



Nebraska Weather and Crops

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Issue NE-CW 1308

Released March 31, 2008

Agricultural Summary: For the month of March 2008, variable temperatures during the first half of the month gave way to normal temperatures during the last half. Precipitation during the first thirty days of March was below normal with most areas receiving less than one inch of moisture. A front moved through the northern part of the state during the end of the month leaving snow cover in some areas of the northeast and north central. Fieldwork was mostly limited to fertilizer applications and seed bed preparations. A few fields of oats had been planted. Calving continued to make good progress with normal calf losses reported. Soil temperatures were above freezing across the entire state with some areas in the southwest reaching the upper 40's. Primary activities included spring fieldwork, calving, and livestock care.

This release is based on data from FSA county directors, county extension educators, NOAA, and the High Plains Regional Climate Center. County comments and reports can be found at:

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Nebraska/Publications/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/index

Weather Summary: At the end of March, snow depth was limited to extreme northern counties and averaged one to two inches in those areas. Precipitation and temperatures for the month were below normal.

Field Crops Report: **Wheat** conditions declined from last month and rated 1 percent very poor, 9 poor, 40 fair, 45 good, and 5 excellent, below last year's condition of 58 percent good or excellent. **Oat** planting was underway with 9 percent seeded statewide. **Hay and forage** supplies rated 3 percent very short, 11 short, 85 adequate, and 1 surplus, well above year ago levels.

Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report: **Cattle and Calves** conditions rated 0 percent very poor, 3 poor, 15 fair, 74 good, and 8 excellent, well above year ago levels. Calving progressed to 64 percent complete with calf losses near average.

The following are comments from Nebraska's FSA County Executive Directors and County Extension Educators:

NORTHWEST

SHERIDAN: Spring fieldwork is just in the beginning stages with very little subsoil moisture present to bring the crops up. As temperatures warm and with no additional moisture, wind erosion becomes a bigger concern.

SIOUX: Good spring moisture continues to fall in the northern parts of the county. Calving is in full swing.

NORTH CENTRAL

HOLT/BOYD: Crop producers are applying fertilizer on wheat fields and getting ready for spring fieldwork. Livestock producers are busy with calving and feeding livestock.

NORTHEAST

ANTELOPE: The ground has begun to thaw due to mild temperatures over the last several weeks. Calving conditions have been good. A few farmers have begun spring tillage. We are in need of moisture.

BOONE: Producers are moving cattle from fields to pastures and feedlots. Producers have been working in the fields cutting stocks and also preparing equipment for fieldwork.

CENTRAL

BUFFALO: Fields are drying out and some fieldwork has started.

DAWSON: Field activity is picking up as conditions allow. Calving is moving along well with few reports of problems. Most cattlemen report few calf losses.

EAST

DODGE: Cool weather is keeping farmers out of the field. Some grain is being hauled to town. Producers are getting equipment ready for the field and getting seed.

POLK: There has been some anhydrous applied and there has been some discing going on in the area.

SOUTHWEST

HAYES/HITCHCOCK: Producers are drilling oats, working fields for spring planting, and branding calves.

RED WILLOW: The lack of moisture in March may start to be taking an effect on the 2008 wheat crop.

SOUTH CENTRAL

ADAMS: Winter wheat seems to have come through the winter as normal. Current calving has been consistent with normal years and losses seem to be average. Producers have started to get into the fields.

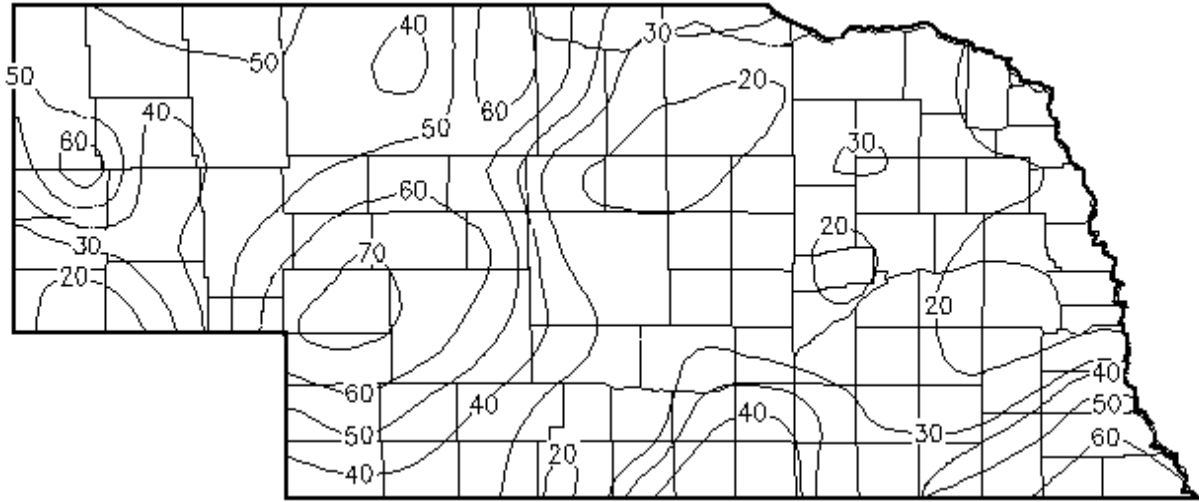
FURNAS: Conditions are dry on the top two inches. A rain would help the wheat that is starting to grow.

SOUTHEAST

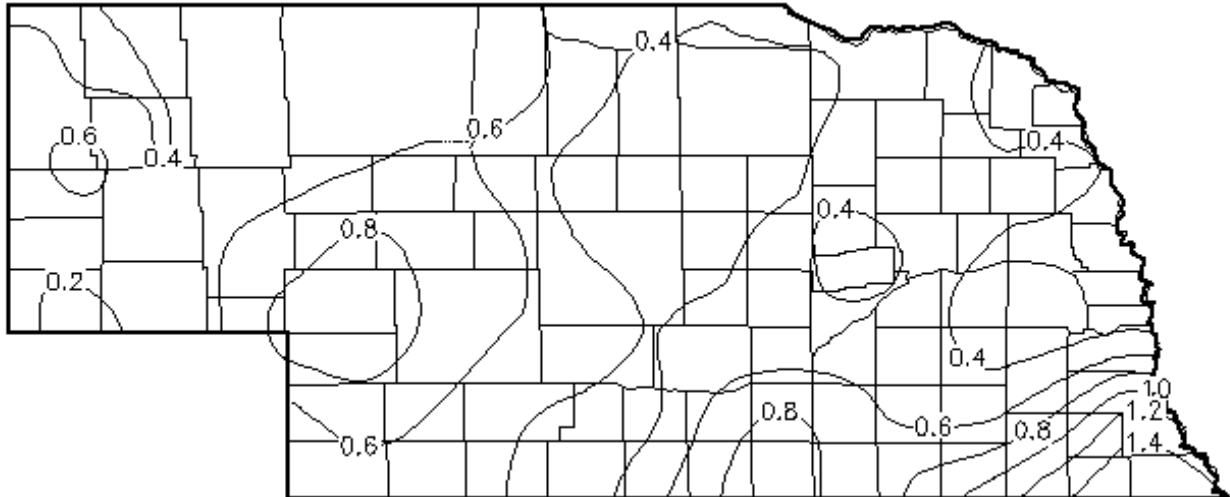
JEFFERSON: Some producers are starting to fertilize, however, fields are very soft from the moisture.

PAWNEE: March temperatures have varied considerably. Calving continues but wet conditions have caused an increase in health problems. Fieldwork is slow getting started.

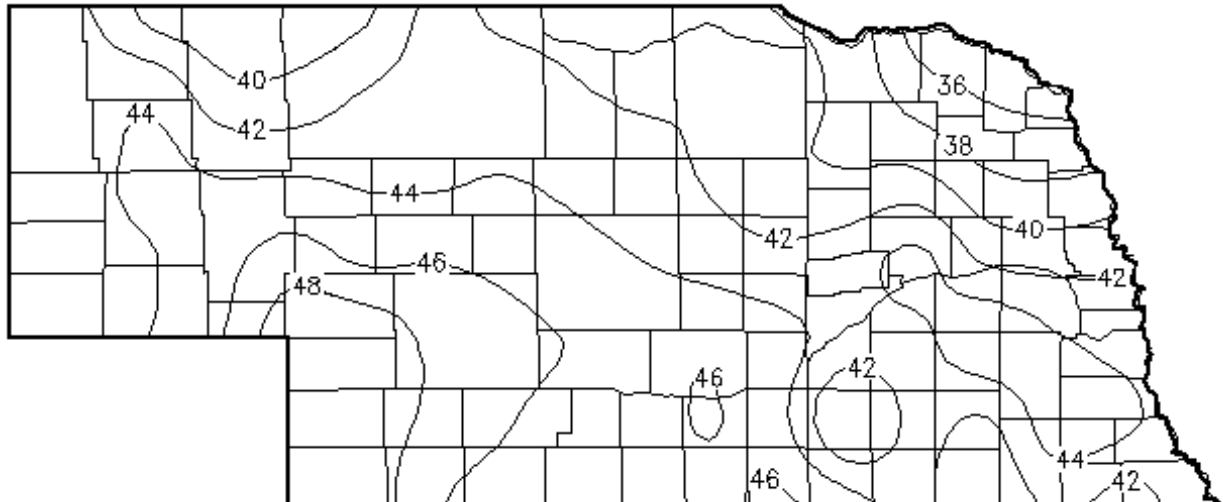
PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR MARCH 2008¹



PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF MARCH 2008¹



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL
MARCH 24, 2008 – MARCH 30, 2008¹**



¹ Source: High Plains Regional Climate Center and Nebraska State Climate Office