

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 2023

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY:

The month of March brought below varying temperatures and snowy weather to the State of Montana, according to the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), temperatures for the month of March ranged from 52 degrees to nine degrees across the State. Drought conditions improved slightly in areas experiencing moderate, severe, and extreme drought; however, overall drought conditions continued to persist compared to the previous month, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor published on March 21, 2023. Over eighty-four percent of the State is experiencing drought conditions, compared with 95.0 percent at the end of February. The amount of land rated as abnormally dry increased from 26.9 percent at the end of February to 36 percent for the month of March. Moderate drought was present across 12 percent of the State, down from 44.3 percent at the end of February. Severe drought covered 0 percent of the State, down from last month's 20 percent, and extreme drought was found in 0 percent of the State, down from last month's 3.7 percent.

In Valley County, cold temperatures, heavy snowpack, and windy conditions were reported leading to stock losses and lower forage quality. Mineral, Missoula, and Ravalli Counties reported warmer days, colder nights, and moisture which led to some reports of pneumonia and scours in calves. Golden Valley and Musselshell County reported light snow and varying temperatures. Yellowstone County reports noted many inches of wet heavy snow of late. The states Winter wheat breaking dormancy was at 3 percent.

Note: A monthly report will be released for April on April 24, 2023. The first weekly report will be released on Monday, April 3, 2023.

LIVESTOCK PROGRESS

Commodity	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Cattle and calves				
Cows Calved.....	13	11	NA	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	97	99	NA	NA
Sheep and lambs				
Ewes lambbed.....	8	7	NA	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	98	98	NA	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero

SOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Topsoil moisture				
Very short.....	4	6	NA	NA
Short.....	19	32	NA	NA
Adequate.....	75	59	NA	NA
Surplus.....	2	3	NA	NA
Subsoil moisture				
Very short.....	10	10	NA	NA
Short.....	42	50	NA	NA
Adequate.....	46	37	NA	NA
Surplus.....	2	3	NA	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero

CROP, LIVESTOCK, PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

Commodity	Current report	Previous report	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Grazing accessibility				
Open	28	27	NA	NA
Difficult	24	30	NA	NA
Closed.....	48	43	NA	NA
Pasture and range				
Very poor.....	18	14	NA	NA
Poor	32	31	NA	NA
Fair	26	31	NA	NA
Good.....	24	24	NA	NA
Excellent.....	--	--	NA	NA
Winter wheat				
Very poor.....	--	1	NA	NA
Poor	6	8	NA	NA
Fair	63	70	NA	NA
Good.....	30	21	NA	NA
Excellent.....	1	--	NA	NA
Winter wheat – wind damage				
None	64	62	NA	NA
Light	25	26	NA	NA
Moderate.....	11	11	NA	NA
Severe	--	1	NA	NA
Winter wheat – freeze damage				
None	80	77	NA	NA
Light	12	10	NA	NA
Moderate.....	8	11	NA	NA
Severe	--	2	NA	NA
Winter wheat – protectiveness of snow cover				
Very poor.....	1	1	NA	NA
Poor	32	5	NA	NA
Fair	34	33	NA	NA
Good.....	24	60	NA	NA
Excellent.....	9	1	NA	NA