Wisconsin Crop Weather

Compiled by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

December 14, 2004 Annual Crop Weather Issue

REVIEW OF THE 2004 CROP YEAR

2004 – A Wet Spring, Cool Summer

The wet spring and cool summer led to a difficult 2004 growing season. Heavy spring precipitation delayed most field activities. Then, temperatures, which were well-below normal for each month from May through August, further delayed crop progress.

The heavy rains began in mid-May and saturated fields in most areas of Wisconsin. Many corn fields in the eastern half of the state had to be replanted in June. The below normal temperatures that persisted through the middle of August had farmers wondering if summer had been skipped. However, the last week of August and the month of September ushered in warmer than normal temperatures. Corn and soybean crops caught up on maturity in many areas of the state, which improved prospects; but for some fields, it was a little too late.

Crop quality and production varied throughout the state. Within many areas, crop conditions and progress varied from field to field. The western half of the state and central and south central districts experienced generally good to excellent crop production. In parts of the eastern half of the state, continual rain and cool temperatures throughout the spring resulted in late planting. Then, a drier than normal fall lowered grain yields.

On the other hand, pastures and hay crops were generally of excellent quality and quantity. Irrigated vegetables and potatoes also had excellent yields.

According to the WDATCP Wisconsin Pest Bulletin, the surplus of rain and chilly conditions this spring drastically reduced insect populations. The European corn borer was practically nonexistent this fall, and soybean aphid densities were the lowest since first detected in Wisconsin five summers ago. There were, of course, a few notable exceptions, including the apple maggot, which emerged in record numbers this season. The most significant impediment to crop success in 2004 was not pests, but the cool, wet weather.

December 2003 was warmer than normal and most of the precipitation was in the form of rain. Little snowfall occurred until late in the month. **January** temperatures and precipitation averaged below normal, but snow cover was greater than the previous year. **February** temperatures were about normal for the first three weeks, but much above normal for the last week. Precipitation averaged above normal for the month. February's weather continued into **March** as temperatures and precipitation averaged well above normal.

April saw a wide variety of weather conditions. Early in the month, freezing temperatures at night were common statewide with temperatures in the 20's. Snow was reported throughout most of the northern half of the state, but was slowly melting. By mid-April, temperatures were 2 to 4 degrees above normal with the last frost finally coming out of the ground in the northern parts of the state. The third week of April brought some much needed rain. Soil moisture conditions were reported as 1% very short, 17% short, 68% adequate, and 14% surplus. Temperatures across the state ranged from the 30's to 80's. However, soil temperatures were still too cold, delaying corn planting in many areas even though spring tillage was reported as 39% complete, ahead of both the previous year and the 5-year average.

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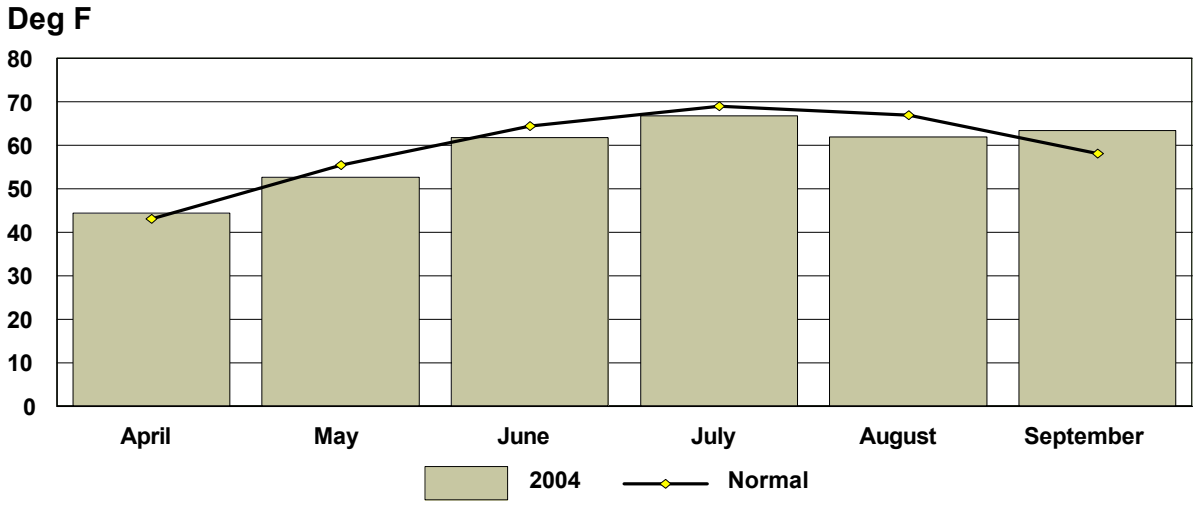
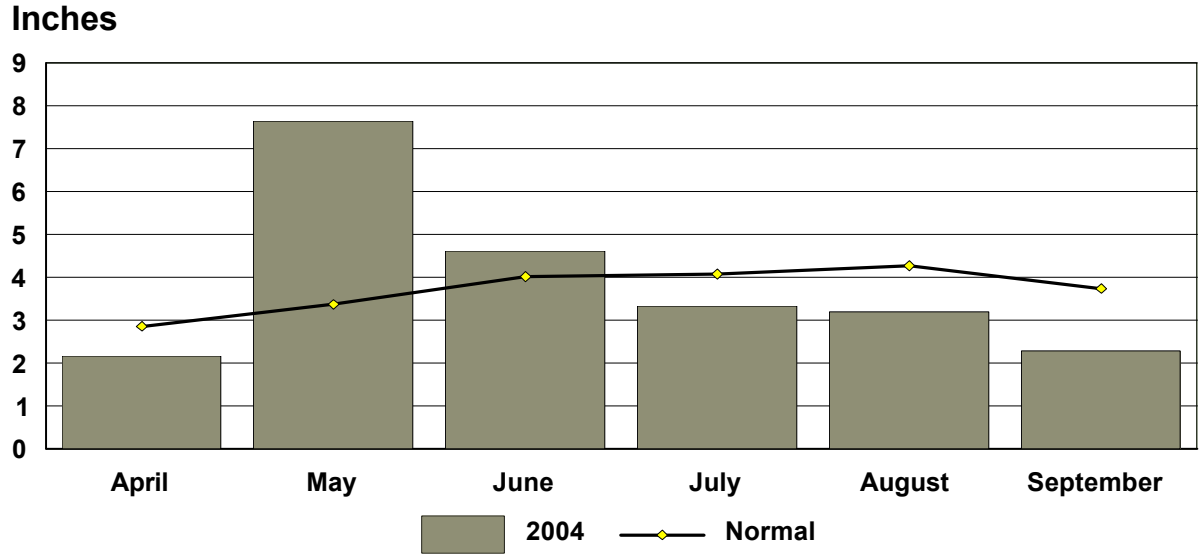
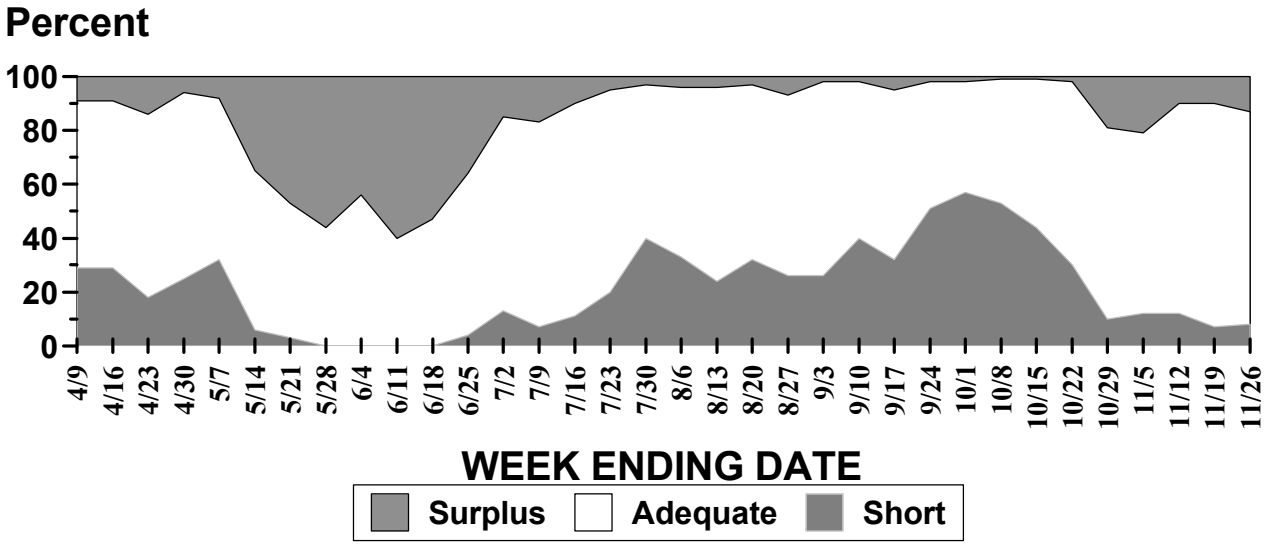
AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURE, WISCONSIN, 2004



AVERAGE MONTHLY RAINFALL, WISCONSIN, 2004



SOIL MOISTURE RATINGS, WISCONSIN, 2004



MONTHLY TEMPERATURES: 2004 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL*

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal
	Degrees Fahrenheit											
NW	42.0	41.7	50.1	54.4	59.5	63.1	65.5	68.1	59.9	65.9	62.5	56.6
NC	40.8	40.4	49.4	53.2	59.3	61.8	64.9	66.4	59.2	64.2	62.2	55.3
NE	42.4	41.3	50.4	53.6	59.9	62.5	64.6	67.0	60.5	64.8	62.0	56.0
WC	47.1	45.2	55.0	57.4	63.4	66.4	68.6	70.8	63.6	68.3	64.7	59.3
C	45.9	44.5	54.1	56.7	63.2	65.8	67.9	70.2	62.7	67.7	64.1	59.0
EC	44.5	42.8	51.7	54.6	61.6	64.1	66.9	69.5	63.6	67.9	64.7	59.8
SW	47.9	46.1	57.2	57.9	64.9	67.2	68.7	71.4	64.3	69.0	64.5	60.5
SC	47.8	45.8	57.1	57.8	65.2	67.2	69.2	71.3	64.9	68.9	64.9	60.6
SE	47.3	45.0	54.9	56.3	63.6	66.0	68.6	71.2	65.0	69.4	65.3	61.4
STATE	44.4	43.2	52.7	55.5	61.8	64.5	66.8	69.1	62.0	66.9	63.5	58.1

1/Preliminary estimates, 2004. * Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1971-2000. Source: State Climatologist.

MONTHLY RAINFALL: 2004 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL*

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal	2004	Normal
	Inches											
NW	2.63	2.39	5.33	3.29	2.54	4.19	4.05	4.29	3.40	4.44	4.36	3.89
NC	2.72	2.40	5.06	3.31	3.50	4.01	2.49	4.06	3.13	4.36	2.86	4.03
NE	2.12	2.65	5.01	3.29	4.59	3.69	2.53	3.70	2.31	3.81	1.46	3.74
WC	1.85	3.05	9.18	3.69	5.47	4.24	4.48	4.45	3.19	4.54	4.14	3.82
C	1.54	3.02	8.85	3.52	6.72	3.88	2.82	4.13	3.47	4.22	1.22	3.72
EC	2.01	2.81	8.94	2.95	5.12	3.51	2.47	3.38	2.52	3.86	0.83	3.42
SW	1.68	3.55	11.66	3.60	5.76	4.35	4.18	4.33	3.81	4.46	0.80	3.42
SC	2.11	3.47	9.83	3.40	5.37	4.19	3.84	4.07	3.55	4.24	0.65	3.51
SE	2.15	3.48	10.54	3.13	5.13	3.76	2.54	3.82	3.63	4.22	0.47	3.48
STATE	2.17	2.86	7.64	3.37	4.61	4.02	3.33	4.07	3.20	4.27	2.29	3.74

1/Preliminary estimates, 2004. * Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1971-2000. Source: State Climatologist.

COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

District	Average Temperature						Total Precipitation					
	June - September						April - September					
	Normal*	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 1/	Normal*	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 1/
	Degrees Fahrenheit						Inches					
NW	63.6	61.6	64.6	65.8	64.3	62.2	22.3	21.5	25.6	28.6	20.3	24.7
NC	62.3	61.3	63.5	65.2	63.6	61.8	22.1	24.1	24.0	28.0	19.9	18.6
NE	63.0	61.6	63.6	65.3	63.6	62.0	20.9	23.0	21.3	26.9	21.3	18.6
WC	66.7	64.9	67.2	68.8	67.3	65.4	23.5	25.4	27.6	29.3	18.6	27.4
C	66.1	64.7	66.6	68.4	66.4	64.7	22.3	27.1	25.8	24.0	19.5	25.9
EC	66.0	64.7	66.7	68.3	65.8	64.6	20.0	24.5	22.4	20.1	20.3	21.6
SW	67.5	66.0	67.4	69.4	67.8	66.0	23.5	30.6	28.7	24.0	19.4	29.1
SC	67.6	66.5	67.8	70.0	67.8	66.1	22.7	30.6	27.6	20.6	19.0	25.8
SE	67.6	66.6	68.0	70.0	67.4	66.1	22.0	31.8	25.5	21.7	17.9	25.1
STATE	65.1	63.6	65.7	67.4	65.6	63.8	22.2	25.6	25.3	25.8	19.7	23.7

1/Preliminary estimates, 2004. * Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1971-2000. Source: State Climatologist.

May started off with temperatures 2 to 6 degrees below normal, with temperatures ranging from the mid-20's to the high 70's. Farmers were busy with spring tillage and planting. The dry weather conditions enabled tractors to be out in full force planting corn and soybeans. By mid-month, spring tillage was 82% complete, ahead of the 5-year average of 76%. Farmers were hoping for some warmer weather and rain to jump start the crops already planted. By mid-May, the rains started coming and kept coming. Severe thunderstorms and heavy rains in many areas saturated the ground leaving water standing in many corn and soybean fields. In some areas, flooding, silting, and soil erosion were becoming a problem. Farmers went from not having enough rain to having too much. Total precipitation for May by district was 2 to 8 inches above normal. Southern Wisconsin received a record amount of rain for the month of May. Soil moisture conditions by the end of the month were 44% adequate, and 56% surplus. Field work slowed to a crawl. Farmers were hoping for some warm, sunny days to dry out the fields in order to complete spring planting. The last week of May had temperatures 4 to 8 degrees below normal.

Wet, cool weather lingered throughout the state during the month of J**une**. Widespread heavy rains delayed final plantings in several areas, especially in the eastern half of the state. By mid-June, wet conditions, compounded by more rain, left many fields saturated. Soil moisture conditions were 47% adequate, and 53% surplus. The last week of the month had temperatures 6 to 10 degrees below normal. The growing degree day heat units were well behind normal, except in the La Crosse area. The cool, wet weather slowed crop development. Some farmers were trying to replant the corn and soybeans that had not germinated, but some fields were too wet to replant. Soil moisture conditions were 4% short, 60% adequate, and 36% surplus. Most crops needed warmer weather and lots of sunshine. A cool summer had arrived.

The first few days of **July** saw some improved crop conditions with sunshine and warmer weather. By the end of the second week, cool weather returned with temperatures 5 to 8 degrees below normal. By mid-July, after 4 weeks of below normal temperatures, farmers were happy to get some warmer, near normal temperatures. Sunny and drier weather allowed them to harvest good quality and quantity second crop hay. During the last half of July, although temperatures remained below normal, sunny weather prevailed, fostering good haying. The year-to-date growing degree day heat units were behind normal, slowing the development of the corn and soybean crops. Soil moisture conditions across the state at the end of July were 9% very short, 31% short, 57% adequate, and 3% surplus. Pasture conditions were rated as 3% very poor, 8% poor, 33% fair, 40% good, and 16% excellent. April through July precipitation was near normal in the north, but 5 to 7 inches above normal in the southern two-thirds of the state.

In **August**, cool weather continued and was the big concern among farmers. In mid-August temperatures were 5 to 10 degrees below normal, ranging from the low 40's to the low 80's. By the end of the month, year-to-date growing degree days were significantly below normal, especially in the northern districts. Since the end of May, 10 out of 12 weeks had below normal temperatures. There were reports of frost in the northern areas of the state. Farmers were beginning to wonder if it was really August or late September. Many crops were one to two weeks behind schedule. The end of August brought a welcome change to the unusually cool temperatures. Temperatures rose to 1 to 3 degrees above normal, ranging from 50 to the high 80's. Season-to-date precipitation totals in the northern part of the state were 1 to 2 inches below normal while the rest of the district totals were 4 to 7 inches above normal. Statewide, soil moisture conditions were rated as 5% very short, 21% short, 67% adequate, and 7% surplus.

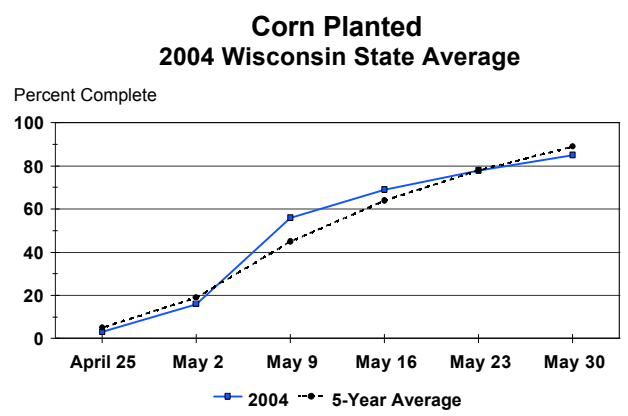
Summer like temperatures ushered in the month of **September**. Temperatures were 4 to 7 degrees above normal, ranging from the 40's to the high 80's throughout most of the month. The average temperature was higher in September than in August or June. The warm temperatures and rain improved the outlook for crops in the western half of the state, but grain crops were still two weeks behind normal. By the end of September, five weeks of above normal temperatures aided crop conditions. Growing degree day heat units reached normal levels for the first time this year. During September, most of the state received below normal rainfall, except the northwest and west central districts. Soil moisture conditions statewide were rated as 12% very short, 39% short, 47% adequate, and 2% surplus. By the end of September, the lack of moisture in the eastern half of the state was becoming critical. Soil moisture conditions in the east central and south east districts were at least 85% very short or short. Pasture conditions remained mostly fair to good throughout most of September, except in the south east where pastures were showing stress from the dry conditions. Farmers were hoping for one more month of warm weather and a late frost.

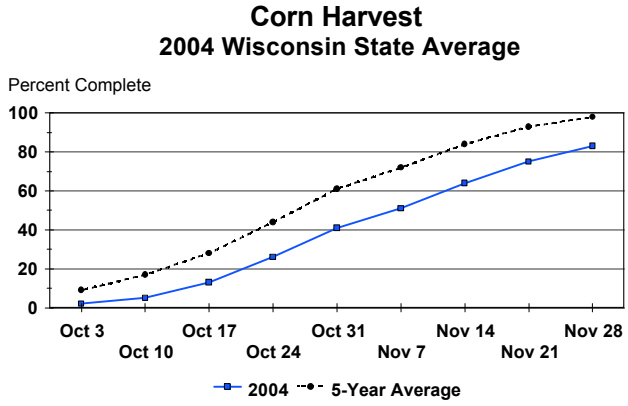
Frost hit the northern parts of the state by the first week of **October**. By the second week in October, a hard frost was reported statewide. Reports in the north indicated that frost stopped the growing season. Southern parts of the state reported frost with varying amounts of crop damage. By mid-month, temperatures were averaging 1 to 5 degrees below normal. Weather across the state was mixed. In the north, cool weather with frost was common. In the south, warmer weather prevailed. By the end of the month, average temperatures were 9 to 11 degrees above normal with low temperatures in the upper 30's and high temperatures reaching the mid 70's. Soil moisture conditions were rated as 2% very short, 8% short, 71% adequate, and 19% surplus. Northwestern Wisconsin had mostly surplus soil moisture. Farmers were averaging 5 to 6 days of field work each week, except during the last week when rainy conditions slowed harvest. Fall tillage was 35% complete, on par with the 5-year average of 34%.

During the first three weeks of **November**, temperatures ranged from 1 to 12 degrees above normal. Wet weather during the first week slowed harvest and field work. The second week, dry conditions across the state improved harvest conditions with 5.9 days suitable for fieldwork. By the end of November, snow fell in northern areas of the state. Light rains prevailed across the southern parts of the state, slowing harvest progress. Southeast Wisconsin received precipitation 4 inches below normal since September 1. The rest of the state had mostly adequate supplies of soil moisture. Soil moisture conditions across the state were 1% very short, 7% short, 79% adequate, and 13% surplus. With adequate soil moisture, winter wheat was in good condition going into the winter. By late November, fall tillage was 60% complete, behind the 5-year average of 77%.

CORN

The 2004 corn planting season began in late April in southern Wisconsin. Corn planting progressed at a rapid pace with 56% of the corn planted by May 9, well ahead of the 5-year average of 45%. Farmers were saying that while planting was going great, they could use some rain, especially on the light soils. By mid-May, farmers got their wish for some rain, which gave the crops already planted a real boost. However, the rain didn't stop. Wet field conditions kept farmers out of the fields, and they were only able to average 2.6 days per week of fieldwork. By the end of May, corn was 85% planted, a little behind the 5-year average of 89%. Emergence was at 63%, a little ahead of the 5-year average of 59%. By early June, the widespread heavy rains during the last half of May resulted in excessive wet spots in some fields and further delayed planting. Some corn was starting to show signs of yellowing. Some farmers contemplated planting soybeans instead of corn. Summer arrived, but temperatures were cool at 8 to 10 degrees below normal. Corn conditions were reported as 23% very poor to poor, 29% fair, and 48% good to excellent. Corn was reported as knee high in many areas of the state by the July 4th weekend. By mid-July, after four weeks of below normal temperatures, fairly warm, sunny, and dry weather arrived. Corn started growing fast and started to tassel in some areas of the state. By August 1, early planted corn was almost done pollinating. Growing degree days were below average in most parts of the state. The average corn height was 69 inches, well behind the 5-year average of 80 inches. The state average for corn silked was 38%, behind the 5-year average of 67%, except in the southwest where corn silked was 80% complete. Corn in some areas was very uneven and about two weeks behind maturity. By the third week in August, temperatures were averaging 6 to 10 degrees below normal. In some areas, late planted corn had yet to silk or tassel. There were reports of insect and weed problems across the state. Some corn fields had damage from mid-summer into fall from corn rootworm and corn earworm infestations. By the end of August, 43% of corn had reached the dough stage, compared to the 5-year average of 69%. Corn in the dent stage was 4%, well behind the 5-year average of 24%. In some areas, farmers reported that ears had not filled out due to the cool days and nights. In the south west, corn looked good, but still had a long way to go until harvest. Corn conditions across the state were 48% very poor to fair, and 52% good to excellent.

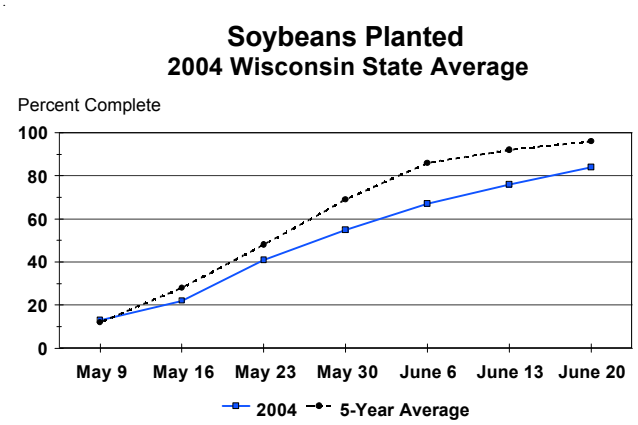


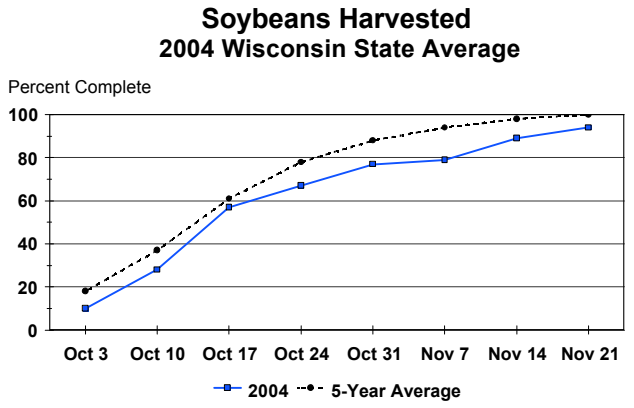


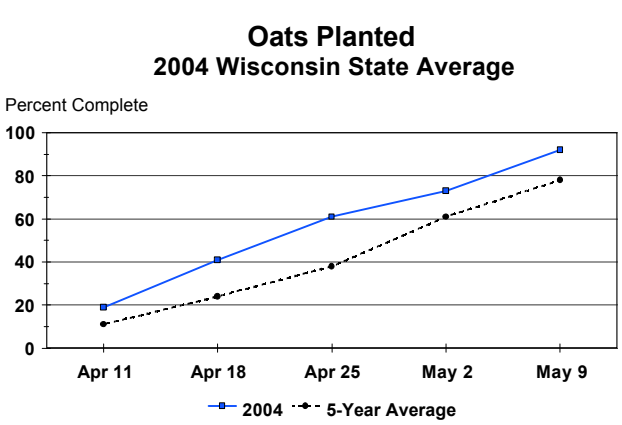
By mid-September, corn fields in the south west district were maturing nicely with some fields starting to turn brown. Corn silage harvesting had started with 14% harvested, behind the 5-year average of 41%. Corn conditions were rated at 47% very poor to fair and 53% good to excellent. By the end of September, after five weeks of above normal temperatures, the corn crop had made great strides towards maturity. Corn in dough stage was 87% complete, a little behind the 5-year average of 99%. Corn in dent stage was 59%, considerably behind the 5-year average of 89%. Corn mature was 12%, well behind the 5-year average of 51%. Harvesting for silage was underway with 30% harvested, but lagging behind the 5-year average of 59%. In early October, frost hit crops hard across the state. The northern parts of the state reported that high moisture corn harvesting had started. In southwest and central areas, harvest was in full swing. By mid to late October, corn silage harvesting was wrapping up across the state. In the northwest, the quantity of corn silage was good, but the quality was fair. In the east central district, quality and quantity were low due to late planting and poor growing conditions. Statewide, corn conditions were rated as 42% very poor to fair, and 58% good to excellent. By the end of October, corn for grain harvest, was in full swing with 41% of the grain harvested, well behind the 5-year average of 61%. Corn in the mature stage was at 90% complete, behind the 5-year average of 99%. Yields in the southwest and south central districts were better than expected, whereas the yields in the south east were mixed. At the end of November, 83% of the corn for grain had been harvested, behind the 5-year average of 98%. Many farmers delayed the harvesting of grain due to its high moisture content.

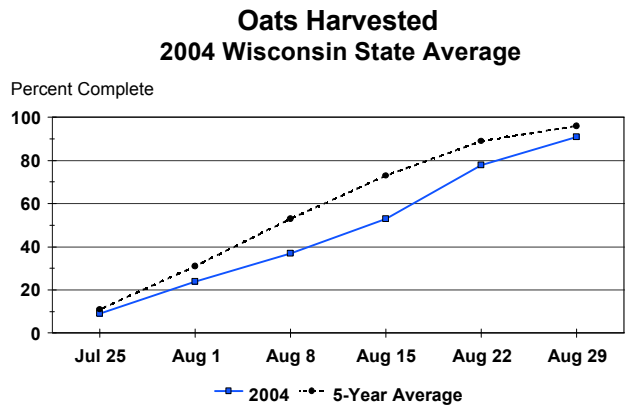
SOYBEANS

Soybean planting got underway the last week in April. In early May, dry weather conditions made fields good for planting soybeans in most parts of the state. Soybean plantings were on target with 13% planted by the end of the first week in May. Farmers were starting to wish for some rain to jump start germination. During the last half of May, the rains kept coming and coming. By the end of May, farmers were hoping that the rain would go away so spring tillage and planting could be completed. Farmers were only averaging 2 to 3 days per week in the fields. By May 30, 55% of the soybeans had been planted statewide, behind the 5-year average of 69%. Soybean emergence was reported at 28%, a little behind the 5-year average of 31%. The exception was in southwestern Wisconsin, where plantings were 87% complete, and emergence was at 63%. By late June, planting of soybeans in some fields had come to a standstill because they were too wet to plant. Soybean conditions were 4% very poor, 16% poor, 21% fair, 45% good, and 14% excellent. By mid-July, soybeans were starting to look better as warm weather stimulated growth. However, weeds were becoming a problem in many fields. By August 1, soybeans blooming were reported at 58%, behind the 5-year average of









71%. Setting pods were at 27%, the same as the 5-year average. By mid-August, rain arrived just in time to prevent additional stress to crops, but temperatures were 5 to 10 degrees below normal. There were a lot of pods setting in some areas of the state, but without warmth, soybeans were already a week or more behind in maturity. Reports were that pods in some areas were still flat. Some early planted soybeans were showing twenty pods per plant, but only two or three beans per pod. By the end of August, soybeans setting pods were reported at 81%, compared to the 5-year average of 93%. Beans starting to turn color were 4%, compared to the 5-year average of 9%.

September's above normal temperatures helped soybean maturity. Toward the end of September, soybeans in the south central and southwest districts were looking good as leaves began dropping. In the northern part of the state, some fields were still trying to catch up. Statewide, soybeans turning color was reported at 76%, behind the 5-year average of 92%. Beans dropping leaves were reported at 46%, below the 5-year average of 67%. By the end of the first week in October, a hard frost had hit most crops across the state. Soybean conditions were rated at 42% very poor to fair, and 58% as good to excellent. By late October, harvest continued in most parts of the state, and harvest was almost complete in the southwest. Good quality and yields were reported in southern Wisconsin. In other parts of the state, there were reports of small bean size. In the north, harvest was slowed because of the cool, rainy weather. In some areas, soybeans were being put in the silo because of low yields. By October 31, 77% of the beans were harvested statewide, compared to the 5-year average of 88%. At the end of November, 97% of the soybeans had been harvested.

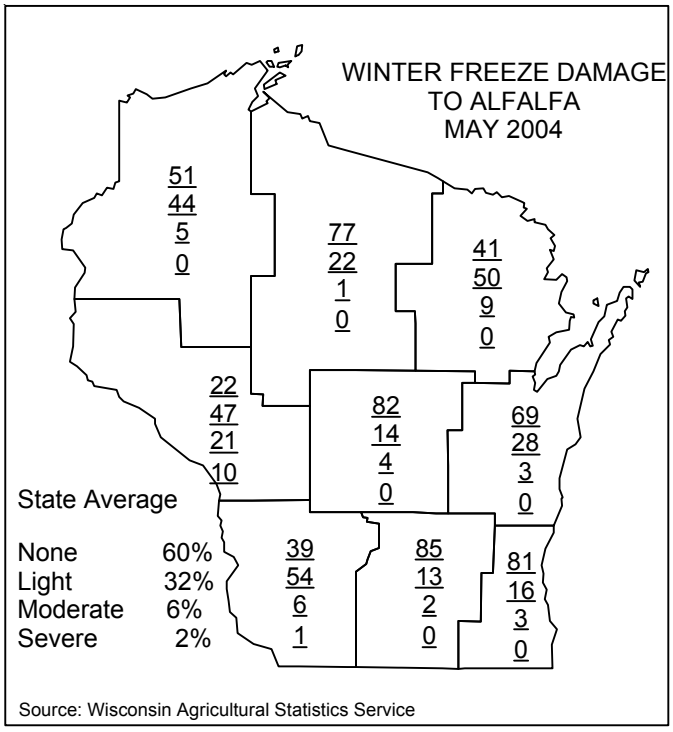
OATS

With warmer than normal weather in early April, oats got off to a good start. By May 9, planting of oats was just about complete at 92%, well ahead of the 5-year average of 78%, and oat emergence was at 59%, ahead of the 5-year average of 41%. The heavy rains received during the last two weeks of May helped the oat crop. By May 30, 95% of the oats had emerged, ahead of the 5-year average of 90%. Oats condition was 73% good to excellent. By the last week in June, oats headed reached 57%, comparable to the 5-year average of 56%. By mid-July, oats headed was 94% complete, close to the 5-year average. Oats harvesting started a week earlier than last year, and oat condition was 73% good to excellent. By mid-August, farmers were reporting that the western and southwestern parts of the state had produced some of the best oats in years, while central and south central areas were reporting low test weights, but a lot of straw. By August 29, oats harvested reached 91%, compared to the 5-year average of 96%. The oat crop continued to look good as harvest was nearing completion. Statewide, the oat yield was near the 5-year average.

WINTER WHEAT

By April 16, as the last frost came out of the ground in the north, winter wheat conditions looked good across the state with 4% very poor to poor, 17% fair, 61% good, and 18% excellent. By late April, winter freeze damage was reported as generally light to none across the state. In the southern half of the state, wheat started to turn dark green and looked great. By April 30, wheat condition was rated as 84% good to excellent. During the last week of May and early June, wheat began to head out. By mid-June, some farmers in south central Wisconsin began to report

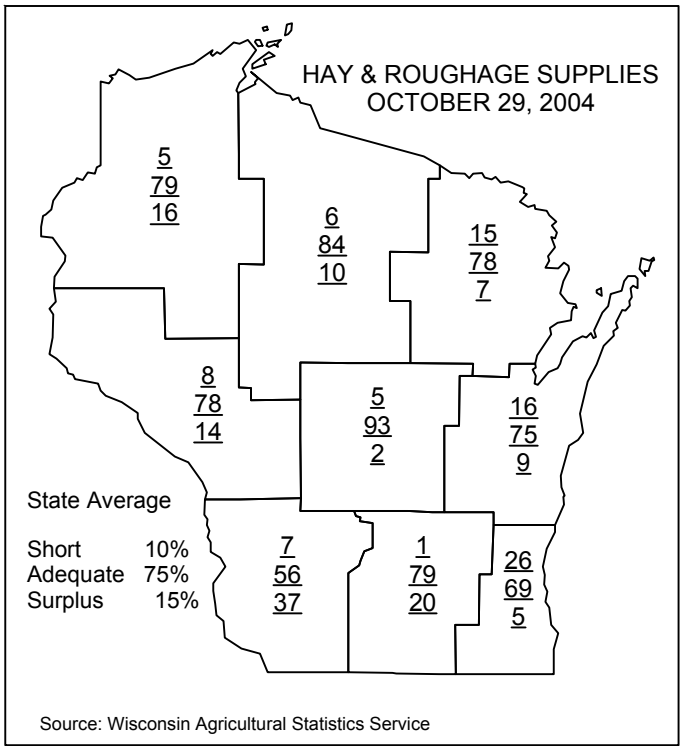
that winter wheat was showing signs of wheat scab. In early July, extended sunshine and warmer weather helped winter wheat condition improve to mostly good. By mid-July, wheat fields had started to turn color, and in some areas, harvesting had started. By the end of July, the cooler than normal summer temperatures and higher than normal precipitation contributed to several reports of problems with scab, especially in the eastern half of the state. On July 30, wheat conditions were reported as 4% very poor, 8% poor, 25% fair, 57% good, and 6% excellent. Harvest was 45% complete, behind the 5-year average of 68%. By August 22, wheat harvest was nearly complete at 94%, compared with the 5-year average of 99%. The average yield for the state was the lowest since 1998 with quality also below average in several areas. By mid-October, most of the upcoming year's winter wheat had been planted. Wheat was reported to be in good condition going into the winter.



Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

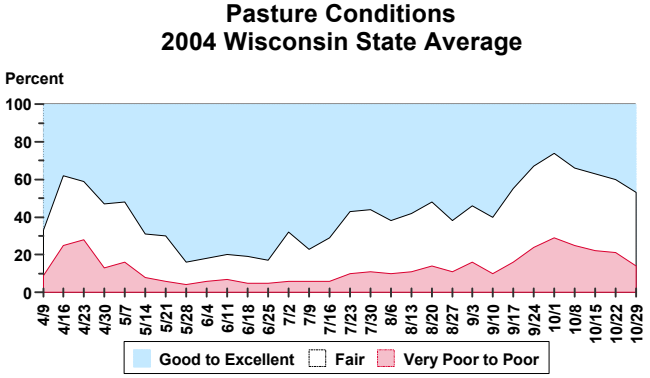
HAY

Alfalfa came through the winter in good shape due to ample snow cover. In mid-April, alfalfa fields were starting to green up with little evidence of winterkill. In early May, winter freeze damage to alfalfa was reported as 60% none, 32% light, 6% moderate, and 2% severe. With soil moisture conditions of 75% adequate to surplus, the alfalfa crop really perked up. By mid-May, alfalfa was reported to be knee high in the central and southern parts of the state. In the southwest, some farmers had started making haylage. By the end of May, soil moisture conditions were 44% adequate, 56% surplus. Alfalfa weevil larvae were showing up in some fields. By mid-June, farmers were still struggling to harvest first crop hay between rain storms. In the western part of the state, first crop hay was plentiful and of high quality. In the central, eastern, and southern areas of the state, first crop hay quantity was excellent, but quality only fair to good. Statewide, hay tonnage was reported as high, but quality had suffered due to poor drying conditions. By the 4th of July, extended sunshine and drier conditions allowed farmers to spend most of the week making hay. First cutting hay was 87% complete, close to the 5-year



Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

average of 92%. By the middle of July, most of the first crop hay had been harvested. Second crop alfalfa was showing good growth, although the wet fields were showing compaction damage from wheel tracks. By the end of July, drier weather had allowed farmers to put up second crop hay. The harvested second crop hay was of good quality and yields, but weeds were a problem. On August 1, second crop hay was 69% complete, compared to the 5-year average of 81%. By Mid-August, second crop hay harvest was almost complete and of high quality. Reports were that second crop hay was superior to first crop hay which got over mature due to the excessive amount of rainy days. Third crop alfalfa harvesting got underway with reports of high quality and yields. By the end of August, third cutting hay was 52% complete, compared to the 5-year average of 64%. By mid-September, third crop hay was about complete across the state with fourth crop hay harvest underway. By the end of September, after five weeks of above normal temperatures, fourth crop hay in the western half of the state was of excellent quality and quantity. In central areas, both third and fourth crops were good, while in some locations in the eastern half of the state, yields were down due to the dry September. By mid-October, fourth crop hay was 71% complete, ahead of the 5-year average of 66%. Haying soon finished due to the cool temperatures and frost.



PASTURES

Adequate moisture and warmer temperatures helped pasture conditions improve quickly. By April 30, pasture conditions were 53% good to excellent. From mid-May through the end of May, an abundance of rain was received in most parts of the state. Pastures flourished, and by the end of the first week in June, pasture conditions were 82% good to excellent. A cool summer with adequate to surplus soil moisture conditions kept pastures in good shape. In mid-July, pasture conditions were 71% good to excellent. Through most of August, temperatures remained below normal. In the third week of August, soil moisture conditions were 68% adequate to surplus which continued to keep pasture conditions 52% good to excellent. Soil moisture conditions by mid-September were 68% adequate to surplus, with pasture conditions 45% good to excellent. In the first week of October, a hard frost hit most of Wisconsin, slowing further pasture growth. By the end of October, pasture conditions were rated at 47% good to excellent.

VEGETABLES

By mid-April, potatoes were being planted throughout the Central Sands area. By the end of April, potatoes and peas were being planted at an accelerated rate. By mid-May, early potatoes were starting to emerge. Sweet corn and snap beans were being planted in the sandy soils of the Central Sands. In early June, the potato crop looked good with many growers doing final hilling. In other parts of the state, farmers were waiting for the fields to dry out so snap beans and sweet corn could be planted. Most vegetables that were planted looked good. In mid to late June, potatoes had started to set tubers, and in some areas, started to bloom. With mostly adequate to surplus soil moisture conditions throughout most of the spring and summer, vegetable crops did well. In early July, peas looked good and harvest had started in several areas. By late July, potato harvest of early whites and reds were of excellent quality and tonnage. Late peas were being harvested along with cucumbers. Some sweet corn was harvested and available at roadside markets. In August, snap beans were being harvested with average or above average yields in many areas. In the Central Sands area, sweet corn harvest got underway with good yields. By mid-September, canning companies were in full swing harvesting snap beans and sweet corn. Late potato harvest was well underway by mid-September with excellent quality and yields. The development of late blight was almost non-existent this year. By mid-October, beets and carrots were being harvested and hauled to local canning companies, with most other vegetables already harvested for the year.

FRUIT

Apples started to bloom in late April and were in full bloom by mid-May across the state. By mid-June, apples had started to set. By mid-July, the apple trees were not producing a lot of fruit, and there were concerns about low yields. In late September and early October, apple harvest was underway with growers reporting smaller than average size fruit. The wet spring coupled with a cooler than normal summer hurt apple pollination, production, and quality. Tart cherries were in full bloom by June. Due to the wet, cool temperatures, pollination was about 75%. Quality and yields were considerably lower than in 2003. Cranberries were in bloom by early July. By late August, there were some concerns of small berry size due to the cool summer. The September heat delayed the coloring of berries. By mid-October, harvest was in full swing with good yields, but variable color. Strawberries were about 2 weeks later than normal due to the cool summer, but by late June, the picking season was in full swing.

MAPLE SYRUP

Maple syrup production and quality were very good this season. The cold nights and warm days in March and early April prompted good sap runs with high sugar content. By the end of the first week in April, maple trees started to bud, ending the maple syrup season.