



Nebraska Weather and Crops

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Agricultural Summary: For the month of December 2008, temperatures averaged five degrees below normal across the state, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Nebraska Field Office. During the first two weeks temperatures were near normal with minimal amounts of precipitation. During the third week, temperatures turned bitter cold and averaged 18 degrees below normal with precipitation in the form of snow and freezing rain. The last week temperatures moderated but were still below normal with virtually no precipitation reported across the state. Livestock producers were using hay and other supplemental feeds due to ice and snow cover and extreme low temperatures.

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: Depth of snow at the end of December averaged one inch across the state. The Northeast District reported the largest amount of snow cover at 2 inches while other areas showed none. Temperatures averaged near normal the first part of the month and below normal for the last half. During the last week of the month, soil temperatures ranged from 26 in the Northwest District to 34 in the Northeast District. Soil temperatures in the western part of the state were 3-5 degrees below a year ago.

Field Crops Report: **Wheat** conditions statewide rated 0 percent very poor, 4 poor, 21 fair, 63 good, and 12 excellent, well above last year. **Hay and forage** supplies rated 0 percent very short, 5 short, 93 adequate, and 2 excellent, also above a year ago.

Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report: **Cattle and Calves** condition rated 0 percent very poor, 1 poor, 16 fair, 75 good, and 8 excellent, near last year.

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

NORTHWEST

BOX BUTTE: It has been a very dry and mild fall with winter continuing with a few cold snaps. Wind erosion has taken a few late planted irrigated wheat fields that did not get a stand established. This is most likely from the late dry bean harvest that moved the wheat planting date back. The wheat overall looks good but could use snow cover or moisture, preferably both. Livestock looks to be doing well.

NORTHEAST

BOONE: Bitter cold conditions with some ice and freezing rain during the week and winds of 35 mph. Some snow left in a few areas but no general cover on the ground. Cattle look good despite the continued cold.

CEDAR: Cold wet weather has been hard on some of the older cows. The fields are covered with snow making it difficult to find the corn. Some are feeding hay and some grain to cows.

DIXON: Cattle are still able to find feed in open areas of corn stubble. No reports of a shortage of hay at this time. The warmer weather on the weekend of the 27th provided considerable relief from snow that had piled up the week before.

KNOX: Livestock on stalks suffered some in early December if they did not have supplemental feed.

MADISON: Producers are planning for 2009. With recent drop in prices and strong input costs, many are evaluating cropping alternatives. Producers are beginning to make appointments to sign up for the 2009 DCP program. ACRE program is a topic of discussion.

THURSTON: Much of the snow received in mid December melted in a late December thaw giving cow-calf producers the opportunity to utilize stock fields for forage.

CENTRAL

DAWSON: Most frozen waterers have thawed and the weather has been good for livestock.

EAST CENTRAL

DODGE: Some grain is being hauled to town and cattle continue to graze corn stalks. Crop protection clinics and farm workshops are the main activities.

SARPY/DOUGLAS: Some of the corn is still in the field awaiting dry down. Cattle can once again graze the crop residues after the crust of ice has melted off.

YORK: No measurable snow since Dec 16th, flurries on five other days in December. Harvested fields have been open for pasturing except for a few days after December 16th. Days and nights have been really cold (extremely cold at times) with strong gusty northerly winds on many days and nights. Not much grain moving out of farm storage.

SOUTHWEST

FRONTIER: December saw some severely cold temperatures followed by unusually mild temperatures. The cattle seem to be doing very well this year after a good grazing period.

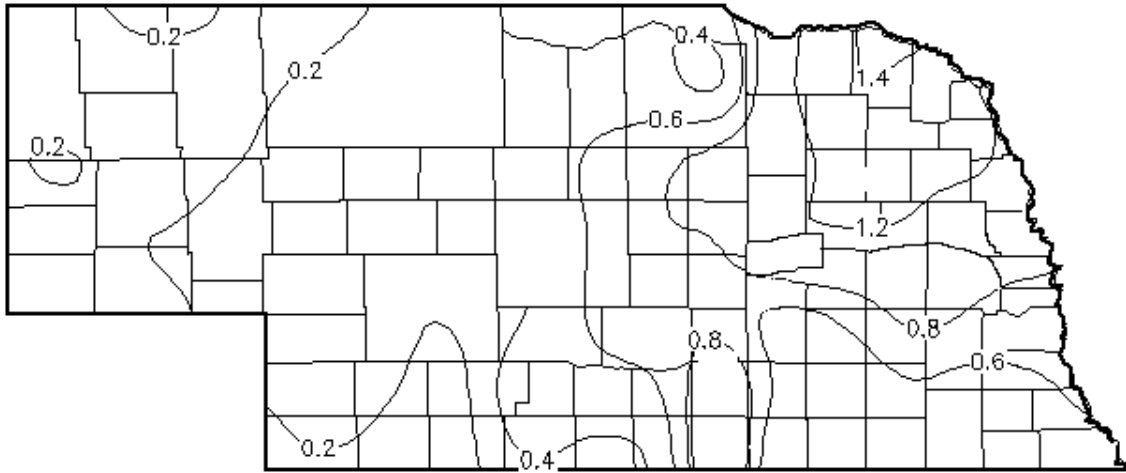
SOUTH CENTRAL

HARLAN: Cattle are grazing corn and sorghum stalks without supplemental feed.

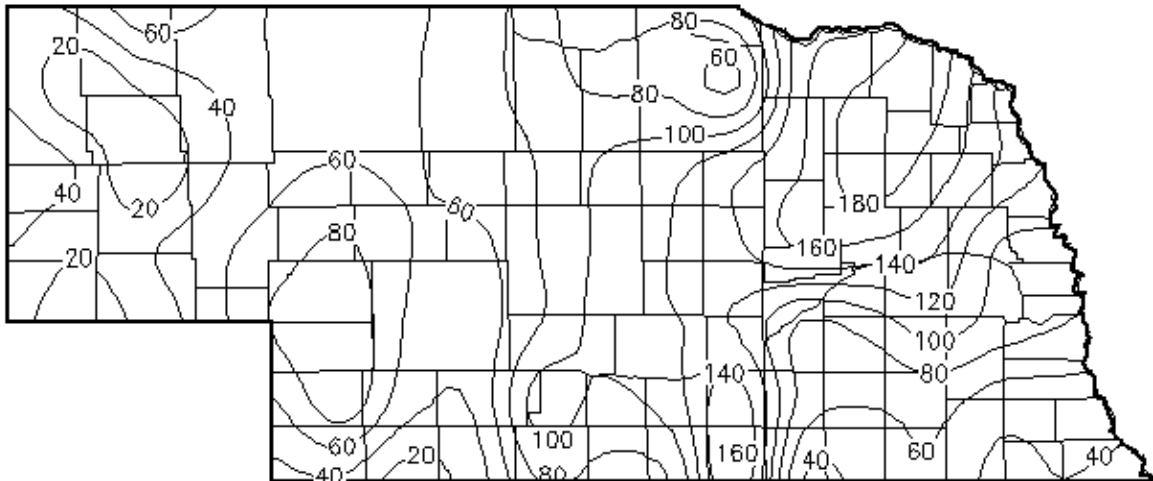
PHELPS: Harvest is complete; some producers were able to do some fall field work.

WEBSTER: Harvest is over, cattle in stocks and looking pretty good. Snow came and went.

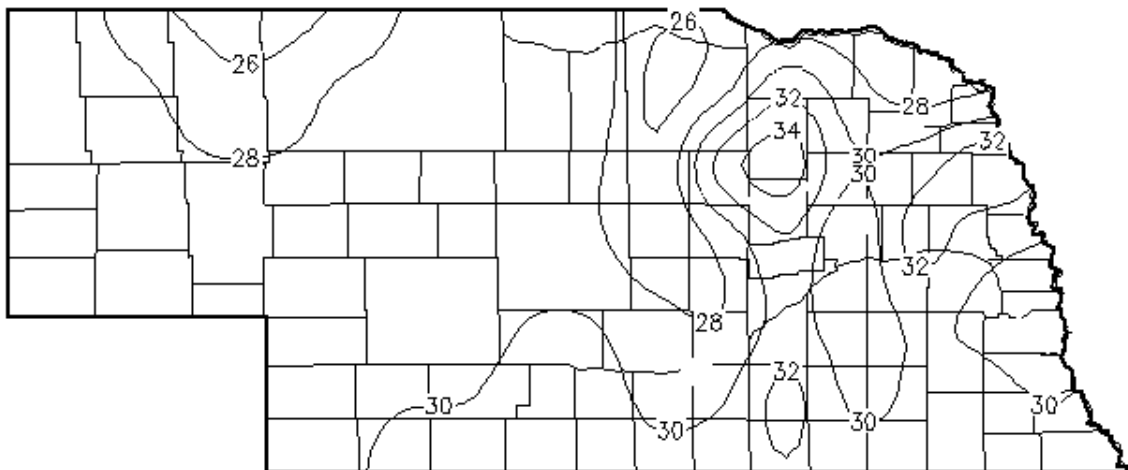
PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER 2008¹



PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR DECEMBER 2008¹



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL
DECEMBER 29, 2008 – JANUARY 4, 2009¹**



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