



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures for 6:10 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights – Monday - May 20, 2024

- In the **West**, a significantly elevated wildfire threat exists in much of **Arizona** and **New Mexico**, due to low humidity levels, gusty winds, and drying fuels. Meanwhile, hot weather in the **Southwest** contrasts with chilly conditions across the **northern half of the western U.S.** Scattered frost was reported early today in several areas, including portions of **eastern Washington** and the **Snake River Plain of Idaho**.
- On the **Plains**, overnight thunderstorms—heaviest in **Kansas** and portions of neighboring states—have weakened and largely shifted into the **Midwest**. Sunday’s peak thunderstorm wind gusts in **Kansas** included 82 mph in **Russell**, 73 mph in **Garden City**, and 65 mph in **Emporia**. Early today, mostly dry weather prevails between storm systems, although heat on the **southern Plains** contrasts with chilly conditions on the **northern Plains**.
- In the **Corn Belt**, showers stretch from the **upper Great Lakes region southward to the Ozark Plateau**. The rain is perpetuating spotty fieldwork delays that left the nation’s intended corn acreage 49% planted—5 percentage points behind the 5-year average—on May 12, a little over a week ago. However, corn and soybean planting operations are currently proceeding in the **eastern Corn Belt**, amid very warm conditions.
- In the **South**, building heat is complicating recovery efforts in areas—such as **Houston, Texas**—battered by last week’s severe thunderstorms. In **Texas**, nearly one-quarter million customers remain without electricity. Today’s maximum temperatures will top 90°F in **southern Florida** and from the **western Gulf Coast region to the Mississippi Delta**. Aside from a few showers in **Florida**, dry weather accompanies the early-season heat.

Outlook: Later today, showers and thunderstorms will return across portions of the **Plains**, especially **Nebraska** and environs. By Tuesday, another round of rain will overspread the **upper Midwest**. Subsequently, additional rain will fall in the **central and eastern U.S.**, boosting 5-day totals to 1 to 3 inches or more across the **western Corn Belt**, as well as the **mid-South**. In addition, locally severe thunderstorms—featuring large hail, high winds, and isolated tornadoes—will continue to plague various parts of the country. In contrast, hot, mostly dry weather will prevail for the remainder of the week on the **southern High Plains** and from **southern Texas to the southern Atlantic Coast**. Dry weather will also stretch from **California to the southern Rockies**, while occasional rain and snow showers will dot the **Northwest**. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for May 25 – 29 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures across the **northern High Plains** and much of the **West**, while warmer-than-normal weather will prevail in the **South, East, and lower Midwest**. Meanwhile, near- or above-normal precipitation across most of the country should contrast with drier-than-normal conditions in portions of the **Southwest**.

Contact: Brad Rippey, Agricultural Meteorologist, USDA/OCE/WAOB, Washington, D.C. (202-720-2397)

Web Site: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/TODAYSWX.pdf>

Product issued by USDA’s World Agricultural Outlook Board, Office of the Chief Economist.

The outlook is an interpretation of National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts and products.

Next scheduled noon release of the “Agricultural Weather Highlights” will be Wednesday, June 12, 2024. On other weekdays, this product will be posted by 9 am ET.