



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

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Crop Weather

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May 3, 2004 - 4 pm

For week ending 5/02/04

Warmer Temperatures Help Dry Out Fields

GENERAL CONDITIONS: For the week ending May 2, 2004, there were 5.4 days available for field work across New England. Topsoil moisture was rated 2% very short, 6% short, 70% adequate, 22% surplus. Subsoil moisture was rated 3% very short, 4% short, 81% adequate, 12% surplus. Pasture condition was rated as 4% very poor, 18% poor, 32% fair, 38% good, 8% excellent. Temperatures started out cool but warmed up by end of the week. The warmer weather helped dry out fields in some areas, allowing farmers a chance to plant between showers. Major farm activities included: planting early vegetables, sweet corn, and potatoes; spreading manure; prepping seed beds for planting; applying fertilizer; pruning and plowing.

SOIL MOISTURE ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Soil Rating	This Week	Last Week	Last Year
	-- Percent --		
Topsoil Moisture			
Very Short	2	0	2
Short	6	2	2
Adequate	70	70	71
Surplus	22	28	25
Subsoil Moisture			
Very Short	3	0	2
Short	4	4	9
Adequate	81	71	79
Surplus	12	25	10

FRUIT: Apple, peach and pear development ranged from bud to early bloom, with northern areas still in dormant stage. Berry crops remained in bud or dormant stage by week's end. New England fruit growers were busy spraying fungicides and pre-bloom insecticides, chopping brush and pruning trees. Burning and flail mowing continued on wild blueberry fields. Cranberry progress averaged one week behind normal due to cool, rainy conditions.

FIELD CROPS: Pasture and hay fields are greening up and growing rapidly around the six - State region. Rhode Island potato farmers got off to a good start with 25 percent planted by week's end, on schedule with normal. Massachusetts potato planting progress was slightly behind last year and normal; producers waiting for fields to dry out. Potato growers in Maine were still waiting for soils to warm up to begin their planting season.

FRUIT CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

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

VEGETABLES: Planting of cool weather crops such as cabbage, carrots, lettuce, potatoes, peas and radishes continued during the week. Early sweet corn was planted under plastic and tomato transplants were planted in high tunnels.

FIELD CROP DEVELOPMENT ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Crop	2004	2003	5-yr Avg	Condition
	-- Percent Planted --			
Barley, ME	0	0	5	--
Oats, ME	0	0	5	--
Potatoes				
Maine	0	0	0	--
Mass	10	35	35	Fair/Good
Rhode Isl	25	10	25	Good
Silage Corn	0	5	<5	--
Sweet Corn	10	10	10	Good/Fair
Tobacco				
Shade	0	0	0	--
Dry Hay				
First Cut	0	0	0	Fair/Good

For the Week Ending Sunday, May 2, 2004

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		
MAINE															
Augusta_State_A	32	85	51	+3	58	+41	10	+10	0.57	-0.34	3	2.74	-0.79	12	
Bangor_Intl_Arp	27	84	50	+3	41	+31	9	+9	0.34	-0.45	3	2.33	-0.77	13	
Bethel	25	85	51	+4	63	+52	17	+17	0.60	-0.24	3	2.94	-0.42	9	
Cari bou_Muni ci p	26	83	48	+5	36	+29	14	+14	0.52	-0.11	3	2.06	-0.26	11	
Dover-Foxcroft	23	83	46	+1	31	+24	7	+7	0.67	-0.17	3	2.56	-0.77	10	
Frenchvi lle	25	83	47	+5	34	+32	11	+11	0.33	-0.33	2	2.20	-0.24	11	
Houl ton	20	85	47	+4	29	+22	7	+7	0.40	-0.30	3	2.33	-0.17	12	
Li vermore_Fal ls	24	86	50	+5	57	+50	13	+13	0.57	-0.32	3	3.47	-0.15	9	
Moosehead	20	84	46	+5	31	+31	4	+4	0.18	-0.57	3	2.30	-0.61	12	
Portl and_ME	31	78	51	+3	51	+43	6	+6	0.82	-0.09	3	2.96	-0.86	9	
NEW_HAMPSHI RE															
Benton	27	81	53	+6	74	+52	21	+21	0.60	-0.10	3	2.01	-0.63	9	
Berli n_AG	27	85	52	+6	64	+47	17	+17	0.41	-0.38	2	1.77	-1.44	11	
Concord	30	86	56	+7	132	+108	41	+41	1.28	+0.58	2	4.39	+1.63	9	
Di amond_Pond	17	77	47	+6	37	+34	2	+2	1.08	+0.31	4	3.67	+0.75	16	
Keene_AP	34	81	54	+4	107	+68	24	+24	1.01	+0.21	2	3.21	+0.20	7	
North_Conway	29	86	52	+5	75	+58	24	+24	0.65	-0.29	3	3.10	-0.75	10	
Rochester	27	90	54	+4	85	+56	25	+25	1.46	+0.48	2	4.57	+0.59	10	
VERMONT															
Burli ngton_Intl	34	84	57	+7	107	+71	38	+38	0.29	-0.39	4	1.79	-0.82	12	
Isl and_Pond	26	80	50	+7	49	+39	11	+11	0.57	-0.13	4	2.00	-0.58	16	
Montpel ier	29	81	54	+7	85	+65	22	+22	0.50	-0.13	4	1.67	-0.66	15	
Pownal	28	80	54	+7	107	+83	27	+27	1.28	+0.23	2	3.84	-0.25	10	
Rochester	29	83	52	+6	72	+55	17	+17	0.38	-0.58	2	1.80	-1.78	11	
Rutl and_AG	31	81	53	+2	90	+41	17	+13	0.57	-0.13	2	1.53	-1.03	11	
Sutton	28	81	49	+6	44	+37	13	+13	0.68	-0.03	5	2.56	-0.19	17	
Townshend_Lake	30	82	53	+4	86	+55	20	+20	0.53	-0.24	2	2.62	-0.46	11	
MASSACHUSETTS															
Ashburnham	34	80	54	+7	87	+70	18	+18	1.07	+0.27	2	4.51	+1.34	8	
Boston/Logan_In	40	81	56	+4	137	+85	44	+44	1.21	+0.40	3	4.86	+1.53	9	
Greenfi eld	33	81	54	+2	102	+53	21	+21	1.33	+0.43	2	4.64	+1.19	8	
New_Bedford	33	71	54	+2	79	+24	3	+3	0.76	-0.13	3	3.45	-0.34	10	
Oti s_AFB	36	68	53	+4	51	+32	1	+1	0.94	+0.03	4	3.13	-0.51	9	
Pl ymouth	30	76	54	+5	79	+59	11	+11	0.69	-0.29	3	3.68	-0.27	10	
Wal pol e	37	81	56	+5	115	+82	24	+24	1.42	+0.53	3	6.00	+2.11	10	
Chi copee/Westov	36	79	57	+3	155	+69	43	+39	0.81	-0.10	2	3.50	-0.14	9	
Worthi ngton	29	80	52	+4	82	+61	14	+14	1.30	+0.26	2	4.19	+0.35	10	
RHODE_I SLAND															
Provi dence	38	78	56	+4	117	+75	20	+20	1.14	+0.23	3	4.84	+1.03	9	
Woonsocket	36	80	56	+6	118	+89	30	+30	1.18	+0.21	3	5.88	+1.98	10	
CONNECTI CUT															
Bri dgeport/Si ko	42	69	55	+3	110	+52	12	+12	1.70	+0.79	3	6.48	+2.94	10	
Hartford/Bradl e	39	80	57	+4	150	+80	37	+33	1.04	+0.13	2	4.44	+0.80	9	
Norfol k	32	78	54	+7	102	+84	24	+24	0.69	-0.36	2	3.19	-1.01	9	
Thomast on_Dam	36	82	56	+5	129	+89	27	+27	1.19	+0.14	3	4.54	+0.53	10	
Wi lli manti c	35	77	56	+5	131	+94	28	+28	1.51	+0.53	4	5.94	+2.02	12	

STATE WEATHER SUMMARY
For the Week Ending Sunday, May 2, 2004

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	Air Temperatures				Precipitation	
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	LO	HI
ME	18	87	49	+3	0.05	1.23
NH	14	90	52	+5	0.41	1.78
VT	20	87	52	+6	0.16	1.28
MA	29	82	54	+4	0.56	1.53
RI	36	80	53	+3	0.12	1.18
CT	32	82	55	+8	0.69	1.70

Prepared by AWIS, Inc.

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 are busy spreading manure, fixing fences, and starting to plow well drained fields. Very little field corn has been planted.

Ross Eddy (FSA), Hartford/Tolland: More sweet corn and peas planted. Some field corn and cabbage planted. Land preparation is going well but many fields still have a "wet" spot. Peaches in full bloom and apples in pink. Broadleaf tobacco looks good in beds but spotty in green houses around the area. Cattle being put out on pasture. **Marsha Jette (FSA), New London:** Spreading manure, fertilizer and harrowing to prepare fields for planting. A very cold and wet spring has put crops behind. Hopefully, will warm up soon. **Dawn Pindell (FSA), Windham:** Asparagus starting. Heavy scab conditions in orchards, spraying fungicides and pre-bloom insecticides. Sweet corn planting beginning. Maple syrup tallies showing average to just above average production. Previous flooding took stacked timber down river off one corn field, with boats fishing over the cornfield until water receded. Wet conditions. Progress continues on drier fields. **Karen Vozarik (FSA), New Haven:** Fields are too wet. Rains are too frequent for soil to dry sufficiently for planting. **Richard Meinert (Ext), CT Cooperative:** Spreading manure and planting corn. Some farmers still waiting for fields to dry enough to get started - some are finished planting corn.

MAINE - Marvin Hedstrom, Northern Aroostook:

Potatoes and small grains: Limited field work as ground still quite wet. Soil temperatures cold. Some growers picking rocks. Small amount of grain planted toward the end of the week. Daytime high temperatures of 80 degrees did a lot to change these conditions. Expect planting activity to be in full swing next week. **Pam Hickey (Ext), Central Aroostook:** It has been a cool spring so far. Growers are preparing to start planting as soon as fields dry up and soil temperature is warmer. Seed is being purchased. If weather cooperates, most farmers will be planting this weekend. Some broccoli has been planted. **Albert Dow (NRCS), Piscataquis:** Farmers have begun to spread manure and have begun fencing. Temperatures were 80 degrees and above the last three days. **Donna Lamb (Ext), Piscataquis:** Last week saw temperatures in the 80's. Helped dry out some fields enough for manure spreading and some plowing. Vegetable farmers have made their early plantings of peas and potatoes. Strawberry growers have removed the straw from plants. **Janet King (FSA), Somerset:** Spreading manure and preparing the fields for planting. Very slow spring. **Rick Kersbergen (Ext), Waldo:** What a difference a warm dry week makes. Lots of manure being spread, fields being tilled and sweet corn being planted. Buds are swelling on apples and high bush blueberries. We actually need some rain! **Trudy Soucy (FSA), Knox/Lincoln:** Early sweet corn being planted under blanket cover. Greenhouses and roadside stands opened for the first time over the weekend. Burning and flail mowing continues on blueberry fields. Fall work did not get completed due to weather and the uncertainty in the blueberry industry. Perfect weather over the weekend for working outdoors. **Michael Tardy (FSA), Androscoggin:** This was a cold, wet, bleak week. Some field work was done, but not much because of the wet, cool weather. Farmers are just waiting for that sun to warm up the ground and dry it out. **Jill Littlefield (FSA), Cumberland/York:** Grass is starting to grow. Heat over weekend helped the buds to break open. Heat varied from coastal to inland. Sweet corn under plastic is in the ground. **Gary Raymond (FSA), Franklin:** Good start to the growing season. Rain, sun, rain. Maple sap production was about average. Some peas & other cold crops are planted.

MASSACHUSETTS - Arthur Williams (FSA), Berkshire:

More sweet corn planted this week, field corn will be planted soon, fertilizer will be applied sparingly because of cost. No report on the early plantings showing up yet, but after warming up for a few days, crops will be showing up. Ground gets rained on one day and then it warms up with a good breeze, this has kept the ground workable, but still have some vernal pools in some fields. **Paul Russell (FSA), Southeast Massachusetts:** Rain and cool weather continue; very little planting being completed. Cranberries are approximately a week behind. Nut growers are running irrigation systems to protect from frost. **David Rose (FSA), Bristol:** Everyone continues to prepare fields and plant, but progress is slow. **John Devine (FSA), Franklin:** Planting peas,

radishes, lettuce, potatoes and cabbage this week. Sweet corn planting continues but soil conditions remain cool and wet. Most dairy farms are busy spreading manure and it certainly smells like spring in Franklin county. **Ted Smiarowski, Jr. (FSA), Hampshire/Hampden:** The temperatures were cool with a few needed rain showers. Fiddleheads were being harvested. Planting potatoes, sweet corn, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, and peas. Farmers are plowing, sub-soiling and spreading lime and manure. Setting up irrigation in strawberry fields. Due to the lack of snow cover this winter, alfalfa growers are reporting over a 50 percent crop loss. **Gary Guida, Worcester:** Busy week on farms. Plowing, harrowing, and planting corn now at a quick pace as some fields finally workable. Retail sales starting to pick-up with busy day on Saturday. Greenhouses in full color and plants look real good. Excellent consumer response.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - Amy Ouellette (Ext), Belknap:

Vegetable fields are being prepared for transplanting and seeding. Many cool weather crops like peas, greens and lettuce have been planted. Early sweet corn under plastic is in. Tree and small fruit growers are fertilizing, cutting & hauling brush, monitoring pests and applying sprays. It was not a good winter for peaches. Greenhouses are selling pansies, perennials, woody ornamentals, soil amendments and seed. Pastures and hayfields are green but rain is needed. **Tina Savage (Ext), Carroll:** What a difference a week makes! Pastures and hay fields are green and growing, manure, fertilizer and lime applications in progress. Leaves are opening, blossoms can't be far behind. Those with peaches are still waiting to see if any flowers survived. Winter damage evident on spring flowering shrubs in isolated locations. Many forsythia have blossoms on the lower branches only. **Carl Majewski (Ext), Cheshire:** A couple rainy days, but generally warm sunny weather most of the week. Farms spreading manure, starting field preparation, getting equipment ready, but no corn planted yet. Pastures and hayfields growing rapidly. A few farms finishing forage seedings. Field preparation continues on vegetable operations, with some planting of early crops. First sprays are being applied on orchards. **Steve Turaj (Ext), Coos:** Seems a fairly dry start to the crop year. Cows now showing up on pastures, farmers fixing fence. Manure spreading on meadows and corn fields on-going. A number of corn fields all prepped for planting. Greenhouses and nurseries at high gear in plans for Mother's day openings, pansies available at some. Looks like good flowers for next weekend. **Tom Buob (Ext), Grafton:** Pockets of winter killed alfalfa throughout the county. Field work includes field preparation for corn, seedings, and spreading manure for corn. Some corn planted, but none has emerged. **Steve Schmidt (FSA), Grafton:** Field work has begun. Manure is being spread, and new seedings are being planted. There was a high degree of winter kill this past winter on Alfalfa and some orchard grass. In many cases the stands were a complete loss. Corn planting is moving ahead. Top soil conditions are adequate. However, the subsoil moisture level appears to be low for this time of year. **George Hamilton (Ext), Hillsborough:** Field crops: spreading fertilizer, lime, and manure. Preparing fields for planting. Forage seedings being made. Fruits: applying pre-bloom sprays. Chopping brush, pruning peach trees. Vegetables: Getting fields ready to be planted. Planting peas, potatoes, green beans, and some sweet corn. Planting tomato transplants in high tunnels. **John Porter (Ext), Merrimack:** Cropping operations are well underway. Manure being spread and incorporated into the soil. Many reports of damage to alfalfa over the winter. Most are plowing up and re-seeding to alfalfa; alfalfa and grass, or switching to corn. Some winter damage in blueberries. Dead ends on branches and winter damage to new growth. **Nada Haddad (Ext), Rockingham:** Planting early vegetables: radishes are out! Preparing vegetable fields by liming, fertilizing and discing. Spreading manure and preparing forage and field corn. Spraying protective fungicide on fruit trees. Finishing up planting small fruits and pruning fruit trees, blueberries and raspberries. Decent weather most of the week with a few brief rain showers. **Pam Marvin (FSA), Sullivan:** A good week of warm weather for field work. Early vegetables have been planted along with a good start to silage corn planting. The first cut of alfalfa is not far off. Spotty showers and lots of sunshine has helped. Pruning of apple orchards, pears and blueberry bushes should be wrapping up soon. Annual and perennial sales have been strong

in all greenhouse stands.

RHODE ISLAND - Karen Menezes (Ext), Newport: The fields have had a chance to dry out some, potatoes being planted, working most fields. All cole crops are in and doing well, early morning fog and cool coastal air are abundant. Seasonal roadside stands are mostly open and full of pansies, and early spring flowering plants. This week has actually had some spring like weather. Good time for catching up. **Marilu Soileau (FSA), All Counties:** Heavy rains on Monday and Tuesday finally subsided and sunny skies and warm temperatures have everything turning green. Fields are still mostly too wet to access, but farmers are chomping at the bit to get out there. Trees are cautiously beginning to leaf out and the light emerald colors that say "spring is here" are emerging.

VERMONT - John St. Onge/Kim Peterson (FSA), Lamoille: Last week was productive for fieldwork. Lots of manure being spread, fence being fixed, fields being plowed and/or harrowed. Some fields of barley were planted. Grass growth has been a little slow in this area so far. Could use more moisture and warm temperatures to keep planting on schedule. **Dave Blodgett (NRCS), Orleans:** Landowners are spreading manure and tilling fields. Some grass/legumes have been seeded on the drier fields. Landowners are repairing fence for pastures. Grass in pastures is about an inch high in places I have looked. The warm temperatures over the weekend and the rain today will help push

the grass. **Perley Sparrow (FSA), Windham:** More alfalfa is being seeded this year to make up for winter kill. Some producers are going to chop what they can and then no-til corn. Some farmers lost as much as 50 percent of their alfalfa. They are finding that even some pasture sustained winter kill. Early vegetable crops are planted but producers are telling us that germination is slow. **Jeff Carter (Ext), Addison:** Spreading manure on corn land. Some manure on grass hay fields. Spring tillage to prepare seed bed with offset harrows and cultivators in corn fields. Fertilizing hay fields with broadcast applications. Pasture growth looks vigorous. Alfalfa growth good with little winter injury. **Dennis Kauppila (Ext), Caledonia:** Good spring week. Lots of manure going out, corn field preparation and fencing. Conditions are dry enough so that people are able to get field equipment onto places that they can rarely go in the spring. Some rain and showers (of both rain and snow). Near record heat on Friday, up in the high 70's. **Chris Benedict (Ext), Chittenden:** With warm temperatures towards the end of the week, all trees have reached half-inch green tip stage. Disease management has taken precedence in the orchard and with cooler, wet weather this week this concern will become ever more prevalent. **Sherwin Williams, Rutland:** Plowing under lots of winter rye which has done well this last week. Temperature for the week has been on the cold side for other crops. Harrowed, fertilized and put asparagus beds in shape, all ready for warmer weather. Planted carrots, broad beans, second planting of sweet corn and peas.

April 2004 Crop Weather Summary: Seasonal temperatures and showers prevailed throughout most of April in New England hindering planting in some areas. Maple sugaring activities were complete by month's end at most locations. Sugar producers report having an excellent season and maple syrup sales have been brisk. Farm activities during the month included nursery/greenhouse work, tending livestock, tapping maple trees, applying fertilizer, performing general maintenance and preparing for the spring planting season.

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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