



# New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service  
United States Department of Agriculture

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## Crop Weather

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For week ending 8/18/02

### New England Awaits Relief From Hot, Dry Conditions

**GENERAL CONDITIONS:** For the week ending August 18, 2002, there were 6.8 days suitable for field work across New England. Pasture condition was rated as 9% very poor, 32% poor, 31% fair, 19% good, 9% excellent. Dry conditions persist in New England, as significant rainfall has made itself scarce as of late. Farmers proceeded with irrigation, though water supplies are low. Humidity returned last week in full force, after taking most of the previous week off. Major farm activities included: harvesting tobacco, potatoes, oats, barley, highbush and lowbush blueberries, apples, peaches and vegetables; spreading manure; applying fertilizer; cutting dry hay and chopping haylage; moving bins into orchards for harvest; irrigating; monitoring for pests and disease; applying fungicides and insecticides.

#### SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
-- Percent --			
<b>Topsoil Moisture</b>			
Very Short	36	20	44
Short	34	37	34
Adequate	28	38	22
Surplus	2	5	0
<b>Subsoil Moisture</b>			
Very Short	25	15	32
Short	42	41	38
Adequate	31	42	30
Surplus	2	2	0

**FRUIT:** Apples, highbush and wild blueberries, peaches, plums and raspberries were harvested last week. Renovated strawberry fields were irrigated, along with other fruit crops. Apples and peaches remain in good to fair condition, while the condition of pears in Connecticut stayed very poor. In Maine, the hot sun has sped up the ripening of wild blueberries; however, the heat could ultimately have a negative effect on the quality of the berries. Cranberry growers in Massachusetts are concerned about water supplies - irrigation is necessary to size up the currently small berries, but water supplies are decreasing as frost season draws near.

**FIELD CROPS:** Hay is burning up in some areas due to the extreme heat, the first cut is nearly finished. Growth on second and third crops of hay has slowed from the hot, dry conditions. Corn continues to curl in the dry soil as farmers get ready for harvest. Harvest of oats and barley in Maine is behind schedule, barley harvest has begun. Potato late blight was found in at least one Maine field last week; growers continue to scout fields for signs of the disease. Tobacco growers in Connecticut and Massachusetts continue to harvest and scout for blue mold.

#### FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	-- Percent Harvested --			Condition
	2002	2001	5-yr Avg	
Apples	10	10	10	Good/Fair
Peaches	65	35	45	Good/Fair
Pears	<5	<5	5	Very Poor/Poor
Blueberries				
Highbush	80	70	75	Good
Wild, ME	50	55	60	Good/Fair
Cranberries, MA	--	--	--	Good/Fair

#### FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	-- Percent Harvested --			Condition
	2002	2001	5-yr Avg	
Barley, ME	5	25	20	Good/Excellent
Oats, ME	<5	15	10	Good/Excellent
Potatoes				
Maine	<5	<5	<5	Good
Mass	20	20	25	Good/Fair
Rhode Isl	40	35	25	Good/Fair
Silage Corn	--	--	--	Good/Fair
Sweet Corn	50	45	50	Fair/Good
Tobacco				
Shade	75	60	75	Good/Fair
Broadleaf	70	55	65	Good/Fair
Dry Hay				
First Cut	99	99	99	Good
Second Cut	75	80	70	Good
Third Cut	35	20	20	Fair/Good

**VEGETABLES:** Vegetable crops continue to show signs of drought stress and growers proceed with irrigation, where available. Sweet corn condition decreased slightly from the previous week, as the dry weather takes its toll. Harvesting of beans, cucumbers, greens, peppers, squash, tomatoes and many other vegetables took place last week.

For the Week Ending Sunday, August 18, 2002

The 41 stations shown below are limited by space but are well distributed across the region. All 86 stations appear on the Internet and in e-mail subscriptions.

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				CUM SINCE MAR 1 GROWING DEGREE DAYS				1-WEEK PRECIP			4-WEEK CUM PRECIP			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	BASE-50F		BASE-60F		TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL		DFN	DAYS
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN				INCHES	DFN		
<b>MAINE</b>															
Augusta_State_A	61	96	79	+12	1610	+64	733	+130	0.00	-0.77	0	0.86	-2.16	6	
Bangor_Intl_Arp	58	95	79	+12	1513	+104	662	+157	0.02	-0.75	1	0.80	-2.13	6	
Bethel	55	97	77	+11	1417	+11	575	+82	0.04	-0.87	2	1.04	-2.46	9	
Caribou_Municip	54	91	76	+13	1190	+32	448	+117	0.00	-0.91	0	0.87	-2.91	9	
Dover-Foxcroft	54	92	74	+10	1149	-83	410	+28	0.00	-0.84	0	0.93	-2.26	5	
Frenchville	59	91	77	+15	1097	+22	412	+130	0.01	-0.96	1	0.66	-3.04	11	
Houlton	51	92	75	+11	1227	+20	464	+97	0.01	-0.94	1	1.72	-1.94	11	
Livermore_Falls	55	100	79	+15	1486	+270	647	+281	0.02	-0.92	1	1.09	-2.36	7	
Moosehead	51	92	73	+11	1085	+60	359	+95	0.00	-0.84	0	1.25	-2.23	8	
Portland_ME	61	93	78	+11	1586	+178	700	+186	0.00	-0.63	0	1.12	-1.43	6	
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>															
Benton	59	93	76	+13	1433	+127	588	+186	0.06	-0.85	1	0.59	-2.90	6	
Berlin_AG	56	92	75	+11	1364	+49	528	+104	0.00	-0.99	0	1.89	-1.87	8	
Concord	59	99	80	+13	1839	+273	887	+276	0.07	-0.70	2	0.67	-2.41	8	
Diamond_Pond	53	88	72	+12	960	+72	304	+130	0.00	-1.19	0	1.71	-2.81	9	
Keene_AP	57	97	78	+10	1804	+58	838	+97	0.30	-0.61	1	2.01	-1.51	5	
North_Conway	59	97	78	+13	1676	+211	778	+243	0.05	-0.86	1	0.45	-3.11	12	
Rochester	60	100	81	+13	1784	+120	833	+147	0.44	-0.39	2	0.89	-2.41	3	
<b>VERMONT</b>															
Burlington_Intl	64	96	80	+13	1867	+184	907	+208	0.06	-0.88	2	1.27	-2.31	10	
Island_Pond	53	89	74	+12	1275	+198	477	+204	0.00	-1.12	0	1.56	-2.74	10	
Montpelier	57	90	74	+10	1488	+162	611	+182	0.33	-0.58	2	1.33	-1.95	11	
Pownal	58	88	75	+10	1549	+178	642	+187	0.16	-0.82	1	3.60	-0.18	8	
Rochester	53	93	76	+11	1467	+172	605	+194	0.00	-1.05	0	2.01	-1.98	7	
Rutland_AG	59	93	76	+8	1578	-154	675	-48	0.00	-0.98	0	2.29	-1.46	6	
Sutton	58	90	74	+13	1321	+226	504	+216	0.00	-1.12	0	1.91	-2.34	10	
Townshend_Lake	48	94	78	+10	1711	+73	769	+101	0.66	-0.25	2	1.07	-2.39	5	
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>															
Ashburnham	61	94	79	+13	1766	+343	812	+309	0.97	+0.19	2	2.92	-0.34	7	
Boston/Logan_In	70	101	84	+13	2259	+292	1204	+284	0.02	-0.70	1	0.68	-2.07	5	
Greenfield	58	95	79	+9	1959	+97	956	+129	0.33	-0.51	2	4.23	+0.87	7	
New_Bedford	66	94	80	+7	2012	+43	966	+45	0.00	-0.98	0	0.50	-2.97	4	
Otis_AFB	68	93	80	+10	1897	+300	895	+239	0.00	-0.77	0	0.69	-2.21	3	
Plymouth	65	96	80	+11	1934	+274	939	+235	0.02	-0.89	1	0.58	-2.77	4	
Walpole	66	100	83	+14	2034	+332	1026	+312	0.00	-0.91	0	1.09	-2.26	3	
Chicopee/Westov	61	97	80	+8	2177	+48	1128	+94	0.02	-0.75	1	2.01	-1.07	6	
Worcester	68	93	80	+12	1869	+284	901	+275	0.03	-0.81	1	2.24	-1.12	7	
Worthington	56	92	75	+10	1604	+217	697	+231	0.14	-0.79	1	1.56	-2.31	7	
<b>RHODE ISLAND</b>															
Providence	66	98	82	+11	2248	+377	1188	+335	0.00	-0.84	0	0.89	-2.25	3	
Woonsocket	62	98	81	+12	2015	+341	1003	+323	0.00	-0.91	0	0.96	-2.66	3	
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>															
Bridgeport/Siko	70	92	81	+9	2307	+303	1224	+261	0.04	-0.69	1	1.70	-1.45	4	
Hartford/Bradle	66	99	83	+12	2310	+259	1232	+251	0.00	-0.84	0	1.50	-1.57	4	
Norfolk	58	95	77	+12	1812	+419	840	+367	0.15	-0.90	1	2.12	-1.85	6	
Thomaston_Dam	57	97	79	+11	2022	+368	994	+335	0.00	-0.98	0	2.17	-1.66	6	
Willimantic	62	96	80	+12	2051	+366	1022	+335	0.00	-0.89	0	2.46	-1.18	4	

**STATE WEATHER SUMMARY**  
For the Week Ending Sunday, August 18, 2002

Summary based on NWS data.  
DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).  
Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.  
Precipitation Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.  
Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

State	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	50	100	76	+11	0.00	0.51
NH	46	100	76	+12	0.00	0.51
VT	48	98	76	+11	0.00	0.85
MA	52	101	80	+11	0.00	1.14
RI	62	98	79	+9	0.00	0.01
CT	57	99	80	+10	0.00	0.15

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**REPORTERS COMMENTS, By County:** *Reporters are from Extension Service (Ext), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), or other knowledgeable individuals.*

**CONNECTICUT - Howard Rood (FSA), Fairfield/Litchfield:** We need rain. Many crops, especially those growing on sandy soils are showing signs of stress. **Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland:** Extremely dry. Those who have water are irrigating, others are hoping for rain. Unbearable heat to work in - 38 days of 90+ temperatures this season and counting. Silage on gravel soils being harvested. Tobacco harvest progressing to keep ahead of blue mold. **Marsha Jette (FSA), New London:** It continues to be hot and dry. Corn is curling. Harvesting silage corn because it's so dry. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** HOT, too DRY, corn is in despair, hay is cracking, irrigation water drying up. Blueberry picking ended. Peaches are smaller than normal, but good. Milk production down due to heat. We need rain soon - too late for some fields. Chopping corn just around the corner. **Nancy Welsh/Karen Lockman (FSA), New Haven:** Rain still is non-existent in many parts of New Haven and Middlesex Counties. Producers still irrigating where possible. Soil temps are so hot and baked that it has burned the plants. Water does not absorb. Certain varieties of apples will not be available. Peaches are good and sweet. Mums are now available. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** More of the same - hazy, hot and humid, only the weeds are growing... can't we bioengineer corn to have the hot weather growth characteristics of crabgrass?

**MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook:** Potatoes: Growers applying fungicides and insecticides. Preparing equipment for harvest. Small grain harvest has begun. It continues to be very dry in northern Aroostook, rain is needed desperately. Potato crop continues to show drought stress, this is showing tuber growth. No problems with blight reported. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** Growers continue to apply fungicides and insecticides. Spray schedule is mostly 7-10 days. Dry conditions this past week have allowed farmers to catch up on harvesting hay. Rain this coming week would be welcomed for other crops. **Steve London (Ext), Southern Aroostook:** Very little pressure from aphids or leafhoppers. It has been very hot and dry, we need some rain. **Donna Lamb (Ext), Piscataquis:** Most of the county is very dry. I did have a report that one farmer got over an inch of rain during an isolated thunderstorm. Too bad it wasn't widespread. Corn on heavier soils looks excellent. I have seen some drought damaged corn that was located on well-drained soil. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** Sweet corn, blueberries and many gardens are being harvested now. Very dry in Somerset County, we need rain. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Dry weather continues. One shower Friday morning settled the dust. Lots of baled hay being done. Corn showing the stress of the dry conditions. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Blueberry harvest winding down. Sweet corn is plentiful. Many areas have had no rain for 3 weeks. A week of 90-100 degree temperatures affecting quality of blueberry crops. Some damage already evident in next year's fields. **David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild Blueberries: Hot temperatures have increased ripening of the crop but has reduced the quality of the berries. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** Those tractors with air conditioning are very popular. We need some moisture and heat relief. Whatever is left of the hay crop is burning up very quickly. The corn crop is really suffering with no rain. The irrigation systems are working overtime. We are also getting calls about dry wells and watering systems. Here we go again. **Parker Rand (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Isolated showers did little to help withering crops. Irrigation systems are in overdrive where available. Still harvesting sweet corn, blueberries, summer vegetables and hay. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** Ground water is becoming seriously short again. Farms are reporting that some livestock watering facilities have run dry. Because of the constant high heat, corn is maturing much faster than normal. That is probably a good thing because of the dry soil conditions. Harvest should begin early. **Laura Rand (FSA), Oxford:** Things are beginning to show stress from lack of water. Fields are turning brown and some field corn is starting to curl. Market stands are selling an array of peppers, corn, tomatoes and beans. Oxford County desperately needs rain.

**MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire:** Still haying, ground is very dry. Very hot with 3 days of rain, for a total of one-tenth of an inch. Corn is showing the dryness. **Kip Graham (FSA), Worcester:** It's been very dry. Despite lack of rain, vegetables are looking good and overall conditions are good. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: The intense heat and dry conditions are killing what would have been a nice cranberry crop. The critical time for berry sizing is now and it isn't happening. Growers are worried about how much longer their water supplies will be usable. Irrigation is still essential and frost season is two weeks away. Mother Nature is not cooperating. These conditions will foster fruit rot, as well. There is no good news in the industry to report. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** Still no rain so the main activity is trying to keep crops alive, as ponds and streams go dry. There is no second or third crop grass hay. There is a fair supply of all vegetables. Fruit is falling off trees at a higher than normal rate. Aphids are everywhere. Disease pressure is low. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Scattered showers ruined the haying plans of many dairy farms this week. Several farmers called in to report hail damage in their silage crops. Fall vegetable crops are at a critical stage where they need a good soaking rain as soon as possible. Pastures, forages and fruit crops are all in the same condition. Record heat has only made drought conditions worse. Drought advisories and water restrictions have been reimposed for the Connecticut River Valley. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** It's very dry and very hot. Farmers are irrigating their late summer and fall crops. Some crops not being irrigated are receiving low yields and fruit may be deformed. Growers continue scouting for pests and diseases. Due to the high humidity, blue mold is being reported by some broadleaf growers. **Gary Guida, Worcester:** No rain again this week. Weeds now wilting. Out of 4 sections of sweet corn at or near maturity, 2 are trashed (ears dried up), 1 was sparsely picked (ears small or drying up), and 1 was harvested (drought tolerant-almost). Out of the next 4 sections, 50% are showing severe stress. Haven't seen so many hornworms in 24 years I've been farming, all over tomatoes. Everything here is stunted, dying, or drying up on plants (like beans). Tomatoes really coming in now (even with hornworms). Produce sales of harvestable crops very good, consumers in understanding mood. Again, perennials selling well. Aren't most of you other reporters glad that your pay isn't tied to harvesting crops with this weather - anyone want to trade jobs?

**NEW HAMPSHIRE - Tina Savage (Ext), Carroll:** Hazy, hot and humid, we are in desperate need of rain. Trees are losing their leaves prematurely, pastures are dry to the point of crispness. Irrigated vegetables continue to do well, I've seen some beautiful green peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers and summer squash. Farmers' markets are doing a booming business. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** Hot, humid conditions with little to no rainfall continue. Regrowth on recently mowed grass fields is very slow. Field corn on sandy soils is showing moisture stress, but the remainder is looking good - milk stage. Second cut dry hay is starting to wind down, and third cutting hay and haylage is going strong. Apples are almost ready to harvest, but lack of rain has made for small fruit. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Quite hot, humid weather throughout the week. Haying activities going at a good pace. Most field corn now tasseled out, sweet corn from local farms becoming available. Increasing selection of veggies now available: beans, tomatoes, garlic, cucumbers. Highbush blueberries look good this year, picking continues. Honey being taken off supers, bees in goldenrod which is now approaching full bloom. Seeing a little moisture stress in field corn on sandy soils, grass fields could use some rain. Clover regrowth good. Pheromone traps for leek moths placed throughout the county. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Very hot and dry weather continues to effect crop growth. Grass growth has basically stopped and alfalfa growth has slowed. Corn at a very vulnerable stage of growth for drought. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Weather: Drought conditions throughout the county. Where irrigation is not available, all crops are suffering. Fruit: Harvestingighbush blueberries, peaches, plums, Paulared apples, and starting on fall

raspberries. Apple growers continue to move bins into orchards, getting ready for harvest. Irrigating renovated strawberry beds, raspberries, blueberries and peaches. Vegetables: Irrigating crops where irrigation ponds' water levels are going down. Harvesting wide array of vegetables. Farmers kept busy monitoring pest pressures, and spraying pesticides for insects and diseases. High demand for produce at most local farmers' markets. Field Crops: Hay cutting continued. Farmers making new forage seedings. With dry conditions, silage corn leaves are curling, showing stress conditions. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** Dry is the word of the week, again. Spot thunderstorms, some with hail, passed through the region last week missing some areas of the county completely. Some silage and sweet corn fields are showing signs of stress. Most hay fields have had 2 good cuttings off them with haylage being done three times. Need rain before any more growth can happen. **Geoffrey Njue (Ext), Strafford:** It was another hot and dry week. Growers and producers are wishing for rain. Fruit and vegetable growers continue to irrigate where possible. Harvesting of a variety of warm climate vegetables such as tomatoes, beans and cucurbits. Sweet corn harvest also continued through the week. Sweet corn yields have been affected by the lack of rain. Fruit growers continued with the harvesting of blueberries and peaches. Growth of third cut hay is seriously affected by the lack of rain. We hope for some rain soon.

**RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport:** The dry weather remains the topic of conversation, a small potato harvest in both size and count continues. Field corn showing signs of stress along with summer vegetables. Overhead and drip irrigation is a sign of the times. Sweet corn tastes wonderful, along with tomatoes and summer vegetables. Amazing, these farmers. **Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties:** Crops are wilting and field corn has a dull green look. The farmers are continuing to move irrigation hoses. Pumpkins are in bloom, but are showing drought stress. Our water need is critical at this time. We've had a heat wave in Rhode Island, with 5 continuous days of 90+ degree heat.

We have all market crops available and peach PYO is underway. Our volume of calls from operators has picked up substantially this week. Pond levels are decreasing rapidly. "Watering brooks" are dried up. Second cut hay is almost non-existent. Farmers and crops are both extremely stressed.

**VERMONT - John St. Onge (FSA), Lamoille:** Hard to believe after the June/July wet weather that we have become dry and dusty. Corn has been thriving in hot weather and maturing on schedule. Vegetables need water and grass growth has slowed. **Lynette Hamilton (FSA), Windham:** Another hot and dry week in Windham County. Most all second cut is harvested. Field corn is looking drier by the day with some of it all dried up. Veggie producers are worried about their fall crops (squash & pumpkins) in these drought conditions. Weeds are taking over some alfalfa fields because of the dry weather. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Continued hot, dry conditions. Corn and grasses showing drought stress. Many ponds dried up. Alfalfa regrowth adequate, grasses have no regrowth. Pasture regrowth stopped. Continued hay harvest, some manure spread on hay land. Some new seedings of hay crop being planted. Corn crop still immature. **Richard Noel, Franklin/Grand Isle:** Franklin/Grand Isle Counties had 7 days for field work, haven't seen that since April up here! Everything going on for field work, a lot of 2nd cut hay going in, manure and fertilizer being spread, sweet corn being harvested, tomatoes starting to ripen. Field corn looking better, but is still pretty sick-looking in some fields! **Sherwin Williams, Rutland:** Sprayed potatoes for blight, also vine crops. Sweet corn season in full swing now, picking mid-season varieties. Tomatoes ripening slow as usual. Early potatoes show their age - will start digging for market soon. No rain last week. My old neighbor used to say "Drier than a cork leg." Dry weather beginning to show on all crops on light soil, but mid-season varieties of sweet corn on heavy soil are doing very good, as are cucumbers, summer squash and cole crops. Have a nice, wet week.

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