

In February, agro-meteorological conditions will vary from winter to spring

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Following the mild seasonal weather at the end of January and beginning of February, agro-meteorological conditions will once again acquire a winter character.

The expected cooling will restore dormancy in autumn-sown crops in the southern and eastern regions and will restrain the premature bud swelling in some early-flowering stone fruit species.

The expected snow precipitation will form a snow cover, which will provide protection for the late-sown winter cereal crops from the forecast low minimum temperatures - down to minus 11-12°C. These values, in the

absence of snow cover and with a more prolonged duration, are critical for part of the overwintering crops in the 1-2 leaf stage (Nikolaevo Agricultural Station).

During the second half of the first and throughout the second ten-day period, agro-meteorological conditions will be determined by temperatures around and above climatic norms. In most field regions, except for areas in Southern Bulgaria and along the Black Sea coast, the forecast average daily temperatures will not exceed the biological minimum necessary for the resumption of vegetative processes in winter cereal crops.

During the third ten-day period of February, a substantial temperature increase is forecast, and conditions for delayed vegetation in autumn-sown crops will be created in the eastern and southern regions. By the end of the month, the third leaf stage will predominate in wheat. Part of the crops in the Danube Plain, in the extreme eastern and southwestern regions (Novachene, Silistra, D. Chiflik, Karnobat, Sandanski) are overwintering in the tillering stage.

The above-normal temperatures during the third ten-day period are expected to provoke premature development also in some early-flowering stone fruit species (almond, apricot, peach) in the southern regions of the country.

In February, the expected above-normal precipitation will increase soil moisture reserves in the two-meter layer. The moisture reserves in the one-meter soil layer at the end of January in most field regions, except for areas in Eastern Bulgaria (Razgrad, Ts. Brod, D. Chiflik, Sliven, Chirpan), reached levels up to Field Capacity.

In February, more suitable conditions for carrying out pruning in vineyards and fruit plantations will be created during the second half of the month, and for top-dressing autumn-sown crops with nitrogen mineral fertilizers and for carrying out pre-sowing tillage on areas intended for sowing with early spring crops (peas, vetch, oats, spring barley) – during the third ten-day period.

Deadlines for the Ban on Nitrogen-Containing Fertilizers

Do not forget the periods during which the application of nitrogen-containing fertilizers is prohibited for field and permanent crops, fruit plantations, meadows, and permanent pastures according to the Water Act 2 "Protection of Waters from Pollution with Nitrates from Agricultural Sources". This requirement is particularly important for beneficiaries under the "Agroecology and Climate" and "Organic Farming" measures, as well as for all farmers whose land falls within the scope of nitrate-vulnerable zones. They are obliged to comply with the Nitrates Directive and the rules of good agricultural practice.

According to the requirements, there are specific periods during which the spreading of nitrogen-containing fertilizers is prohibited:

- For Southern Bulgaria, this is the period from November 1 to February 20 and covers the districts of Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Sliven, Smolyan, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Yambol, Sofia-city, Sofia-province, Pernik, and Kyustendil;
- For Northern Bulgaria, the period is from November 1 to February 25 and includes the districts of Varna, Vratsa, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Lovech, Montana, Pleven, Razgrad, Ruse, Silistra, Targovishte, and Shumen;
- From November 1 to February 5, fertilization of annual crops sown in autumn is not permitted;
- From November 1 to February 25 – on vacant areas prepared for sowing and planting crops;
- When establishing new fruit plantations, nitrogen-containing fertilizers are not applied from November 15 to February 25.

The annual norm for nitrogen-containing fertilizers, including organic and mineral (inorganic), is up to 17 kilograms of active substance per decare. Farmers are obliged to keep fertilization logs, in which the fertilization rate, the name, type, and quantity of the applied fertilizers are recorded, as well as the results of preliminary soil analyses and the recommendations of fertilization specialists.