



New England Agricultural Statistics



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Crop Weather

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For week ending 4/30/06

Dry Spring Pushes Farmers Ahead

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending April 30, 2006, there were 6.0 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 8% very short, 33% short, 57% adequate, 2% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 2% very short, 29% short, 68% adequate, 1% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 10% very poor, 12% poor, 32% fair, 38% good, 8% excellent. Light rain and windy conditions hindered outside activities at the beginning of the week. By mid-week, clear skies and warm days provided ideal conditions for farmers to continue preparing and planting fields. During the week, cold nights brought frost to low lying areas. Farmers were busy fencing and waiting for pasture conditions to improve to let livestock out.

FRUIT: An abundance of sunshine this spring has allowed fruit development to progress ahead of schedule. Most fruit tree growers were finished pruning trees and now concentrating on early sprays. Maine wild blueberry growers were busy pruning, fertilizing, and spraying herbicides onto fields. Fruit growers continued to plant trees, raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	Stage	Condition
Apples	BS/EB	Good
Peaches	EB/FB	Good
Pears	BS/FB	Good
Blueberries		
Highbush	Bud Stage	Good/Fair
Wild, ME	Dormant	Good
Cranberries,	Dormant/BS	Good
Strawberries	Dormant/EB	Good/Fair

BS = Bud Stage, EB = Early Bloom, FB = Full Bloom

VEGETABLES: Growers have started to plant sweet corn and five percent of the 2006 crop was planted in the region by the end of the of April. Some early vegetables have been planted: greens, lettuce, peas, spinach, swiss chard, and tomatoes. Asparagus harvest was underway. Growers continued to prepare fields by fertilizing, liming, plowing, and discing. Greenhouses were busy planting vegetables and garden centers were busy over the weekend selling soil amendments, mulch, pansies, perennials, shrubs, and trees. Local farm stands will be opening soon.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
-- Percent --			
Topsoil			
Very Short	8		0
Short	33		0
Adequate	57		38
Surplus	2		62
Subsoil			
Very Short	0		0
Short	29		2
Adequate	68		54
Surplus	1		44

FIELD CROPS: A warm, dry spring has allowed farmers to get off to a good start with field work. Farmers were busy spreading lime, manure, and fertilizer, plowing, harrowing, and planting fields. Some reports of winter kill damage occurred in some hay fields in Maine. The dry spring has allowed Massachusetts potato growers to get ahead of schedule with plantings, and 45 percent of the crop had been seeded by week's end. Rhode Island potato growers have taken advantage of the dry spring and have a quarter of the crop planted, which is also ahead of normal planting. Maine potato growers were busy preparing ground and cutting seed.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2006	2005	5-yr Avg	Condition
-- Percent Planted --				
Barley, ME				N/A
Oats, ME				N/A
Potatoes				
Maine				N/A
Mass	45	15	20	Good
Rhode Isl	25	20	20	Good
Silage Corn	5	0	0	Good/Fair
Sweet Corn	5	5	10	Good/Fair
Tobacco				
Shade				N/A
Broadleaf				N/A
Dry Hay				
First Cut				Fair/Good
-- Percent Harvested --				

Weather Summary For New England Agricultural Statistics
Prepared By AWIS, Inc.

For the Period: Monday April 24, 2006
To: Sunday April 30, 2006

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 INCHES		DFN	DAYS
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN				INCHES	DFN		
MAINE															
Augusta State A	31	61	45	-3	32	+21	0	+0	0.34	-0.57	3	1.98	-1.52	9	
Bangor Intl Arp	28	62	45	-2	18	+12	0	+0	0.40	-0.39	4	2.38	-0.72	12	
Bethel	24	66	43	-4	31	+25	0	+0	0.42	-0.42	3	2.07	-1.29	8	
Caribou Municip	23	67	42	-1	9	+5	0	+0	0.30	-0.31	3	1.74	-0.55	10	
Dover-Foxcroft	23	59	41	-3	3	-1	0	+0	0.20	-0.64	1	1.55	-1.75	3	
Frenchville	22	65	41	-1	8	+8	0	+0	0.45	-0.18	3	1.55	-0.83	9	
Houlton	19	68	42	-2	16	+12	0	+0	0.18	-0.49	3	1.88	-0.56	12	
Livermore Falls	22	63	42	-3	24	+20	0	+0	0.08	-0.83	3	1.59	-2.05	7	
Moosehead	21	59	39	-2	3	+3	0	+0	0.21	-0.56	3	2.00	-0.90	11	
Portland_ME	27	64	44	-4	30	+25	0	+0	0.47	-0.45	2	2.81	-1.01	8	
NEW HAMPSHIRE															
Benton	25	62	41	-6	16	+0	0	+0	0.92	+0.22	3	2.65	+0.07	10	
Berlin AG	25	64	42	-4	19	+8	0	+0	0.21	-0.60	2	1.89	-1.29	6	
Concord	26	66	45	-4	84	+68	6	+6	0.80	+0.10	2	2.61	-0.12	8	
Diamond Pond	20	56	38	-3	4	+4	0	+0	0.73	-0.04	4	3.10	+0.22	13	
Keene AP	27	64	44	-7	69	+42	3	+3	0.74	-0.03	1	1.37	-1.58	4	
North Conway	27	62	44	-3	42	+31	0	+0	0.83	-0.14	4	2.51	-1.34	10	
Rochester	28	68	45	-4	68	+48	0	+0	1.04	+0.06	3	3.73	-0.25	9	
VERMONT															
Burlington Intl	26	61	43	-6	69	+43	11	+11	0.35	-0.35	3	2.65	+0.05	8	
Island Pond	21	61	39	-5	6	-1	0	+0	0.51	-0.19	4	2.15	-0.37	12	
Montpelier	24	63	42	-5	47	+33	2	+2	0.47	-0.15	3	2.54	+0.26	10	
Pownal	28	63	44	-3	46	+29	0	+0	0.89	-0.16	2	3.43	-0.63	7	
Rochester	24	66	41	-5	14	+3	0	+0	0.37	-0.56	2	3.20	-0.30	5	
Rutland AG	24	62	43	-7	45	+8	1	+0	0.15	-0.55	2	2.51	+0.01	8	
Springfield_VT	26	64	44	-4	61	+46	0	+0	0.73	-0.18	1	2.77	-0.78	6	
Sutton	22	61	40	-3	13	+9	0	+0	0.99	+0.29	4	2.88	+0.17	13	
MASSACHUSETTS															
Boston/Logan_In	38	70	49	-4	97	+58	4	+4	0.71	-0.13	3	1.77	-1.59	11	
Fitchburg	29	68	48	+1	102	+91	10	+10	0.71	-0.11	3	2.24	-0.92	10	
Greenfield	30	66	47	-5	65	+29	0	+0	1.31	+0.40	4	3.59	+0.17	12	
New Bedford	30	65	47	-6	43	+1	0	+0	1.33	+0.42	3	3.28	-0.56	10	
Otis AFB	36	64	47	-2	33	+20	0	+0	0.42	-0.49	3	2.28	-1.34	12	
Plymouth	31	66	46	-3	45	+31	0	+0	0.51	-0.47	3	2.20	-1.75	12	
Walpole	29	70	48	-3	86	+62	3	+3	1.24	+0.30	3	2.58	-1.36	12	
Chicopee/Westov	28	70	48	-7	102	+34	6	+5	1.12	+0.21	2	2.86	-0.75	8	
Worthington	27	65	44	-3	40	+25	0	+0	1.44	+0.43	3	4.06	+0.31	9	
RHODE ISLAND															
Providence	38	68	50	-2	109	+78	5	+5	1.51	+0.60	3	3.19	-0.65	11	
Woonsocket	31	71	48	-2	82	+62	0	+0	0.79	-0.18	3	2.18	-1.69	12	
CONNECTICUT															
Bridgeport/Siko	38	73	51	-2	109	+65	9	+9	3.70	+2.79	2	7.92	+4.41	9	
Hartford/Bradle	34	71	51	-3	141	+87	17	+16	1.35	+0.44	2	3.72	+0.11	10	
Norfolk	28	65	46	-2	51	+39	0	+0	2.16	+1.11	3	5.59	+1.42	9	
Thomaston Dam	32	68	48	-3	77	+48	1	+1	3.23	+2.19	3	6.86	+2.88	10	
Willimantic	30	71	48	-3	103	+77	2	+2	0.90	-0.08	3	2.73	-1.18	11	

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.

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STATE WEATHER SUMMARY

For the Week Ending Sunday, April 30, 2006

State	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	L	HI	AV	DF	LO	HI
ME	17	68	42	-3	0.03	0.73
NH	6	68	42	-5	0.18	1.93
VT	16	68	42	-5	0.15	1.21
MA	23	71	47	-3	0.19	1.44
RI	31	71	49	-2	0.55	1.51
CT	28	77	49	-3	0.85	3.70

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: This past week, farmers were busy spreading fertilizer on cropland. Some field corn has been planted on the lighter soils. There were light frosts at the end of the week. **Jude Boucher (Ext), Tolland:** Nice weather for spring planting. **Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland:** Abundant sun and cool mornings with frost in many areas required fruit growers to apply overhead irrigation for frost protection. Sweet corn planted under plastic and row cover is 3-4 inches tall. Field corn planting started at the end of the week. Moisture has been scarce this spring and grass has not responded to fertilizer the way it should have. Even though fertilizers and fuel are available they are very expensive! **Frank Himmelstein (Ext), New London:** A warm dry April allowed many days in the field to spread manure and disc in rye. Until last week field conditions were too dry in the county. Some much needed rain did arrive towards the end of the month. More precipitation is expected this week. While some growers may be ahead of their usual field preparation schedule, the weather this past week has not settled into an optimal stage for planting corn. Crops that get off to a slow start will be more susceptible to weed, disease and insect problems. **Marsha Jette (FSA), New London:** Very dry. Producers have been able to get on usually wet fields and spread manure and till the soil. Twenty percent loss of early planted sweet corn due to two days of frost. Some possible loss to strawberries also. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Frost for several mornings, Peaches in full bloom, Pears early bloom, planted peas, spinach, swiss chard, sweet corn, harvesting asparagus. Seeding hayfields, spreading manure on corn land. Some farmers spreading "boston beans" to reduce fertilizer costs. Many Dairy farmers are stretched to cover fertilizer and increased diesel fuel costs. **Nancy Welsh (FSA), New Haven:** Excessive rainfall occurred on April 23rd in both New Haven and Middlesex County, ranging from 5 to 6 inches. There is a lot of standing water in fields. Prior to the rainfall a lot of ground had been prepared for planting. Some early vegetables have been planted. There was a potential for frost on 4/28 and 4/29 in both counties, as overnight temperatures dipped into the high twenties, but no reports of damage have been received at this time. **Joyce Meader (Ext), Windham:** Farmers debating on nitrogen level in soil. Will they save on fertilizer expense based on manure applications and wait until June Nitrate test to apply Nitrogen? Rain is coming, the hay farmers hope. The corn preparation is way ahead due to dry weather. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Field work is mostly prep work - spreading manure, plowing, harrowing etc. A few farms in the sandier soil areas have planted field corn. Sweet corn under row covers is planted in the CT River Valley.

MAINE - Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook: Ground getting ready. Cutting seed. Soil temperature 39-40. Picking rocks. Some grain being planted. **Steve London, Southern Aroostook:** Potatoes and small grains: Ground work being done for grain. **Donna Coffin (Ext), Piscataquis:** Pastures are starting to green up. Fields have dried early so field work is progressing. **Kathy Hopkins (Ext), Somerset:** Plowing and manure spreading starting. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Some corn planted. Lots of manure being spread. Last fall seedlings look like they suffered winter damage with many needing to be seeded again this spring. Many spring grains are planted. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Sweet corn has been planted. Most blueberry field burning has been completed and now sulfur and fertilizer application has begun. Lack of snowfall this winter and a dry spring has gotten farm activities off to an early start. We had a few frosty mornings this week. Fire danger is high. Farmstands opening soon! **Dr. David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild blueberries Fields being pruned and fertilized and pre-emergence herbicides applied. Plants at green tip in Knox-Lincoln county, fungicide applications to prevent mummy berry are beginning. **Sandy Truslow (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Grass has turned green, now some moisture is needed to get it growing! **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** It is very dry in Western Maine. There were 17 straight days with no rainfall in March (a record) and very little rain in April. Maple syrup production was way down for most producers, with some exceptions.

Fruits, berries & hay land are being monitored for winter kill damage. **Laura Rand (FSA), Androscoggin:** Busy, busy, busy. Producers are busy tilling the ground in preparation of planting and others are beginning the initial stages of planting potatoes and oats. Cold nights and warmer days have been the norm.

MASSACHUSETTS - Jason Otto (FSA), Bristol: Field work has started. After some heavy rain moisture levels are up. **Aimee Thayer (FSA), Berkshire:** The Berkshires had a very dry spring up until 3" of rain fell over last weekend bringing the year to date precipitation nearer to normal. However, the early dry weather made it possible for farmers to hit the fields earlier without the usual mud season. So we had some cultivation, pest control and early planting done in the county by the end of April. Hay fields and pasture were jump started by the rain allowing earlier pasturing of livestock and a serious green flush of growth. Vegetable farmers have planted cold tolerant spring crops. Local Farmer's markets will start up in a week or two with annuals, maple syrup and farm made goods. Reports for the maple sugaring season reported 20% and higher reduction in volume due to unseasonably warm temperatures in an erratic season. To date, no serious hard frosts have threatened the stone fruit buds which are just now starting to bloom. There is concern over tent caterpillar in the county and some preventative treatment is going on now. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** Crop field conditions are dry, rain is needed. Dairy farmers are spreading manure, lime, repairing fences and seeding new hayfields. Vegetable growers are plowing and spreading lime. They are planting potatoes, peas, sweet corn, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, spinach, parsnips and strawberry plants. Sweet corn is up five to six inches under plastic. Spinach and fiddle heads are being harvested. Orchardists are applying fertilizer and a protective fungicide spray.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap: Farmers have had the opportunity to get on the fields earlier than normal. Early sweet corn under plastic and peas are planted in some places. Pastures and hayfields are looking good. Most fruit growers have finished pruning and are concentrating on early sprays. For late April, garden centers saw good weekend sales of soil amendments, mulch, pansies, perennials, shrubs and trees. **Tina Savage (Ext), Carroll:** No mud season this year, few black flies. Fields are dry and producers are able to get on them to spread manure, fertilizer and lime. Everything seems to be a bit early this year, roughly a week ahead of schedule. Plant sales booming with the nice week end weather. Shaping up to be a very dry year. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** A mild winter and decent spring so far. A couple days of nice rain early in the week, but we could use more. New forage seedings are in, and field conditions have allowed farms to make great progress getting ready for planting. Most fruit crops seem to have made it through the winter just fine. Here's hoping for a great season... **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Still hard freezes at night. Friday a particular concern with greenhouse/nursery growers struggling to protect outdoor crops. Temps in low 20's reported in Northern Coos and other cold locations. Manure being spread on hay lands, just the beginning of field prep on farms with lighter soils. Apple pruning finishing up. Season beings somewhat drier than usual. Reports of some alfalfa winter-kill. Growing degree days (base 50) 83 as of May first. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Crops are growing slowly with the dryness and cool weather. Field activities include field prep, manure application and new seedings. Dry soils have allowed for early access to fields to get spring work going. **Steve Schmidt (FSA), Grafton:** Grass is starting to grow in the valley. The higher elevations are still a little further behind. Manure is being spread, and corn is being planted. March provided below normal levels of precipitation. Over all soil moisture conditions are adequate. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Vegetables: Transplanting tomatoes into high tunnels. Early season vegetables (peas, lettuce, greens) are being planted, along with early sweet corn. Liming, fertilizing, plowing, disking and getting ready to plant fields. Fruit: Cherry are in full bloom, plum are at advance white bud stage to bloom stage and peach are at advance pink stage to

bloom. Apples are in pre-pink stage to pink stage. Blueberry is at 0.25" green stage to early pink bud stage. Pruning last blueberry bushes and raspberry patches. Orchardists are chopping brush in orchard or push pruning out of the orchards. Fertilizing orchards. Protective fungicide sprays applied on fruit trees. Planting fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries. Field Crops: Liming and fertilizing hayfields; spreading manure, plowing, disking fertilizing and getting ready to plant corn. Fixing pasture fences. Also, getting ready to make new pasture and hayfield seedings. **Sadie Puglisi (Ext), Merrimack:** The past few nights have been very cool with frost in the low areas of the county. Fields need rain. Manure is being spread and corn is starting to be planted. Fruit buds are showing some color. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Weather fairly good. Some rain needed. Livestock grazing. Plowing, discing, fertilizing, laying black plastic in vegetable fields. Planting tomatoes and greens in high tunnels. Finishing pruning blueberries, raspberries and tree fruits. Tent caterpillars are active. **Geoffrey Njue (Ext), Strafford:** We have experienced several weeks of dry weather. The few showers last week helped but we need more rain. Grass in pastures and hay fields are showing some good growth but needs more rain and warm weather. Fruit growers were monitoring for bud growth and scouting for any signs of diseases. Others were irrigating their orchards and fields. Vegetable growers busy planting the cool season vegetables and irrigating their fields. Greenhouses and Garden centers opened with good sales of cool temperature annuals and shrubs.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: Due to such a dry winter and spring, field work has been a dusty job. Potatoes still being planted and lots of cole crops in. Strawberries and apples are looking good. Greenhouses full of annuals and perennials. Roadside stands are busy with spring flowers and bulbs. Some rain last week helped, but we could use some more.

VERMONT - John St. Onge/Kim Peterson (FSA), Lamoille: Several days of warm spring weather and sunshine have encouraged a lot of activity. Producers are busy with manure spreading and plowing and harrowing of corn fields. Fencing is taking place before the animals are turned out to pasture in the next few weeks. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** It has been a dry spring so far. Landowners have been able to get on the land earlier than most years. Farm activities include spreading manure, discing corn fields and building fence for pastures. The grass is green and several inches tall. **Terence Bradshaw, Univ of Vermont:** Nice stretch of dry weather with low winds allowing for timely spray applications. Fruit bud density appears quite high with potential for 'snowball' bloom on some varieties. One major scab infection period weekend of 4/22/06 was generally well-covered due to preceding period of calm weather. Winter injury looks to be little to none. **Heather Darby (Ext), Franklin:** Busy out in the field! Manure being spread and fields being worked for corn. Some corn has been planted over the last week. New seedings are being planted. Some new seedings have already germinated. Some winter kill in alfalfa fields but not too severe.

To receive this report every Monday evening, send an e-mail message to listserv@newsbox.usda.gov and in the body, type **subscribe usda-new-eng-crop-weather**

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