MONTANA CROP PROGRESS

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
MONTANA FIELD OFFICE
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Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION
WEEK ENDING JULY 23, 2023

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY: The week was marked with varying temperatures, dryness, wind, and pests, according to the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Temperatures were well below normal in far eastern sections of the State, but across the majority of Montana, temperatures were mostly at or above normal according to data from the High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC). Temperatures were, on average, about 5 degrees below normal in the areas bordering North Dakota. Moving westward, temperatures averaged higher. Far western areas experienced temperatures as many as 4 degrees above average. Precipitation levels were below normal for much of the State, also according to data from the (HPRCC). Only isolated portions of north central and southeastern Montana received moisture levels above average. Drought conditions worsened according to the United States Drought Monitor report published on July 20, 2023. The amount of land rated drought free fell slightly to 60.2 percent, compared with 61.7 percent the previous week. Abnormal dryness increased slightly to 25.2 percent, up 1.2 percentage points. Moderate drought also moved upward, now sitting at 11.1 percent, compared with 10.8 last week. Severe drought conditions were unchanged at 3.5 percent. Crops were developing quickly in Mineral, Missoula, and Ravalli Counties with the hot and dry conditions. Non-irrigated pasture lands, however, were drying out with the heat and winds. Thunderstorms caused wildfires on some public lands in Ravalli County. Farmers in Roosevelt County faced high temperatures and dry conditions, as well as the effect of grasshoppers in their fields. A few hailstorms also went through the county during the week. Large numbers of grasshoppers and flies were present in Powder River County. Cattle and horses were reportedly bunching together as a means of dealing with the countless flies. Grasshoppers were a large problem on crop and range lands in Richland County as well. Farmers were seeing defoliation of crops and significant deterioration of ranges. In some areas farmers reported total crop loss due to the pests. Pastures were drying out quickly in Sweet Grass County due to the hot and dry conditions. As in other areas of the State, grasshoppers had taken a large toll, especially on pastures in northern sections of the County.

CROP PROGRESS

Commodity	Current week	Previous week	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Alfalfa hay				
1st cutting harvested	92	77	86	85
2nd cutting harvested	2	NA	NA	NA
Barley				
Booted	96	94	NA	NA
Headed	85	59	92	91
Turning color	18	9	45	48
Harvested	5	NA	4	1
Canola				
Emerged	95	83	NA	NA
Blooming	82	79	97	93
Turning color	35	20	47	44
Dry edible beans (includes Chickpeas)				
Blooming	94	91	96	NA
Dry edible peas				
Blooming	93	91	98	NA
Harvested	5	1	8	14
Durum wheat				
Booted	93	91	97	NA
Headed	86	61	81	81
Turning color	23	2	23	22
Flaxseed				
Blooming	85	73	91	86
Turning color	16	1	18	15
Lentils				
Blooming	94	89	NA	NA
Mustard seed				
Turning color	40	23	36	39
Oats				
Booted	95	89	NA	NA
Headed	81	59	80	80
Turning color	26	3	29	26
Other hay				
1st cutting harvested	86	80	86	81
2nd cutting harvested	1	NA	NA	NA
Safflower				
Blooming	43	32	56	50
Spring wheat				
Headed	94	90	84	88
Turning color	16	7	27	35
Sugarbeets				
Emerged	95	93	NA	NA
Winter wheat				
Turning color	79	66	68	82
Harvested	2	1	17	11

NA – not available
(--) – zero

DAYS SUITABLE FOR FIELDWORK AND SOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

	Current week	Previous week	Previous year	5-year average
Days suitable for field work	7.0	6.9	7.0	6.8
Topsoil moisture	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Very short	12	10	25	23
Short	43	36	30	29
Adequate	44	53	44	46
Surplus	1	1	1	2
Subsoil moisture				
Very short	8	7	36	22
Short	48	41	37	31
Adequate	43	52	26	45
Surplus	1	--	1	2

NA – not available
(--) – zero

CROP, PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

Commodity	Current week	Previous week	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Barley				
Very poor	1	2	6	7
Poor	10	12	23	17
Fair	51	42	36	23
Good	26	30	30	37
Excellent	12	14	5	16
Canola				
Very poor	1	3	3	1
Poor	1	7	8	13
Fair	39	31	35	26
Good	49	54	48	45
Excellent	10	5	6	15
Corn				
Very poor	--	2	3	4
Poor	18	20	4	9
Fair	21	23	32	22
Good	59	50	59	56
Excellent	2	5	2	9
Dry edible peas				
Very poor	1	1	6	10
Poor	2	5	16	13
Fair	33	42	43	27
Good	60	51	34	43
Excellent	4	1	1	7
Durum Wheat				
Very poor	--	1	1	9
Poor	20	15	4	12
Fair	58	67	46	30
Good	20	15	49	41
Excellent	2	2	--	8
Lentils				
Very poor	1	1	2	8
Poor	15	18	7	11
Fair	33	42	54	32
Good	47	38	36	42
Excellent	4	1	1	7
Mustard seed				
Very poor	1	--	4	1
Poor	10	13	2	8
Fair	36	45	78	53
Good	50	41	14	34
Excellent	3	1	2	4
Pasture and range				
Very poor	2	2	26	18
Poor	15	13	12	13
Fair	44	35	19	19
Good	36	45	40	42
Excellent	3	5	3	8
Safflower				
Very poor	--	--	--	6
Poor	--	--	5	10
Fair	45	45	46	29
Good	55	55	40	50
Excellent	--	--	9	5
Spring wheat				
Very poor	--	1	4	12
Poor	11	12	19	16
Fair	54	45	34	21
Good	29	38	41	44
Excellent	6	4	2	7
Winter wheat				
Very poor	1	1	9	7
Poor	6	5	28	18
Fair	45	36	45	28
Good	29	38	15	25
Excellent	19	20	3	22

[1]Current conditions for Dry Edible Beans, Flaxseed, and Oats are available using the QuickStats on-line database at:
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/
NA – not available
(--) – zero