

MONTANA CROP PROGRESS



United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
MONTANA FIELD OFFICE
 P.O. BOX 150969 · Lakewood, CO 80215-0969
 Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 January 29, 2024

Contact: Eric Sommer
 (800) 392-3202

CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION MONTH OF JANUARY 2024

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY: Montana experienced a cold January according to the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. Temperatures were, on average, in a range of 4 – 8 degrees below normal for most of the State, according to data from the High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC). A few isolated areas experienced temperatures as many as 10 degrees below average. Precipitation levels were at or below average for much of the State. Some areas received slightly higher amounts of moisture. Certain northern and central areas received as much as 0.75 inch of moisture above normal. Drought conditions deteriorated according to the U.S. Drought Monitor report released for January 23, 2024. The amount of land rated drought free fell to 20 percent, compared with 44 percent as reported on December 26. Abnormal dryness was found across 41 percent of Montana, compared with 37 percent on the same December release. Moderate drought stood at 26 percent, up 10 percentage points from December. Severe drought was found in about 13 percent of the State, also up 10 percentage points from December. Beneficial snow fell in Golden Valley and Musselshell Counties earlier in January. With the ongoing warm conditions, however, the snow cover was expected to melt. Farmers did not see much snow this winter until January in Valley County. More moisture was needed. Winter wheat was suffering with current snow depth at 4 inches at the most. The existing snow was expected to dissipate with the upcoming warmer weather forecasts.

Note: Monthly reports will be released for February on February 26, 2024; and for March on March 25, 2024.

LIVESTOCK PROGRESS

Commodity	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Cattle and calves				
Cows calved.....	4	NA	4	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	92	73	99	NA
Sheep and lambs				
Ewes lambled.....	3	NA	2	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	95	72	98	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.....	14	46	10	NA
Short.....	54	33	41	NA
Adequate.....	30	21	45	NA
Surplus.....	2	--	4	NA
Subsoil moisture				
Very short.....	23	48	8	NA
Short.....	46	31	56	NA
Adequate.....	28	21	33	NA
Surplus.....	3	--	3	NA

NA – not available
 (--) – zero

CROP AND PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

Commodity	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Grazing accessibility				
Open	50	87	30	NA
Difficult	35	5	32	NA
Closed	15	8	38	NA
Pasture and range				
Very poor	19	36	16	NA
Poor	35	24	31	NA
Fair	40	17	28	NA
Good	5	21	24	NA
Excellent	1	2	1	NA
Winter wheat				
Very poor	--	8	1	NA
Poor	3	13	1	NA
Fair	56	36	82	NA
Good	41	26	15	NA
Excellent	--	17	1	NA
Winter wheat – wind damage				
None	48	73	74	NA
Light	37	3	12	NA
Moderate	15	24	10	NA
Severe	--	--	4	NA
Winter wheat – freeze and drought damage				
None	47	73	74	NA
Light	32	27	20	NA
Moderate	20	--	6	NA
Severe	1	--	--	NA
Winter wheat – protectiveness of snow cover				
Very poor	8	87	9	NA
Poor	54	10	40	NA
Fair	21	1	18	NA
Good	17	2	18	NA
Excellent	--	--	15	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero