ALABAMA: The last few weeks of December 2011 brought much needed rain to the drought stricken south eastern part of the State. December also brought about bouts of cold weather across parts of the State. The US Drought Monitor from December 27, 2011 indicated the State to be only 39.32 percent free from drought, compared to 17.67 percent at the start of the calendar year, and 29.64 percent a year ago. Brandon A. Dillard, Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) Regional Extension Agent over the south eastern part of the State, said corn harvest was complete and yields were very poor due to the drought. Dillard and Dennis P. Delaney, ACES Agronomy & Soils Extension Specialist for Alabama, said soybeans yields were average, while the 2012 wheat and small grain crop looked good as rainfall was received. William C. Birdsong, ACES Extension Specialist over the south eastern part of the State, said most of the cotton crop has been harvested and gins are still running. Dale Monks, ACES Agronomy and Soils Extension Specialist for Alabama, said cotton yields were at 730 lbs per acre this year, which is an increase from last year. Kris B. Balkcom, ACES Agronomy and Soils Research Associate for Alabama, said peanut yields were scattered across the board for 2011. Balkcom said the earlier planted peanuts fared better than the later planted peanuts. Jack B. Tatum, ACES Regional Extension Agent, said drought was the major problem, reducing hay supply and causing increased feed costs due to livestock feed supplementation.

ALASKA: DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ARIZONA: Temperatures across the State alternated each week going from above normal to below normal. The year ended with above normal temperatures across the State. The temperature extremes for December were a high of 82 degrees in Coolidge and a low of 3 below zero at Grand Canyon. Precipitation in the form of rain or snow had fallen throughout the month in virtually every area of Arizona. Thirteen of the twenty-two weather stations finished the year with less than 90 percent of normal precipitation. Cotton harvesting was in its final stages by the end of the month but behind the five-year average. Alfalfa harvesting slowed down and sheeping off activities on the alfalfa fields occurred in central and western areas of the State. Vegetable and citrus harvesting activities increased throughout the month.

ARKANSAS: December started off with temperatures slightly above normal. A wet weather system brought much needed moisture to the State. The second week of December observed much cooler temperatures along with measurable snow scattered throughout the State. This was the first December snow event since 2005. This system was followed by two weeks of little moisture and cool temperatures. The last week of December brought clear skies and near normal temperatures to the State. Despite the recent rainfall, drought conditions still existed for several southwest counties. Cattle producers were feeding hay to their herds. Fieldwork was minimal during December due to the rain that was received. Many farmers were planning for the 2012 crop season by attending meetings, locating land, making planting decisions. Winter wheat was reported to be looking good.

CALIFORNIA: Cotton picking was complete, with most of producers chopping and disking their crops in preparation for spring and to comply with the Cotton Plowdown Regulation. Late planting in winter wheat, oats, and other small grain fields occurred in hopes of wetter weather. Planted fields progressed well, but needed some precipitation to sustain growth. Some producers irrigated their crops for better progress. Early planted acres started to head. Weed spraying in small grain fields continued. Persimmon and kiwi harvests were complete. Pineapple quinces, figs and apples continued to be harvested.

Pomegranate harvest was wrapping up. The table and wine grape harvests were complete; grapevines were dormant and pruning had begun. Frost was a problem for citrus growers across the State. Growers ran freeze protection several nights as temperatures dropped into the upper 20s. Satsuma mandarin, Ovari and Clementine tangerine harvests continued; growers were about 50 percent complete in Tulare County. Navel orange harvest continued. Navel oranges were beginning to show improved internal maturity. Cara Cara orange and lemon harvests continued. Oro Blanco and Melogold grapefruit harvests were winding down. Pummelo harvest began to pick up. The harvest of walnuts was complete. Finished walnut groves were being irrigated, pruned and sprayed. Almond stockpiles were hulled. The pistachio harvest was over. Carrots, lettuce and cabbage were harvested in Kern County. Tulare County reported continued planting of winter vegetables, while tomato and pepper harvest had finished. Fresno County reported irrigation and fertilizing of winter vegetables, while dehydrator onions were being planted and fall carrots were being harvested; broccoli, lettuce, and spinach were growing at a good rate. In Sutter County, onion and garbanzo crops were growing well, while field cultivation and preparation were ongoing. Low level pastures were greening and new seasonal vegetation had germinated. Rangeland conditions had started to deteriorate due to lack of rains; wetter weather was needed to sustain current conditions. Sheep and cattle grazed retired farmland and alfalfa fields. Supplemental feeding of livestock continued until new vegetation gained strength.

COLORADO: Most areas of the State received below normal precipitation during December while the Front Range received slightly above normal amounts. Overall, mountain snowpack is currently 72% of average. Temperatures averaged slightly below normal for most of the State. Windy conditions existed during the last week of the month, particularly along the Front Range and mountains. Winter wheat stands remain in mostly fair to good condition with only minor, localized damage caused by high winds the last day of the month. Soil moisture ratings continue as mostly adequate to short in most areas.

DELAWARE: Hay supplies were mostly adequate. Topsoil and subsoil moisture levels were at adequate levels thanks to steady rainfall. Pasture ratings were declining in some areas due to livestock damaging the ground from high moisture. Soybean harvest continued into December. Barley and winter wheat plantings had emerged. Cover crops were also being planted as allowed by field conditions.

FLORIDA: Farming activities on schedule throughout December, exception was late-planted cotton and peanut fields. Sugarcane harvesting on schedule with few interruptions from rainfall. Vegetable harvesting continued. Mid-December, rains increased risk for disease. End of month, farmers anticipated cold front, prepared for cold by protecting vegetable crops. AMS vegetables marketed included avocados, snap beans, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, bell peppers, okra, radishes, strawberries, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes. Sparse rainfall brought abnormally dry conditions to citrus region. Harvesting of early oranges (Navel and Hamilins), white and colored grapefruit, Faligio and Sunburst tangerines, and Tangelos continued. Production practices included lime application and irrigation as needed. Statewide, drought, cold temperatures limited pasture condition throughout December. Rain mid-month raised pasture condition to 42% good; drought limited forage growth. Panhandle, northern areas summer pasture dormant beginning of month, winter (small grain) pasture growth insufficient to provide forage. Winter forage planting delayed, soil too dry to permit germination. Cattle condition very poor to excellent, mostly good. Hay, supplements fed to compensate for poor pasture. Some herd reduction in Panhandle due
to poor pastures and hay shortage. Central areas most pastures in fair condition, drought and frost lowered forage growth. Winter forage planted. Most cattle in good condition, supplemental hay fed. Southern areas pasture condition mostly fair to good. Cattle condition fair to excellent, mostly good. Producers continued to feed hay. Central areas warm temperatures helped forage growth, but winter (ryegrass) forage not planted due to dry soil conditions earlier in season. Stock pond water levels down. Southern areas ranchers fed supplemental hay. Warmer weather helped cattle condition. Month’s end, cool season forage growth reached grazing height following rain and above-season normal temperatures. Hay, supplements fed extensively throughout State. Cattle condition poor to excellent, mostly good condition.

GEORGIA: According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service’s Georgia Field Office, Georgia climate cooled during the month of December. Precipitation estimates for the month in Georgia ranged from 0.5 to 4.5 inches on the leeward sides in the southeastern corner of the State. The week’s average temperature ranged from the lower 40s to the upper 50s. Most of the State was slightly warmer than normal for this time of year. Rain has given Georgia some relief from the exceptional drought; however, extreme drought still covers roughly 64% of the State compared to less than 8% one year ago. Field activities included late harvesting of crops, planting of small grains and routine care of livestock.

HAWAII: December weather conditions were typical for this time of year with trade winds spawning showers especially in the mountains along with the windward (eastern) slopes and shorelines. Irrigation reservoir levels operated by the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture (HDOA) rose due to rainfall plus water usage cutbacks on Molokai and Oahu Islands. No irrigation water restrictions were in force on the HDOA irrigation system on the Big Island of Hawaii. The first week of December was another wet week for the trade wind areas, though the main rain fell in the South Point area on Tuesday and in Ka`u in general on Friday. Windward areas saw light rain and a fair amount of sun through Thursday, with the rain and cloudy skies returning Friday and continuing through the weekend. High winds were reported through Friday in mauka areas. The combination of rain and sun late in the week should be welcome to windward ranches; the little bit of rain inKa`u on Friday may help a bit, but more rainfall is needed in that area and leeward in general. The leeward ranches are still under drought conditions. Beneficial rainfall fell on Maui County through the week; however this precipitation was primarily over the windward sections of the islands. There was some very light rainfall noted on the west side of Maui, but this rainfall did not appear to increase ground moisture. Pastures on the west side continued to be very dry. Heavy irrigation for crops on this side of the island was essential to maintain crop development. During the second week, leeward Island windward areas remain dry for the most part with a few exceptions at the end of the week; unfortunately, it was certainly not enough to alleviate drought conditions in these areas. What little rain they received, was surely welcome though. Windward areas were a whole different story – the week started out pretty average, with light rain falling every day, interspersed with some sun. The weekend, however, was extremely wet as windward areas were visibly saturated with huge puddles all over the place. Hopefully the lighter rain and intermittent sun allowed for good growth in the beginning of the week. Strong and gusty winds brought rainfall over most parts of Maui County this week. A flash flood warning was issued during the latter part of the week with some areas reporting receiving up to 4 inches of rain. The south-facing areas that have been dry also received some precipitation this week which should benefit pastures in the area. The windward sections of the island have received an accumulative amount of rainfall, and field work in these areas was tempered. Mauna Kea received rain in most leeward areas during the early part of the third week of December (Monday – Wednesday) and in Ka`u on Sunday, though drought conditions still persisted. Windward gages recorded fair amounts of rain all week, but not the heavy rains experienced last week. There was even a bit of sun toward the end of the week, helping the ground to dry up a little before the rain returned Sunday. A flash flood warning was issued for the Big Island this morning, so we would expect more rain in the days to come. High winds caused damage to some forlicracea shade houses. Early in the week, strong trade winds brought heavy rains to the windward sections of the islands in Maui County. Leeward areas also continued to receive precipitation from the rainfall from the trade winds. Many areas that have not received precipitation during the past several months are now benefitting from the rainfall. The central portion of Maui County received rain this week, but field activity was not hampered. During the final full week of 2011, windward areas experienced a very, very wet holiday week; the Kawaiulani Stream station alone over 14 inches in 3 days. The ground in windward areas remained saturated all week (as it has been for several weeks now), but rains started to let up over the weekend, and there was finally some intermittent sunshine. Some leeward areas benefited from this rainy spell, particularly from eastern Ka`u to South Point. Drought conditions still persist, but this bit of rain could temporarily keep conditions in that area from worsening. Passing trade showers continued to settle in along the windward areas during the last few days of the year set new record highs at several locations in the eastern half of the State. The Southwest District is still very dry with 64 percent reported in the short to very short for topsoil moisture. Some fields that received consistent rainfall may need a few days to dry out before reentering for field work. Overall, the rainfall during the past several weeks has allowed for the replenishing of the water supply especially for the Upcountry areas.

IDAHO: Topsoil moisture 8% very short, 33% short, 56% adequate, 3% surplus. Calving complete 4%, 2% 2011, 2% avg. Lambing complete 1%, 1% 2011, 2% avg. Hay and roughage supply 26% very short, 14% short, 58% adequate, 2% surplus. Winter wheat condition 0% very poor, 0% poor, 18% fair, 65% good, 17% excellent.

ILLINOIS: The warm temperatures allowed farmers to wrap up fall field work. Wheat producers reported favorable conditions but some are concerned about the lack of snow cover. Winter wheat conditions stand at 2 percent poor, 17 percent fair, 72 percent good, and 5 percent excellent.

INDIANA: December was both warmer and wetter than normal in Indiana. The State average temperature of 36.7o was 5.5o above normal while 4.55 inches of precipitation fell which was 1.49 inches above normal. A limited amount of corn remains to be harvested in some eastern counties but farmers will have to wait until the ground freezes hard enough to support equipment. Winter wheat is reported to be in mostly good condition, though not as good as expected. April snowfall was not enough to cause much winter kill or heaving. Some dry fertilizer, manure and lime were spread during the month as soil conditions permitted. Many operations were moving grain to market and also forward contracting 2012 crops. Livestock are reported to be in mostly good condition with the exception of battling muddy feedlots and pastures. Hay supplies remain mostly adequate, but prices are beginning to climb as demand is starting to increase. Other activities included income tax preparation and purchasing inputs for 2012 crops, clearing fence rows, spreading fertilizer and lime, repairing and installing drainage tile, hauling grain to market and feeding hay to livestock.

IOWA: Topsoil moisture levels rated 24% very short, 31% short, 44% adequate, and 1% surplus. Most of Iowa had no need for a snow shovel in December as the State experienced above normal temperatures and below normal snowfall. Tile work as well as some fertilizer application continued throughout the month. Winter wheat coupled with a lack of snow has reduced forage needs as cattle do not need to consume as much feed to stay warm and continue to gain weight. Livestock losses have been below normal.

KANSAS: Days suitable for fieldwork 9. Topsoil moisture 7% very short, 17% short, 69% adequate, 7% surplus. Winter wheat condition 2% very poor, 7% poor, 38% fair, 46% good, and 7% excellent; wind damage 92% none, 7% light, 1% moderate; freeze damage 94% none, 4% light, 2% moderate. Cotton harvest 94% complete. Range and pasture condition 28% very poor, 25% poor, 32% fair, 15% good, 4% excellent. Stock feed supplies 11% very short, 17% short, 68% adequate, 4% surplus. Hay and forage supplies 24% very short, 29% short, 44% adequate, 3% surplus. Stock water supplies 11% very short, 19% short, 69% adequate, 1% surplus. Most areas of Kansas received much needed moisture during the month of December with thirty-four of the 52 stations reporting over 2 inches of precipitation. The lightest amounts were in the northwest where Oberlin was the only station with below normal precipitation for the month. Snow fell during the first and third weeks of December in the western half of Kansas with amounts over a foot at some locations in the West Central District and limiting Kansas farmers to an average of only 9 days suitable fieldwork for the month. The temperatures varied widely during the month with lows ranging from 17 degrees at three locations in the southeast to -15 degrees in the northwest. December was both warmer and wetter than normal in Kansas. Drought conditions still persist, but this bit of rain could temporarily keep conditions in that area from worsening. Passing trade showers continued to settle in along the windward areas during the last few days of the year set new record highs at several locations in the eastern half of the State. The Southwest District is still very dry with 64 percent reported in the short to very short for topsoil moisture. Fieldwork was limited by wet fields, but primarily involved harvesting cotton when possible and applying fertilizer in preparation for spring crops. For 2011, only 11 of the 52 stations received above normal precipitation.
Mississippi: December was warmer and wetter than normal. Average temperatures were 3 to 6 degrees above normal. Precipitation averaged 3.64 inches compared to the December 30 year average of 2.67 inches. The southeast district averaged 7.39 inches in December. The condition of the dormant winter wheat crop ranges from poor to excellent with the majority rated good. The condition of some winter wheat in the southeast district was poor due to standing water.

Kentucky: December recorded both above normal temperatures and rainfall. December 2011 was a mild month, but above normal rainfall resulted in the wettest year on record over the past 100 years. Several weather stations in southeast Kentucky received over 15 inches for the month. Temperatures for the period averaged 42 degrees across the state which was 4 degrees warmer than normal. High temperatures averaged from 50 in the West to 52 in the East. Departure from normal for both month and year temperatures were 83 degrees warmer than normal in the West to 4 degrees warmer than normal in the East. Low temperatures averaged from 34 degrees in the West to 34 degrees in the East. Departure from normal low temperature ranged from 4 degrees warmer than normal in the West to 6 degrees warmer than normal in the East. Precipitation (liq. eqv.) for the period totaled 5.99 inches Statewide which was 1.14 inches above normal and 126% of normal. Precipitation totals by climate division. West 6.27 inches, Central 4.69 inches, Bluegrass 5.42 inches and East 5.96 inches, which was 1.39, -0.13, 1.55 and 1.73 inches respectively from normal. Tobacco producers continued to strip their burley as December rains made conditions favorable. The wet weather also improved soil moisture conditions, which was beneficial for fall seeded small grain growth. Mild temperatures were favorable to livestock.

Louisiana: Rainfall averaged 4.68 inches in December of 2011. Louisiana remains 26 percent behind normal for rainfall in 2011. Harvesting of sugarcane was ongoing. Citrus producers were spraying to control diseases. Strawberries were being harvested. Livestock producers were fertilizing winter pastures and feeding hay. Crawfish producers were putting out traps. Other activities included repairing and cleaning equipment.

Maryland: Hay supplies were mostly adequate, but varied across the state. Topsoil and subsoil moisture levels were at adequate levels thanks to steady rainfall. Pasture ratings were declining in some areas due to livestock damaging the ground from high moisture. Soybean harvest continued into December. barley and winter wheat plantings had emerged. Cover crops were also being planted as allowed by field conditions.

Michigan: The precipitation for the past four weeks ending January 1 varied from 0.92 inches to 1.75 inches in the Upper Peninsula and 0.87 inches to 1.99 inches in the Lower Peninsula. The month of December was much warmer than normal and yielded much less snowfall. Producers stated that more snow cover was needed to protect winter wheat.

Minnesota: December was warm and dry. Temperatures for the month averaged 7.0 degrees above normal in the Northeast District to 11.3 degrees above normal in the Northwest District. Greatest monthly precipitation of 1.31 inches was recorded in Preston. Most observers reported monthly average temperatures that ranged from 5 to 10 degrees warmer than normal, placing 2011 among the top ten warmest December Statewide. The lack of precipitation during December placed it among the ten driest in history, according to the Minnesota state climatology office. As of December 27, with the exception of the southeastern tip, the entire state was rated from abnormally dry to undergoing a severe drought by the U.S. Drought Monitor. As of December 29, snow cover was negligible across the State. The exception was the Northwest District which reported between 1 and 8 inches of snow.

Missouri: Topsoil moisture 6% very short, 0% last year; 40% short, 7% last year; 50% adequate, 81% last year; 22% surplus, 12% last year. Subsoil moisture 13% very short, 1% last year; 36% short, 10% last year; 46% adequate, 88% last year; 5% surplus, 1% last year. Winter wheat condition 2% very poor, 0% last year; 7% poor, 22% last year; 61% fair, 26% last year; 26% good, 62% last year; 4% excellent, 10% last year. Winter wheat – wind damage 71% none, 74% last year; 24% light, 25% last year; 3% moderate, 1% last year; 2% heavy, 1% last year. Winter wheat – freeze damage 83% none, 82% last year; 17% light, 17% last year; 0% moderate, 1% last year; 0% heavy, 0% last year. Winter wheat – protectiveness of snow cover 92% very poor, 1% last year; 6% poor, 1% last year; 2% fair, 19% last year; 0% good, 42% last year; 0% excellent, 37% last year. Winter wheat emerged 93%. Corn harvested for grain 97%. Range and pasture feed condition 11% very poor, 6% last year; 21% poor, 13% last year; 37% fair, 52% last year; 26% good, 62% last year; 5% excellent, 3% last year. Cattle and calves receiving supplemental feed 72%, 94% last year. Sheep and lambs receiving supplemental feed 69%, 94% last year.

Nebraska: Wheat conditions rated 0% very poor, 1 poor, 25 fair, 70 good, 4 excellent. Hay and forage supplies rated 0% very short, 4 short, 94 adequate, and 2 excellent. Cattle and Calves condition rated 0% very poor, 0% poor, 7% fair, 85 good, and 8 excellent. Weather conditions were relatively mild and dry compared to the same month last year. High temperatures reached the upper 60’s and lows fell to 16 degrees. Snow that had fallen during the month melted with the above normal temperatures allowing cattle producers to make good use of stalks. As a result, feed usage was not heavy and feed supplies were more than adequate with cattle in good condition. The southeast corner of the State received well above normal precipitation while most of the west was well below normal. Field work continued with the warm, dry weather and weather conditions were well above year ago levels. The majority of the State saw temperatures average 2-6 degrees above normal. During the last week of the month, topsoil temperatures ranged from 30 to 35 degrees and in general got warmer as you moved from west to east. The southeast corner of the State received from 1 to 3 inches of precipitation, while much of the west and north received a half inch or less.

New England: The month of December became one of the mildest on record with temperatures ranging from 4.0 to 8.5 degrees above normal in almost all of New England. Measurable snowfall was nonexistent in southern New England and minimal elsewhere. An exception was northernmost latitudes of Maine reporting up to 17 inches, a below-average measurement for December. Total precipitation for the month ranged from as low as 1.53 inches in northern elevations in New Hampshire to as great as 5.16 inches in central Massachusetts. The first week began with average to above average daytime temperatures ranging from the low 30s to mid-50s. Constant showers during the second week brought over 2 inches of rainfall throughout most of New England. Temperatures were unseasonably warm during this period with highs and lows reaching the mid-60s and low 50s, respectively, as far north as New Hampshire. In contrast, northern Maine was cool enough to receive up to 9 inches of snow during the week. Warm temperatures in the 50s made a comeback during the middle of the relatively dry third week. The fourth week continued the trend of average temperatures with a warm spell. However, there were several nights with subzero temperatures in the northernmost latitudes of Maine and New Hampshire during the week. Light snow was reported throughout northern New England on December 23. Rain showers, gusty winds, and abnormally high
temperatures in the 50s were reported in every State of New England during the last week of the month.

NEW JERSEY:  Temperatures were mostly above normal the entire month of December. There were minimal amounts of precipitation in many localities. Farmers finished their 2011 season harvesting of corn and soybeans. Other activities included attending meetings, equipment repair, greenhouse work, and feeding stored hay to livestock.

NEW MEXICO:  December began with temperatures below normal across most of the State. A cold front swept through New Mexico the second week of December bringing bands of snow showers in the higher elevations and rain in the lower elevations. Behind this system, a polar air mass dropped temperatures drastically. Most of the northwest was twelve degrees below normal compared to the southwest which was seven degrees below normal. Cattle and livestock conditions remained fair due to declining supplemental feeding and haying. Wet weather prevented pecans from being harvested, due to wet and muddy fields that did not allow machinery into orchards. Due to the cold, all summer crops ended. Cotton harvest completed during December. Remaining livestock is being fed with other means than pasture grass across the State. Livestock still being sold in mass quantities to maintain lower feed costs. Drought conditions are starting to improve in most areas of the State.

NEW YORK:  Outside activities and daily chores continued. Weather was warmer than normal for this time of year with very little snow. Producers kept busy repairing machinery and removing snow where needed. Major activities included caring for livestock, spreading manure, grading and packing potatoes, onions, apples and cabbage. Winter meetings and trade shows were well attended.

NORTH CAROLINA:  Statewide soil moisture levels were rated at 1% very short, 9% short, 77% adequate and 13% surplus. The State received below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures throughout the month of December. Producers continued to trend livestock and winterize farm equipment.

NORTH DAKOTA:  Average snow depth was 0.2 on January 1. Hay and forage supplies were 2% short, 66% adequate, 32% surplus. Snow cover protection for alfalfa was rated 98% poor, 2% adequate. Snow cover protection for winter wheat was rated 94% poor, 6% adequate. Cattle condition 11% fair, 68% good, 21% excellent. Sheep condition 12% fair, 74% good, 4% excellent. Road conditions 97% open, 3% difficult. Sixteen percent were icy, 1% muddy, 83% dry. The month of December brought warmer than average temperatures and very little snow accumulation to the State. While the mild weather conditions were welcomed by most, some winter wheat and alfalfa producers expressed concern over the lack of adequate snow cover for their crops. Agricultural activities during December included grazing, moving, and vaccinating cattle.

OHIO:  The December 2011 average temperature for Ohio was 37.0 degrees, 5.3 degrees above normal. Precipitation for the State averaged 4.35 inches, 1.43 inches above normal. Winter wheat producers were happy with the weather as adequate moisture and cooler temperatures were in line with the crop's needs. Much of the crop was planted late and acreage is down from operator planting intentions due to a wet fall; however planted wheat crops are in good shape. Initial snow cover in fields occurred during the last week of December, which is behind usual conditions. Cattle are in fair to good condition. Current hay inventories are reduced from normal, operators expect to purchase hay to make up for a shortfall in hay production. The wet spring reduced the number of dry hay cuttings.

OKLAHOMA:  Topsoil moisture 9% very short, 24% short, 63% adequate, 4% surplus. Subsoil moisture 35% very short, 34% short, 31% adequate. Wheat 1% very poor, 6% poor, 30% fair, 54% good, 9% excellent; grazed 37% this month, 34% last year, 35% average. Canola 1% very poor, 5% poor, 40% fair, 46% good, 8% excellent. Rye 1% very poor, 4% poor, 25% fair, 58% good, 12% excellent; grazed 63% this month, 65% last year, 64% average. Oats 1% very poor, 4% poor, 23% fair, 67% good, 5% excellent; grazed 42% this month, 13% last year, 15% average. Livestock 9% very poor, 17% poor, 40% fair, 31% good, 3% excellent. Pasture and Range 43% very poor, 31% poor, 21% fair, 5% good. Livestock conditions were rated mostly in the good to fair range with 26 percent rated poor to very poor. Operators are feeding hay and continue to sell cattle as needed. The availability of water continued to be a major concern as December rainfall was not enough to replenish critically low ponds. There were a few reports of cattle deaths due to the blizzard in the Panhandle.

OREGON:  In contrast to last December, this December was drier and slightly cooler than normal. Conditions were mainly clear, cool and dry for most of the month with some precipitation the last week of the month. High temperatures ranged from 48 degrees in Joseph to 65 degrees in Bandon. Low temperatures ranged from 27 degrees in Bandon and North Bend, down to -10 degrees in Christmas Valley. Twenty-eight of the forty-two stations reported below average temperatures. Total precipitation (rain or melted snow) ranged from zero total inches in Baker to 9.99 total inches in Detroit Lake. All stations, except The Dales and Parkdale, reported below normal precipitation levels for December. Lake County reported being 48 percent of normal for the water year. Snow accumulation was very little, with only 9 inches reported at the Santiam Junction and 8.5 inches reported in Meacham. Wallowa County reported snow pack levels at 70 percent of normal. Concerns have been raised about irrigation and livestock water for 2012. Field crop harvests finished up and field work was completed. Newly planted winter cover looked good, but could suffer without additional moisture. In the Willamette Valley, geese were feeding on wheat and grass seed. Wine grapes turned out quite well, even with the late and slow growing season. By mid-month some tree fruits were still holding onto their leaves, especially apples. Hazelnut orchards were pruned and debris was removed. There was some mold being reported in the hazelnut crop due to high moisture, but not as bad as last year. There were some cale crops still fighting the freezing temperatures earlier in the month. Maintenance was on-going for nursery operations. Livestock were doing well on supplemental feed.

PENNSYLVANIA:  The month of December was uncharacteristically warm this year. The Harrisburg area received 3.26 inches of precipitation throughout December. The average high temperature was 47.7 degrees and the average low was 30.2 degrees. December 6th was the warmest day of the month, with a high at 61 degrees. The lowest temperature of the month was 19 degrees, which was recorded on December 12th. The average temperature for the month was 38.9 degrees, which is 5 degrees above normal.

SOUTH CAROLINA:  December began with cool temperatures and sunny skies. Highs were in the fifties for most counties with a few southern counties in the low sixties. Seasonally cool temperatures for Saturday eased higher for Sunday, December 4th. The Charleston AP reached 74 degrees on Sunday afternoon. The warm temperatures led to snow showers on Tuesday, December 6th, with Jackson, Berkeley, Dorchester and Charleston recording 0.14 inches and Pickens 0.95 inches. Walterboro's Wednesday afternoon 81-degree high temperature plummeted 44 degrees to a Thursday morning low temperature of 37 degrees. High temperatures on Friday, December 9th, retreated back into the 50's and settled into that range for the weekend. Florence and the North Myrtle Beach AP reached 57 degrees on Saturday afternoon. Sunday, December 11th, started with a high of 31 degrees at Sandhill and McCormick. The State average temperature for the period from December 5th to December 11th was three degrees above normal. The State average rainfall for the period was 0.4 inches. A cold rain fell across the southern counties on Monday morning, December 12th. Tuesday's morning low temperature fell to 27 degrees at Saluda and Cedar Creek before much warmer air began to arrive from the south. Sandy Run and Pinopolis reported a morning high of 77 degrees on Wednesday. The string of above normal temperatures continued on Friday, December 16th, for the central and eastern parts of the State with Columbia, Dillon, Hartsville and the Georgetown AP each recording 77 degrees. Mostly sunny, cool weather was observed over the last fall weekend of the year. The State average temperature for the seven-day period was seven degrees above normal. The State average rainfall for the week was 0.1 inches. Milder air was observed on Tuesday, December 20th as Orangeburg, Pinopolis and the Beauvoir Marine Air Station each recorded 74 degrees. Evening showers fell over parts of the Piedmont and Upstate. By Wednesday morning, Pickens had measured 0.97 inches of rain. A boundary of cooler weather eased into the State on Christmas Eve. McCormick and Saluda recorded a Saturday high temperature of just 58 degrees. Christmas Day Sunday began with partly cloudy skies, then periods of light rain for central South Carolina and eastward to the coast. The State average temperature for Sunday was nine degrees above normal. The State average rainfall for the period was 0.6 inches. Monday, December 26th began with mostly sunny weather and Walhalla reporting a low temperature of 27 degrees. A boundary passed through the State overnight with periods of heavy rain and a few reports of thunder. Much of Wednesday saw cooler air spreading over the State. On Thursday morning, the temperature at Anderson, Greenwood, Sandy Run and Cades was 26 degrees with heavy frost observed across the Midlands. A gradual warming trend started on Friday, December 30th and continued through the year.
ending weekend. The State average temperature for the seven-day period was five degrees above normal. The State average rainfall for the period was 0.8 inches.

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** Average snow depth (inches) 0.1. Winter wheat snow cover 95% poor, 5% adequate. Winter wheat 1% very poor, 11% poor, 47% fair, 38% good, 3% excellent. Alfalfa snow cover 96% poor, 4% adequate. Feed supplies 1% short, 88% adequate, 11% surplus. Stock water supplies 1% very short, 7% short, 88% adequate, 4% surplus. Calf deaths 26% below average, 74% average. Cattle condition 5% fair, 82% good, 13% excellent. Sheep condition 3% fair, 74% good, 23% excellent. Sheep & lamb deaths 15% below average, 85% average. Road conditions–township 99% open, 1% difficult. Road conditions–county 99% open, 1% difficult.

**TENNESSEE:** Eighty-four percent of this year’s winter wheat crop is rated in good-to-excellent condition; however, some of the wheat in low-lying has yellowed from being too wet. Producers were feeding hay during December and most have ample hay stocks on hand. As of January 1, hay stocks were rated 3 percent very short, 9 percent short, 76 percent adequate, and 12 percent surplus. At this same time, seventy-three percent of cattle were rated in good or excellent condition. During December, temperatures averaged a few degrees above normal across the State. Rainfall averaged near or above normal.

**TEXAS:** Areas of East Texas and the Lower Valley received up to 0.25 inches of rainfall, while the rest of the State observed little to no rainfall. In northern areas of the State, dry land winter wheat progressed well due to recent moisture in areas of the Northern High Plains. Winter wheat in areas of the Cross Timbers progressed well due to warmer temperatures. Emerging winter wheat and oats slowed due to a recent cold front in areas of the Blacklands. Winter wheat and oats progressed well in areas of the South Texas due to timely rain showers and replenished soil moisture. Cotton harvest was virtually complete in areas of the Northern High Plains. Cabbage and spinach progressed well due to recent rain showers while producers benefited from reduced irrigation costs in areas of South Texas. Spinach harvest resumed due to recent dry open weather in southern areas of the State. Across the State, some cattle were released on wheat pastures due to low hay supplies. Stock tank levels improved due to recent rain showers; however, more moisture was needed. Cool season grasses continued to progress well due to earlier rain showers and recent warmer weather.

**UTAH:** Producers have been concerned about the lack of snowfall during the month of December. December 2011 was one of the driest Decembers on record. Northern Utah producers were also faced with strong winds the first part of the month which caused damage to various buildings and property. Field work for 2011 has ended with the exception of a few fields of grain corn that were not harvested. Farmers in Morgan County were able to complete field work due to the lack of moisture. Growers are beginning to get concerned about the lack of moisture. There is also concern that winter wheat and barley may be harmed because of the lack of an insulated covering of snow. Dryland producers need moisture for grain crops. Soil moisture content across the state is low which could cause problems for crops. The lack of snowfall in Utah has been helpful to livestock producers thus far. Cattle across the state are in good condition. The dry weather has allowed producers in Box Elder County to keep livestock in pastures. Ranchers have not needed to feed as much hay this year because of the mild winter. Early calving cows and heifers are just beginning to calve. Hay supplies in Carbon County are adequate for now. Many cattle in Beaver County are still grazing meadows and alfalfa fields. Wayne County range and pasture conditions are excellent.

**WISCONSIN:** December average temperatures ranged from 6 to 8 degrees above normal. Average high temperatures ranged from 32 to 40 degrees. Average low temperatures ranged from 17 to 27 degrees. Full month precipitation ranged from 1.19 inches in Eau Claire to 2.24 inches in Milwaukee and Madison. The entire State received snow in December, but above average temperatures resulted in little to no accumulation in the southern portions of the State. Of the reporting stations, Eau Claire received the most snow, with 7.8 inches of snow since December 1.

**WASHINGTON:** December was unusually dry up until the last week of the month, and therefore a very mild winter thus far. Christmas tree growers in the western counties experienced one of the easiest harvest seasons on record due to unusually dry weather throughout the majority of the month. In Pacific County, shellfish growers were very busy with oyster and clam harvesting operations for the holiday market. Cranberry growers completed final post season equipment and bog work. Some berry growers pruned and tied the canes in Snohomish County. The mild winter temperatures were ideal for tree fruit in Yakima and Chelan Counties, and thus allowed field workers to complete a fair share of the dormant pruning. In Kittitas County, cattle were on feed or range ground. In Ferry County, most cattlemen were feeding. Although with the lack of snow some were still on pasture with supplemental. Hay inventories remained high. A few cattle farmers saw cattle beginning to calve during the month. Spokane and Pend Oreille Counties were significantly behind on moisture. The winter wheat was dormant, but not all the wheat was emerged when winter set in. Whitman County was on track to have its driest December on record until the final week of the month when it rained a significant amount.

**WEST VIRGINIA:** Topsoil moisture 67% adequate, 33% surplus compared to 10% short, 86% adequate, 4% surplus last year. Hay and roughage supplies 1% short, 90% adequate, 9% surplus compared with 1% very short, 13% short, 84% adequate, 2% surplus last year. Feed grain supplies 11% short, 87% adequate, 2% surplus compared with 2% very short, 23% short, 73% adequate, 2% surplus last year. Winter wheat conditions 25% fair and 75% good. Cattle and calves 2% poor, 22% fair, 73% good, 3% excellent. Sheep and lambs 2% poor, 12% fair, 84% good, 2% excellent. The month of December has been unseasonably warm and extremely wet. Farming activities included cleaning up debris out of fields and off of fences from floodwaters, feeding hay to livestock, repairing fences, and preparing for calving and lambing.

**WYOMING:** Topsoil moisture 3% very short, 23% short, 73% adequate, 1% surplus. Subsoil moisture 8% very short, 17% short, 75% adequate. Average depth of snow cover 1.3 inches. Wheat condition 1% poor, 5% fair, 94% good. Winter wheat wind damage 62% none, 38% light. Winter wheat freeze damage 100% none. Farm flock sheep shorn 2%. Calf losses 18% light, 82% normal. Lamb losses 2% light, 98% normal. Cattle condition 13% fair, 86% good, 1% excellent. Sheep condition 8% fair, 91% good, 1% excellent. Stock water supplies 11% short, 89% adequate. Hay and roughage supplies 9% short, 89% adequate, 2% surplus. Near normal temperatures and moisture. Lincoln County reported weather has been cold and dry. Snow pack is half of normal. Platte County reported harvest went well with the report of good yields. Six to eight inches of snow before Christmas but with the warm winds most of it is gone. Wind has taken a lot of moisture out of the ground. High temperatures ranged from the mid 30s to the low 60s. Low temperatures ranged from 29 below zero to 1 above.