% poor, 35% fair, 25% good, 5% excellent. Livestock grazing 34% open, 41% difficult, 25% closed, compared to 2002 when 52% open, 26% difficult, 22% closed. Currently, 99% of the cattle are received supplemental feed, 99% of sheep. Last year 98% of cattle, 96% sheep received supplemental feed. Calving, lambing 23% and 12%

completed respectively compared to 25% for cattle, 12% for sheep last year.

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**NEBRASKA:** Temperatures for February averaged above normals the first three weeks, 11 to 22° below normals during the last week with highest readings during the third week. Precipitation for the month occurred during the first, last weeks in the form of snow. At the end of February, wheat 12% very poor, 20% poor, 44% fair, 23% good, 1% excellent, well below last year. Hay, forage supplies were mostly adequate to short. Cattle were grazing stalk fields with some supplemental feeding. Cattle were in mostly good condition with calving 20% done. Activities: Planning for the 2003 crop year, FSA sign ups, livestock care, attending farm sales.

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**NEVADA:** A split jet stream rested over state for much of the month, pushing storms to the north, the south. Precipitation was much below normal for most of the State, with the notable exception of Las Vegas which had above normal precipitation for the month. Concerns of irrigation water supplies heightened as the water content of winter snow pack remained below normal in all primary watersheds. Western watersheds were near normal for snow pack, but much of the East had less than half of normal. Calving was underway during the month, as was farm flock lambing, kidding. Marketing of yearling cattle was active and bull sales were busy. Hay shipments to dairy, equine accounts continued. Fall seeded grains, though limited, were wintering well. Garlic fields were in good condition. Shipments of onions from storage ended. Potato processing remained active. Winter livestock feeding demands were minimized by lack of snowfall. Activities: Equipment maintenance, ditch burning, livestock care, fence repairs, crop, livestock marketing.

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**NEW ENGLAND:** Cold temperatures, snow were prevalent throughout most of February in state. Most maple producers are awaiting warmer temperatures when sap will begin to flow; frigid temperatures, deep snow in areas have caused poor conditions for tapping. In the meantime, producers are preparing for the upcoming season. Activities: During the month included nursery/greenhouse work, tending livestock, preparing for the spring planting season.

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**NEW JERSEY:** February brought windy conditions, cold temperatures, snow to much of the region. The month was one of the snowiest on record for many areas, with some localities reporting cumulative snowfall totals of 30 inches or more. The first of several snowstorms swept through the region on February 7 dropping 6 to 8 inches of snow statewide. The President's Day storm dumped over 20 inches of snow in many areas. Warmer temperatures, steady rain the weekend of February 21 combined with the heavy snow pack to cause minor flooding in some localities. Temperatures averaged below normal, with the highest recorded temperature 52° on February 4. The lowest recorded temperature was 2° on February 14, the average monthly temperature was 29°.

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**NEW MEXICO:** The month of February started out relatively cool, with temperatures averaging 40 below normal for the state. Two storms brought light precipitation to the southeast, but accumulation was generally spotty, light. During the second week a significant storm came through that dropped 6 to 10 inches of snow on the northern, central mountains above 9000 feet. The third week brought several winter-type storms, with the main storm impacting the southern half of the state. Greatest precipitation amounts included 1.50 inches at Las Cruces, 1.11 inches at Carlsbad. Temperatures were near normal. The last week of the month was marked by a series of minor storms that favored the north. Chama, Farmington, Red River all measured over an inch of moisture. Temperatures were cool for most of the state, with the east averaging as much as 10 to 14° below normal. By the end of the month several areas had recorded precipitation accumulation near or above normal levels. This occurred mostly in the southern counties. Other areas were still well below average levels, although they were in better shape than they were at the end of January. Farmers were busy planting onion transplants,

pre-irrigating for chile, pruning pecan trees, leveling land, preparing seed beds. Ranchers were preparing for calving, many were supplementing feed.

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**NEW YORK:** The month of February was dominated by numerous heavy snowfalls combined with prolonged periods of frigid temperatures, about the same as January. Activities: Limited due to coldness, excessive snow. Activities: Tending livestock, snow removal, farm machinery maintenance, attending producer meetings, trade shows, grading, packing onions, apples.

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**NORTH CAROLINA:** Cold wet weather persisted throughout the month of February in North Carolina. Saturated field conditions prevented most spring crop preparations, deterred pasture, cover crop growth. The quality of small grain crops is a concern due to the poor weather conditions, late planting dates. Soil 0% very short, 1% short, 21% adequate, 78% surplus. The cold temperatures, poor pasture feeds increased hay, feed grain demand for livestock operations, causing tighter hay supplies. Many operations are further culling their herds, using alternative feeds to stretch hay supplies. Activities: Seeding greenhouse tobacco beds, planting potatoes, cabbage, equipment maintenance, caring for livestock, record keeping, enrolling in Farm Service Agency programs, completing Agricultural Census forms. The Weather, Crop report will be released on a weekly basis until late fall.

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**NORTH DAKOTA:** Calving, lambing have started across the state, with the cold temperatures causing difficulties for some producers. The average snow cover for the state was 3.0 inches. Snow cover protection for alfalfa 59% poor, 38% adequate, 3% excellent. Hay, forage 7% very short, 20% short, 70% adequate, and 3% surplus. Cattle conditions were rated 1% very poor, 3% poor, 29% fair, 60% good, 7% excellent, calving 8% complete. Sheep conditions 1% very poor, 3% poor, 27% fair, 58% good, and 11% excellent. Lambing was 21% and shearing 45% complete. Thirteen percent of the cattle, sheep feed was obtained from pastures and ranges. Road conditions for travel were rated 94% open, 5% difficult, 1% closed. Ten percent of the roads drifted, 6% icy, 6% muddy, 78% dry.

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**OHIO:** February 2003 was 5.0 ° colder than normal in state, with temperatures averaging 25.0° across the state. Precipitation averaged 3.17 inches, 0.92 inches above normal. Cattle remains in good condition across the state. Some producers reported purchasing forage for their operations.

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**OKLAHOMA:** Days suitable for fieldwork 1.0. Subsoil 6% very short, 25% short, 65% adequate, 4% surplus. Topsoil 3% very short, 22% short, 66% adequate, 9% surplus. Winter Wheat 1% very poor, 4% poor, 27% fair, 58% good, 10% excellent. Rye 2% very poor, 5% poor, 27% fair, 57% good, 9% excellent. Oats 5% very poor, 11% poor, 40% fair, 40% good, 4% excellent. Wheat grazed 62% 2003, 38% 2002 41 % avg. Rye grazed 86% 2003, 53% 2002, 34 % avg. Oats grazed 45% 2003, 38% 2002 37 % avg. Livestock 1% very poor, 8% poor, 34% fair, 50% good, 7% excellent. Pasture, Range 8% very poor, 19% poor, 45% fair, 27% good, 1% excellent. Livestock: Livestock were rated in mostly good to fair condition Statewide, but the cold, wet conditions have caused stress to the cattle. With spring calving underway, producers are reporting losing a large number of calves at birth due to the cold conditions. Farmers, ranchers have been forced to feed extra amounts of hay, feed during these adverse conditions.

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**OREGON:** Activities: Winter care of livestock ongoing across State. Supplemental feed continued. Shipments of wheat, barley, oats, corn, potatoes, dry onions continued. Digging, shipping of balled, burlapped, bareroot plants ongoing. State Department of Agriculture sponsoring nursery research grant programs for disease control, plant development. State is still lacking in consistent rainfall, mountain snowpack buildup has

not yet transpired. Snowpack in Cascades is 58% of average, while snowpack feeding the Willamette Basin is 25% of average. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), all river basin sites less than 65% of average snow water equivalent. Values ranged from 0% for Coast Range to 64% for Owyhee, Rogue, Umpqua.

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**PENNSYLVANIA:** During the month of February, Stare experienced below average temperatures almost every day. The average high temperature was approximately 33.3 °, 5.8° below normal. The average low temperature was approximately 18.9°, 4.6° below normal. Precipitation levels in western Pennsylvania were 25 to 50% below normal, despite large amounts of snowfall, rain. Precipitation levels in central state were normal to 50% above normal, while levels in eastern state were greater than 50% above normal. The precipitation total for the month was about 3.8 inches, 0.9 inches above normal. The precipitation total for the year is approximately 5.8 inches, 0.5 inches above normal. Activities: Maintaining machinery, fixing fences, buying seeds, other supplies, caring for livestock, buying hay, corn, shoveling snow, tax preparation, attending farm shows, organizational meetings.

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**SOUTH CAROLINA:** The weather for the month consisted of cold fronts which brought about some snow, icy conditions in, around the upstate counties. The fronts also brought about overcast skies, scattered showers. There were also several days with strong, windy conditions with wind gusts nearing 40 mph. The cold fronts were followed by warming trends with some temperatures in the 70° range. Farmers are busy in preparation for the upcoming planting season by servicing their equipment, tilling the land. The high fuel prices may encourage some farmers to pursue the option of no-till planting this year. Farmers are also using winter grazing pastures to supplement their winter hay supply.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA:** Feed Supplies 18% very short, 33% short, 45% adequate, 4% surplus. Stock water supplies 23% very short, 30% short, 46% adequate, 1% surplus. Winter Rye 11% very poor, 3% poor, 48% fair, 35% good, 3% excellent. Winter Wheat 7% very poor, 14% poor, 48% fair, 26% good, 5% excellent. Cattle condition 1% very poor, 3% poor, 24% fair, 60% good, 12% excellent. Sheep condition 1% very poor, 2% poor, 24% fair, 62% good, 11% excellent. Accessible livestock feed supplies 94% readily available, 5% difficult, 1% inaccessible. Accessible stock water supplies 86% readily available, 13% difficult, 1% inaccessible. Road conditions--county 100% open, township 98% open, 2% difficult. Cattle deaths 37% below normal, 62% normal, 1% above normal. Average snow depth state wide 1.0 inch. Alfalfa snow cover 88% poor, 12% adequate. Winter wheat snow cover 90% poor, 10% adequate. Winter rye snow cover 82% poor, 18% adequate. Calf deaths 28% below avg.; 70% avg.; 2% above avg. Sheep, lamb deaths 34% below avg.; 65% avg.; 1% above avg. The month of February brought some periods of cold temperatures, snowfall, but most of the state experienced, continuing, mild winter weather. With little snow cover, moisture received across the state, farmers, ranchers worry about the condition of winter crops, as well as the upcoming growing season. Activities: Tending to livestock, calving, lambing, fixing machinery, preparing for this year's growing season.

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**TENNESSEE:** Overall, temperatures averaged below normal, precipitation averaged above normal during the month of February. The first full week of the month began mild, dry, but a cold front moved through bringing showers, snow, cooler temperatures. Temperatures averaged below normal for the week, while precipitation amounts averaged around an inch. The next two weeks saw precipitation amounts well above normal causing some minor flooding, temperatures below normal. For the week ending February 16, precipitation totals ranged from 2 to over 5 inches across the state. The last week of the month saw temperatures ranging from slightly below normal over the East to well below normal elsewhere. Although it was mostly cloudy, rainfall totals averaged slightly below normal over the East to well below normal elsewhere. Winter wheat was in mostly fair conditions for the month. Cattle were being sold in some areas due to the tight, expensive hay supplies.

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**TEXAS:** February had a variety of temperature extremes ranging from very warm to icy conditions. Brief periods of 70, 80° weather were always followed by heavy rain, freezing precipitation. In the Panhandle, moisture was generally short all month as most came in the form of snow, ice. From North state down through Central, East, the Upper Coast, producers had to deal with wave after wave of rain showers; usually a decent downpour once a week. North, East, Central state were blanketed with ice for almost three days. Soil moisture was short on the Plains, the Trans Pecos. The Rio Grande Valley had generally adequate soil moisture. The rest of the state, however, experienced a surplus; extreme in many locations. Fieldwork on the Plains continued to consist of deep breaking, listing to prepare for summer crops as well as top dressing of small grains. In the Valley, harvest of sugarcane, citrus, vegetables occurred, early planting began for cotton, corn, sorghum. In North, Central, East state, Upper Coast, the Coastal Bend, most field work was non existent due to the constant barrage of rain, ice. The major casualty of this weather was the corn crop. Corn producers were delayed in land preparation, planting all month, there was no end in sight by March 1. Wheat condition was in generally good shape, but there was concern about the future as moisture remained short. Supplemental feeding increased in most areas as the weather failed to warm up, trampling of pastures remained a constant problem. In some eastern counties that had been saturated, hay was beginning to be in short supply. The weather aggravated sickness in cattle, adversely affected cows that were calving. Poultry producers had to run their heaters longer than usual, that, along with higher fuel prices, became a major stumbling block. Greenbugs were present in wheat but populations were fluctuating because of freezing weather.

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**UTAH:** February welcomed colder temperatures, increased precipitation in state. Water shortages are still a concern, however, with total precipitation levels between 60%-80% of average in the states major river basins. Lambing, calving have begun and producers have reported that livestock are in good condition. The mild temperatures in the early part of the month raised concerns about fall planted crops, fruit trees breaking out of dormancy early. This did not happen, colder temperatures in late February have suppressed this concern. Sevier, Millard counties have reported army worm infestations in specific location on range or pasture sites. Some growers have begun planting spring grains, apply fertilizers, herbicides to their fields.

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**VIRGINIA:** Pasture 7% very poor, 31% poor, 41% fair, 20% good, 1% excellent. Livestock 1% very poor, 10% poor, 33% fair, 51% good, 5% excellent. Small Grain, Winter Grazing Crops 14% very poor, 28% poor, 36% fair, 20% good, 2% excellent. State experienced very wet, cold weather during the month of February. Due to the wet conditions, field work, farm activities were hampered with some counties reporting little to no field work done. Because of the cold, wet weather, late planting, growth of the small grains was running behind schedule. Several counties reported some flooding during the month. The snow, ice took its toll on pasture, winter grazing crops. For that reason, producers were feeding livestock full time. Feed supplies were very short causing farmers to search outside of this region, to use alternative feeding practices. Livestock body conditions are lower than normal. Several counties reported building damage due to heavy snow, ice. Some reported livestock losses from the collapsing buildings, severe weather conditions. Most counties continue to report full ponds, running springs, keeping hopes high for adequate irrigation in the spring. Activities: Spring calving, preparing to seed tobacco greenhouses, repairing machinery, buildings, attending meetings, feeding livestock, preparing taxes, attending auctions, meeting with creditors, purchasing seed, sampling soil, applying nutrients, making plans for the upcoming growing season. Temperatures for the month of February ranged from cold to freezing. Snow, ice, rain were characteristic for the month. Almost all of state experienced many forms of precipitation during each week of the month

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**WASHINGTON:** Warmer temperatures, rainfall earlier in the month helped winter wheat emergence in Eastern state. Western state had super saturated fields from heavy precipitation, causing some crop fields

to flood. Cooler weather blanketed state the last week in February with temperatures dipping into the teens. Some fruit producers in Yakima County have reported crop damage due to freezing weather. Early potato planting has begun in the Columbia Basin. Farmers were also preparing fields for planting spring crops. Christmas tree growers were planting new fields, preparing equipment for herbicide application

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**WEST VIRGINIA:** Topsoil 33% adequate, 67% surplus, Winter wheat 9% poor, 39% fair, 52% good. Cattle, calves 1% very poor, 6% poor, 42% fair, 49% good, 2% excellent, calving 34%. Sheep, Lambs 3% poor, 58% fair, 38% good, 1% excellent, lambing 24%. Hay, roughage supplies 14% very short, 49 % short, 33% adequate, 4% surplus. Feed grain supplies 14% short, 86% adequate. February was characterized by above normal precipitation, below normal temperatures. A severe ice, snow storm struck the state the third weekend of February, resulting in prolonged power outages, deep snows across much of the state. Weight of ice, snow collapsed some poultry houses. Hay supplies running short in some areas of state as some farmers are looking for hay to purchase. Muddy conditions became a problem the last week of the month. Calving, lambing have been affected. Calf, lamb losses are higher than normal due to these conditions. Activities: Calving, lambing, snow, ice handling, feeding livestock, purchasing, moving of hay.

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**WISCONSIN:** February was very similar to the month of January in state. Average monthly temperatures were 3-7° below normal for February. High temperatures for the month were in the low 50's for a two day period, but most of the month consisted of below normal temperatures. Minimum temperatures were mostly colder than January. Precipitation for February was below .5 inch and up to 1.5 inches below normal. Much of state had little or no snow cover. Northern state had some snow on the ground but significantly lower than most years. There is some concern being voiced about possible drought conditions for spring crops. Winterkill for alfalfa, winter wheat crops may be of greater importance due to the lack of snowcover.

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**WYOMING:** Topsoil 27% very short, 57% short, 16% adequate. Subsoil 43% very short, 48% short, 9% adequate. Winter wheat 3 % very poor, 25% poor, 48% fair, 24% good, wind damage 22% none, 33% light, 26% moderate, 19% severe, freeze damage 80% none, 15% light, 5% moderate. Avg snow cover depth 4.00 inches. Cattle 5% poor, 41% fair, 54% good. Sheep 4% poor, 48% fair, 47% good, 1% excellent. Hay, roughage supplies 17% very short, 37% short, 46% adequate. Spring grazing prospects 17% very poor, 40% poor, 38% fair, 5% good. Spring calves born 16%, 2002 23%, 5-yr avg 23%. Calf losses 34% light, 66% normal. Farm flock sheep shorn 37%, 2002 34%, 5-yr avg 30%. Farm flock ewes lambled 28%, 2002 30%, 5-yr avg 29%. Lamb losses 27% light, 73% normal. Monthly temperatures averaged 0.1° below normal in Rock Springs to 6° below normal in Lander. About half of the reporting stations received above normal precipitation for the month. The heaviest moisture fell in Sundance at 2.20 inches, Afton 1.45 inch, Newcastle 1.39 inch, Jackson 1.26 inch. Despite the precipitation received, yearly totals were behind normal at most stations