

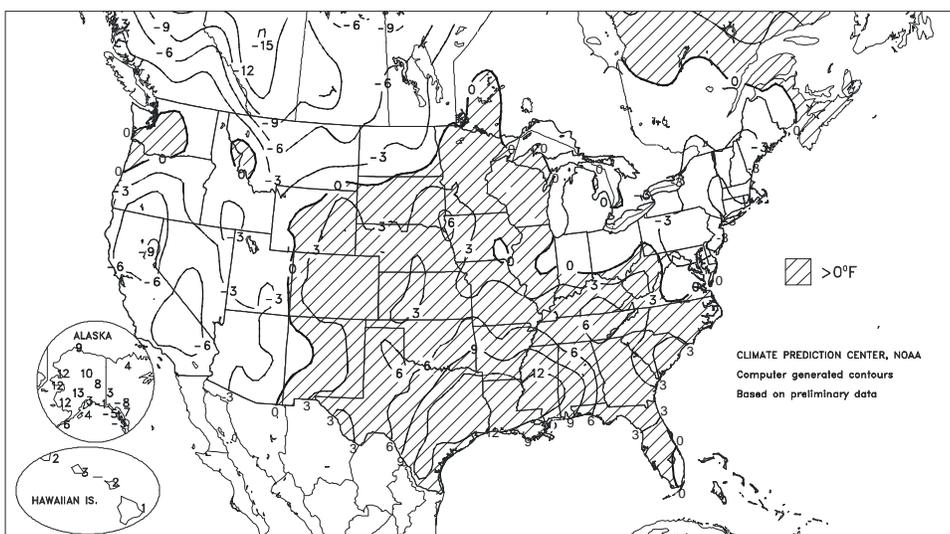
(Continued from front cover)

eastward to the western slopes of the Appalachians, widespread, locally heavy rainfall slowed fieldwork but boosted soil moisture reserves for cool-season pastures and winter grains. Harvesting advanced more quickly in the western Corn Belt, where warm, mostly dry weather prevailed. Farther south, record warmth prevailed in the western Gulf Coast region, where weekly temperatures averaged as much as 15°F above normal and readings frequently topped 90°F. A variety of conditions prevailed in the Atlantic Coast States, ranging from cool, dry weather in northern New England to above-normal temperatures and occasional showers in the Southeast. In between, cool weather and persistent showers affected the northern Mid-Atlantic region. Weekly temperatures averaged at least 5°F below normal in parts of the Northeast, northern High Plains, and West.

Western storminess shattered several long-standing precipitation records. The Nevada Division of Forestry at Mt. Charleston, near Las Vegas, netted 9.78 inches of rain on October 20. Nevada's previous 24-hour precipitation record was established on January 31, 1963, when 7.13 inches fell in the Sierra Nevada near Lake Tahoe at the Mt. Rose Highway Station. Farther east, October 21 was the wettest October day on record in Utah locations such as Kanab (2.67 inches; previously, 1.75 inches on October 5, 1925), Zion National Park (2.40 inches; previously, 1.48 inches on October 31, 1992), and Cedar City (1.70 inches; previously, 1.40 inches on October 13, 1996). October 21 was the wettest day on record in Milford, UT, where 3.00 inches fell (previously, 1.80 inches on July 3, 1934). Elsewhere in Utah, Zion National Park's Lava Point netted 10.18 inches of rain from October 17-21, including 7.13 inches in a 24-hour period. Nearby Midway Valley, UT, in Cedar Breaks National Monument, measured 10.80 inches of precipitation and 45 inches of snow. Alta, in Utah's Wasatch Range, received 4 to 5 feet of snow. Farther south, 5.5 inches of snow blanketed Flagstaff, AZ, on October 21. Last year, Flagstaff's first measurable snowfall (0.4 inches) occurred on December 8, and the city's season-to-date snowfall finally topped 5 inches on January 20, 2004. In southern California, 48-hour (October 18-20) rainfall exceeded 10 inches in a few locations, including Mt. Baldy (10.37 inches). Santa Ana, CA, collected 3.15 inches of rain on October 20, surpassing its record for the entire month of October (1.89 inches in 1957). The wettest October day on record in Alpine, CA (2.32 inches on October 20), pushed the month-to-date rainfall to an October-record sum of 6.57 inches (previously, 3.94 inches in 1974). Similarly, southern California's Mt. Palomar collected 6.26 inches of rain in a 24-hour period on October 19-20 (previously, the 24-hour October record was 3.66 inches on October 29, 1974), boosting its 5-day total to 12.02 inches. Mt. Palomar's former October monthly record of 4.04 inches was established in 1974.

Departure of Average Temperature from Normal (°F)

OCT 17 - 23, 2004



Finally, San Diego, CA, clocked a southerly wind gust to 39 m.p.h. on October 20, breaking its monthly record (31 m.p.h. from the north) established on October 8, 1961.

Heavy rain also fell from the Mississippi Valley eastward to the Appalachians, setting a few daily records. London, KY, received 2.01 inches on October 18, followed the next day by daily-record totals in locations such as Muscle Shoals, AL (3.05 inches), and Chattanooga, TN (2.17 inches). Another round of rain toward week's end produced daily records in Watertown, SD (1.15 inches on October 22), and West Plains, MO (1.55 inches on October 23). Late in the week, heavy rain also developed in parts of Texas, where daily records included 3.60 inches (on October 22) in Waco and 3.43 inches (on October 23) in Austin-Bergstrom. Prior to the arrival of Texas' rain, summer-like heat prevailed. Dallas-Ft. Worth (93°F) posted a daily-record high on October 18, followed the next day by record highs of 96°F in McAllen and 94°F in Houston, Waco, and Harlingen. In fact, Houston logged record highs on 4 consecutive days (94, 93, 93, and 91°F) from October 19-22. Farther north, the week ended in Cheyenne, WY, without the season's first freeze (32°F or lower). Cheyenne's latest first freeze was observed on October 27, 1963.

Cool weather in southeastern Alaska (weekly temperatures as much as 5°F below normal) contrasted with mild conditions (more than 10°F above normal in many locations) across the Alaskan mainland. On October 19, daily-record lows were set at several locations in southeastern Alaska, including Juneau (20°F). Meanwhile, daily-record highs included 53°F (on October 18) in King Salmon and 41°F (on October 20) in McGrath. Precipitation continued to ease long-term dryness in east-central Alaska, where Fairbanks netted 4 inches of snow and a daily-record precipitation total (0.36 inch) on October 19. Meanwhile, warm weather accompanied scattered showers in Hawaii. On Kauai, Lihue (86°F) posted a daily-record high on October 20. On the Big Island, weekly rainfall at Hilo totaled 4.41 inches, including 2.51 inches on October 19.