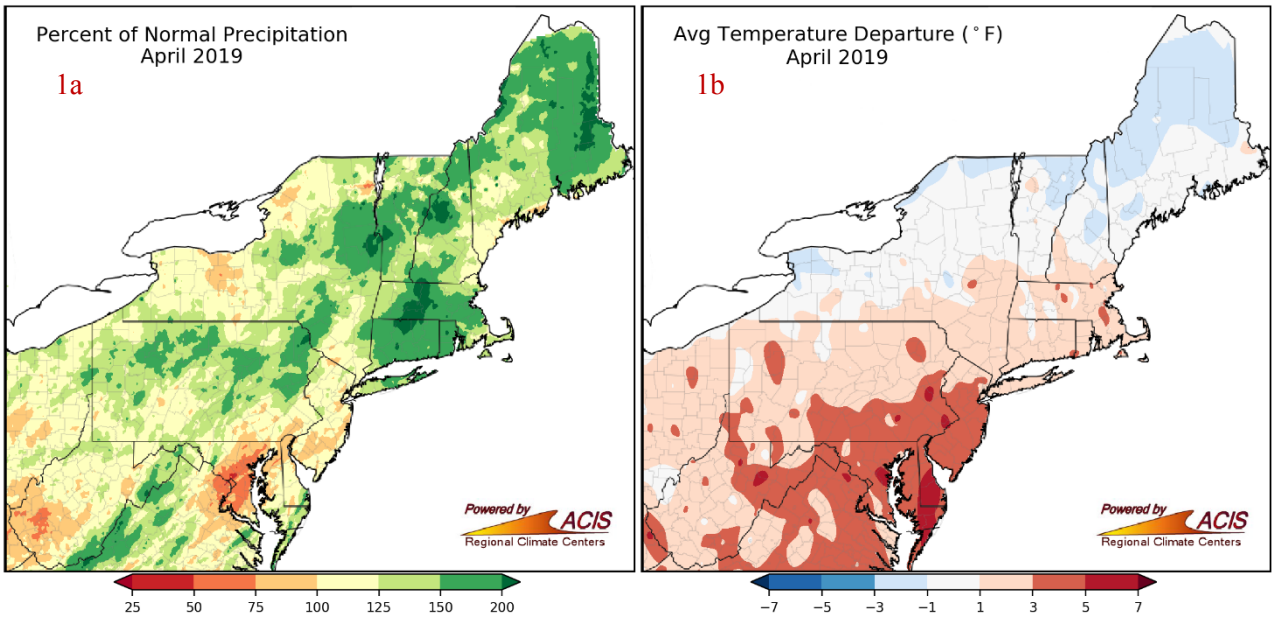
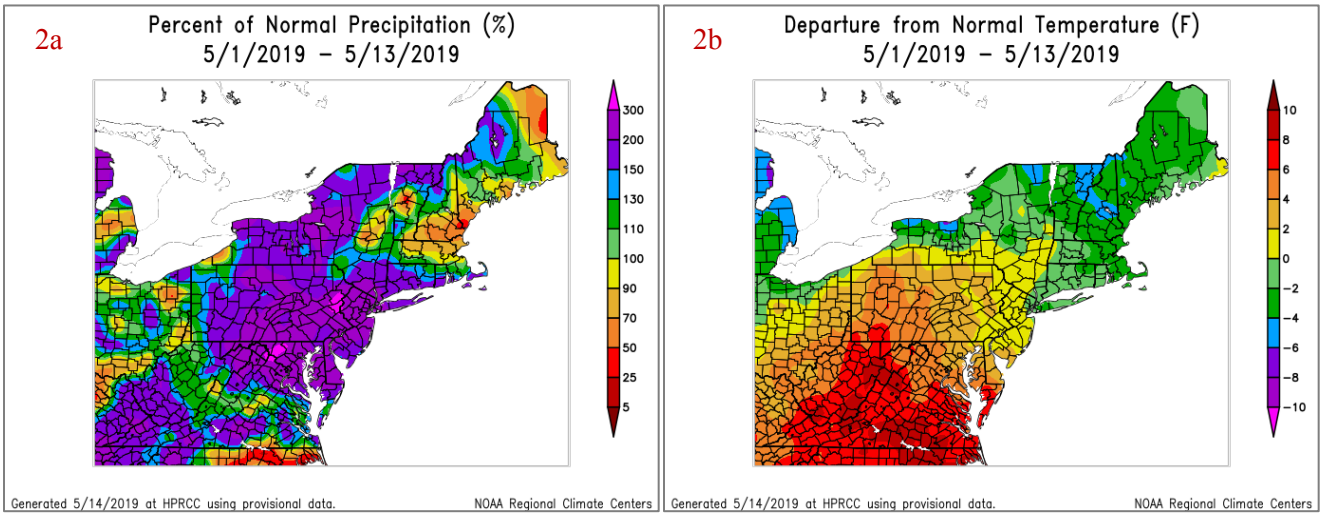
Field Crops, Forages and Soils Updates for NNY ***15 May 2019***

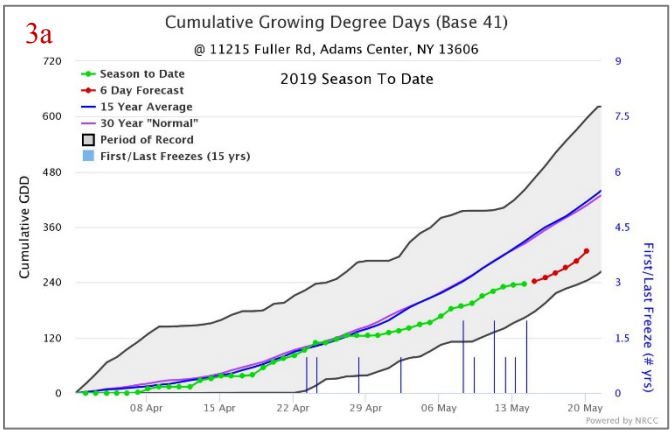
- NNY Weather Summary for April through mid-May 2019. April 2019 was the 18th wettest April since 1985 for NYS – the state received 124% of normal precipitation. A lot of that excess rain fell in the Hudson Valley and in Central NY while much of the North Country saw about average precipitation. Bits of Jefferson and southern St. Lawrence Counties were actually a bit drier than normal in April. Figure 1a below, shows the wettest areas as darker green and dry areas as pale orange. Temperatures were slightly cooler than normal for much of the North Country during April. Figure 1b below shows that the North Country saw mostly normal average April temperatures, except for along the Seaway and Canada borders.

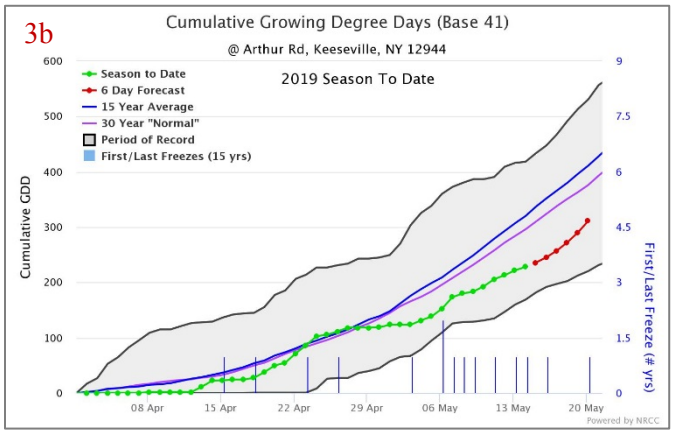
  May, however, has brought abnormally wet and cool weather. Figure 2a shows that most of the North Country has had 150-200% of normal rain totals, so far in May. And Figure 2b shows we've averaged 2 to 6 °F below normal daily temperatures in May.





Figures 3a and b show below normal GDD base 41 accumulations from April 1 to May 14 for 2 locations in NNY - Adams Center (3a) and Keeseville (3b). Both were slightly below average GDD accumulations in April but fell further behind in May. The good news is, it will not be difficult to compensate for this relatively small deficit once temperatures begin warm. The impact of this destabilized spring weather is apparent though in slow forage growth and delayed field fitting and annual crop planting.





- 'Winterkill' of alfalfa and alfalfa-grass fields is common and extensive this spring. Severely damaged alfalfa and mixed alfalfa-grass fields have been reported in all NNY counties growing alfalfa. For most fields, damage appears to have resulted from ice sheeting formed during thaw-freeze cycles in late winter. In some cases, damage appears to have resulted from exposure due to lack of snow cover. Some fields are complete losses. Orchardgrass was killed along with alfalfa in a few fields. See guidelines for reseeding decisions for alfalfa and grasses here.

A severely damaged alfalfa field in St. Lawrence County. May 2019. Photo by K. O'Neil.

PEST UPDATES:

- Alfalfa Snout Beetles adults have been observed walking across roadways and ditches for a week or more in a few spots around the North Country. The adult beetles don't cause harm to structures or to most early season crops. These beetles emerge from the soil, eat a little alfalfa for a couple weeks and then begin walking to find a suitable host plant to lay eggs. Their top choice is alfalfa but they'll also lay eggs on a few other species such as red clover, wild carrot, dandelion, and yarrow. Insecticides are not effective for ASB control.

Additional resources:

1. Cornell Cooperative Extension's North Country Regional Ag Team Web Resources
2. New York Integrated Pest Management (NYSIPM) Web Resources
3. Weekly Crop Progress & Condition Report. 2019. New York USDA-NASS.
4. Northeast Regional Climate Center

For more information about field crop and soil management, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office or NNY Cornell University Cooperative Extension Regional Field Crops and Soils Specialists, Mike Hunter and Kitty O'Neil.

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Our Mission

"The North Country Regional Ag Team aims to improve the productivity and viability of agricultural industries, people and communities in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton and Essex Counties by promoting productive, safe, economically and environmentally sustainable management practices and by providing assistance to industry, government, and other agencies in evaluating the impact of public policies affecting the industry."

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities