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**(S.D.)-The Dakotas Have Have Mixed Winter Wheat Snow Cover**



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/31/2013 07:34 AM

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - North Dakota winter wheat farmers are enjoying better snow cover protection for their crops than their counterparts in South Dakota.

The Agriculture Department says protection for winter wheat in North Dakota is rated 28 percent poor, 44 percent adequate and 28 percent excellent. That compares with 84 percent poor in South Dakota and only 16 percent adequate.

The average snow depth in North Dakota at the start of the week was 4.1 inches, compared with 2 inches in South Dakota, which has been harder-hit by drought.

Winter wheat is planted in the fall and begins to grow before turning dormant when winter cold arrives. Snow covering the ground helps insulate the young plants that reawaken with warmer weather in the spring and grow to maturity.