



Wisconsin Crop Progress

April 17, 2012

Vol. 12, No. 2

Freezing Nights Impact Early Crops

Nighttime temperatures dipped into the 20s across central Wisconsin and into the teens in some parts of northern Wisconsin this week, threatening fruit crops, hay and winter grains. The full extent of freeze damage varied, with the worst impacts reported on budding apple and cherry trees. Small grain, alfalfa and fruit development was reportedly running 3 to 4 weeks ahead of normal across the state. Thunderstorms caused localized heavy rains, but soil moisture was 35 percent short to very short statewide. Dry conditions aided fieldwork, though rain is needed in many areas. There were 5.7 days suitable for fieldwork this week.

Across the reporting stations, average temperatures last week were 1 to 5 degrees above normal. Average high temperatures ranged from 56 to 59 degrees, while average low temperatures ranged from 32 to 37 degrees. Precipitation totals ranged from 0.01 inches in Green Bay to 0.48 inches in La Crosse. If you are interested in further weather data, please reference the following sites:

- <http://www.noaa.gov/>
- <http://www.aos.wisc.edu/~sco/>
- <http://www.cocorahs.org/>
- <http://www.weather.gov/>

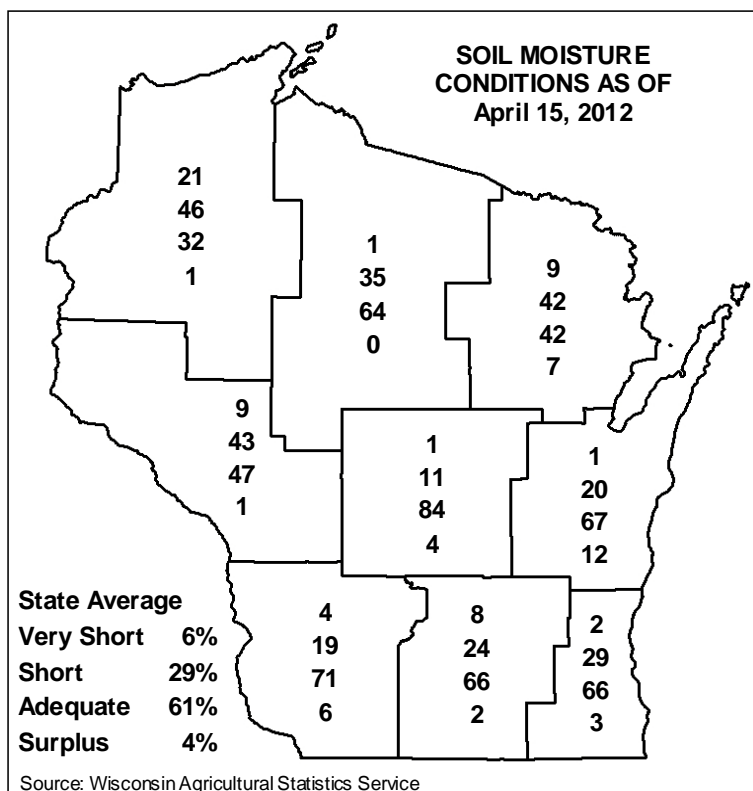
Statewide, **spring tillage** was at 32 percent complete. Many producers were out applying liquid manure and nitrogen this week.

Oats were 48 percent planted this week as dry field conditions aided planting. Oat emergence was at 10 percent, 12 days ahead of the 5-year average.

Corn was 2 percent planted this week compared to 0 percent last year and a 0 percent 5-year average. Test field plantings were reported across the state, with planting only beginning in earnest in the Southeast. Reporters noted that most producers are holding off planting corn due to low soil temperatures, crop insurance dates and continued frost danger.

Reported damage to **hay** and **winter wheat** varied, and many commented that growth has slowed or halted with the cold weather. While few areas experienced a killing freeze, most reporters noted that the full extent of damage can't be determined yet. Direct seeding of **alfalfa** was ongoing.

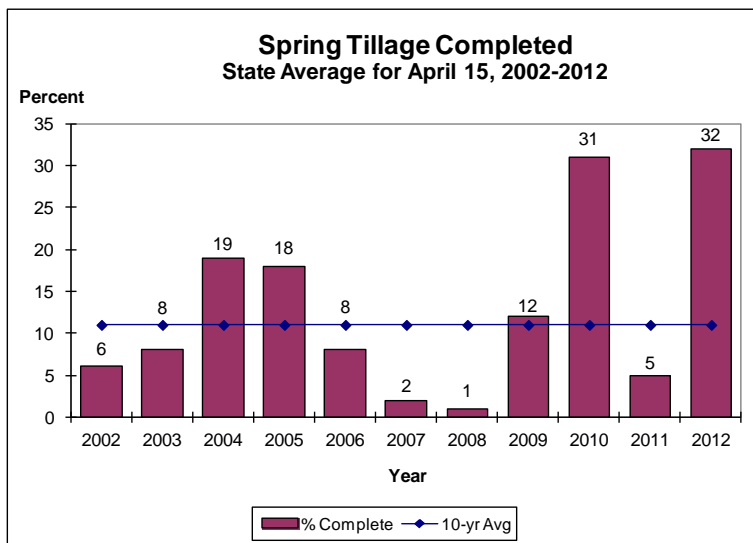
Frost damage to **apple** blossoms was reported in Dunn, Door and Vernon Counties. Reporters in Door and Shawano Counties noted damage to blooming **cherry** trees with up to a 70 percent loss reported so far in Door County. Damage was also reported to **grape** vines, **strawberries**, **blackberries**, **raspberries** and **pears**. **Potato** planting continued in Shawano, Portage, Waupaca, Waushara, and Dane Counties.



Wisconsin Crop Conditions as of April 15, 2012

Item	V.-poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
	Percent				
Pasture	2	6	37	48	7

Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office.



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Crop and percent of acreage	District average									State average			
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE	This week	Last week	Last year	5-year average
Oats planted	40	13	50	57	41	39	68	76	48	48	26	8	17
Oats emerged	0	0	8	8	7	5	18	35	17	10	n.a.	0	0
Spring tillage	25	16	22	38	33	20	48	42	30	32	19	5	10

Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office.

Selected Quotes from Farm Reporters and County Ag Agents

All comments are used in creating this report, but only a few are published below.

BARRON-C.B.: Soil moisture is still drier than ideal. Forages look to have made it through the winter alright. Some small grains being seeded.

RUSK-G.P.: Spring work picked up a bit this week, but more normal temperatures have slowed everybody down. Lots of manure hauling and primary tillage with a decent push on oats. The calendar looks a little better but with snow in the forecast for next week and the tight corn seed supply, most are still holding off on planting. It's getting greener out there.

CLARK-R.H.: There is some field tillage done and some small grains planted. Manure hauling was the main chore this week in the county. I did see one corn planter in the field this week. Many producers are concerned about soil temperature and the crop insurance planting date. Alfalfa and winter grain crops look excellent, but there is some fear of a freeze. For fruit crops there is fear of a freeze damaging blossoms and reducing crop yield.

MARATHON-S.N.: Spring tillage is starting. Farmers report that it is too early to plant anything other than small grain as the soil temperature is too cold to plant corn. The leaves on trees and lilac bushes are appearing. Manure hauling is almost complete. Maple syrup production was 50 percent less than last year. Syrup was very dark. The ginseng has not sprouted and the beds remain uncovered. Farmers throughout the county report topsoil moisture is low and a good shower would be appreciated.

LANGLADE-A.K.: Some winter kill in some hay fields, growth has slowed down with frosty mornings and cool temps. Conditions remain dry, still no spring soaker. Tillage and small grain and alfalfa seeding winding down.

SHAWANO-T.B.: Very little winter kill of alfalfa or winter wheat. Alfalfa showing signs of frost/freeze injury with leaf tip necrosis. Quick start to hay now stunted back to normal size. No trouble getting into any fields last week but some areas of fields a little wet. Only small grain and new seeding hay being planted so far. Most gardeners planting potatoes and onions. The cherry blossoms threatened by the hard frost. Some apples beginning to bloom may be at risk if the forecast comes true.

DUNN-J.R.: Frost this week will have an impact on first crop. Manure pits are being emptied and planters are being readied for the fields. While many are ready to plant corn they are being cautious due to the cost to put the crop in.

TREMPEALEAU-J.S.: Cool, sunny, windy week. Frost has caused concerns for orchards and growers have been taking preventative measures to reduce loss on budding trees/vines, etc. Now seeing signs of winterkill on alfalfa fields.

JUNEAU-J.W.: Some corn has been planted but most of the farmers that I have talked to indicated they will wait until the end of April. There were concerns regarding frost warnings and how it would affect the winter wheat, alfalfa, and the fruit crops. There may have been some damage to these crops but nothing significant has been reported. I think irrigation was applied to protect the cranberries in the northern part of the county.

WAUSHARA-K.W.: Alfalfa shoots have been shut down, plants will be sending out new shoots. We have had a week of below freezing night temps. Temps as low as 25 or 26 degrees for 3 or 4 nights. Potatoes are being planted. Received 1.0 inch of rain Saturday night April 14.

BROWN-B.S.: Alfalfa leaves suffered with the cold conditions but no apparent winterkill.

DOOR-T.S.: The return of normal weather has stalled alfalfa growth. Manure is getting hauled and worked in. Some oats are planted and up. We saw one field with a corn planter sitting so it appears some will attempt corn planting before this weekend's rain forecast. Apples, cherries and grapes were hard hit by freezes in the last week of March and again on April 5th and 6th. Growers anticipate losses of 70 percent with more damage likely if we have normal weather over the next few weeks. Apples appear to be less affected than cherries. The early warm up pushed orchard and grape development 4 weeks ahead of normal.

GRANT-R.R.: Alfalfa survived the winter well, but the freezing temperatures of the past week have really taken their toll. Any corn that was planted early will be in trouble with more freezing temperatures predicted for the coming week. The weather this season is backward.

RICHLAND-J.C.: Fields were very dry until a much needed rain over the weekend.

DANE-D.R.: Reports of alfalfa being one month ahead of normal for harvest. Some reports of corn planted. Orchards and wineries are examining crops for loss from the frosts this past week. Lawns are growing rapidly. Many trees are in bloom and leaf. Our ash tree behind house has not exhibited budding.

RACINE-K.I.: Crop insurance coverage kicked in Apr 11th for planting corn. Many planting now. We had some cold nights this week - will have to watch alfalfa and winter wheat.

WASHINGTON-J.N.: Cold nights and cold days - everything is at stand still. Hope to start planting corn next week.



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Wisconsin Weekly Weather, Selected Cities, Ending as of 7:00 a.m. on April 15, 2012

City	Temperature						Growing degree days (modified base 50) 1/		Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Mar. 1 to Apr. 15	Mar. 1 to Apr. 15 normal*	Last Week	Since Mar. 1	Mar. 1 dep. from normal *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Eau Claire	56	32	73	24	44	2	285	37	0.08	2.82	-0.31	5.20	0.25
Green Bay	58	35	73	30	47	5	233	32	0.01	2.40	-0.84	4.92	-0.54
La Crosse	58	35	71	26	47	1	328	58	0.48	2.06	-1.43	4.58	-1.07
Madison	59	37	73	29	48	4	329	61	0.35	2.98	-0.84	5.41	-0.95
Milwaukee	56	37	69	31	47	4	240	n.a.	0.04	3.23	-1.07	6.08	-1.71

1/ Formula used: GDD = (daily maximum (86°) + daily minimum (50°))/2-50°; where 86° is used if the maximum exceeds 86° and 50° is used if the minimum falls below 50°. *Normal based on 1971-2000 data. Source: NCEP/NOAA Climate Prediction Center <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>. n.a.=not available. T=trace. Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office.