EFFECT OF WEATHER ON CROPS AND FARMING OPERATIONS, APRIL, 1930

By J. B. KINCER

General summary.—During the first decade moderate temperatures and generally fair weather made conditions favorable for farm work, except in the Southeast, where frequent rains interfered, and in the Southwest, where the soil was too dry. Rains in the Middle Atlantic States were favorable, but farther south they were too frequent and kept the gound too wet. The soil was becoming rather dry generally outside of this area, though deficiencies in moisture were not serious, except in the Southwest. In western grazing sections warm weather was generally beneficial for stock interests, particularly for lambing, but in the Southwest, especially in Kansas and Oklahoma, the drought was intensified, with conditions serious.

During the second decade rains materially improved soil condition in the Atlantic States, the northern and western Ohio Valley, and a large area of the central-north. Showers were largely local in character in the Southwest, with droughty conditions still unrelieved in much of Kansas, central and western Oklahoma, and western Texas. In general, conditions were mostly favorable over the northern half of the country, with rains helpful; in the South farm work progressed rapidly, although rains would have helped in many parts.

During the last decade there were two overshadowing features of the weather—damaging frost in the East and beneficial rains in the Southwest. In the Eastern States, especially the Appalachian Mountain sections, frost and freezing temperatures did extensive and in many places severe harm to fruit and truck crops. There was also more or less damage over a large area from western North Carolina, southwest Virginia, and eastern Kentucky northward to Pennsylvania. Over the western half of the country the period was generally favorable, the widespread rains in many sections being especially beneficial. In the Southwest a few limited areas were still dry, but, in general, the drought was largely relieved.

Small grains.—During the first two decades there was little change in the condition of winter wheat in the Southwest, especially in western Texas, Oklahoma, and most of Kansas, with the drought unrelieved and the crop deteriorating in many parts. Condition of wheat was very spotted in this area, ranging from very poor to only fair, although in some sections of Kansas the crop was holding up well, with jointing reported from the Southeast. Outside of this droughty region winter wheat progress and condition varied widely, with good advance in the northwestern parts of the belt, but slow growth in the Ohio Valley, although rains were helpful in the latter area. During the last decade the drought in the Southwest was generally broken, with heavy rains over practically all parts of Oklahoma and beneficial falls in Texas and Kansas. Parts of southwestern Kansas still needed moisture, but much of the wheat crop revived and showed marked improvement. Except for some need of rain over central and eastern parts of the Winter Wheat Belt, the crop was making satisfactory advance at the close of the month.

The condition of oats closely paralleled that of winter wheat, while spring oat and barley seeding had been largely finished at the close of the month. Spring-wheat seeding was mostly completed, with much up and looking well, while other small-grain crops were making satisfactory progress.

Corn.—While moderately warm and mostly sunny weather was favorable for field operations in the Corn Belt during the first decade, frequent showers and low temperatures caused considerable delay to planting and preparations during the latter part of the month. Seed beds had been prepared in Iowa, but only a small amount of corn had been planted, while the early-planted crop was not coming up.

Cotton.—During the first decade cotton planting made good advance in Texas, but warm rains were needed for germination; in Oklahoma seed beds had been prepared, but the drought delayed planting. In central and eastern parts of the belt planting made good headway, except in the extreme Southeast, where it was too wet. During the second decade continued dry soil in the western Cotton Belt further delayed planting, although some was put in western Texas, where germination was hindered by dry soil and low temperatures. The soil continued too dry for germination in Oklahoma, but in central parts of the belt field work made rather good progress, while planting was active in more eastern portions. Rainfall during the last decade in the western Cotton Belt decidedly improved the condition of the soil, but the central and some eastern parts were beginning to need rain. Planting continued in Texas, while seeding operations in Oklahoma were only awaiting drier soil. A good, general warm rain was needed in central and some eastern parts of the belt.

Miscellaneous crops.—Except for droughty conditions in the Southwest, range and livestock conditions were largely satisfactory throughout the country during the month, although the low temperatures retarded growth of pastures in the East. Lambing was favored quite generally, while shearing advanced satisfactorily.

During the first two decades potatoes and truck crops did well, with planting of the former advancing to the northern portions of the country. The frost during the last decade caused some injury to potatoes and truck in the Ohio Valley and adjacent sections, but elsewhere these crops did well. There was rather extensive frost injury to fruit reported over a wide area embracing the Appalachian Mountain districts, the Ohio Valley, the Lake region, and the Northeast, although later reports indicated that the early fears were rather pessimistic, especially in the central Appalachian area. Outside of these sections, fruit did well, except for some local dropping.

WEATHER OF THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC OCEANS

NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

By F. A. YOUNG

The weather over the North Atlantic during April was marked by few unusual features, and the number of days with gales was not far from the normal over the greater part of the ocean. As shown by Table 1, the monthly pressure departures were comparatively small, and, with the exception of Horta, the range in barometric readings not unusually large.

The number of days in which fog was reported in different localities was as follows: Over the Grand Banks on 13 days; along the American coast between the thirty-fifth and forty-fifth parallels, from 7 to 10 days; in the Gulf of Mexico, from 1 to 4 days; over the steamer lanes, east of the forty-fifth meridian, on from 1 to 4 days.