

Texas Crop Weather Survey

Background Information And Instructions

Texas Agricultural Statistics Service
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Austin, Texas 78767

In Cooperation With

Texas Cooperative Extension
The Texas A&M University System
College Station, Texas 77843

Weekly Crop –Weather Survey Quick Reference Guide

1. Log on to Web Site <http://cpcsweb.nass.usda.gov>.
2. Select State (TX)
3. Enter User Name (exactly as supplied in separate e-mail message)
4. Enter Password (exactly as supplied in same message as User Name)

NOTE: Call 800-626-3142 if you forget your User Name or Password

5. Click on Continue button (or Reset to Start Over)
6. Click on Survey to go to Questionnaire
7. Enter information and comments

Enter whole numbers only

Use the Tab key to move from item to item.

Condition percentages must add to 100

Skip item if none in your county

Enter **zero** if item is in your county, but **no** acreage in the requested stage (when the item is not in your county leave the cell blank)

Your comments are very important and useful.

8. Click on Submit Survey to transmit information.

If necessary, correct inconsistencies and resubmit.

NOTE: Call 800-626-3142 if you have any questions or problems with the Internet reporting system.

Weekly Crop-Weather Survey Information & Instructions

I. Purpose

The Weekly Crop-Weather Survey is intended to provide current information on crop progress during the growing season, crop and pasture conditions, and the condition of livestock. Additional information is collected on soil moisture supplies and other items are sometimes included on an as-needed basis. It is a non-scientific survey designed to track the week-to-week changes in the individual items included in the survey.

The Crop-Weather Survey is conducted every week by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and its 45 state offices. In Texas, the reports are collected weekly for all but two or three weeks of the year around the Christmas and New Years holidays. The survey reporters are the County Extension Agents for Agriculture in all 254 Texas counties. Weather information is provided by the National Weather Service (NWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Texas Crop Weather Summary is released at 3:00 p.m. Central Time on the first business day of the week. A national crop progress and condition report is issued from Washington, D.C. at the same time. The complete national Weather-Crop Summary is released each week on Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. Central Time. The Texas report is available in print and over the Internet.

The Internet report can be accessed at the Texas Agricultural Statistics site, www.nass.usda.gov/tx/mweather.htm

The national report can be found at www.usda.gov/nass/.

When information contained in the weekly Crop Weather Report is used to help evaluate conditions and development compared to the previous week, the previous year, and five-year averages. The data should not be used as an absolute measure of activity, but rather as a relative measure compared to some past period. Bear in mind that the data are collected from reporters who are providing their "best estimates" and that some county reports may not be available before the survey is closed for summarization.

The weekly Crop-Weather Report is one of the most closely watched reports issued by USDA during the growing season. The data are used by many organizations and individuals to assess current conditions and possible impacts on production and markets.

II. Reporting Instructions

The weekly Internet questionnaire is found at <http://cpcsweb.nass.usda.gov>.

You should bookmark this address for easy access in the future. Each week, the questionnaire will be available from Thursday morning until Monday morning. An e-mail reminder message will be automatically sent to your office and your personal e-mail address when the questionnaire is available for your response. If you have not responded by Monday morning, the system may also send you a reminder notice via e-mail. You must respond by about 8:30 a.m. on Monday morning for your report to be included in the summary.

The opening screen of the questionnaire will ask you to select your state (TX), and enter your user name, and password. Then you can either click on Continue to go to the next screen or Reset to clear all cells and start over. Your completed report is confidential, so special procedures have been designed into the system to protect the privacy of your response. Your unique user name and password are parts of the system security. They have been (or will be) sent to you in a separate e-mail message. Please keep them in a secure location. Note that the user names and passwords are case-sensitive and must be entered exactly as they were sent to you.

The second screen gives you a choice of selecting either the Help or Survey button. Clicking on the Help button will bring up an overview and definitions that may be useful when filling out the questionnaire. Clicking on the Survey button will bring up the questionnaire for the week.

Once in the questionnaire, the Tab key can be used to move from item to item. Only number entries are valid in the answer cells, except for the "Respondent's Name" and "Comments" boxes. Only whole numbers are allowed. Please note that percentages on crop and livestock conditions must add to 100. The system will return a message if they don't.

Responses from your most recent report will be listed to the right of the answer cells for your reference. They are labeled "Prev. Resp:". Only responses from the previous two weeks are listed. If you didn't report sometime in the last two weeks, this area will be blank.

We and your District Director would very much appreciate your comments on crop and livestock conditions in your county. They can be entered in the comments section near the end of the questionnaire. Your comments are very important and helpful when we write the narrative that must be included in each weekly release.

Once you have completed the questionnaire, click on the Submit Survey button to transmit the data to us.

If there are any inconsistencies in the report, you will get a message that shows the number of the question involved and a brief description of the problem. Typical messages are that the condition percentages do not add to 100 or that a current crop progress is less than in the previous week. You will be instructed to click on the Back button of your browser to return to the questionnaire and correct the inconsistency. Once it has been fixed, you can again click on the Submit Survey button to transmit the report. You should get a message: "Data validated and submitted. Thank you for your report." At this point you can go on to other Web sites or exit your browser.

If a crop appears on the survey that is not grown in your area, simply skip over the answer cells, leaving them blank. However, if the crop is grown, but has no acreage in the requested progress stage, such as planted or harvested, please enter a zero (0).

If you complete your report on Thursday or Friday, please project the crop progress through the weekend to the best of your ability. For example, if wheat harvest is active in your area when you complete the report on Friday and open weather is forecast for the weekend, assume normal harvest progress and project a percent harvested estimate that includes Saturday and Sunday.

Please call us if you have any questions or problems with the Crop Weather system, your user name, password, or any other part of the Internet reporting system. Our numbers are:

Austin Calling Area:(512)916-5581

Statewide Toll Free:(800) 626-3142

E-mail nass-tx@nass.usda.gov

III. Definitions

The following information was adapted from the Help screen in the Internet reporting system.

DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaires are electronically delivered to the reporters each week for the following Sunday reference date. Any conditions or developments that are reported should be "as of" Sunday. If the report is filled out at the end of the work week for the following Monday, the reporter should project all conditions and developments forward to Sunday, based on the expected weather conditions and the reporter's expertise.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Guidelines and definitions for each question or group of questions are given below. Reporters should answer all questions which refer to any crops that are grown in their county.

NOTE: All references to corn refer to field corn only, not sweet corn. Any developments in the sweet corn crop should be discussed in vegetable comments.

Soil Moisture:

The county's total cropland should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

Very Short Code = 1 Soil moisture supplies are significantly less than what is required for normal plant development. Growth has been stopped or nearly so and plants are showing visible signs of moisture stress. Under these conditions, plants will quickly suffer irreparable damage.

Short Code = 2 Soil dry. Seed germination and/or normal crop growth and development would be curtailed.

Adequate Code = 3 Soil moist. Seed germination and/or crop growth and development would be normal or unhindered.

Surplus Code = 4 Soil wet. Fields may be muddy and will generally be unable to absorb additional moisture. Young developing crops may be yellowing from excess moisture.

Range and pasture condition:

The county's non-irrigated pasture and rangeland should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

Very Poor - Pastures provide very little or no feed compared to what is normally expected for the current time of the year. Supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.

Poor - Pastures are only providing marginal feed compared to what is normally expected for the current time of the year. Some supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.

Fair - Pastures are generally providing adequate feed, but is still less than normal for the current time of the year.

Good - Pastures are providing adequate feed supplies compared with what is normally expected for the current time of the year.

Excellent - Pastures are supplying feed in excess of what is normally expected for the current time of the year.

General crop conditions:

The county's entire crop should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

Very Poor - Extreme loss of yield potential; complete or near complete crop failure.

Poor - Heavy loss of yield potential due to excessive soil moisture, drought, disease, etc.

Fair - Less than normal crop conditions. Yield loss is a possibility, but is not severe.

Good - Yield prospects are normal or better. Moisture levels are adequate with minimal disease and insect damage.

Excellent - Yield prospects are above normal and crops are experiencing little, if any, stress.

General crop progress:

Percents should indicate the progress of field activities or crop development. For example, if half of the expected total winter wheat acreage is planted, a value of 50 percent would be reported. All progress percentages should relate to acres. In general, an acre can be considered to be in or beyond a stage when 50 percent or more of the plants in that acre are in or beyond that stage. **ALL PROGRESS STAGES MUST BE ACCUMULATED TO 100 PERCENT.** For example in the question "Corn Silking or Beyond", the reporter should add the percent that is currently silking and the percent that has passed into the dough and later stages (including harvested if greater than zero). Do not reduce the percentage of progress reported below that of the previous week if some of the planted acreage is removed or abandoned after it is planted, this should be stated in the comments section of the report form.

The stages are defined below. These terms and definitions should be used only as guidelines. Individual interpretations may vary from State to State. Only those items included in the National Crop Progress release are discussed.

Definitions:

Planted: If half of the total current year acreage expected is planted, a value of 50 percent should be used. If weather conditions alter plans such that intentions are prevented, a 100 percent should be used when planting stops.

Harvested: Crop harvesting progress covers intended acres, not the current acres. If, for example, half of the total current year soybean acreage is harvested, a value of 50 percent should be used. If weather conditions alter plans such that intentions are prevented, a 100 percent should be used when harvesting stops.

Corn Stages:

Emerged: As soon as the plants are visible. Normally occurs about a week after planting.

Silking: The emergence of silk like strands from the end of ears. Occurs approximately 10 days after the tassel first begins to emerge from the sheath or 2-4 days after the tassel is emerged.

Dough: Normally half of the kernels are showing dent with some thick or dough-like substance in all kernels.

Dent: Occurs when all kernels are fully dented and the ear is firm and solid. There is no milk present in most kernels.

Mature: Plant is considered safe from frost. Corn is about ready to harvest with shucks opening and there is no green foliage present.

Soybean Stages:

Emerged As soon as the plants are visible. Normally occurs about a week after planting.

Blooming A plant should be considered as blooming as soon as one bloom appears.

Setting Pods Pods are developing on the lower nodes with some blooming still occurring on the upper nodes.

Dropping Leaves Leaves near the bottom of the plant are yellow and dropping, while leaves at the very top may still be green. Leaves are 30-50 percent yellow.

Cotton Stages:

Squaring A plant should be considered as squaring after the appearance of a small triangular leaf-like structure on the growing tip of the main stem and/or branches.

Setting Bolls A plant should be considered as setting bolls as soon as one bloom or boll is visible.

Bolls Opening A plant should be considered in this stage as soon as white fibers are visible on at least one boll.

Specialty Crops - Includes Christmas trees, nursery products, turf, flowers, bulbs, aquaculture, forest products, seed crops, etc.

Livestock - Range and Pasture - Includes livestock and poultry conditions, supplies, marketings, movements, etc., as well as range and pasture conditions, feed supplies, etc.

Other Farm Activities - Includes any other farm and ranch activities important to agriculture.