



Nebraska Weather and Crops

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Agricultural Summary: For the month of December 2009, strong winter storms with blizzard conditions gave much of Nebraska a white Christmas, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Nebraska Field Office. Corn harvest progressed slowly during the last half of the month. Heavy drifting in the eastern third of the state currently limits corn harvest. During the second week temperatures turned bitter cold and averaged 18 degrees below normal with precipitation in the form of heavy snow. The last week temperatures averaged nine degrees below normal with precipitation in the form of freezing rain and snow. Livestock care was difficult with producers 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 eight inches across the state with the Northeast District reporting the largest amount of snow cover at nearly 20 inches and the East Central District recording 13 inches. Much of the western half of the state recorded only minimal amounts of snow cover. Temperatures averaged below normal the entire month. During the last week of the month, soil temperatures ranged from a low of 24 in western parts of the state to a high of 34 in the east.

Field Crops Report: Corn harvested was at 96 percent complete compared to 93 percent for the week ending December 20, 2009. Wheat conditions statewide rated 0 percent very poor, 2 poor, 33 fair, 61 good, and 4 excellent, below last year. Hay and forage supplies rated 0 percent very short, 6 short, 90 adequate, and 4 excellent, near a year ago.

Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report: Cattle and Calves condition rated 0 percent very poor, 2 poor, 20 fair, 75 good, and 3 excellent, below last year's 83 percent good or excellent.

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

NORTHWEST

SHERIDAN: Snow fall ranged from 30 inches to only 5 inches throughout the county. With snow and cold temps, we are seeing livestock being fed hay earlier than anticipated. There is still corn remaining in the field with high moisture and now there are snow drifts to contend with.

NORTHEAST

DIXON: Acres of unharvested corn will remain in the field for a while. The snow has caused a great deal of work getting roughage to livestock in some situations. No wide spread reports of death loss at this time.

THURSTON: Hay supplies are likely to be consumed rapidly as stock fields are covered with snow. Hay will likely become short in supply quickly as we experience one of the harshest winters in recent memory. Corn harvest has come to a standstill because of the snow depths. It is likely losses of standing corn will be at least five to ten percent.

CENTRAL

BUFFALO: Snow, cold, and wind have challenged cow-calf producers who are calving now. The weather has also slowed all livestock production and increased feed requirements. Grain farmers with corn still in the fields are finding north rows and/or end rows with snow drifts up to the tassels, restricting harvest.

EAST CENTRAL

DODGE: The first week of December had some harvest going on but after that it looks like it will be spring before harvest will be finished. Some standing corn has snow covering the ears. Cattle are in stalks but the snow is deep and supplemental feeding is required.

DOUGLAS: Poor livestock conditions due to the cold and snow cover. Iced up water supplies and snowed in feed supplies. The few acres of corn that is not harvested is covered in snow drifts.

POLK: A few cattle losses reported due to the Christmas 2009 blizzard.

SAUNDERS: No progress on corn still in the field. More snow last week and freezing temps. Most producers that have livestock are feeding hay and breaking ice.

YORK: Very cold. Country roads are difficult to travel because of snow.

SOUTHEAST

NEMAHA: Heavy snow cover and frigid conditions could result in forage and hay shortages later in the winter and into spring.

OTOE: Several inches of snow on the ground. Waiting to hear from producers about livestock losses if any from the Christmas storm.

SOUTHWEST

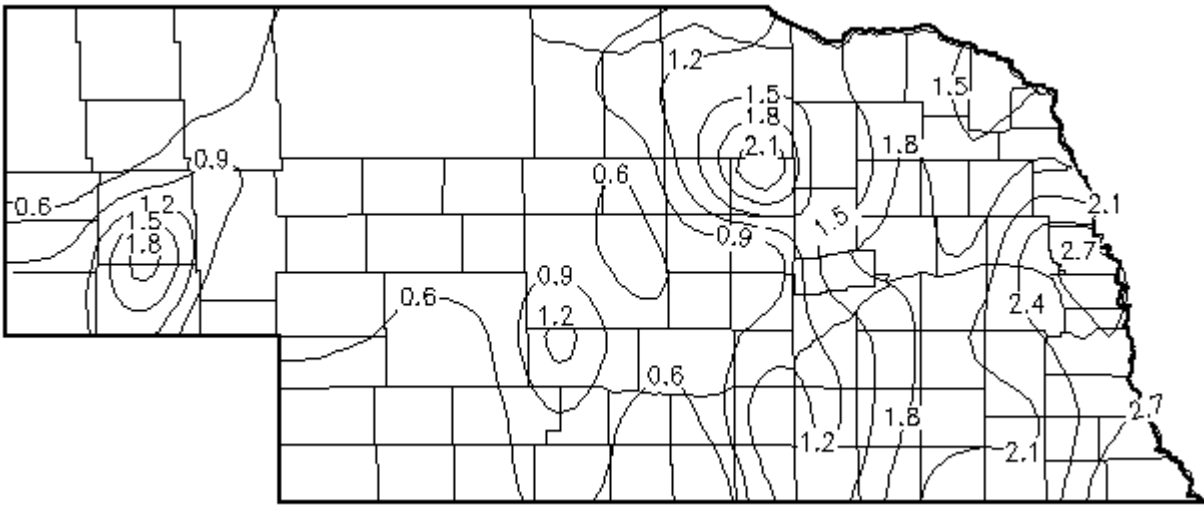
LINCOLN: Finishing the corn harvest is slow. The weather hasn't cooperated and some corn is still high in moisture.

FRANKLIN: Many cattle were left on pasture longer than normal because of the late corn harvest. Consequently, they were going to stalks at a lower score. Now with the snow lying on the ground producers are feeding hay since the grain residue in the stalks is not readily available.

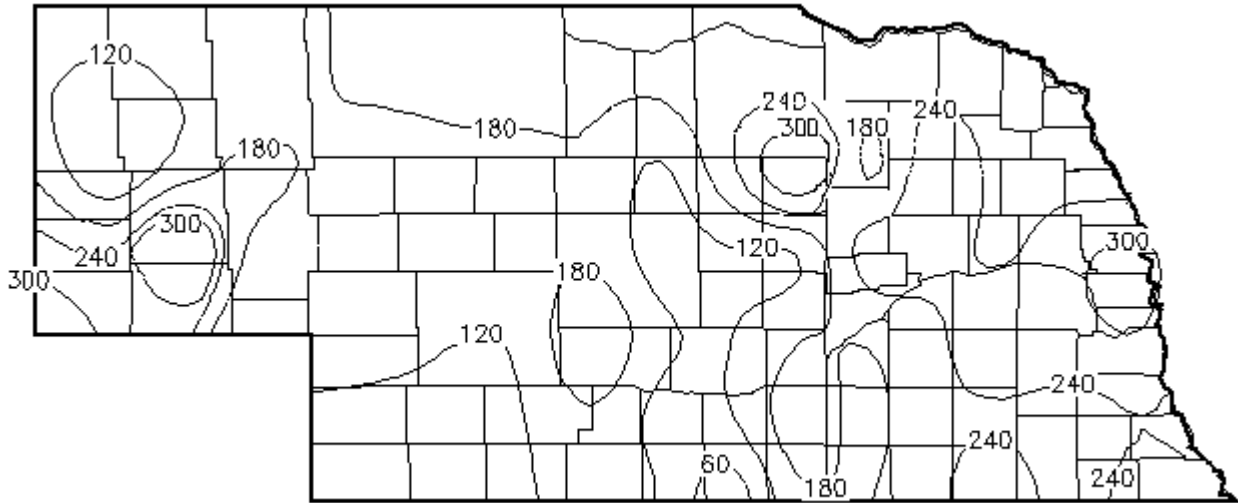
HARLAN: There is still some corn to harvest. Cattle are being supplementally fed due to snow cover in fields. The forecast is for more cold weather and snow this week. We have not had this cold of a winter for a long time, so I guess it was due, but not fun for livestock producers.

WEBSTER: Snow still is holding back final harvest of acres left. Could be spring before they are out now the way the snows have been coming and hanging in there. Cattle have been supplementally fed for the last month and it doesn't look like that will change any time soon, therefore, making hay and feedstocks a premium price, but there isn't a lot to buy due to drought this past summer.

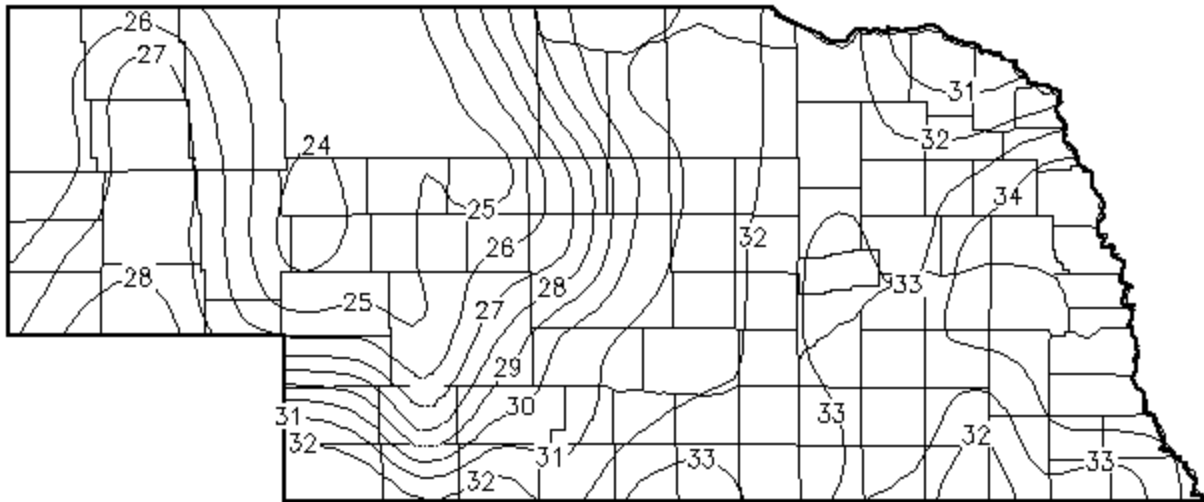
PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER 2009¹



PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR DECEMBER 2009¹



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL
DECEMBER 28, 2009 – JANUARY 3, 2010¹**



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