



Nebraska Weather and Crops

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Agricultural Summary: For the month of March 2011, temperatures and precipitation were below normal across much of the state, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Nebraska Field Office. Wheat condition continued well below year ago levels. During the last week of the month, soil temperatures ranged from 36 to 46 degrees. The coolest soils were in the North Central and North East districts and got warmer moving south and west across the state. Hauling grain to market, fertilizer application, planting preparation, and livestock care were the main activities during the month. Producers have been feeding cattle due to cold conditions with most feed supplies adequate. Cattle are in good condition with over half of cows having calved. Calf losses have been average or below for much of the state.

Weather Summary: Precipitation was light during March across the southern half of the state with less than .5 inch recorded. Elsewhere, one half to one and a half inches were received. More precipitation was received in the north than over the south. Some late season snow fell across the state at the end of the month. Temperatures averaged 1 degree below normal for the month. Temperatures averaged below normal at the beginning and end of the month and above normal for the third week of the month. Average temperatures for the month got warmer moving from north to south across the state.

Field Crops Report: Wheat conditions statewide rated 3 percent very poor, 14 poor, 43 fair, 36 good, and 4 excellent, below last year.

Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report: Cattle and Calves condition rated 0 percent very poor, 1 poor, 17 fair, 73 good, and 9 excellent, above last year. Calving progressed to 60 percent complete, ahead of last year with calf losses mostly average across the state. Hay and forage supplies rated 0 percent very short, 4 short, 92 adequate, and 4 surplus, above a year ago.

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

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

NORTHWEST

SCOTTSBLUFF/MORRILL: Slow start to spring field work as snow and wet weather of last week slowed activity.

SHERIDAN: Already seeing dry conditions and a need for moisture.

NORTHEAST

BOONE: Even with the most recent snow fall, we are behind in moisture.

CEDAR: Hay supplies are a little below normal this year. Cows and baby calves all look good. Farmers are moving corn and soybeans to market and getting equipment ready for field work.

DIXON: Producers are preparing for the spring planting season. There has been very limited field activity at this time.

KNOX: Primary activities were marketing grain, care of livestock, and preparation of machinery for spring work.

EAST CENTRAL

DODGE: Getting planters ready and getting seed corn and soybeans are the main activities. The weather has been decent for calving.

MERRICK: We had 3-5 inches of wet, heavy snow on Thursday & Friday night and some Saturday during daytime hours. It has mostly melted at this time.

SOUTHWEST

KEITH/ARTHUR: Other than the cold spell in late February, calving has been reported as good. Not much loss above normal. Producers are beginning to get into the fields with the warmer weather and wind drying things up. Wheat is in need of moisture throughout the month of April.

LINCOLN: We have had some winter wheat crop damage in the county due to cold temperatures and no snow cover.

SOUTH CENTRAL

FRANKLIN: County Committee members are concerned that there may be some winter kill. The soil conditions are still dry. Wheat was slowly beginning to grow. Cattlemen had some very cold weather for calving earlier but weather has been mild the last two weeks. Franklin County is in need of rain.

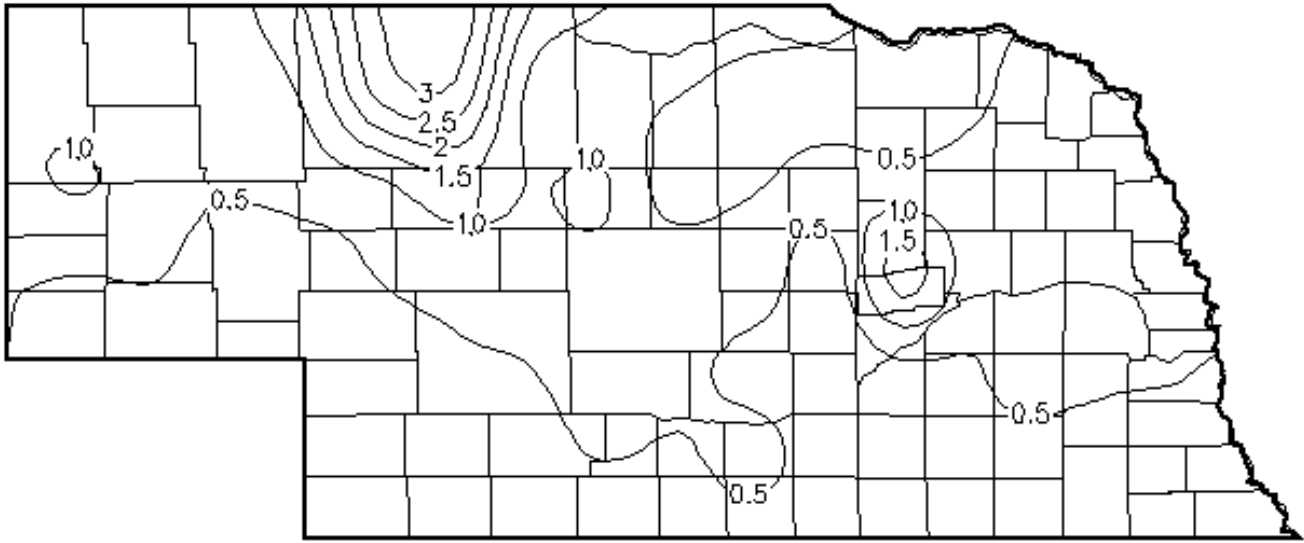
FURNAS: It's dry in Furnas County. During September, 2010 we recorded 1.60 inches of moisture in the Beaver City area. From October 1, 2010 until present we've recorded 2.20 inches at Beaver City, NE. There is much concern for the winter wheat because lack of moisture after planting caused poor germination and absence of fall tillering. Field work has begun. A good soaking rain would lift everyone's spirits.

HARLAN: One producer was in yesterday and he said the majority of his calves had short ears and tails from the cold weather that we seemed to have nearly every week. Some of the wheat fields have started to green up, but this cold that we are supposed to have through the weekend will slow it down again. Not much of the wheat had good growth last fall, so it is promising to see the greening fields that have been dormant all winter. Tuesday afternoon (22nd) we had enough hail to make the ground white in parts of the county. It rained very hard for a short time and we received nearly an inch of rain. I don't think that there was any damage as the hail was reported to be soft enough to crush when it hit the windshields of cars.

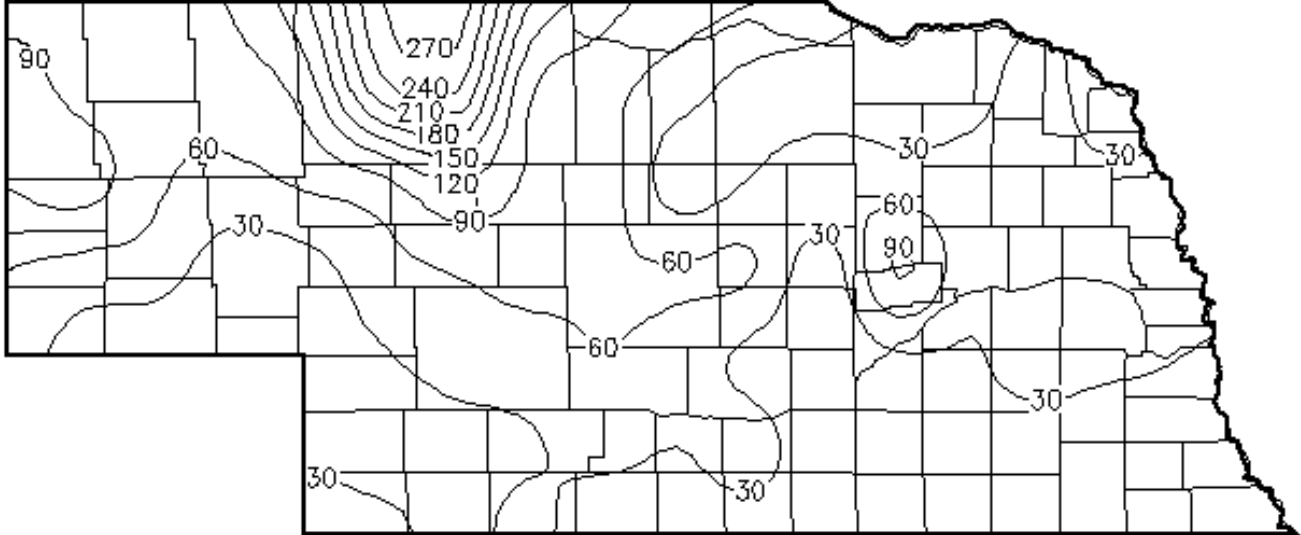
PHELPS: Calving has gone well, went through a tough, very cold spell in Jan. and Feb. With shelter being provided by livestock producers for cows, loss was average. Producers are beginning to do some spring field work, prep for planting. Moisture has been minimal in the area during Jan. thru March. Producers are hoping for moisture prior to planting.

WEBSTER: Calving is in full swing. Wheat is greening up nicely. Soil moisture is short.

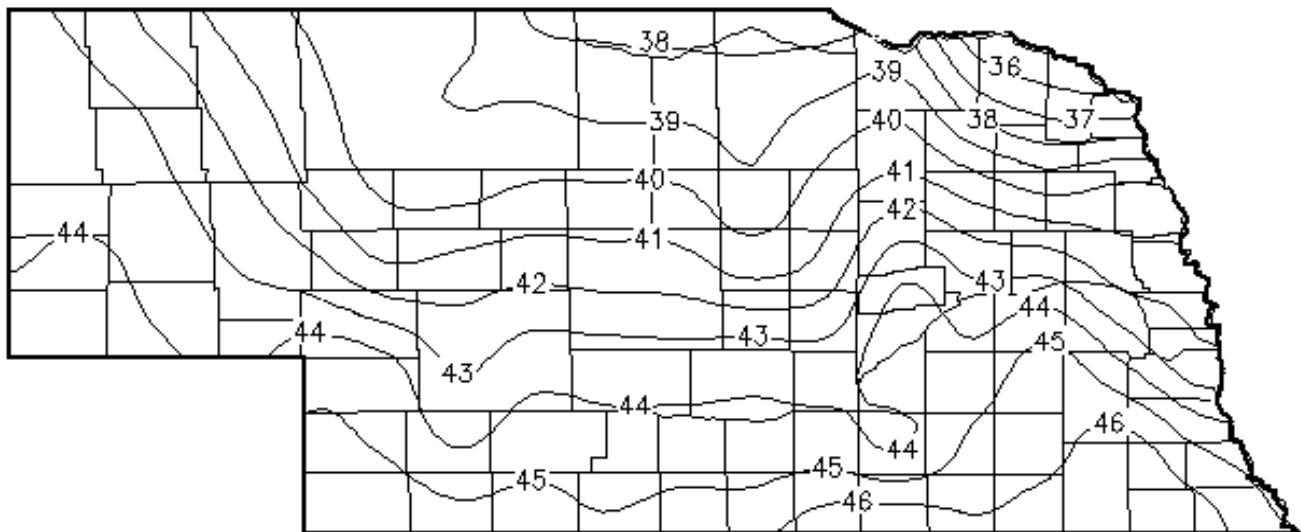
PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF MARCH 2011¹



PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR MARCH 2011¹



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL
MARCH 21, 2011 – MARCH 27, 2011¹**



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