



Crop Progress and Condition

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Agricultural News (December): December brought above normal temperatures and much below normal precipitation. The state has now received below normal precipitation for four months straight. Although there were periodic rounds of rain, accumulation places 2023 as one of the driest Decembers on record. The U.S. drought monitor places 87% of the state in the abnormally dry category. This December was also in the top 10 warmest recorded. The unseasonably warm weather caused instability with the South Central part of the state hit with a round of tornadic activity mid-month. Precipitation for the month totaled 2.39 inches, 2.06 inches below normal. Precipitation totals by climate division, West 1.88 inches, Central 2.18 inches, Bluegrass 2.44 inches, and East 3.05 inches, which was 3.0, 2.64, 1.43, and 1.18 inches below normal respectively. Temperatures averaged 43 degrees for the month, 5 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged from 53 degrees in the West to 53 degrees in the East. Low temperatures averaged from 36 degrees in the West to 35 degrees in the East.

Tobacco stripped is at 87%, putting progress on par with historical levels for this juncture. Winter wheat condition was rated as 2% poor, 24% fair, 63% good, and 11% excellent.

Pastures were stressed through much of the fall as late summer drought took a toll. As pastures deteriorated, many farmers began supplementing with hay and depleting stocks. The current hay supply is rated as 10% very short, 29% short, 57% adequate, and 4% surplus. Livestock condition was rated as 2% poor, 27% fair, 64% good, and 7% excellent. As temperatures consistently cool, livestock will likely be more stressed. There were reports of good birth rates for fall calving.