



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

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Crop Weather

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For week ending 4/28/02

Unusual Spring Weather Worries Farmers

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending April 28, 2002, there were 5.0 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 4% very short, 12% short, 74% adequate, 10% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 11% very short, 32% short, 51% adequate, 6% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 6% very poor, 14% poor, 29% fair, 45% good, 6% excellent.

Above average temperatures two weeks ago gave way to cold temperatures and snow last week, causing farmers to be concerned about possible frost damage to early fruit and vegetable crops. Drought conditions remain a problem throughout the Northeast. Major farm activities included: planting field corn, early vegetables, sweet corn, and potatoes; spreading manure; prepping seed beds for planting; applying fertilizer; plowing; fixing fences; and setting up irrigation systems for frost protection.

FRUIT: Apples were in the bud to early bloom stage last week. Growers fertilized orchards and applied protective fungicide sprays. Strawberries are starting to grow. Reports of possible frost damage to strawberries and peaches have surfaced. Fungicide application for mummy berry disease in blueberries took place in Maine, and fields were burned and mowed for pruning. Cranberry growers in Massachusetts cleaned ditches, repaired dikes, applied herbicides, and watched for frost.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	-- Percent --		
	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
Topsoil			
Very Short	4	--	--
Short	12	--	--
Adequate	74	--	--
Surplus	10	--	--
Subsoil			
Very Short	11	--	--
Short	32	--	--
Adequate	51	--	--
Surplus	6	--	--

FIELD CROPS: Warm temperatures in early spring allowed some farmers to plant field and sweet corn ahead of normal. Potato planting in Rhode Island is well ahead of last year and normal, while Massachusetts is slightly behind last year and normal. Most Maine potato farmers have yet to begin planting. Tobacco seed is germinating and fields being plowed. Some animals have been put onto pastures.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	Stage	Condition
Apples	Bud/Early Bloom	Good/Fair
Peaches	Early/Full Bloom	Fair/Good
Pears	Full/Early Bloom	Fair
Blueberries		
Highbush	Bud/Dormant	Good/Fair
Wild, ME	Bud	Good
Cranberries, MA	Bud	Good/Fair
Strawberries	Bud	Good/Fair

VEGETABLES: Planting of early sweet corn, peas, onions, carrots, spinach, asparagus, beans, lettuce and cabbage has begun. Plastic sweet corn has germinated. Tomatoes are being transplanted into high tunnels.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2002	2001	5-yr Avg	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --			
Barley, ME	0	0	0	--
Oats, ME	0	0	0	--
Potatoes				
Maine	0	0	0	--
Mass	20	25	30	Good
Rhode Isl	30	5	5	Good
Silage Corn	<5	0	0	Good/Fair
Sweet Corn	10	<5	<5	Good/Fair
Tobacco				
Shade	0	0	0	--
Dry Hay	-- Percent Harvested --			
First Cut	0	0	0	Good/Fair

For the Week Ending Sunday, April 28, 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	TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS
MAINE														
Augusta_ME	26	56	41	-7	39	+32	1	+1	0.51	-0.40	1	4.40	+0.94	12
Bangor	22	59	40	-7	25	+21	0	+0	0.42	-0.35	2	4.90	+1.82	12
Bethel	22	60	38	-9	51	+47	8	+8	0.43	-0.41	1	5.03	+1.67	10
Caribou	22	58	38	-5	11	+9	0	+0	0.15	-0.44	2	2.75	+0.48	14
Dover-Foxcroft	17	54	36	-8	9	+7	0	+0	0.12	-0.72	1	2.43	-0.85	13
Frenchville	22	54	35	-6	4	+4	0	+0	0.31	-0.32	1	2.56	+0.20	14
Houlton	20	59	38	-5	16	+14	0	+0	0.25	-0.40	3	3.90	+1.50	15
Livermore_Falls	17	61	38	-7	32	+30	5	+5	0.51	-0.40	1	4.77	+1.14	11
Moosehead	18	58	35	-5	10	+10	0	+0	0.19	-0.58	2	3.06	+0.20	13
Portland_ME	25	55	40	-7	44	+41	3	+3	1.07	+0.13	3	3.30	-0.52	13
NEW HAMPSHIRE														
Benton	24	55	37	-9	75	+63	24	+24	0.70	+0.00	2	4.20	+1.66	11
Berlin_AG	22	59	37	-8	48	+40	8	+8	0.32	-0.51	1	4.28	+1.12	10
Concord	23	60	40	-8	124	+112	40	+40	0.69	-0.01	2	2.23	-0.48	12
Diamond Pond	15	56	33	-6	17	+17	0	+0	0.44	-0.33	4	4.71	+1.87	17
Keene_AP	25	57	40	-10	138	+117	45	+45	0.40	-0.37	2	3.08	+0.15	13
North_Conway	22	60	39	-8	70	+63	18	+18	0.67	-0.31	2	5.69	+1.85	13
Rochester	26	60	41	-8	90	+75	23	+23	1.13	+0.15	2	3.26	-0.70	10
VERMONT														
Burlington_VT	25	58	40	-8	119	+99	40	+40	0.52	-0.17	2	2.20	-0.36	11
Island Pond	19	56	36	-7	55	+50	12	+12	0.47	-0.21	2	3.73	+1.25	13
Montpelier	22	55	37	-9	98	+88	33	+33	0.60	+0.00	2	3.39	+1.15	12
Pownal	26	56	39	-8	116	+103	42	+42	0.83	-0.22	4	3.31	-0.71	13
Rochester	25	58	38	-8	86	+78	26	+26	0.75	-0.16	2	5.17	+1.73	10
Rutland_AG	26	57	39	-11	103	+73	29	+29	0.63	-0.05	3	4.37	+1.91	9
Sutton	21	55	36	-7	56	+54	18	+18	0.55	-0.15	2	2.62	-0.07	13
Townshend_Lake	26	60	40	-8	115	+98	41	+41	0.95	+0.18	3	2.95	-0.10	13
MASSACHUSETTS														
Ashburnham	28	57	41	-6	116	+108	34	+34	0.76	-0.08	3	2.82	-0.34	12
Boston	34	60	46	-6	153	+122	43	+43	0.83	-0.01	2	2.34	-1.02	10
Greenfield	28	66	43	-8	130	+102	48	+48	0.85	-0.04	4	2.93	-0.45	16
New_Bedford	30	60	45	-7	155	+121	38	+38	1.63	+0.71	4	3.56	-0.30	11
Otis_AFB	34	54	44	-4	112	+103	16	+16	1.21	+0.30	3	2.96	-0.64	9
Plymouth	27	58	43	-6	118	+108	28	+28	1.24	+0.26	2	3.55	-0.40	10
Walpole	28	61	44	-6	142	+124	47	+47	1.09	+0.13	4	2.75	-1.20	13
Westover	28	59	43	-11	186	+128	70	+70	0.69	-0.22	3	2.42	-1.17	13
Worthington	24	59	39	-8	118	+107	42	+42	0.95	-0.04	4	2.78	-0.90	16
RHODE ISLAND														
Providence	33	60	46	-6	164	+139	47	+47	1.05	+0.13	4	2.61	-1.24	11
Woonsocket	29	60	43	-6	150	+135	51	+51	0.97	-0.01	4	2.58	-1.28	11
CONNECTICUT														
Bridgeport	33	59	47	-6	151	+115	44	+44	1.00	+0.09	4	2.10	-1.39	12
Hartford_AP	30	61	45	-9	206	+162	79	+79	0.96	+0.05	4	2.34	-1.25	14
Norfolk	26	57	41	-6	125	+117	47	+47	1.08	+0.03	4	3.74	-0.41	13
Thomaston_Dam	27	61	43	-7	160	+137	58	+58	0.99	-0.03	4	2.79	-1.15	12
Willimantic	26	60	43	-7	178	+158	63	+63	0.85	-0.13	4	2.12	-1.77	13

STATE WEATHER SUMMARY
For the Week Ending Sunday, April 28, 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	15	62	38	-7	0.00	1.51
NH	6	62	37	-9	0.32	1.21
VT	15	62	37	-9	0.25	1.36
MA	24	66	43	-7	0.69	1.63
RI	29	60	45	-6	0.97	1.41
CT	25	63	44	-7	0.83	1.09

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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: Farmers were busy with a variety of chores this past week. Dairy farmers were pumping their manure pits and spreading corn fields. Ground rye cover has been sprayed with herbicide. Heifers have been turned out to pasture. Warmer than normal early spring weather has pushed the season ahead. Some corn land has already been plowed. **Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland:** Planting greens, cabbage, collards, sweet corn and peas. Spreading manure, plowing and planting field corn. Tobacco seed is germinating and tobacco fields plowed to keep ahead of fast growing rye. Fruit trees approaching full bloom and were nailed by frost last week, especially on Saturday morning. Showers last week were great. Livestock put out on pasture. **Marsha Jette (FSA), New London:** Producers are readying the fields for planting silage corn. Areas of the county will begin planting by May 1st. Reports of dry, powdery soil. A small percentage of sweet corn has been planted. Some concerns for predicted frost. **Nancy Welsh/Karen Lockman (FSA), New Haven:** For the week of 4/14-4/20, temperatures ranged from the mid 90's to the 60's. That pushed the already swelled buds of the fruit trees to flower. This week's temperatures were in the 60's in the day, then dropped to the 20's at night with rain freezing buds of strawberries and causing heavy frozen frost. We are still in drought conditions due to lack of precipitation this winter and warm temps for the season. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Field corn planting is underway. Manure spreading is continuing. Rain at the end of the week was a welcome sight. In general spring is about 2 weeks earlier than normal...things greened up fast!

MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook: Potatoes: No field activity as soils are too wet and cold for any crop planting. Some potato seed being cut. Another week before much activity. **Steve London (Ext), Southern Aroostook:** Potatoes and small grains: There have been some people who have planted a few acres to grain and potatoes but the ground really hasn't warmed up enough. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Farmers spreading manure, building fences. **Donna Lamb (Ext), Piscataquis:** This past week we have had two snow storms. The most recent was Sunday night, leaving over six inches of snow on the ground. When able to get on the fields, farmers have been spreading manure and fertilizer. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** Farmers getting ready for the spring planting of their crops. Need rain. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** Cold wet weather is a change! Four inches of snow last night will delay lots of field activity. Some forage seedings were done before the wet weather. Some sweet corn planted under clear plastic. **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Burning continues on blueberry fields when weather permits. Spraying for mummyberry on blueberry fields is in the works. The cold, damp weather could cause a problem with mummyberry this year. Pastures are unusually green for this time of year. **David Yarborough (Ext), Washington:** Wild Blueberries: Fields being burned and mowed for pruning. Preemergence herbicide and fertilizer being applied. Field season was two weeks ahead of normal, but cold weather this past week has slowed plant development to one week ahead of normal development. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** We had a very short spring and now the snow wants to return. After one week of warm weather we have been plagued with cool, damp, snowy days for over a week. Not much is getting planted other than the cold weather crops. This week's forecast is not much better. Hang on to your hats! It could be an interesting season. **Parker Rand (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Just starting to see real activity, plowing, spreading manure and fertilizer, and even some small grain planting. Apples were about a week ahead until last week's cold and snowy weather slowed things down. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** Ground water is still in a long term drought situation. Snow and rain in March and April have helped the surface soil and reservoirs some. Grass is just starting to get some growth at this elevation. **Laura Rand (FSA), Oxford:** Can you believe this weather? Soil conditions are dry in spite of the amounts of snow that we have received. Between showers, producers are preparing the ground for seeding.

MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire: Applying lime and fertilizer on crop fields. Started to till corn and vegetable ground. Most of the land has been planted to forage crop. May start planting field corn in the near future. Light snow on Thursday

and Friday; up to four inches in hill town. A lot of discussion on future crops because of questionable ground water supply and rainfall for the crops. **Paul Russell (FSA), Southeast Massachusetts:** Vegetable growers are starting to plant early crops. Dairy farmers are preparing fields to plant corn and readying hay equipment for the first cutting. Cranberry growers are running sprinkler systems to protect bogs from frost. Most cranberry growers have spread herbicides and will be applying their first application of fertilizer this week. Shellfish growers are planting seed and harvesting some quahogs. Shellfish are in great shape with lots of growth and the market has firmed up after the collapse caused by 9/11. **Frank Caruso (Ext), Plymouth:** Cranberries: Growers are cleaning the ditches, repairing dikes, applying herbicides, and watching for frost. Due to early-season temperatures, things are two weeks ahead of the usual. Should be a horrendous year for insects, based on the mild winter. Precipitation for the month and the year is close to the norm. Ponds are down due to the deficit encountered in 2001. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** Everyone is busy plowing and harrowing fields. Some planting being done, but the cold wet weather of this past week has slowed this activity. Fruit trees are in full bloom to petal drop. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** After 90 degree weather the week before, the other shoe fell last week. Franklin County had frost or freeze conditions that may have effected tree and vine fruit. Peaches, apples and lowbush blueberries may have been damaged. Producers in the western sections of the county have reported that temperatures fell to the mid-teens. Asparagus growers have reported that their fields were also damaged by the frost. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** Dairy farmers spreading manure, fertilizing hay fields, and preparing corn fields to plant. Vegetable growers are plowing fields, planting seed corn, potatoes, peas, cabbage, lettuce and parsnips. Harvesting spinach, asparagus, and fiddleheads. Greenhouse industry reports growing conditions are good and crops look excellent. Everyone is happy with the rain showers on Sunday. More is greatly needed.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap: Rain and snow this week have helped somewhat with replenishing ground water reserves. Hay and pasture grasses are growing well. Peas and cold-tolerant greens are seeded. Farms and garden centers are busy preparing fields, seeding and transplanting. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Alfalfa has overwintered well. New seedings are planted and some are up and growing well. Despite snow and cold weather, field work is progressing. Spreading manure and preparing corn ground. Some corn planted but nothing up. Soil temperature in high 30's to low 40's as of Sunday. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Field Crops: Liming and fertilizing hayfields. Spreading manure, plowing, disking, fertilizing and planting corn. Making new pasture and hayfield seedings. Vegetables: Transplanting tomatoes into high tunnels. Early season vegetables (peas, lettuce, greens) are being planted, along with sweet corn. Plastic sweet corn germinated. Fruits: Bloom is two weeks ahead. Peaches were in full bloom to petal fall in the Hollis area on Sunday. The earliest blooming apple varieties are in bloom and most of apple trees are in pink stage. Strawberry plants starting to grow and strawberry plants under floating row-cover starting to bud. Planting fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries. Fertilizing orchards. Protective fungicide sprays applied. Weather: From 90+ degrees two weeks ago to snow last week, crops are two weeks ahead of schedule. Cold weather (under freezing temperatures) last week damaged peach and strawberry blossoms, waiting to evaluate if apple blossoms were damage. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Rained almost every day or night and had frost (down to 21 degrees) six nights in a row. We had about 2 inches of snow on Thursday night. Protecting strawberry plants from frost with either overhead irrigation or straw/Reemay. Peaches, cherries and apricots are in full bloom. Pruning apples, blueberries and grapes. Disking and plowing vegetable fields and laying black plastic. Applying manure and seeding pasture and hayfields. Established pastures and hay fields are infested with white grubs. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** With the recent unusually warm weather, preparing of corn fields and some planting is about 2 weeks ahead of schedule. Many other crop fields are being tilled and fertilized. First crop of hay looks like it will be good with the help of much needed rain in April. **Geoffery Njue (Ext), Strafford:** There was rain and light snow in the last

half of the week. Most fields have been plowed, but the conditions last week were not suitable for harrowing because of wet soils. Peach growers were worried about falling temperatures last week because the peaches were in early bloom. Frost damage to the flowers would seriously affect the peach yields. Grass and other forage crops were growing well because of warm weather and rains in the previous week.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: Some good rain has fallen this week which has helped. Potatoes still being planted, along with spring crops of lettuce, spinach and cole crops. Manure being spread, some haying done along with strawberry preparation. Greenhouses are full and ready to stock roadside stands with annuals, hanging baskets and tons of geraniums. **Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties:** The previous week's 90-degree temps pushed the fruit trees toward blooming, much too early. Remember this happened last year, but it was the first week of May when they got a freeze; peaches were completely wiped out and apples took a really hard punch. Now it's happening again, only two weeks earlier. Cole crops are planted. Equipment preparation underway, a few farmers are tilling under covercrop.

VERMONT - John St. Onge (FSA), Lamoille: Mother Nature has been playing plenty of tricks on us this month. Between weather extremes, farmers have been plowing, harrowing, and spreading manure. Greenhouses are full of started plants waiting for warmer ground temperatures. **Bill Snow (Ext), Orange:** Spring tried to sneak in early, but winter came back! Grazers had their cows out in pasture in mid-April, but pastures are white this morning. They were covered with four inches of snow on the 23rd of April. Spring spreading of manure was completed two weeks early on some farms. Fertilizer has been spread on hayfields and corn fields were prepared. Farm activities are ahead of schedule. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** Farmers have just started to disk their drier

fields this week. Most farmers are spreading manure on their dry fields. Pasture are getting very green. Growth of grass in pastures is one to two inches. Landowners are repairing fences to begin pasture season. Soil moisture appears to be adequate at this time, however some farmers are still short of water for their livestock. **Lynette Hamilton (FSA), Windham:** The last week in April and strange things are happening! Peaches and pears are in bloom along with some apples, but with wet weather, pollination could be low. Some farmers have planted new seeding and the winter kill to alfalfa was less than ten percent. In southern Windham County most of the corn land is plowed and ready to plant. More rain this week will help the drought situation. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Spreading manure on corn and hay fields. Spreading nitrogen fertilizer on grass hay fields. Some tillage to incorporate manure and some seedbed preparation. Started planting new seed alfalfa/grass fields. Some lime delivered to fields. Pasture growth good, hay fields good vigor. **Richard Noel (FSA), Grand Isle/Franklin:** 2002 wild weather this weekend! Three-quarters inch of rain, then rain gauge got choked up with snow. A lot of manure and fertilizer was spread in the last two weeks. Some of the land has been plowed and worked up. Some sweet corn planted under plastic. A lot of fences have been repaired, winter wasn't too hard on them this year. Some cows out on pasture; I think after yesterday they may want to get back inside. We're already behind on moisture for this year. Many new wells drilled in Franklin County in the past six months. Lake is down two feet compared to last year and precipitation is also down two inches. Had to plow off the snow before I could mow the lawn. That's northern Vermont for you. **Sherwin Williams, Rutland:** Planted early sweet corn, peas, early vegetables, onions, carrots, lettuce, spinach, asparagus and beans. Harrowed and fertilized. Started planting during the warm spell, but things are froze down now. Rhubarb nearly ready to market. Excellent crop of winter rye to plow under. Soil temperature good.

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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