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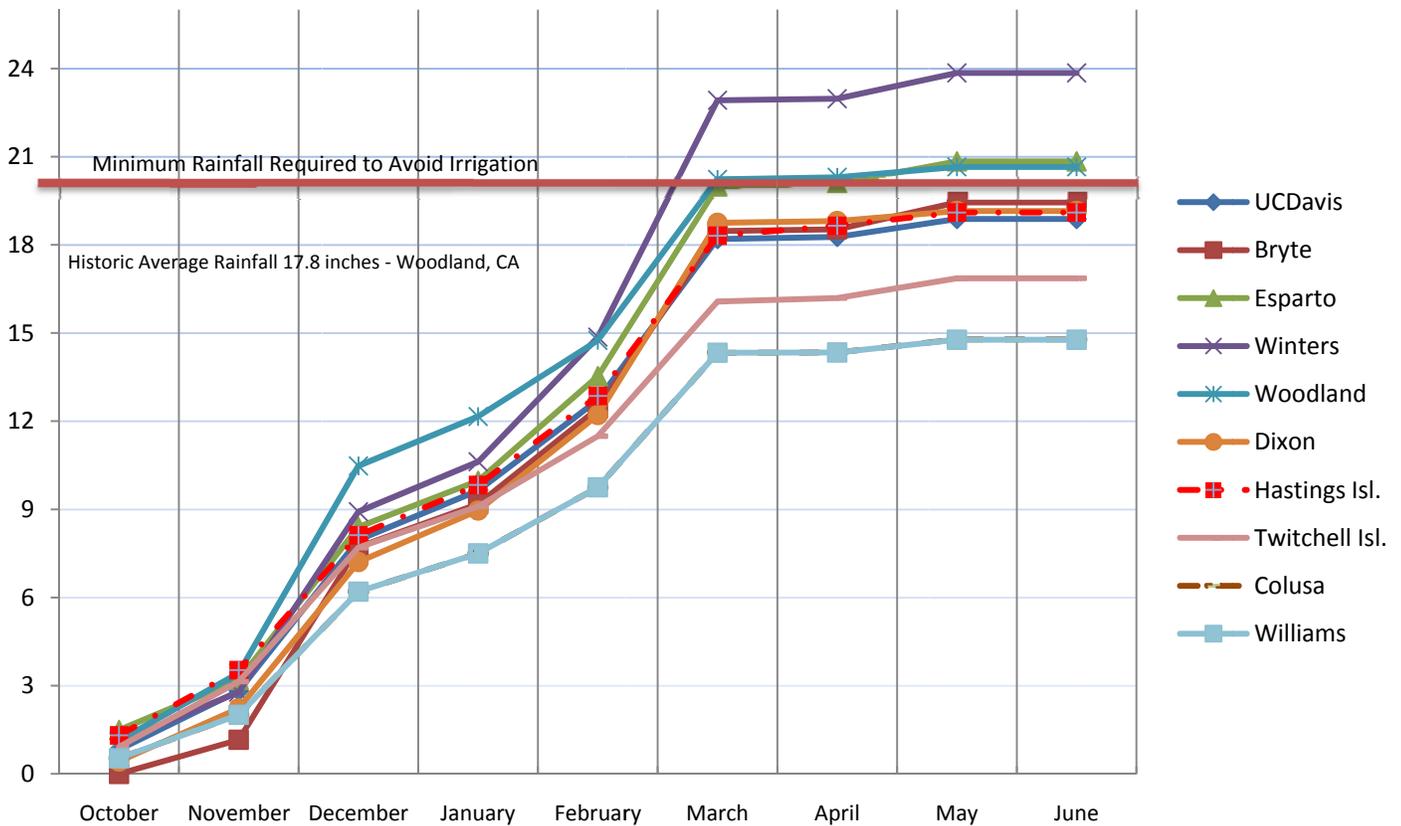
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What Happened to the Wheat in Sacramento Valley?

We always have to be careful for what we ask for, especially when it comes to the weather. Wheat growers asked for another good rain year this year, and unfortunately, they got nearly one-third of it all in March, 5.72 inches. The ten weather stations I monitor in the Southern Sacramento Valley, Colusa south to Twitchell Island, received an average 18.8 inches of rain this year. The high was 23.85” in Winters and the low was 14.77” in Williams. March rain left water standing in the wheat field for at least 3 weeks in the clayey soils. For my Clarksburg wheat trial location on Sacramento Clay soil, water stood for 5 weeks.

Chart 1. 2010-2011 Rainfall season for Southern Sacramento Valley (accumulated inches).



As I have walked the fields this spring I have noticed that most of the early planted wheat (planted before November 1st) on heavy soils has crown rot problems, septoria, blanking heads, bacterial leaf streak, and

some heads with black chaff. This has made it very difficult even to discuss standing in the field looking at it. Septoria is particularly bad in the grain-on-grain fields. Small grain advisors warn of the dangerous buildup of septoria in the soil following grain, and two wet years in a row has shown this to be true for back-to-back grain growers.



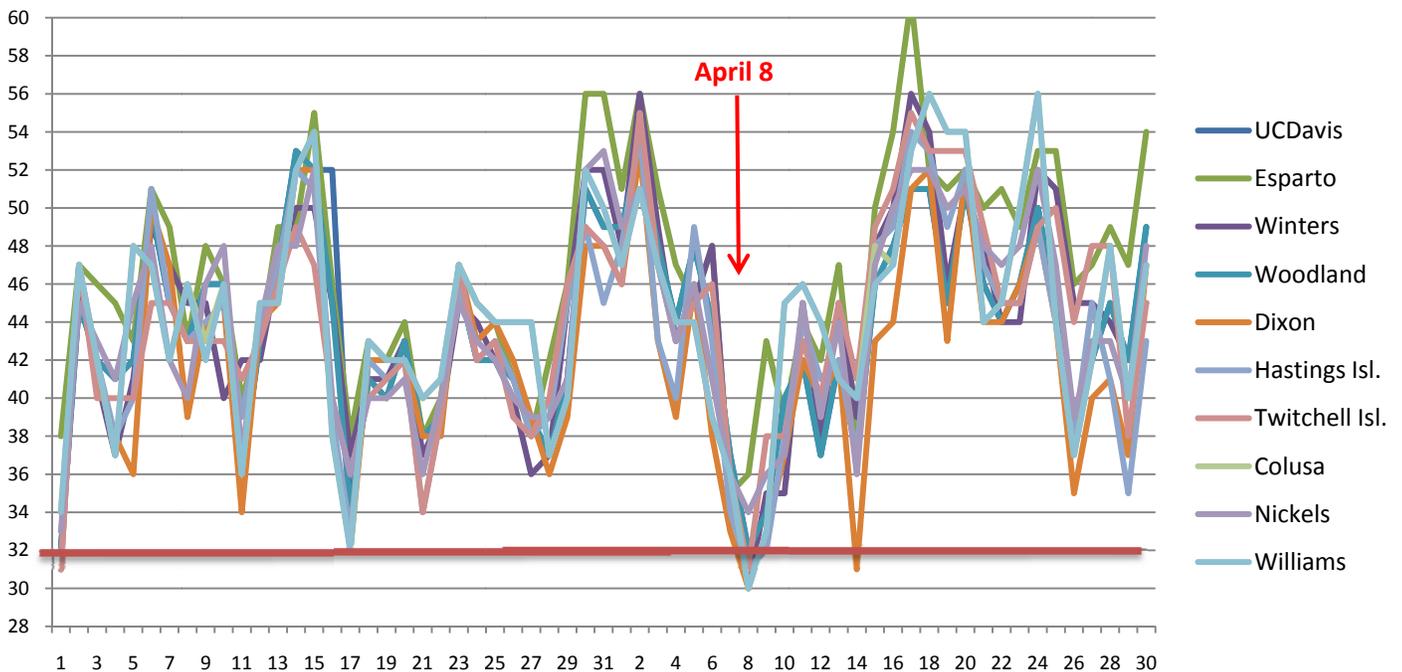
Bacterial Black Chaff

Frost Injury

For complete discussions on septoria and bacterial blights (leaf streak and black chaff) please see our UC Pest Management Guide Lines for Small Grains (www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) [Bacterial Blights](#) and [Septoria tritici blotch](#) pages. Crown rot (loss of primary roots supporting the crown) has caused early maturation of the heads in many of these fields. Many of those heads are blanking or are only partially filling.

Blanking grain heads usually means frost during the boot stage of grain growth or later. In looking at the minimum temperatures for this past March through April, I can find as many as 5 possible dates where we hit 32°F or cooler. I feel the most likely culprit was April 8th, as all but 2 (Esparto and Nickels) of the eleven weather stations hit between 30 to 32°F that date. All of the early fields were headed out by this date, even in my mid-November planted trials, Cal Rojo was nearly 100% headed out on April 8th.

Chart 2. Minimum Temperatures for Southern Sacramento Valley – March thru April 2011 (degrees F)



Dixon, Colusa, and Williams all hit 32°F on March 17th as well. Dixon also hit 31°F on April 14th, which is the last date I could find where any station hit freezing. Remember, temperature readings are very localized

events and can vary several degrees in short distances. I expect the worse fields got colder than these weather stations indicate.

The Good News for the Rest of the Wheat Crop

For those many fields planted in mid to late November on well drained soils, we have a beautiful grain crop coming. Some growers topped dressed with nitrogen, and our April –May light rains did a nice job of incorporating it. Growers on the lighter soils have had to irrigate. There is a slight amount of frost damage even in these fields, so our yields probably won't beat last year's. There is a more than usual number of fields planted after the 1st of the year this year. I feel that these late fields are doing better than expected with the mild spring weather and timely irrigation.

Small Grain Field Meetings

Your Chance to Come and See for Yourself! I will be holding a field meeting in a location fairly near you, if you farm in the lower Sacramento Valley. I have 4 large scale field trials that I would like to invite you to come out and see.

1st Location: Craig Gnos Trial – Dixon Area: I-80 and Pedrick Rd or Pitt School north, take Sievers Rd to Currey Rd north ½ mile to sign on the east side of the road.

Date/Time: June 1st, Wednesday 9AM – noon.

High lights: Best trial location with all the inputs, irrigated, all the new UC lines to see.

2nd Location: Rominger Brothers – Winters/Esparto Area: County Road 29 just west of Co Rd 89, south side.

Date/Time: June 1st, Wednesday 2PM – 4PM

High lights: Heavier soil on beds very good condition. Non-irrigated. All the wheat & triticale varieties.

3rd Location: Larry Hunn – Clarksburg South Area: Jefferson Rd. to Courtland Rd turn west 0.85 miles to vineyard. Turn north on dirt road between vines. Look for signs.

Date/Time: June 2nd, Thursday 9AM – noon.

High lights: Heaviest soils, Sacramento clay, see difference of planting date and all the ailments.

4th Location: Jennie McCormick – Montezuma Hills Rd 2 miles west of Rio Vista. Right on the road.

Date/Time: June 2nd, Thursday, 2PM – 4:30PM

High Lights: Dryland farming at its best, all the varieties including some of the new UC lines.

New Corn Season Has Begun – New Trial Locations

Off to another slow start this year, with corn planting 2-3 weeks late. I planted my first grain corn trial April 19th into fair moisture at UC Davis. Hastings Island was planted April 27th and irrigated up Friday, 2 days later. Tyler Island trial with Steve Mello was planted into good moisture May 1st. Fusarium Ear Rot trials were planted May 4th at UCD and May 6th on Tyler Island. My Wilber Ellis Demonstration trial was planted May 5th - a very busy week! All trials are up and looking good. I should have plot maps and locations up on my web site as of your reading of this newsletter. [Grain Corn Trial Location and Plot Maps](#)

Register now at <http://wric.ucdavis.edu> for...

[Weed Science School 2011](#)

Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2011, UC Davis

[Weed Day 2011](#)

July 14, 2011, UC Davis - Be a Weed Day sponsor

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