

western range and livestock



May 1, 1971

17 Western States

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Range feed condition improved seasonally during April but was below average on May 1, according to the Crop Reporting Board. Spring rains have supplied fairly adequate moisture, except in the Southwest where drouth still prevails. Cold, wet weather in the North and West Coast States has delayed early spring growth, but ranges are expected to furnish good grazing as warmer weather arrives.

Condition of cattle and calves averaged 79 percent on May 1, an increase of 1 point during April but 5 points below a year earlier. Sheep and lamb condition at 80 percent was unchanged during the last month but is 4 points below last year.

RANGE FEED CONDITION: Condition of range feed averaged 73 percent on May 1, 5 points below a year ago and 4 points below the 10-year average.

Soil moisture is adequate in the North and West but very short in the Southwest. Southern areas of Utah and Nevada and all of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and western Oklahoma are still very dry with range conditions in these areas reportedly far below normal. Many wheat fields are being grazed out. Reported May 1 range condition in Texas was the lowest since the drouth of 1956.

Prospects for grazing in late spring and early summer are very good in the Great Plains and Inter-Mountain Regions due to April rain and snow. But unless the Southwest receives rain soon, prospects for range feed are bleak for this area.

CATTLE CONDITION: Condition of cattle and calves increased during April and was 79 percent on May 1. This is 5 points below last year and 3 points below the 10-year average. Supplemental feeding continued in many States during April and was heaviest in the North and Southwest. Calving is making good progress and is nearing completion in many areas. Cold, wet weather has caused some death losses of new-born calves. Feed supplies are getting low in Southwest drouth areas.

SHEEP AND LAMB CONDITION: At 80 percent, condition of sheep and lambs was unchanged from last month but is 4 points below last year and 3 points below average. Lambing is about complete in the Southwestern States and is progressing rapidly in northern range flocks. New lamb death losses have been about normal, although some problems developed due to cold, wet weather in late April. Shearing was well along in most areas at the end of April.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STATISTICAL REPORTING SERVICE

CROP REPORTING BOARD

MtAn 2-3 (5-71)

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

TEXAS GOAT CONDITION: Goat condition, at 74 percent, increased 4 points from last month. This is 11 points below last year and 9 points under the 10-year average.

CONDITIONS, MAY 1, 1971, WITH COMPARISONS
EQUIVALENTS OF REPORTED CONDITIONS: Below 60, bad; 60-69, poor; 70-79, fair; 80-89, good; 90-99, very good; and 100 and over is excellent

State	RANGE FEED				CATTLE				SHEEP			
	:10 yr.:	:	:	:	:10 yr.:	:	:	:	:10 yr.:	:	:	:
	: av. :	May :	April:	May :	: av. :	May :	April:	May :	: av. :	May :	April:	May :
	:1960-:	1970:	1971 :	1971:	:1960-:	1970:	1971 :	1971:	:1960-:	1970:	1971 :	1971:
N. D.	: 71	71	69	75	: 81	81	83	83	: 82	82	83	83
S. D. (West.)	: 76	72	74	81	: 81	80	82	83	: 82	81	82	83
Nebr. (West.)	: 79	81	76	81	: 84	84	82	83	:			
Kans. (West.)	: 75	81	72	77	: 81	84	79	81	: 82	86	80	82
Okla.	: 80	83	65	68	: 81	83	75	77	:			
Texas	: 80	86	60	63	: 82	86	73	74	: 82	87	72	73
Mont.	: 74	71	75	77	: 83	84	85	85	: 84	85	85	85
Idaho	: 78	70	82	80	: 84	85	84	84	: 86	88	84	85
Wyo.	: 76	69	74	77	: 84	82	84	83	: 85	83	85	84
Colo.	: 75	80	78	82	: 82	84	85	85	: 84	83	87	84
N. Mex.	: 75	77	69	63	: 78	80	76	73	: 80	80	77	74
Ariz.	: 77	75	66	63	: 80	79	71	70	: 80	77	74	75
Utah	: 77	74	76	79	: 82	84	83	82	: 83	84	83	83
Nev.	: 77	76	79	84	: 81	82	82	83	: 82	81	81	80
Wash.	: 80	79	73	76	: 84	85	83	83	: 86	88	85	86
Oreg.	: 78	75	78	80	: 83	84	81	83	: 84	86	84	84
Calif.	: 81	72	76	80	: 85	83	80	82	: 86	84	84	88
Western	:				:				:			
Range States	: 77	78	70	73	: 82	84	78	79	: 83	84	80	80
	:				:				:			

DETAILS BY STATES

NORTH DAKOTA: Range feed condition improved 6 points during April but no real grass growth occurred up to May 1. Rain and snow the latter part of April improved topsoil condition. All areas report adequate topsoil moisture and pastures and ranges should furnish good feed with warmer weather. With no severe storms, calving and lambing conditions during April were the best of recent years. Some death losses of young calves were reported from scours, pneumonia, and red nose.

SOUTH DAKOTA (WESTERN): Range feed condition improved 7 percentage points during April and on May 1 was 9 points above a year earlier. Spring grazing prospects are excellent; virtually all areas received at least 2 inches of rain in late April. A few locales reported up to 6 inches of moisture. Tame grasses have shown rapid growth and native grass is expected to grow rapidly as temperatures rise seasonally. Topsoil moisture is adequate to surplus and stock water supplies are excellent.

Supplemental feeding was still required in some areas and hay supplies were reported low in many areas. The condition of cattle and sheep both increased one percentage point from last month and are above year-earlier levels. Calving has progressed favorably. Lambing was nearing completion by May 1.

NEBRASKA (WESTERN): Temperatures in the range area averaged above normal during April. Rain beginning April 17 and snow on April 26 and 27 brought precipitation above normal by the end of the month. Moisture supplies appear excellent and grasses should develop rapidly with warmer temperatures. Wet weather caused scours in many young calves, with losses in some areas. Calving is nearing completion and branding is beginning. Cattle are in good condition.

KANSAS (WESTERN): Ranges have gotten off to a slow start this spring due to cool weather and a shortage of surface moisture. Good rains from mid-April through early May have brightened prospects for summer grazing considerably. Livestock were being moved to native pastures in most areas but grazing was still limited and supplemental feeding was necessary during early April. Some wheat was being grazed out in western areas during April. Water supplies in range ponds were generally adequate. Condition of cattle and sheep was slightly above last month but moderately below last year.

OKLAHOMA: Ranges made fair to good improvement in the east during April, but in the southwest and west central severe drouth caused further declines. Ranges in the Panhandle and central districts held steady or showed slight gains. Much wheat and small grain acreage is being grazed out as western ranges are not producing any new grass except in bottomlands. Dry soils have prevented planting of feed crops and outlook for first cutting of alfalfa is gloomy because of drouth and insects. Water hauling is necessary where pond water is the main source and all stock tanks and ponds need runoff. Hay supplies are limited and expensive. Cattle condition is fair but not making normal springtime recovery. Sales have been heavy, easing up with each additional rain. A good calf crop is now mostly on the ground and death losses have been light.

TEXAS: Range and livestock conditions showed a slight increase during April. Drouth continues over most of the State although some areas have received temporary relief from scattered showers. Hay is still critically short over many areas as cattle continue to require supplemental feeding. Many cattlemen have reduced their herds, leaving only the breeding stock, as feeding costs remain prohibitive. The 63-percent range condition is the lowest reported for May 1 since 1956. Lambing and calving are well advanced throughout the State. Shearing of spring wool and clipping mohair is nearing completion with crews still reported hard to find.

MONTANA: Temperatures were slightly below normal during April, slowing growth of range grasses. Topsoil moisture was generally adequate in all areas. New grass was quite short so grazing was limited to areas where there was some old grass left. Supplemental feeding was widespread during April. Calving and lambing are nearing completion. Calves and lambs are in good condition and death losses are below normal.

IDAHO: Range condition was above normal for May 1, due to an exceptional amount of rainfall during April and warmer temperatures toward the end of the month.

Hay supplies are getting scarce in several localities as supplemental feeding continued longer than normal. The good range condition is expected to ease the situation. Cattle are in good condition and calving operations are generally winding up with no unusual problems. Sheep are in about average condition for the date. Lambing is almost complete with normal lambing percentages. Shearing operations are nearly over in the southeast and south central areas and are well under way in the east.

WYOMING: Range feed condition, at 77 percent, was 3 points above a month earlier. Recent moisture has greatly improved prospects for spring and summer grazing. Despite the wet weather most livestock remain in good condition.

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COLORADO: Range feed condition was generally good on May 1, except in the San Luis Valley where cool, dry weather has retarded spring range feed development. Moisture received over much of the State during April improved ranges but more rain will be needed in the San Luis Valley and southeastern Colorado to insure good summer grazing. Calving and lambing neared completion in April and calf and lamb crops were good. Stock water supplies remained adequate throughout the State.

NEW MEXICO: Extreme drought prevailed over New Mexico ranges on May 1. Stock water is in short supply on many ranches. Livestock are holding up in spite of the poor range condition. Heavy supplemental feeding continues with no unusual death losses reported.

ARIZONA: Condition of range feed was the lowest reported for May 1 since 1925, while the condition of cattle and calves was the lowest since 1955. Range feed condition declined 3 points during April as precipitation throughout the State was minimal, even at higher elevations. Range forage is predominantly dry grasses and filaree with little greening reported. Supplemental feeding and hauling of stock water was required in most areas and these measures have kept livestock in fair condition. No unusual death losses have been reported.

UTAH: Cool, wet weather the last two weeks of April slowed range feed growth but improved prospects for spring grazing as weather warms. Supplemental feeding continued through April in most areas and feed supplies were quite low by May 1. Cattle and sheep are in fair to good condition. Calving is well along. Shearing was delayed by the wet, cold weather but was progressing the last of April. Lambing of latest range flocks will start in mid-May. Wool sales are very slow. No contracts or sales of calves and lambs reported.

NEVADA: Range feed condition increased significantly during April and is considered good throughout the State. However, dry weather in the south, and cold, wet weather in the north during the last half of the month tended to curtail growth and development of range feed. Cattle and calves improved slightly and continued in good condition. Sheep and lamb condition declined slightly and is fair to good. Calving and lambing are well along except in northeast areas.

WASHINGTON: Range feed condition increased 3 points during April. Cold, wet weather slowed grass growth until the last week of April when a slight warming trend helped vegetation in general. Soil moisture is generally abundant and growth should be rapid if warm weather continues. Hay and silage is scarce and stock had to be turned out before range pastures had enough growth for safe use. Most farmers are feeding supplementary roughage to reduce pressure on grass. Cattle and sheep are in good condition with few reports of unusual losses of calves or lambs. Calving and lambing are winding up but sheep shearing continues.

OREGON: Cool, wet weather continued during April and by May 1 growth of range feed was still about 2 weeks behind normal. Most cattle were turned out on summer ranges and pastures during April. In many areas, hay supplies were virtually exhausted by May 1. Soil moisture supplies are above normal over most of the State. However, in the north-central portions, precipitation has been below average and rain is needed. Most livestock are in good condition. Adverse weather appears to have reduced calving rates. A few early lambs were moving to market and marketings are expected to be later than normal.

CALIFORNIA: Cold weather slowed grass growth indicating a late feed year. Rain was beneficial mainly to the northern and mountain areas. Cattle are moving to feedlots and summer range. Lambs are moving to market. Sheep shearing is progressing well in the Sacramento-San Joaquin area.