

PASTURE AND LIVESTOCK CONDITION, JANUARY 1, 2003



Hawaii County

Hilo and Puna: Increased rainfall activity, during December, improved pasture condition to mostly good. However, cooler temperatures,

shorter days, and light showers at the higher elevation kept the pastures in poor to fair condition. Stock water levels were still low. Cattle and calves were in good condition. Year-to-date rainfall totals ranged from 75 percent to 106 percent of normal.

Ka'u: Rainfall for the month was very light and as a result most pastures were dry or drying and in only fair to poor condition. Most lower elevation pastures had adequate dry feed on hand and higher elevation pastures were turning brown. A few isolated pastures received some showers which stimulated some new grass growth. Cattle and calves were in good condition with the addition of supplements. Due to heavy rains earlier in the year, rainfall totals for the two rain gage stations in Ka'u were at normal levels.

Kona: Very dry conditions prevailed throughout the Kona district. Some light showers at the upper elevations helped to keep pastures in fair to good condition, but cooler temperatures along with cloudy afternoons slowed any new grass growth. On the other hand, coastal pastures in South and Central Kona were turning brown, while North Kona coastal pastures were dry and in poorer condition. Soil moisture levels were low, while stock water supplies were decreasing. Cattle and calves were in fair to good condition with increased use of supplements to help maintain their weight. Dry conditions continue to plague the Kona district as rainfall totals for the year were just over 50 percent of normal.

Kohala: Very dry conditions continued through December as rainfall totals remained below normal levels. Showers over windward areas helped to maintain these pastures in fair to good condition, but most other pastures in the district were dry or drying. Lower elevation leeward coastal pastures around Kawaihae and Mahukona were very dry with very little feed available. The every expanding area of bare pastureland has allowed the proliferation of the Senecio flowering weed. Stock water supplies were diminishing. Although the cattle and calves were in fair to good condition there was an increasing need to feed supplements to the livestock located in the drier areas. One rancher reported some death losses due to unknown reasons. Rainfall totals for the year ranged from a low of 34 percent at the Kahua Ranch rain gage to amounts near or above normal at the other rain gages.

Hamakua: Sunny days with very light showers had

most coastal and mid-elevation pastures in fair to poor condition, however, cooler temperatures and shorter days slowed any further grass growth. Upper elevation pastures were in generally poor condition. Water hauling was needed as stock water supplies were low. Cattle and calves were in fair to good condition, with the need for some light supplemental feeding. Rainfall at the Honokaa rain gage station was at 134 percent of normal.

Honolulu County

Rainfall totals were very light, as nearly all rain gage stations recorded rainfall at below 30 percent of normal for the month. However, timely intermittent trade showers kept many windward pastures in fair to good condition. Leeward pastures, on the other hand, were drier and in poor to fair condition. Cattle and calves were in fair to good condition. A very dry November and December resulted in rainfall totals at all rain gages to finish the year below normal levels. The two rain gages recording rainfall amounts nearest normal levels were at Wilson Tunnel and Luluku with 98 and 89 percent, respectively.

Kauai County

Dry conditions continued into December as all of the island's rain gages recorded rainfall totals below 50 percent of normal, except for the Wainiha gage, which had rainfall at 56 percent of normal. Most pastures continued dry and in fair condition. Cattle and calves were in fair to good condition. Year-to-date rainfall totals for the island were above 50 percent for all rain gages. However, because of wet conditions during early 2002, two rain gage stations recorded rainfall totals above normal levels for the year, Hanapepe at 107 percent and Wailua at 104 percent of normal.

Maui County

As with the other islands a dry December, probably due to the onset of El Nino conditions in the Pacific, has most pastures drying out. However, unlike the other islands timely showers combined with sunny, dry conditions has helped to maintain windward pastures. Cooler conditions at the upper elevations have retarded any new grass growth. Although leeward pastures were dry, they were still able to provide sufficient supplies of forage. On the whole, pastures were in fair to good condition. Cattle and calves were in fair to good condition. As an average the year-to-date rainfall total for Maui county was the best in the State. The Haiku rain gage recorded the lowest percentage with 65 percent, while the Pukalani rain gage recorded rainfall at 125 percent of normal. The other rain gages recorded rainfall totals at about 80 percent of normal or higher.

Rainfall Data Source: *National Weather Service Forecast Office. NWS-NOAA.*

Disclaimer: *Data from Hydronet state-wide network of automated rain gages. Gages are not certified and rainfall information is provided for informational purposes only.*