

SOUTH CAROLINA CROP SUMMARY

2007

JANUARY: The year began with the arrival of a cold air mass, dropping morning temperatures into the 20's for many areas of the State. Although mid-January saw record high temperatures, the month ended with a week on average that was one degree below normal as the western half of the State experienced temperatures in the teens. The Statewide average precipitation for the last half of the month was 1.5 inches. Crop reporting respondents indicated that conditions are favorable for small grains, pastures and livestock, with soil moisture ending the month at an adequate level.

FEBRUARY: February began with chilling temperatures, registering eight degrees below normal at the end of the first week. Wintry mix combined with a slow, soaking rain to further improve soil moisture conditions. Much like its predecessor, the third week recorded an average temperature that was five degrees below normal. The month ended with afternoon temperatures reaching well into the 60's, finishing the final week in February three degrees above normal.

MARCH: South Carolina started out unseasonably warm at approx 3 degrees above normal and continued to stay above normal for the remainder of the month. The average statewide rainfall was 1.8" the first week, but the rest of the month was dry with less than an inch and a half of recorded rainfall. The fairly dry weather allowed farmers to enter the fields and tend to small grains and to make good progress in field preparation. The dry weather has accelerated corn planting statewide, although the lack of precipitation began to stress moisture supplies in both fields and pastures.

APRIL: South Carolina continued to experience below average precipitation for the year. Soils continued to dry from lack of precipitation and above average daytime temperatures. Soil moisture was 12% very short, 43% short, 41% adequate, and 4% surplus at the end of the month and 25 days were suitable for field work. Corn was 98% planted and 87% emerged. A portion of the crop did not recover from the Easter freeze and has had to be replanted. Small grain conditions were mostly very poor to poor. Early soybean planting ran behind last year and the 5-year average.

MAY: The lack of rain continued to remove soil moisture and negatively impact crops emergence and development. Delayed planting was also reported in some areas. Soil moisture was 38% very short, 47% short and 15% adequate at the end of the month, with 25 days suitable for field work. Small grains crops ranged from very poor to fair condition. Livestock condition was fair to good whereas pasture conditions declined. Vegetable planting was nearly completed. Peaches and apples were in mostly very poor to poor condition.

JUNE: Several areas of South Carolina received plenty of rainfall during the latter part of June from thunderstorms, while other parts of the State saw little or none. Soil moisture was 13% very short, 40% short, 46% adequate, and 1% surplus at the end of the month, with 25 days suitable for field work. Cotton began with a good start in areas that received rain. Soybeans were just about all planted. Oat and Winter wheat harvests were nearly complete. Peaches and apples remained in mostly very poor condition.

JULY: Dry conditions prevailed across most of South Carolina, causing most of the State's crop conditions to drop from the preceding week. Soil moisture declined to 21% very short, 57% short and 22% adequate, with 25 days suitable for field work. Peanut and tobacco crops were in fair to good condition. Peanut growers were scouting their fields for earworms, and preparing to treat soils for white mold, whereas tobacco harvest was in full swing. Diseases were showing up in some areas. Pasture, hay, and livestock conditions all further deteriorated this month. The situation remained dry in many areas of the Upstate. Livestock were still being fed hay. Later variety peaches were coming in, but harvest remained very light at best. The crop was in very poor condition. Apples ranged from very poor to fair condition.

AUGUST: Most of South Carolina's crops improved from the additional showers that fell during the early part of August. Crops really suffered during the first three weeks of the month. The heat was overwhelming to crops and livestock. Conditions varied from one location to another, depending on whether rain fell or not from scattered showers. Soil moisture at the end of the month was very short or short, with 26 days suitable for field work. Livestock continued to be sold because of the lack of hay and poor pastures. A very disappointing peach harvest winded down for the season. Apple harvest continued with poor yields.

SEPTEMBER: Growing conditions for the State's crops continued to decline due to the ongoing drought. Soil moisture declined to 52% very short, 33% short and 15% adequate, with 25 days suitable for field work. Corn harvest was just about complete. Cotton harvest progressed during the month. Asian soybean rust spread further into the State. The lack of rain was also cause for concern for the crop. Tobacco harvest was finally completed. Farmers were waiting on rain before planting Winter wheat. More livestock producers were searching for hay due to depleted stocks. Over two-thirds of pastures were in very poor or poor condition. Apple picking continued.

OCTOBER: South Carolina was thankful to have received a long and steady rainfall across the State during the final week of the month. As much rainfall that fell across the Low Country and Midlands, it was difficult to believe that much of the Upstate and Central Savannah River Area received less than an inch of precipitation. Soil moisture improved by the end of the month, but overall remained dry. Average ratings were 39% very short, 28% short, and 33% adequate, with 25 days suitable for field work. Cotton harvest reached 50 percent complete. Peanut harvest was nearing completion. Pasture conditions did not improve as temperatures remained well above normal for much of the week, and rainfall amounts were generally lighter in Upstate and western counties.

NOVEMBER: November continued dry which did not help improve the severe drought that has reduced yields for many of the State's crops. The state needed Winter rains to replenish the soils and livestock ponds before next spring. Soil moisture at the end of the month was 59% very short, 40% short, and 1% adequate, with 26 days suitable for field work. The very poor cotton crop was just about all harvested during November. Harvest of the sweet potato crop was completed by the end of the month. Farmers were still seeding winter wheat in dry soils in anticipation of forecasted rains. Many livestock producers were facing the winter with little or no hay stocks while pasture conditions continued to deteriorate.

DECEMBER: A cold front crossed the state early during the first week of December with only brief sprinkles and gusting northwest winds. Record warmth was observed during the second week of the month. The state average temperature for the period was twelve degrees above normal. The state average temperature for the last week of the year was seven degrees above normal, and average precipitation for the period was 2.3 inches. Even with the heavy rains that occurred, annual precipitation totals were near record lows for the year. Small grains and winter grazings were greatly helped by the moisture received late in the month