

# 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 MONTH OF MARCH 2018

**AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY:** Low temperatures and wet conditions were widespread throughout Montana for the month of March, according to the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. Topsoil moisture conditions were 86 percent adequate to surplus which is below last year's 93 percent. Subsoil moisture conditions were 68 percent adequate to surplus which is below last year's 87 percent. The high temperature for the month was recorded in Yellowtail at 68 degrees. The low temperature for the month was recorded in Brockway at -16 degrees. Reporters in northwestern areas of the state welcomed mild temperatures, but that was not the case in the rest of the state. Cold, wet conditions in north-central Montana made for difficult lambing and calving conditions as there was no dry land on which to deliver. Central areas of the state experienced flooding which delayed shipments of seed potatoes and hay. The northeast area of the state however, remained concerned about drought as the northern most counties had not received as much snow cover as the rest of the state. Reporters noted little to no wind or frost damage on the winter wheat crop, but were hoping that the crop is not yet breaking dormancy under the snow cover. Winter freeze and wind damage to winter wheat remains low with 82 percent of reporters observing no freeze & drought damage, and 85 percent reporting no wind damage. Winter wheat snow coverage for the state is rated 65 percent good to excellent compared with 13 percent at this time last year. Winter wheat condition is rated 65 percent good to excellent, compared with 62 percent last year. Grazing accessibility was limited with 57 percent of grazing lands reported as inaccessible or closed, and 27 percent rated as difficult. Livestock producers are providing supplemental feed at a slightly higher rate than the previous year, with 98 percent of cattle being fed, compared to 91 percent at this time last year, and 100 percent of sheep being fed, compared to 92 percent at this time last year.

### CROP AND LIVESTOCK PROGRESS

Commodity	Current week (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Cattle and calves				
Cows calved.....	14	3	13	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	98	100	91	NA
Sheep and lambs				
Ewes lambled.....	5	2	9	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	100	99	92	NA

NA – not available  
 (--) – zero

### DAYS SUITABLE FOR FIELDWORK AND SOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

	Current week	Previous report	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
<b>Topsoil moisture</b>				
Very short.....	2	8	1	NA
Short.....	12	23	6	NA
Adequate.....	52	47	82	NA
Surplus.....	34	22	11	NA
<b>Subsoil moisture</b>				
Very short.....	11	14	4	NA
Short.....	21	29	9	NA
Adequate.....	50	45	78	NA
Surplus.....	18	12	9	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero

### CROP, LIVESTOCK, PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

Commodity	Current week	Previous report	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
<b>Grazing accessibility</b>				
Open.....	16	6	77	NA
Difficult.....	27	22	17	NA
Closed.....	57	72	6	NA
<b>Winter wheat</b>				
Very poor.....	2	2	1	NA
Poor.....	2	3	6	NA
Fair.....	31	41	31	NA
Good.....	48	46	57	NA
Excellent.....	17	8	5	NA
<b>Winter wheat – wind damage</b>				
None.....	85	85	71	NA
Light.....	14	12	22	NA
Moderate.....	1	3	6	NA
Heavy.....	--	--	1	NA
<b>Winter wheat – freeze and drought damage</b>				
None.....	82	85	65	NA
Light.....	13	11	23	NA
Moderate.....	4	3	9	NA
Heavy.....	1	1	3	NA
<b>Winter wheat – protectiveness of snow cover</b>				
Very poor.....	10	3	42	NA
Poor.....	13	8	15	NA
Fair.....	12	10	30	NA
Good.....	27	34	12	NA
Excellent.....	38	45	1	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero

Montana's weather data can be accessed at the following:

[http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Montana/Publications/Crop\\_Progress\\_&\\_Condition/2018/MT-Weather-03252018.pdf](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Montana/Publications/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/2018/MT-Weather-03252018.pdf)