

Agrometeorological forecast for March

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After the short-term cold spell at the beginning of March, during most days of the first half of the month the agrometeorological conditions will be determined by temperatures close to the climatic norms and to the biological minimum required for the development of winter cereal crops. During this period, conditions for the onset of vegetation in the autumn-sown crops will be created in the southern regions of the country.

A substantial rise in temperatures and an activation of the vegetative processes in winter cereal crops and perennial plantations is forecast for the second half of the second ten-day period.

During the third ten-day period the development of agricultural crops will proceed at an accelerated pace, under above-normal thermal conditions. At the end of the month, wheat and barley will be predominantly in the tillering

stage, with a transition to stem elongation in the stands in some of the southern and southeastern regions of the country. In winter rapeseed, which has overwintered in the rosette stage, branching will be taking place on a mass scale.

In March, various phenological stages will be observed in fruit crops – from bud swelling and bud burst to the stages of green cluster and flowering in the early-flowering stone fruit species – almond, apricot, peach, in the southern regions and in places in the Danube Plain, where above-normal temperatures in February provoked premature development in the orchards.

In March, the forecast minimum temperatures, down to minus 7°C, will pose a risk to the most advanced fruit crops in the stages of bud formation and flowering.

The expected precipitation in March, close to the monthly norm, will increase soil moisture reserves even in the two-meter layer. At the end of February, in most of the arable regions the soil moisture reserves in the one-meter layer under winter cereal crops were at levels close to field capacity. Exceptions were observed in some places in the Danube Plain – agrometeorological stations: Bazovets, Novachene, Pavlikeni, and in the southeastern regions – agrometeorological stations: Sliven, Karnobat, Dolni Chiflik, where the soil moisture reserves in the one-meter soil layer under wheat were below 90% of field capacity.

In March, suitable conditions for carrying out seasonal agrotechnical activities – pre-sowing tillage and sowing of early and medium-early spring crops (vetch, oats, spring barley, peas); preventive pre-flowering treatments in orchards against a number of diseases – blossom blight (early brown rot), shot-hole disease, peach leaf curl, scab, etc., will be available during most days of the first and during the second half of the third ten-day period.

The forecast frequent precipitation during the second and the first half of the third ten-day period of March will maintain high moisture content in the upper soil layers and, for this reason, in some places in the southern regions the agrotechnical deadlines for sowing sunflower will be missed. The optimal period for sowing sunflower in Southern Bulgaria occurs between 15–20 March, and in the Danube Plain it begins in the middle of the third ten-day period of the month (25.03–5.04).

Source: NIMH