

International Weather and Crop Summary
NOAA/USDA Joint Agricultural Weather Facility

September 21 - 27, 2008

International (202) 720-9807

HIGHLIGHTS

FSU-WESTERN: Early-week rain maintained wet soils in Ukraine, further delaying fieldwork for summer crop harvesting and winter grain planting.

FSU-NEW LANDS: Mostly dry weather aided spring grain harvesting in Russia and Kazakhstan.

EUROPE: Dry weather in western crop areas favored fieldwork, while additional rainfall in southeastern Europe alleviated drought.

MIDDLE EAST: Showers in Turkey provided much-needed topsoil moisture for winter crop planting and emergence.

AUSTRALIA: Rain benefited reproductive winter grains in western and eastern Australia, while relatively dry weather in southern

Australia was unfavorable for winter wheat and barley.

EAST ASIA: Mostly dry weather aided harvesting throughout China, while Typhoon Hagupit made landfall mid-week in southern China.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Monsoon showers diminished somewhat across Indochina, while Typhoon Hagupit caused flooding in the Philippines and northern Vietnam.

SOUTH ASIA: Drier conditions returned to central and northern India, while heavy rain in northeastern growing areas maintained ample moisture supplies for rice.

ARGENTINA: Warmth and dryness maintained stress on vegetative to reproductive winter wheat but rain was approaching at week's end.

BRAZIL: Showery weather promoted flowering of coffee and helped to condition fields for planting soybeans and other summer crops.

CANADA: Conditions were favorable for harvesting spring crops in most Prairie farming areas.

MEXICO: Rain boosted reservoir levels in winter farming areas of the south and east.

FSU-WESTERN: Early in the week, widespread rain (25-50 mm or more) maintained wet soils across most of Ukraine, further delaying summer crop (corn, sunflower, and sugar beet) harvesting and winter grain planting. Drier weather prevailed across the country during the second half of the week, allowing some resumption in fieldwork in areas with lighter soils. In Russia, light to moderate showers (5-27 mm) overspread the Southern District, causing only brief delays in fieldwork. Elsewhere, high pressure ushered in unseasonably cold, dry weather to most of northern Russia (Central and Volga Districts) helping late-season fieldwork but slowing winter grain development. Furthermore, extreme minimum temperatures at or below freezing (-4 to 0 degrees C) were observed across most of northern Russia, prompting cold hardening in winter grains. In Belarus, dry weather aided summer crop harvesting in the north, while wet weather (25-50 mm or more) continued to hamper fieldwork across the south. Weekly temperatures averaged 1 to 3 degrees C below normal in Ukraine and northern Russia and near normal in Belarus and the Southern District in Russia.

FSU-NEW LANDS: Spring grain harvesting was well underway in Russia and nearly complete in Kazakhstan. Mostly dry weather helped harvest activities across most of Russia and Kazakhstan. Significant precipitation (10 mm or more) was confined to the eastern portion of the Urals District, occurring at week's end. Weekly temperatures across the region averaged 1 to 4 degrees C below normal, slowing the maturation of unharvested crops. In cotton producing areas of Central Asia, seasonably dry weather aided harvest activities.

EUROPE: Dry weather across western Europe contrasted with widespread showers in eastern Europe and the Balkans. A broad ridge of high pressure over Scandinavia gradually shifted westward, maintaining dry conditions from western Germany into France and England. Consequently, fieldwork (including small grain harvesting and winter crop planting) progressed at a rapid pace following earlier rain-related delays. As the high shifted westward, showers (5-25 mm) returned to the eastern half of Europe, slowing fieldwork but maintaining adequate topsoil moisture for planting and establishment of winter wheat and rapeseed. In southeastern Europe, another week of moderate to locally heavy rain (10-60 mm) alleviated drought and increased topsoil moisture for winter crop planting and establishment. Across the remainder of southern Europe, dry weather in northern Italy favored corn and soybean harvesting while light to moderate rain (5-50 mm) on the Iberian Peninsula boosted irrigation reserves for upcoming winter wheat planting.

MIDDLE EAST: Showers eased drought in Turkey, while long-term drought remained entrenched over the rest of the region. An upper-air low triggered beneficial rainfall (10-75 mm) across most of Turkey's primary winter wheat districts, although showers were lighter (less than 10 mm) in portions of western Turkey. Nevertheless, the rain provided topsoil moisture for the planting and establishment of winter grains and signaled a favorable start to the fall-winter rainy season. Showers (1-20 mm) also spilled into northern-most portions of Syria, Iraq, and Iran, although most eastern crop areas remained dry; widespread, soaking rainfall will be needed over the upcoming weeks to recharge depleted groundwater tables and irrigation reserves on the heels of last season's severe drought.

AUSTRALIA: Widespread, soaking rains (25-50 mm, locally more) overspread Western Australia, providing a welcomed boost in topsoil moisture for reproductive winter grains. Soaking rains during September typically help solidify yield expectations, but a freeze (minimum temperatures as low as -3 degrees C) in isolated parts of Western Australia on Sep 22 may have reduced the yield potential of some crops, at least partially offsetting the benefits of the soaking rains. In South Australia and Victoria, widely scattered showers (1-9 mm, locally near 15 mm) provided little additional moisture for winter wheat and barley. The recent, below-normal rainfall in these states has been unfavorable for reproductive winter grains, likely reducing the yield potential of these crops. In contrast, widespread showers in New South Wales and southern Queensland (10-31 mm) favored reproductive to filling winter grains. The rain in eastern Australia was also beneficial for summer crops, increasing topsoil moisture and irrigation supplies for cotton and sorghum. Summer crops are typically planted in eastern Australia in September and October. Temperatures averaged near normal across the Australia wheat belt.

EAST ASIA: Dry weather continued to favor crop maturation and harvesting throughout China, while Typhoon Hagupit made landfall in southern China. In Manchuria, mostly dry weather favored corn and soybean harvesting, although a freeze in parts of Heilongjiang and southern Jilin likely stunted further development of maturing crops. Generally mild, sunny weather aided summer crop harvesting across the North China Plain, but occasional showers (1-25 mm) later in the week likely caused some minor harvest delays. Cotton in particular, which is sensitive to wetness during harvest, has thus far fared well as rainfall has been light and intermittent during the harvest period. Meanwhile, farther south, mostly dry weather continued to aid rice harvesting. Along the southern coast, however, Typhoon Hagupit made landfall mid-week in Guangdong province as a category four typhoon (winds 114-135 kts). In addition to the high winds, heavy rainfall (50-200 mm) caused flooding in predominantly sugarcane areas.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Monsoon showers waned across much of Indochina, while Typhoon Hagupit brought heavy showers to the northern Philippines. In Thailand, somewhat drier weather eased wetness from several weeks of inundating rains, with soil moisture remaining favorable for reproductive rice that was nearing maturation. Likewise in Vietnam, mostly dry weather in the south favored winter rice planting, while Typhoon Hagupit caused flooding late in the week across the Red River Delta. Earlier in the week, Typhoon Hagupit passed north of the Philippines bringing torrential rainfall (100-400 mm, locally over 400 mm) to Luzon and renewing flooding in rice and corn areas on the western side of the island. In addition to the flooding, Hagupit caused further damage with category two strength winds in excess of 83 knots. Meanwhile, more seasonable rainfall amounts occurred in the rest of the country, maintaining adequate to abundant soil moisture for rice and corn. Seasonable rainfall (10-100 mm) in oil palm areas of Indonesia and Malaysia maintained favorable soil moisture, while causing little delays in harvesting.

SOUTH ASIA: The monsoon shifted abruptly eastward, while a slow-moving disturbance brought locally heavy rain to eastern growing areas. After a late-season resurgence, strong westerly winds aloft (above 15,000 ft) pushed the monsoon rapidly eastward, bringing dry weather to much of central and northern India. The respite from recent rainfall favored reproductive to filling summer crops and allowed saturated fields to dry. Meanwhile, a slow-moving monsoon low along India's east coast triggered heavy rain (50-150 mm) across northeastern portions of the region, maintaining ample moisture supplies for rice. In southern India, light showers (10-40 mm) benefited cotton and groundnuts in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, while dry conditions prevailed in Tamil Nadu. In Pakistan, early-week showers (1-15 mm) in northern growing areas gave way to dry weather by week's end, promoting summer crop maturation and harvesting. Sunny weather in southern Pakistan favored early rice and cotton harvesting.

ARGENTINA: Mostly dry, warmer-than-normal weather (temperatures averaging 2-3 degrees C above normal, with highs reaching 30 degrees C locally) stressed vegetative to reproductive winter grains throughout the main growing areas of central and northern Argentina. Crop prospects were particularly poor in sections of Cordoba and Santa Fe that missed last week's beneficial rain. However, on September 28, beneficial rain was moving into the region, promising to help stabilize crop conditions and provide timely moisture for reproduction (additional information will appear in next week's *Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin*). Summer crop planting is reportedly underway in northern growing areas, and fieldwork should become more widespread in southern areas during the months of October and November. Planting of second-crop soybeans (sown after winter wheat is harvested) can last into January.

BRAZIL: Showers (5-25 mm, locally exceeding 50 mm) continued throughout much of central and southern Brazil. In farming areas of the southeast (notably Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais), the moisture encouraged flowering of coffee and citrus, with the heaviest amounts (greater than 50 mm) concentrated over the plantation areas of south-central Minas Gerais. The rain in the Center-West region (Mato Grosso, Goias, and northern Mato Grosso do Sul) boosted topsoil moisture for germination of soybeans and other summer crops that are in the early stages of planting. Light to moderate showers (5-35 mm) maintained moisture for late development of immature winter grains in Rio Grande do Sul but the moisture was untimely for the portion of the crop that was ready for harvest. Near- to below-normal temperatures (weekly temperatures averaging up to 3 degrees C below normal) accompanied the moisture across south-central Brazil and on September 22, some locations in southern Parana may have experienced an unusually late spring frost. Wheat in this part of the region should be filling to maturing, limiting potential impacts from a freeze.

CANADA: Dry weather supported harvesting of spring grains and oilseeds in most of Saskatchewan and in neighboring locations of Alberta and Manitoba. In addition, the first widespread autumn freeze was recorded in eastern Alberta and western Saskatchewan, aiding dry down and maturation. Despite the occurrence of freezing temperatures in nearly all major growing areas, weekly temperatures averaged near to above normal across the Prairies, with highs briefly reaching the middle and upper 20s degrees C. An exception was the northern growing areas of Alberta, where highs only reached the upper teens degrees C. Rain (5-25 mm or more) hampered fieldwork in Alberta's northern growing areas and in several locations on the southern Prairies, including Manitoba's Red River Valley; however, harvesting reportedly made good progress in many of these areas prior to the onset of the wet weather, helping to mitigate the impact of the damp conditions.

In eastern Canada, mostly dry, warmer-than-normal weather aided dry down and harvesting of summer crops and forage, with mid-week highs in the lower and middle 20s degrees C. Temperatures stayed well above freezing (lows ranging from 5 to 10 degrees C) in the main soybean and corn areas of southwestern Ontario.

MEXICO: Moderate to heavy rain (25-50 mm, locally exceeding 100 mm) continued throughout eastern and southern Mexico, increasing irrigation reserves for winter-grown agriculture. The heaviest rain (greater than 200 mm), however, caused some flooding in southern Veracruz and Tabasco. Elsewhere, locally heavy rain (greater than 100 mm) continued throughout the northeast (primarily Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon) but drier conditions prevailed in the northwest as the monsoon continued to weaken. Amounts greater than 25 mm were generally confined to southern Sinaloa, Durango, and Zacatecas. Heavier showers (25-50 mm or more) fell along the southwestern Pacific Coastal areas of Nayarit and western Jalisco but rainfall tapered off across the southern Plateau, where corn and other rain-fed summer crops are filling to maturing.