

**Southwest Michigan Field Crops Updates
April 1, 2022**

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates—whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed—please send me an email or call the office.

MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Begins

The MSU Extension Field Crops team will once again be offering a weekly webinar on Thursday mornings from 7:00-8:00 called Virtual Breakfast. Each session will begin with a presentation from one of our specialists or educators on a topic that is pertinent to that time of the growing season. Then our state climatologist Jeff Andresen will share a weather report and forecast followed by a Q&A session where attendees can ask their questions of any MSU staff on the call that day. There will be one Michigan RUP credit and one CCA credit available each day for those attending the live session.



Participating is easy and free! You can join the live meeting via Zoom using a computer, tablet, mobile device or regular phone line. If you are new to Zoom, simply download the Zoom app and you will be ready to join online every week to see visuals shared by presenters. A call-in by phone option is also available but note that you will only hear the audio portion.

Participants must sign up to receive an email notification with instructions for joining the Virtual Breakfast. You only need to do this once and you will receive the Zoom link and call-in phone number, as well as weekly reminders every Wednesday and Thursday. Participants receiving emails can opt in or out at any time.

If you cannot participate in the live session at 7 a.m., you can view the recorded version at any time. However, only the live session will be eligible for RUP and CCA credits. Recordings will be closed-captioned and available at the [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast](#) webpage and the MSU Extension Field Crops Team social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Twitter](#).

If you are unable to sign up online, call the Lapeer County MSU Extension office at 810-667-0341.

- March 31 - Early Season Weed Control with Christy Sprague
- April 7 - Soil Fertility with Kurt Steinke
- April 14 - Forage Fertility with Kim Cassida
- April 21 - Corn and Soybean Planting Considerations with Manni Singh
- April 28 - Apps for Weed/Plant Identification with Erin Hill
- May 5 - Postemergence Weed Control with Erin Burns
- May 12 - Head Scab in Wheat with Marty Chilvers
- May 19 - Sidedress Corn Recommendations with Kurt Steinke

May 26 - Dry Bean Planting with Scott Bales
June 2 - Hot Topic Q&A session
June 9 - How to Get the Best out of Your Drainage System with Ehsan Ghane
June 16 - White Mold Management in Soybean with Marty Chilvers
June 23 - Irrigation in Michigan with Lyndon Kelley and Younsuk Dong
June 30 - Cover Crops After Wheat with Brook Wilke
July 7 - Tar Spot in Corn with Marty Chilvers
July 14 - Sugarbeet Cyst Nematode Management with Daniel Bublitz
July 21 - Hot Topic Q&A session
July 28 - Bugs and More Bugs with Chris DiFonzo
Aug. 4 - Alfalfa Planting Recommendations with Kim Cassida
Aug. 11 - Combat Excess Water in a Changing Climate with Ehsan Ghane
Aug. 18 - Carbon Market Update with Matthew Gammans
Aug. 25 - Hot Topic Q&A session
Sept. 1 - Nematode Management Updates in Field Crops with Marisol Quintanilla
Sept. 8 - Reducing Soybean Harvest Losses with Mike Staton
Sept. 15 - Herbicide Resistance? Now is the Time to Check! with Erin Hill
Sept. 22 - Fall Weed Control with Christy Sprague

Importance of Responding to NASS Surveys

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture. If you receive a survey questionnaire, please respond quickly and online if possible. The results of the surveys help determine the structure of USDA farm programs, such as soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program and prices and yields used for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs. This county-level data is critical for USDA farm payment determinations. Survey responses also help associations, businesses and policymakers advocate for their industry and help educate others on the importance of agriculture. NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

Reminder: Restricted Use of Synthetic Auxin Herbicides in Southwest Michigan

The director of MDARD reminds everyone about the restriction of use of 2,4-D or MCPA in grape growing areas in southwest Michigan according to the signed 2022 Herbicide Restrictive Order. This notice concerns the continuance of the April 16, 1963 order restricting the use of certain herbicides in grape growing areas in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, Saint Joseph & Van Buren counties and is effective May 1 to October 1, 2022. For more details on which townships in these counties are affected, check out [this MSU Extension article](#) or the [official order sent out by MDARD director Gary McDowell](#).

Record Keeping is a Waste of Time

Provocative title, eh? The article below was included in the winter edition of [MSU Extension's Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter](#) and it was so good I wanted to share it with all of you. Though he writes to beef cattle producers, you could substitute crops or any other farm product in here to get a very insightful take on record keeping and the need to transform data into useful, actionable information.

By Ryan D. Rhoades, Associate Professor-Extension Beef Specialist, Colorado State University

Ever been told you must keep detailed set of records for the ranch to be successful as a manager? Ever considered you might be wasting a great deal of time? Hopefully that's not the case, but it is certainly possible

to be 100% efficient but 0% effective. One example of this is record keeping on the ranch. Records in raw form are just data. Actual decision making requires information. Some level of analysis is therefore needed to transform raw records/data into information that can be used for decision making. If records are being kept to simply write data down and then place it on a shelf or in the back of a desk drawer, then precious time is likely being wasted. However, if records are being used to generate metrics that help plan production decisions, then record keeping is a valuable exercise. Good records should provide specific, timely, and actionable information for the operation to use. Ask the following prior to taking the time to record data. Is this data creating value? How much extra time is required to record the data? Can the data recording be simplified? Since data analysis is key to more effective record keeping and decision making, here are a couple of considerations to help improve your effectiveness.

1)Apply the 80/20 rule to record keeping: Meaning 20% of the work usually results in 80% of the results on the ranch. However, the problem with keeping records is usually 80% of our time is spent collecting the data and only 20% analyzing it. Record keeping is often a useful exercise when these percentages are turned around. Making this change would require setting aside time for strategic management or working on the business. Spending the right amount of time analyzing records could help identify those critical areas (i.e., production, financial, grazing, people) where management time should be focused to ultimately improve profits. It's not a new concept but one that deserves more attention. Few ranchers enjoy record keeping but that is likely a result of no perceived benefit in relation to time spent on the task. Regardless, managers need to develop a good system for allocating the appropriate amount of time collecting and then analyzing the data.

2)Make a list of the records that will aid in planning: It is commonly stated that the current financial situation (i.e., costs and cash flow) of the ranch is the greatest barrier to success. Ranch profitability is generally tied the big buckets of production, financials, grazing, and people. Make a list of the data currently being recorded on the ranch within each of these buckets. Determine which ones were used last year to help make a decision that impacted profitability. Perhaps consider simplifying data collection to only those that were used in decision making. Once key data have been determined, develop a management plan with a set goals for the ranch that can tracked and evaluated over time. Make sure goals are attainable for a balanced set of key performance measures (specific to your ranch). Consider using data analysis, experience, and research to identify goal targets. Then simply track actuals, compare projections, and adjust as the year progresses.

3)Transform the data into useable information for the business: A large percentage of producers (40-80% depending on individual performance measure) routinely collect performance and financial data (i.e., percent calf crop, weaning weight, pregnancy rate, feed costs, cow inventory, etc.). However, it has also been estimated that over 75% of producers do not know their breakeven within \$0.10/lb., which suggests there is an opportunity to improve ranch record keeping and data management. It's not enough to just collect good data. Data should be transformed into management information or key performance indicators (i.e., ROA, Overhead Ratio, Grazing Days, etc.) that can be used to help make strategic decisions. Once data has been analyzed consider studying the results often and thinking through ways to better prepare the ranch to adjust or for uncontrollable events (i.e., drought, market volatility, etc.). The point is to work smarter not harder.

It's Not too Late to Sign Up for 2022 Michigan Soybean On-farm Research Trials

It's not too late to sign up to host a trial with the Michigan Soybean On-farm Research program. The trials being included this year are listed in the table below. Farmer cooperators will receive: products used in the trial (depending on the topic); assistance with plot set-up, treatment application, and harvest; free soil test results and other crop metrics (depending on the topic); and access to individual and combined trial results. Contact me (Eric Anderson) or Mike Staton (staton@msu.edu) soon if you would like to know more about any of these trials or if you would like to sign up to host one or more trials on your farm.

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1. 2x2 starter fertilizer
 2. White mold fungicide application timing
 3. Delaro complete foliar fungicide
 4. HeadsUp seed treatment
 5. Growthful Soil amendment
 6. Stimulate biological mixed with post emergence herbicide
 7. Planting date
 8. ~~Prescription foliar fertilizer based on tissue analysis~~ (no longer available)
 9. Saltro vs llevo
 10. Broadcast potassium
 11. Planting equipment comparison
 12. Foliar fertilizer applied with foliar fungicide
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SARE Funded Research Project – Well Being of Beef Farms in Michigan

MSU is starting a new project that will study the ecological, economic, and social wellbeing outcomes of 45 beef producers using a range of grazing management strategies. This study will help producers understand how to improve the quality of their land, their profitability, and their happiness simultaneously.

Commitments would include yearly surveys, financial training as well as training on land monitoring. There would also be optional Holistic Planned Grazing training. This will all provided to you free of charge and micro-grants will be available for producers who want to adopt HPG. Please reach out to Dr. Matt Raven mraven@msu.edu, Dr. Jenny Hodbod jhodbod@msu.edu or Crista Derry crawf329@msu.edu.

If you're interested in participating please let us know via [this short online survey](#), which will ask for a few details about your farm. You can also just contact one of us to express your interest. You must be at least 18 years of age or older to complete the survey and all your responses will be kept in strict confidence. We want to emphasize that your participation in this project is completely voluntary.

Producers Can Now Hay, Graze and Chop Cover Crops Anytime and Still Receive Full Prevented Planting Payment

Agricultural producers with crop insurance can hay, graze or chop cover crops for silage, haylage or baleage at any time and still receive 100% of the prevented planting payment. Previously, cover crops could only be hayed, grazed or chopped after November 1, otherwise the prevented planting payment was reduced by 65%. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) added this flexibility as part of a broader effort to encourage producers to use cover crops, an important conservation and good farming practice.

For the 2021 crop year and beyond, RMA will not consider a cover crop planted following a prevented planting claim to be a second crop. But RMA will continue to consider a cover crop harvested for grain or seed to be a second crop, and it remains subject to a reduction in the prevented planting indemnity in accordance with the policy.

To learn more about this policy change, visit RMA's [Prevented Planting webpage](#). The webpage also has the latest Cover Crop Termination Guidelines, which USDA updated in 2019 as a result of greater flexibilities provided in the 2018 Farm Bill. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

MSU Extension Field Crops Staff Update

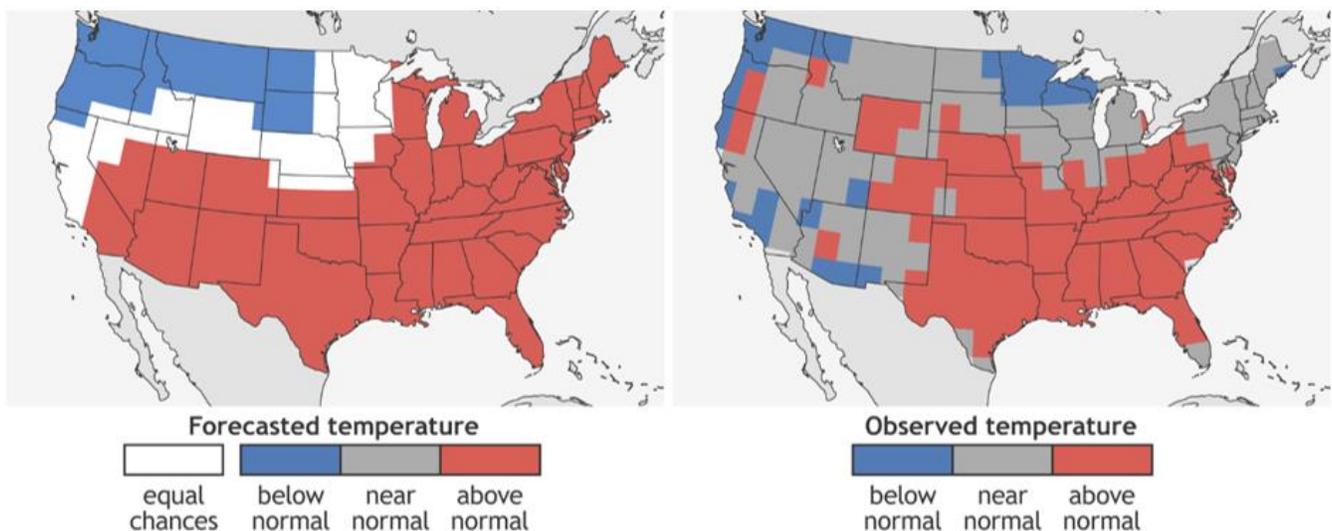
Many of you have worked with Bruce MacKellar over the years as he has been a long-time member of the MSU Extension Field Crops Team in southwest Michigan. At this time, Bruce will not be responding to emails, texts, or phone calls, until further notice. If you have questions about crop management issues this spring, please contact me (Eric Anderson) or the Van Buren County Extension office (269-657-8213 or msue.vanburen@county.msu.edu). Bruce has also assisted farmers with other aspects of farm management over the years. If you have farm finance-related questions, please contact Jon LaPorte (269-414-6418 or laportej@msu.edu) directly, and if you have questions related to irrigation, please contact Lyndon Kelley (269-535-0343 or kelleyl@msu.edu) directly. Thank you for your understanding.

Weather and Crop Update

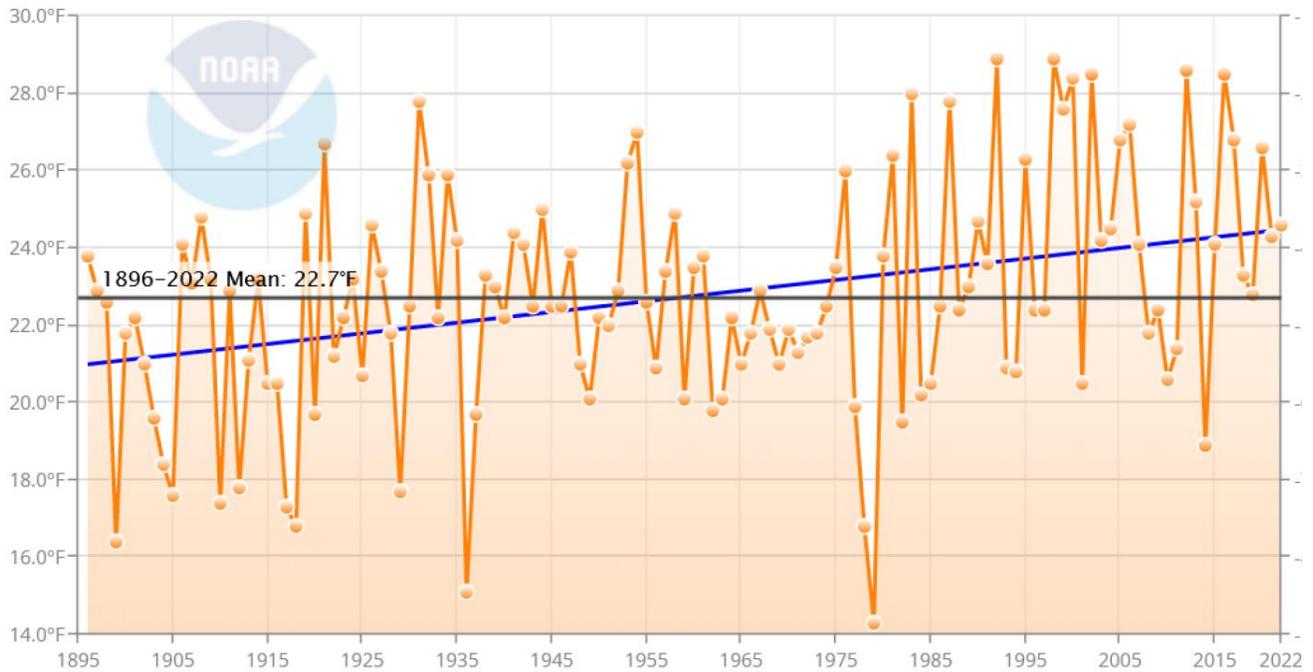
Weather

Temperatures this winter were near normal for southern Michigan, although December was well above normal while the first 60 days of 2022 were 2-4 F below normal. The forecasts from the fall, largely based on La Niña models, overestimated the temperature for southern Michigan compared with actual measurements. The trend for winter temperatures in the Upper Midwest has been increasing with this past winter being roughly 1.5 F warmer than the 126-year average. Although there is significant year-to-year variability, the overall trend has shown an increase of over 3 F from 1896 to 2022.

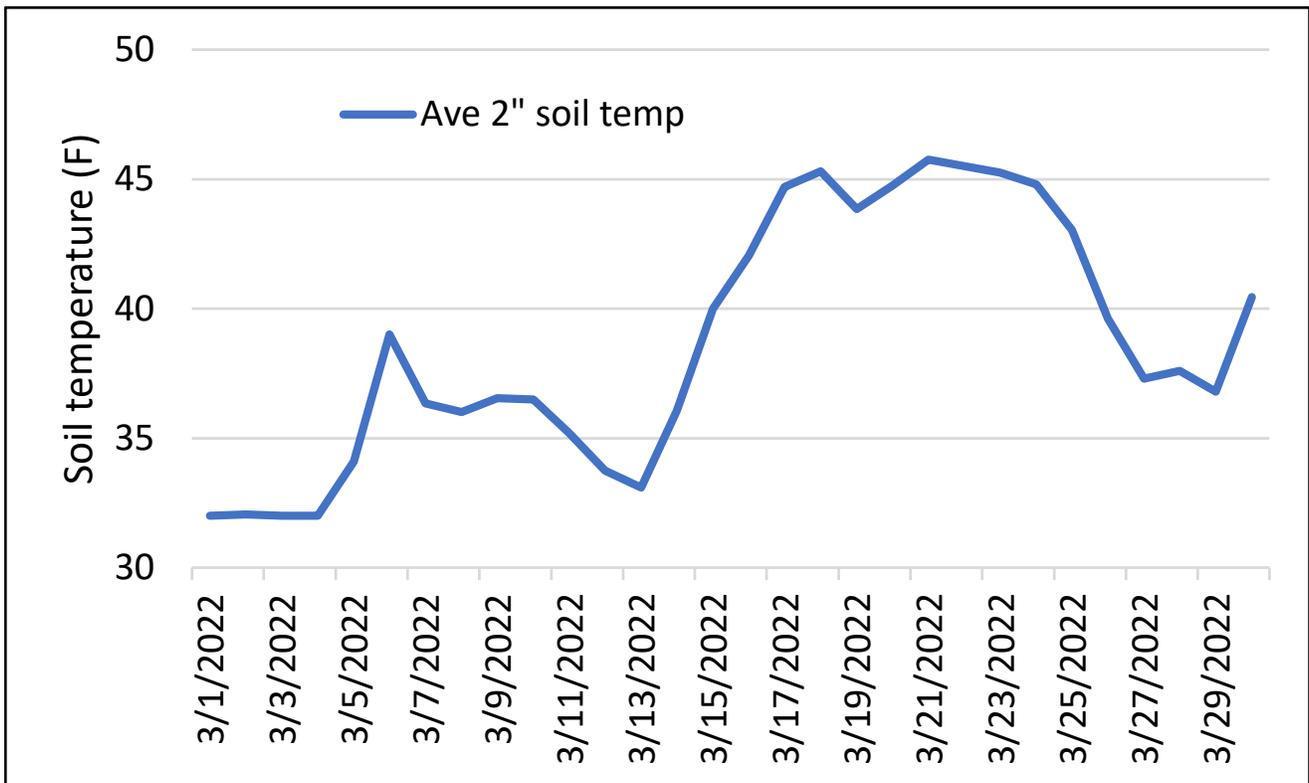
Soil temperatures are currently hovering around 40 F after having cooled off from the late-March warm-up, but they are still warmer than average for this time of year—see [this MSU Extension article](#) for a soil temperature history for south-central Michigan. With near-normal temperatures predicted for the first half of April, it does not appear that soil temps will be the limiting factor in timely planting this spring. The last freeze date for southwest Michigan has historically been sometime in the last half of April or the first half of May depending on location, but an early May freeze has been more common than not these past several years.



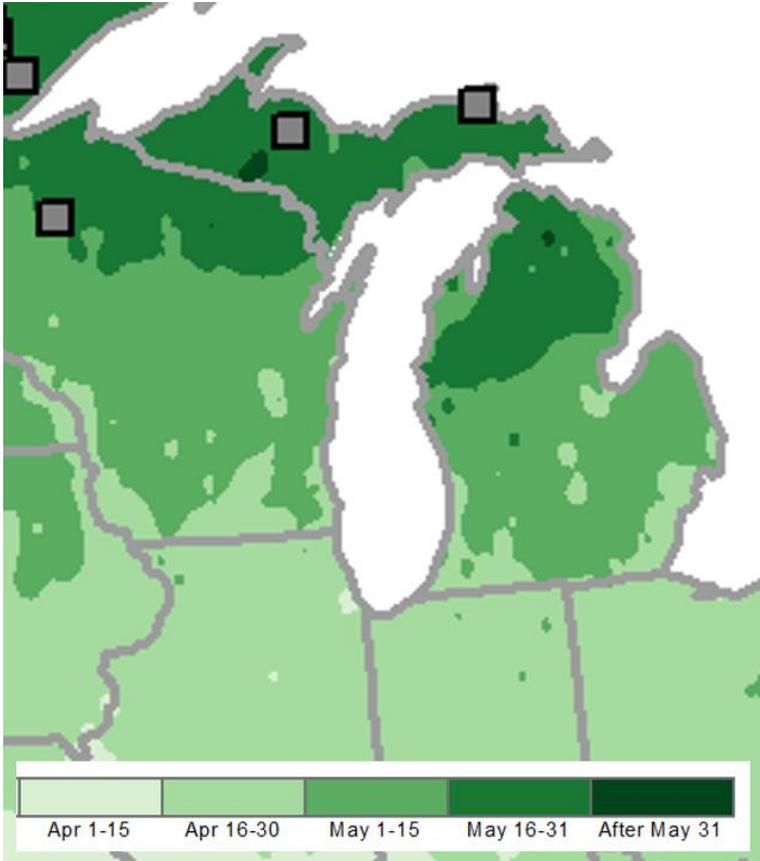
Forecasted vs actual temperature for Dec 2021 – Feb 2022 according to the Climate Prediction Center.



Average temperature December-February for the North Central Region as measured from 1896 to 2022. The blue line is the trend fitted to the data and the black line is the 127-year mean.

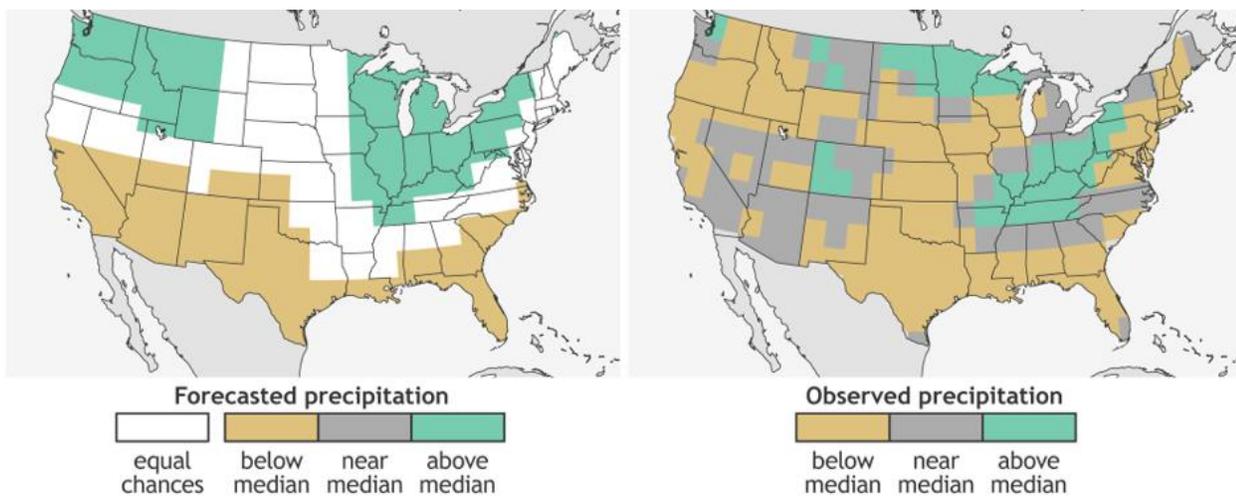


Average soil temperatures at 2 in. depth during March 2022 as measured at the Enviroweather station in Coldwater.

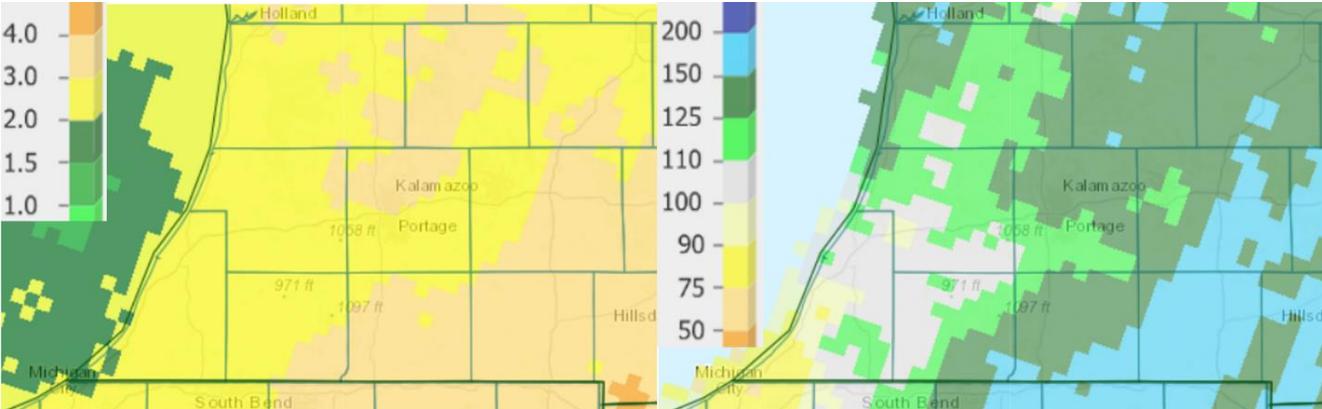


Day of last spring freeze based on 1991-2020 climate normals.

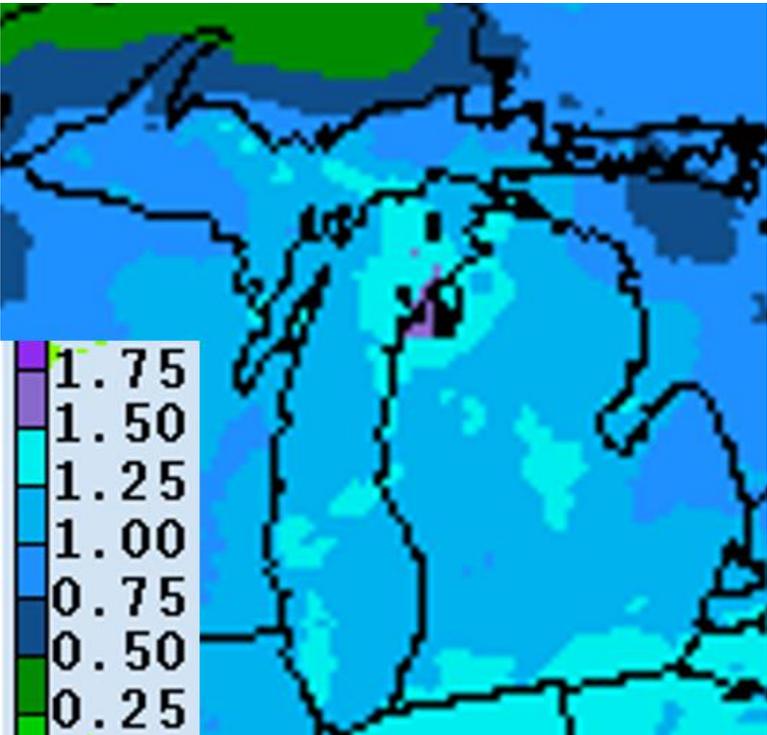
Precipitation this winter has also been near normal, although similar to temperature, December was an anomaly with drier than average conditions while January and February were slightly wetter than average. Opposite of temperature, forecasts from the fall underestimated the precipitation for southern Michigan compared with actual measurements. Precipitation in March ranged from up to 25 percent below normal to over 50 percent above normal in the region with actual measured amounts from 1.6 in (Scottsdale) to 3.5 in (Fennville) and an average of 2.8 in (water equivalent). The forecast calls for 1.0-1.5 in rainfall in addition to what has fallen overnight Wednesday. Most of that is predicted to fall early- to mid-week next week although there is a strong change of as much as 0.2 in this Saturday. The 6-10 day outlook calls for normal temperatures and 40-50 percent chance of above-normal precipitation.



Forecasted vs actual precipitation for Dec 2021 – Feb 2022 according to the Climate Prediction Center.

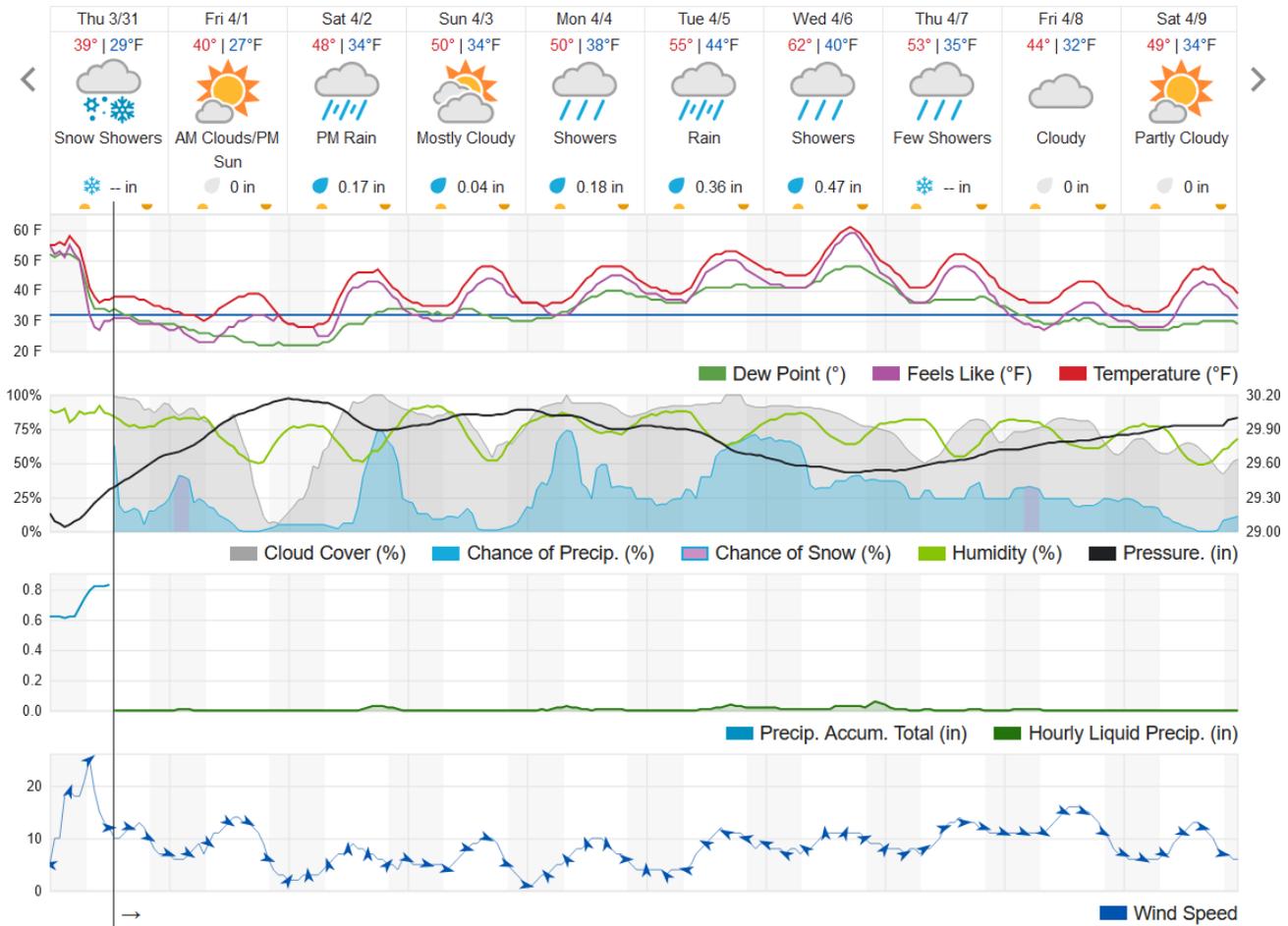


Precipitation totals (left) and percent of normal for the past 30 days (right) as of March 30.

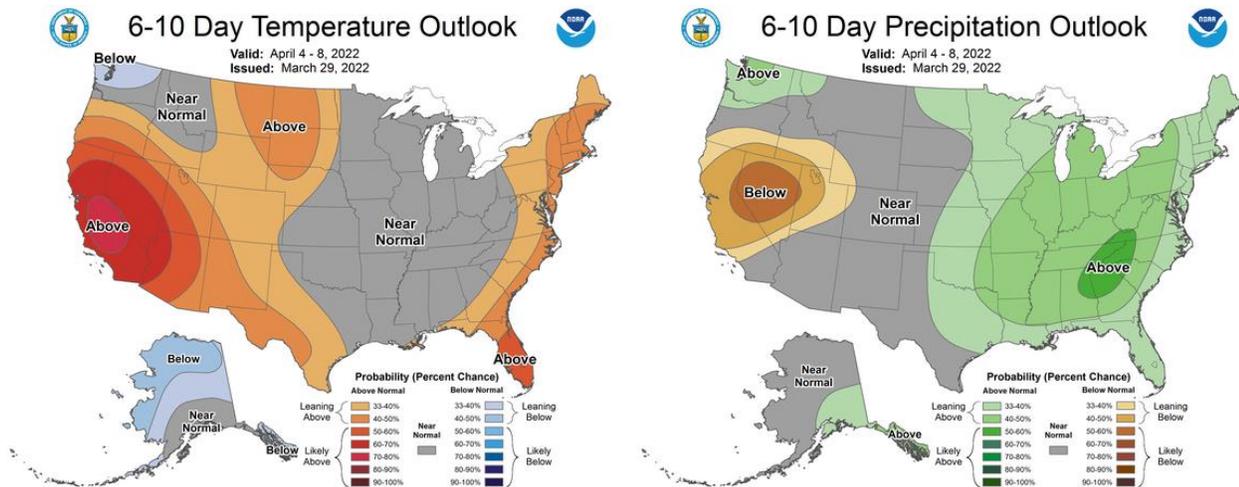


Precipitation forecast for Mar 31 - Apr 7.

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The 10-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to wunderground.com.



The 6-10 day outlook (Apr 4-8) for temperature (left) and precipitation (right). The 8-14 day outlook is similar.

Crops and Pests

Wheat, hay, cover crops and other overwintering plants (yes, including winter annual and perennial weeds) have broken dormancy and have been growing since earlier in March. Although we had an unusually warm day during the first week of March, temps were consistently in the 30's and 40's during the third week. According to Purdue Extension, wheat will break dormancy once temps consistently stay in the 30's and 40's. This is a good time to scout fields to determine the extent of any stand loss due to ponding/freezing that occurred in February and March.



Winter annual weeds such as purple deadnettle, common chickweed and annual bluegrass have broken dormancy and are putting on spring growth. Photos courtesy of Eric Anderson.

Early-season weed control was the topic of this week's [MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast](#) with weed specialist Christy Sprague. She explained why controlling weeds early and starting clean is important to avoid problems with larger weeds interfering with tillage and planting and competing with crop seedlings for moisture, light and nutrients. She referenced a study they conducted several years ago showing 6.7, 8.3 and 9.2 bu/acre loss on soybean when delaying weed control until unifoliate, V1 and V3 stages, respectively, compared with controlling prior to or at planting. At \$16 soybeans, waiting too long to control weeds could end up costing \$100 or more in yield per acre this year.

With limited supplies and higher prices for herbicides like glyphosate and glufosinate, it will be important to identify effective alternatives for commonly used burndown herbicide programs. Christy outlined numerous options for both corn and soybean that avoid the use of or include lower rates of glyphosate. She also explained why including herbicides with residual activity is extremely important as a foundation program to reduce the number of weeds present for postemergence applications. She said caution should be used to apply preemergence products prior to soybean emergence whereas there is more flexibility with many products used in corn. Several useful tables and other valuable information can be found in MSU's 2022 Weed Control Guide for Field Crops (E0434) [available for free online as a pdf](#) or in [print version from the MSU Bookstore](#).

Dr. Sprague also explained why spring tillage will be a key alternative to a herbicide burndown this year for many farmers. Timing is key as controlling large weeds with tillage is particularly difficult, and vertical tillage is not effective for weed control as roots are not effectively disturbed. Caution also needs to be taken not to till when soils are too wet to avoid compaction.

If you were not able to join the session, the recordings will be closed-captioned and available at the [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast](#) webpage and the MSU Extension Field Crops Team social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Twitter](#).

Announcements & Jobs

- Bayer is looking for some people to take field notes (stand counts, pollination notes, etc.) this summer. The job would be outdoors for most of the summer collection data on our corn fields. The job would start around late May or early June and end around mid-August. Potentially interested people would need to be at least 18 years old or older and have a personal vehicle that they could drive from field to field. We do reimburse mileage for personal vehicle use. Starting pay will be between \$14-15/hour. Please call, text or email Taylor Houghton (taylor.houghton@bayer.com or 509-331-4077) if interested.
- [Regenerative Ag and Conservation Specialist in SW Michigan](#). Pheasants Forever is looking for a B.A.+ to work from a home office to advance sustainable agricultural practices and environmental outcomes focusing on soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on working lands throughout Southwest MI. Deadline to apply is March 21.
- Student Assistant in MDARD's Industrial Hemp Program. Pay: \$15.34/hr undergrad or \$17.82/hr grad student. Start date: April 18, 2022 (negotiable). Location: Remote. Hours per week: 25-30 hrs/week (max 129 hrs/month). Posting closes: March 28, 2022. To apply, email a cover letter, resume, and copy of transcripts to Molly Mott at mottm@michigan.gov.

Calendar

Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined

- Mar 31** [Virtual Breakfast Begins](#). 7-8am Thursdays. This hour-long broadcast from the MSU Extension Field Crops Team will run throughout the cropping season and feature a brief weather forecast and a presentation from a MSU specialist or educator on a timely topic. One RUP and one CCA credit will be available with each session. Cost is free. Register to receive the link that will be used throughout the season.
- Apr 7** [Virtual Breakfast – Soil Fertility](#). 7-8am. Register online once for the entire series.
- Apr 14** [Virtual Breakfast – Forage Fertility](#). 7-8am. Register online once for the entire series.
- Apr 21** [Virtual Breakfast – Planting](#). 7-8am. Register online once for the entire series.
- Apr 28** [Virtual Breakfast – Weed ID](#). 7-8am. Register online once for the entire series.
- May 31** Last Day to Request Commodity Loans 2021 Corn, Soybeans & Sorghum
- Jul 15** Final Date to Report Crop Plantings & CRP

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 24, 2022

- [REDUCING SOYBEAN PLANTING RATES CAN INCREASE INCOME](#): Results from 49 on-farm replicated trials conducted in Michigan from 2015 to 2021 build a compelling case for reducing soybean planting rates.

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 21, 2022

- [NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROJECT SEEKS FARMER COOPERATORS](#): Participating growers will receive their farm's nutrient balance, soil health and soil microbial community test results.

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 17, 2022

- [MOLE DRAINS \(E3452\)](#): Learn how mole drains can improve drainage performance and increase crop yield in heavy clay soil.
- [MOLE DRAINS: A CHEAP ALTERNATIVE TO SUBSURFACE TILE DRAINAGE](#): Learn how mole drains can improve drainage performance and increase crop yield in heavy clay soil.

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 14, 2022

- [MSU CASH FLOW ESTIMATOR](#): The MSU Cash Flow Estimator is intended to help farm managers create a cash flow projection for their business.
- [FIELD CROPS VIRTUAL BREAKFAST SERIES TO KICK OFF NEW GROWING SEASON MARCH 31, 2022](#): This free weekly series for farmers and agribusinesses focuses on a wide array of relevant field crop pest and crop management topics during the growing season.
- [IS YOUR SOYBEAN 2X2 STARTER FERTILIZER PROGRAM PROFITABLE?](#) Applying starter fertilizer to soybeans has produced mixed results in on-farm research trials. If considering this practice, work with the Michigan Soybean On-Farm Research Program to determine if your soybean starter fertilizer program is profitable.
- [NEW MSU RESEARCH SHOWCASES INNOVATIVE METHOD TO DEVELOP MORE ACCURATE CORN YIELD PREDICTIONS](#): Published in the prestigious journal Remote Sensing of Environment, new MSU research details how more accurate yield information can equip farmers with the knowledge to improve profitability.

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 10, 2022

- [SOYBEAN SEED QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS](#): Due to the potential for reduced seed quality, Michigan soybean producers should determine the quality of their seed and use this information to maximize seed performance.

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 3, 2022

- [TIPS FOR IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR DRAINAGE SYSTEM](#): Learn which pipe removes water the quickest and which pipe properties increase water entry into the pipe.
- [REPRINTS OF THE 2022 MSU WEED CONTROL GUIDE FOR FIELD CROPS ARE AVAILABLE](#): Resources on alternative herbicide options this year will be important with impending herbicide shortages.
- [CONSIDER CONDUCTING AN ON-FARM SOYBEAN RESEARCH TRIAL IN 2022](#): Producers can learn new information about how new products, management practices and equipment perform on their farms by conducting replicated research trials.
- [COMPOST HANDLING IN AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS: RIGHT-TO-FARM COVERAGE OF ON-FARM COMPOST PRODUCTION](#): Part six of a six-part series on compost utilization and management on farms.
- [RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANTING SOYBEANS AFTER SOYBEANS](#): Make sure the benefits of planting second-year soybeans exceed the risks and manage the increased risk with proven practices.

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