USDA NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
UPPER MIDWEST REGION - IOWA FIELD OFFICE
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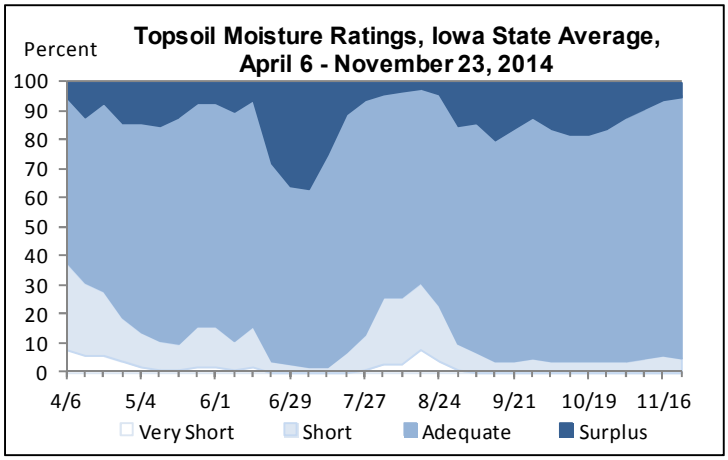
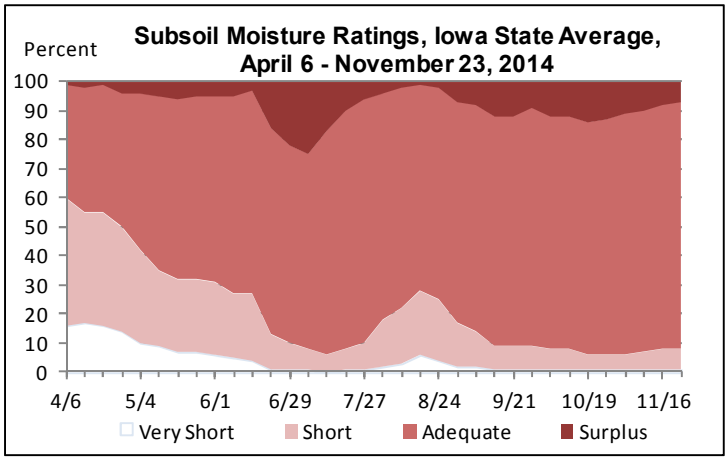
2014 IOWA CROP PROGRESS REVIEW

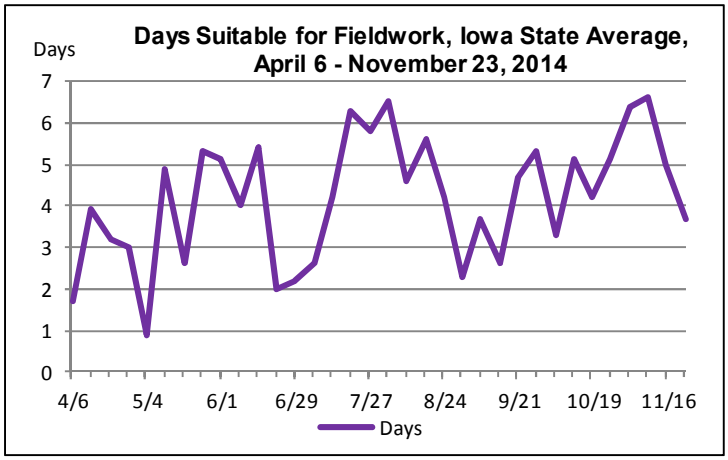
The Crop Progress and Condition Report is made possible by the dedication of our volunteer Crop Progress Reporters. Thanks for your help!

Review of the 2014 Crop Year:

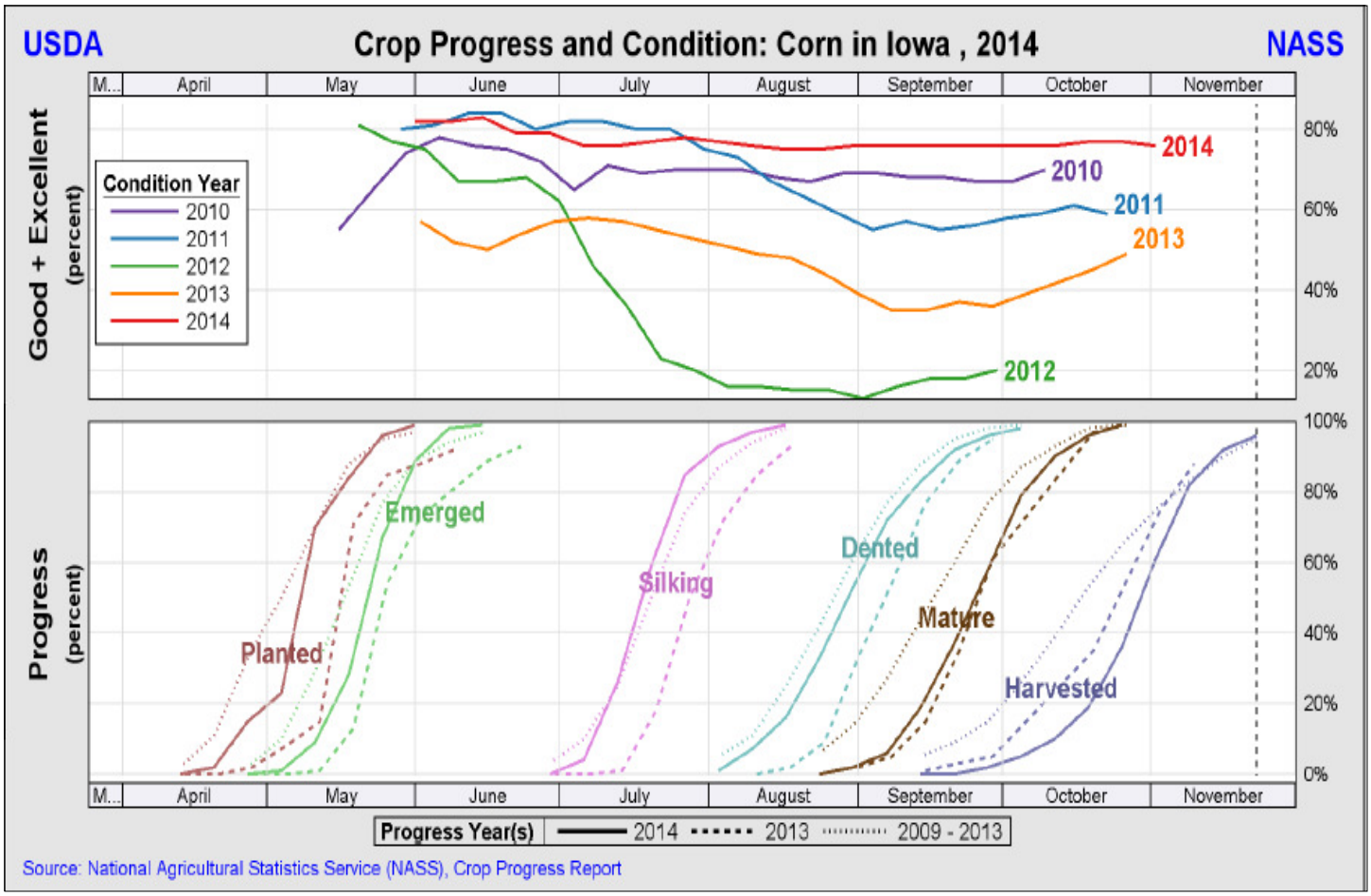
The 2014 crop season started off slowly due to colder than normal temperatures and considerable frost depth. Planting progress during April was ahead of last year but behind the normal pace. Statewide above normal precipitation throughout April helped replenish soil moisture levels and improved pasture and range conditions. Planting progress advanced rapidly during May and by mid-June almost all of the soybean and corn crops were planted. Recurring precipitation during the second half of June limited most fieldwork and harvest of alfalfa hay. The week ending July 6 saw the highest topsoil moisture at 37 percent surplus and the highest subsoil moisture at 25 percent surplus statewide. Dry and cool weather persisted for the rest of July and beginning of August, allowing farmers to catch up on fieldwork but slowing crop progress. Frequent rains from late August into September increased soil moistures. For the first time since July 12, 2011, Iowa was free of "abnormally dry" areas on September 16 as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor. Harvest was underway by the end of September. High grain moisture levels and wet fields caused harvest activities to progress slowly at times during the October. Farmers took advantage of any dry weather periods to harvest large amounts of corn and soybeans. November was relatively dry but unseasonably cold, with the first snow accumulation occurring in northern Iowa on the 10th. By the end of the season, only isolated corn fields remained to be harvested and soybean harvest was virtually complete.





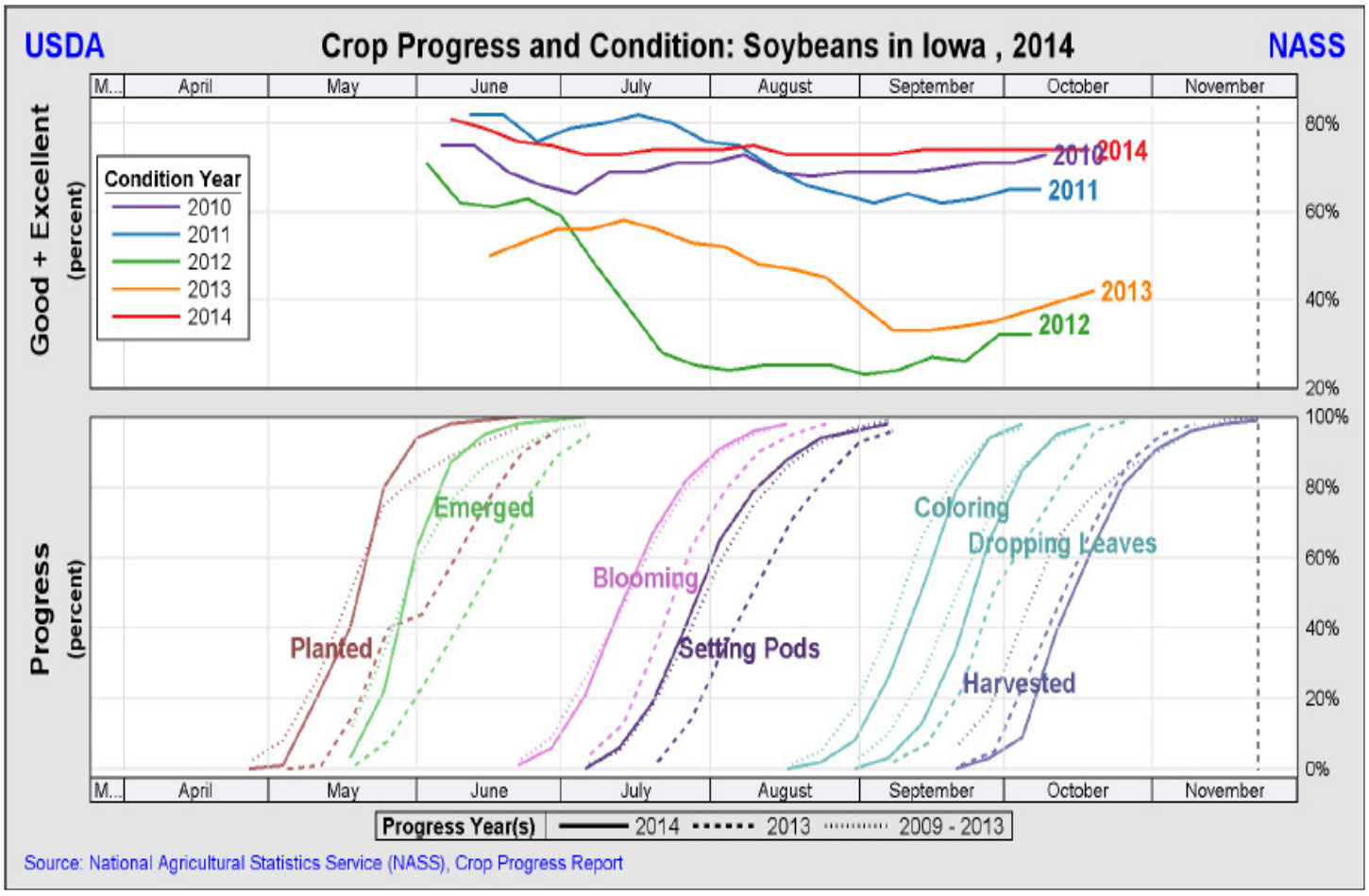


Corn planting in Iowa was slow during April, but sped up with almost half of the state's corn acreage planted the week ending May 12. By the end of May, planting progress was ahead of the five-year average and emergence was equal to average. Corn silking surpassed the normal pace in mid-July, with slightly more than half of the acreage in or past the silking stage. The percent of corn in the dough stage was at or ahead of average during the season, but cooler than normal temperatures delayed dent progress and corn maturity to behind average. By the time a measurable amount of corn was harvested in late September, harvest was already three weeks behind the normal pace. High corn moisture levels continued to hinder harvest progress. Condition of the crop did not change dramatically from early in the year and ended with 76 percent in good to excellent condition as of November 2. By November 23, 96 percent of the corn crop was harvested, still one week behind average.



*Due to a lapse in federal funding in October 2013, the Crop Progress reports for the weeks ending October 6, 2013 and October 13, 2013 were cancelled. Therefore, previous year and five-year average estimates will reflect the years 2009-2013 using published estimates for 2009-2012 and imputed estimates for 2013.

Soybean planting started slow but advanced 40 percentage points in the week ending May 25, jumping from 3 days behind the normal pace to 4 days ahead. Soybean emergence followed the same trend as planting and was virtually complete by the end of June. Plants started blooming at the end of June, a couple days behind average, but surpassed average by mid-July. Pods set were ahead of average for almost the entire season until September, when progress slowed near the end of the stage. Leaves turning color and was behind average for most of September but ahead of last year. Harvest started in late September, approximately a week behind normal. Condition did not change much from July to harvest and was last rated 74 percent good to excellent on October 19. Over three-quarters of the state's soybean acreage was harvested during the month of October, but progress was never able to catch up to average. Harvest continued throughout November and was 99 percent complete by November 23.



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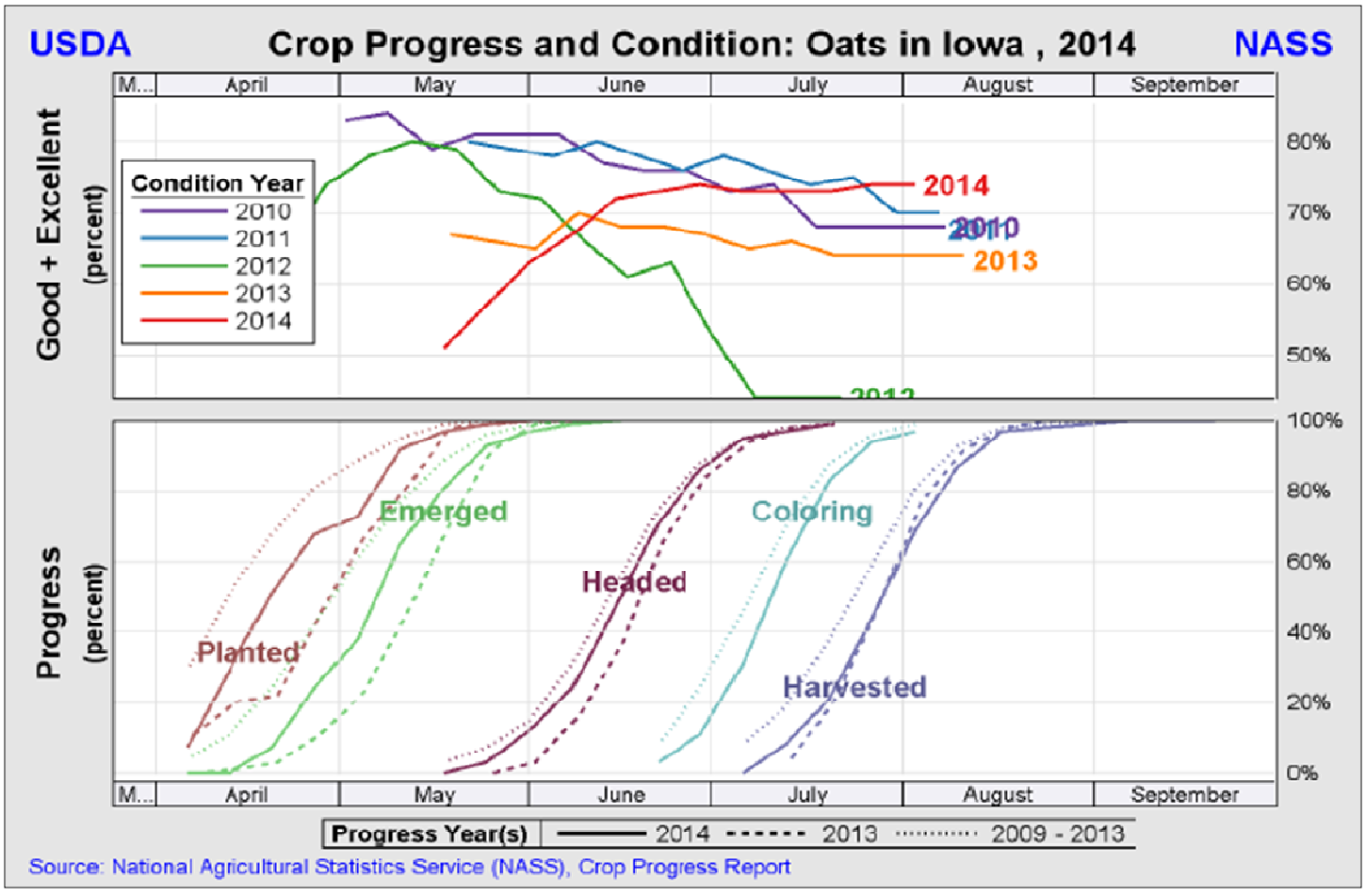
Oat seeding started later than normal but rapidly advanced during the middle of April. Planting continued through the end of May as little progress was made during some weeks. Emergence started off 10 days behind normal and finished 4 days behind average in the first part of June. By June 1, 12 percent of the oat acreage was headed, 3 days behind average, and would stay behind average through the rest of the season. The crop started to turn color in the latter half of June and harvest began the second week of July, about a week behind normal. Condition of the crop did not change much after June 1st and was last rated 74 percent good to excellent on August 3. Harvest was steady throughout July and the first half of August. By August 31, harvest was 99 percent complete, 3 days behind average.



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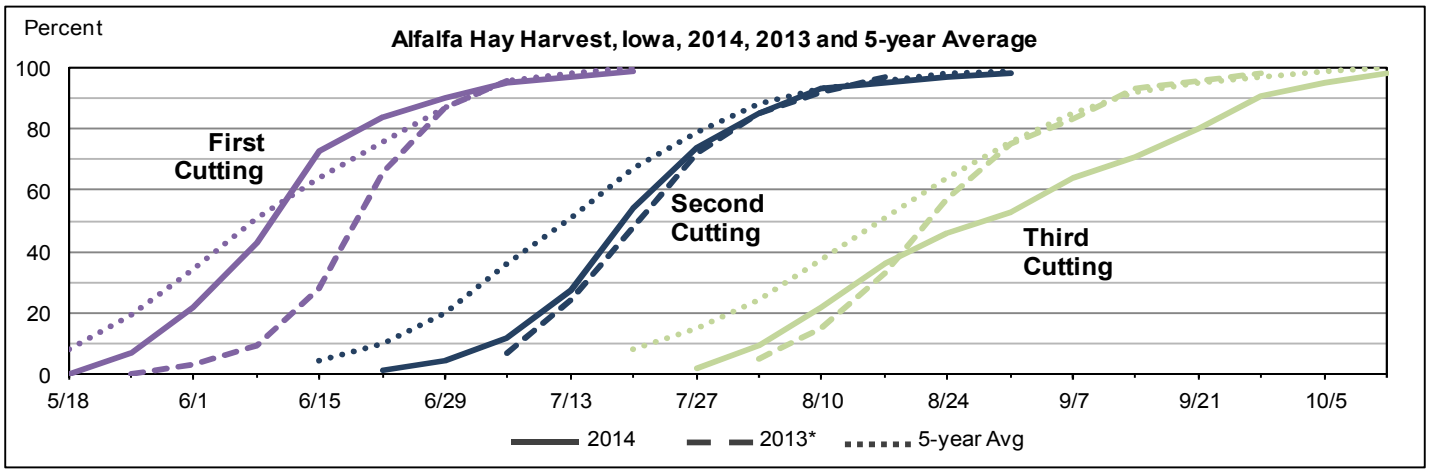
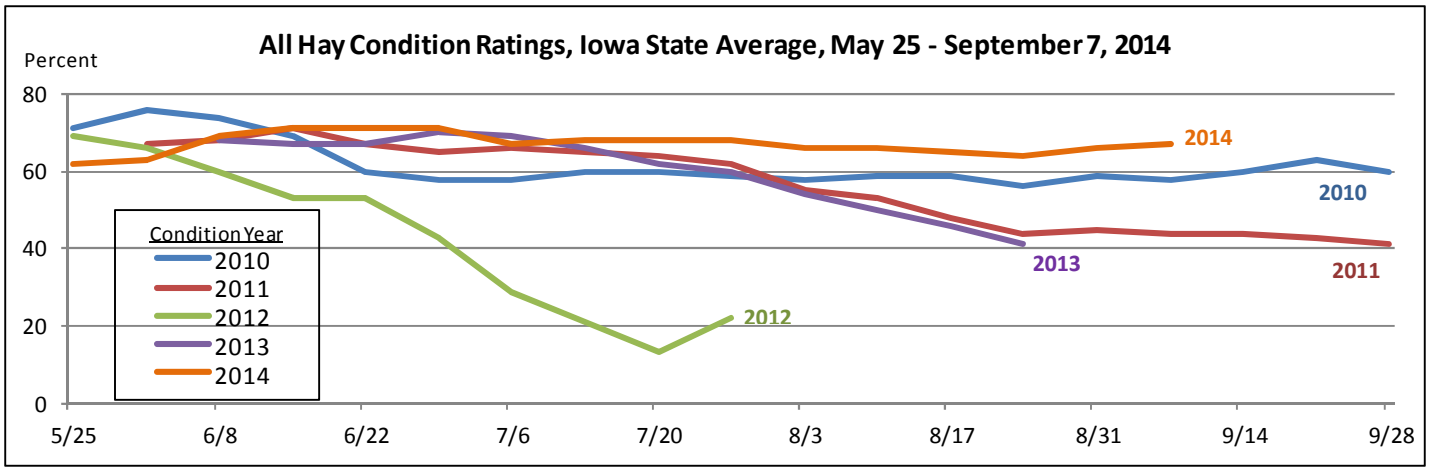
The first cutting of **alfalfa hay** was 7 percent complete by May 25, just over one week behind the five-year average. Progress advanced more quickly than normal and was 3 days ahead of average by mid June. Frequent rains slowed harvest during the second half of June and beginning of July. The second cutting of alfalfa hay started in earnest in early July. Ninety-three percent of the second cutting was complete by August 10th, but the rest of the acres continued to be cut into the first part of September as rain prevented hay from being baled. The third cutting of alfalfa hay spanned almost 3 months from the end of July to the middle of October, never advancing ahead of the average. On September 7, hay condition was rated 67 percent good to excellent. By October 12 the third cutting of alfalfa hay was 98 percent complete, just over one week behind normal.





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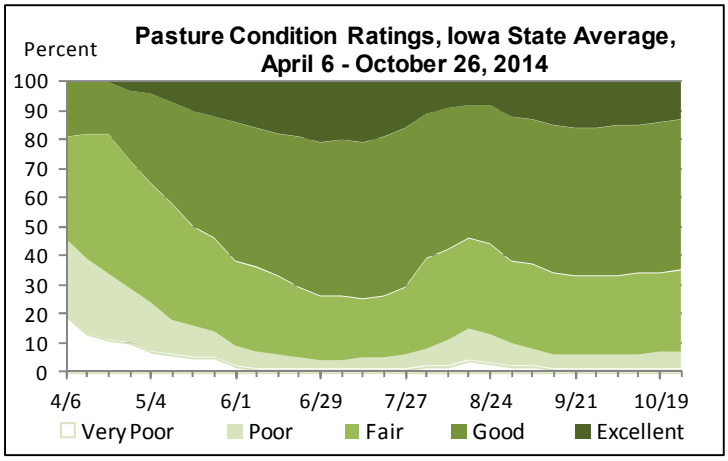
Pastures were slow to recover from the cold winter. The first 3 weeks of April had an average of 18 percent of pasture in good condition and 0 percent in excellent condition. Abundant moisture and warmer temperatures helped pastures recover during the next 2 months. By June 15 two-thirds of the state's pasture was in good to excellent condition. The highest condition rating came the week ending July 13 where 75 percent of pastures were in good to excellent condition, of which 21 percent were in excellent condition. Dry, cool weather then caused pasture condition to decline, with only 54 percent in good to excellent condition on August 17. Pastures recovered during the autumn's rains, but below normal temperatures kept conditions lower than in the early summer. Pasture condition rated 65 percent good to excellent as of October 26, 46 percentage points greater than the previous year at that time.



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