

International Weather and Crop Summary

NOAA/USDA Joint Agricultural Weather Facility

October 25 - 31, 2009

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HIGHLIGHTS

FSU-WESTERN: Wet weather maintained abundant soil moisture for winter grain establishment but slowed late-season fieldwork.

FSU-NEW LANDS: The coldest air of the season signalled the end of the growing season and ushered winter crops into dormancy.

EUROPE: Dry weather reduced soil moisture reserves for winter grain emergence over most of Europe, although lingering showers in eastern-most growing districts slowed summer crop harvesting.

MIDDLE EAST: Rain and mountain snow boosted soil moisture and irrigation reserves for crop establishment.

NORTHWEST AFRICA: Dry, hot weather facilitated winter grain planting.

SOUTH ASIA: The northeast monsoon was well established in India, bringing warm, dry weather for winter crop planting and summer crop harvesting.

EAST ASIA: Late-week showers provided beneficial moisture to winter wheat and rapeseed.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Dry weather aided crop harvesting in Indochina, while Tropical Cyclone Mirinae made landfall in the Philippines.

AUSTRALIA: Much-needed rain benefited summer crops in eastern Australia, while elsewhere in the wheat belt showers helped maintain good to excellent winter grain prospects.

ARGENTINA: Heat and dryness stressed crops and pastures in the north but conditions favored summer crop planting farther south.

BRAZIL: A drying trend brought some relief to the southern wheat belt.

MEXICO: Seasonably drier weather prevailed in the northwest, but seasonal rains continued along the Gulf Coast.

SOUTH AFRICA: Conditions remained overall favorable for early corn planting.

FSU-WESTERN: Wet weather continued over most crop areas, although pockets of dryness prevailed in the south. A slow-moving storm system produced widespread rain and snow (10-40 mm liquid equivalent) from Belarus and northern Ukraine into Kazakhstan and central Russia. The precipitation provided additional soil moisture for winter grain development but hampered late summer crop harvesting. In contrast, rain was lighter (less than 10 mm) in Russia's Southern District, keeping soil moisture levels unfavorably low for winter grain establishment. However, cooler weather (nighttime lows from -8 to -3 degrees C) replaced last week's unusually warm conditions, resulting in cold hardening of winter grains.

FSU-NEW LANDS: Cold, snowy conditions ended the growing season and ushered winter crops into dormancy. A strong cold front swept across the region, bringing an abrupt end to the recent spell of unusually warm weather. In Russia's Siberia District, the stretch of unseasonable warmth (daily average temperatures up to 5 degrees C above normal) began on September 20 and lasted until October 22. Arctic air (nighttime temperatures as low as -20 degrees C) surged into the region on October 23, signaling the end of the growing season; however, 5 to 10 cm of fresh snow cover protected winter crops from widespread freeze-related damage. Likewise, cold, snowy weather (5-15 mm liquid equivalent) in northern Kazakhstan and Russia's Urals District ushered winter crops into dormancy. *This will be the last weekly summary of the season; coverage will resume in the spring, 2010.*

EUROPE: Dry weather settled over most of Europe, although unsettled conditions lingered in eastern- and northern-most crop districts. Precipitation amounts were generally less than 5 mm over Europe's primary crop areas, promoting corn and sugarbeet harvesting. In addition, temperatures averaged 1 to 5 degrees C above normal, encouraging additional vegetative growth of winter wheat, barley, and rapeseed. However, the dryness was unwelcomed in Spain and northern Italy, where irrigation reserves remained below normal due to a drier-than-normal fall. Locally heavy showers (10-50 mm) in northern England and Ireland slowed fieldwork in these northern-most crop areas. In addition, showers (10-40 mm) from Greece into central Romania also slowed harvesting but were generally beneficial for winter grain establishment.

MIDDLE EAST: The first storm of the season brought wet, mild weather to much of the region. A slow-moving area of low pressure over the eastern Mediterranean produced a wide swath of moderate to heavy rain and mountain snow (10-120 mm liquid equivalent, locally more) from western Turkey into northwestern Iran. The precipitation was beneficial for winter crop establishment and provided much-needed recharge to soil moisture and irrigation reserves. Rain was lighter (less than 10 mm) over central and southern Iraq, and bypassed northeastern Iran completely; these areas will need precipitation over the upcoming weeks to ensure proper crop establishment. Average temperatures 2 to 5 degrees C above normal added late vegetative growth to wheat and barley in northern growing districts, with no hard freezes reported during the past week.

NORTHWEST AFRICA: Mostly sunny skies and above-normal temperatures promoted early winter grain planting. Topsoil and subsoil moisture remained adequate for planting and establishment following one of the wettest Septembers on record, although daytime highs in excess of 30 degrees C in Morocco accelerated evaporative losses during the past week. Cooler conditions prevailed in Tunisia, where temperatures averaged up to 4 degrees C below normal.

SOUTH ASIA: The seasonal shift to the northeast monsoon was well underway across India, bringing warm, dry conditions to much of the country. Winter wheat planting advanced throughout the north with dry weather and maximum temperatures between 30 and 35 degrees C. In Rajasthan, however, winter rapeseed planting continued under less than ideal conditions with maximum temperatures approaching 35 degrees C; supplemental irrigation was necessary to aid rapeseed germination and establishment. Meanwhile, the warm, dry weather aided summer crop harvesting in central India. In southern India, the southwest monsoon remained entrenched and provided 10 to 50 mm of rainfall to late-season cotton and groundnuts.

EAST ASIA: Dry weather for much of the week gave way to showers by week's end across central China. High pressure brought dry weather and maximum temperatures between 25 and 30 degrees C for much of the week to the North China Plain and Yangtze Valley, benefiting winter wheat and rapeseed planting. By the end of the period, however, a cold front ushered in 10 to 25 mm of rain, providing beneficial moisture for winter crop emergence and establishment. Additionally, the front brought dry, cold air (below -5 degrees C) to Manchuria, aiding corn and soybean drydown. Meanwhile, the North Pacific high pressure area was positioned unseasonably far to the north, bringing drier-than-normal conditions to sugarcane areas of southern China. Elsewhere in the region, showers (10-100 mm) in North Korea and parts of Honshu, Japan, slowed the last of the rice harvesting.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Mostly dry weather aided harvest activities in Indochina, while Tropical Cyclone Mirinae crossed the Philippines. Dry weather in Thailand benefited rice maturation and harvesting. Similarly, dry weather in Vietnam favored coffee harvesting in the Central Highlands. At the same time, seasonal showers (20-50 mm) provided favorable moisture to winter rice in southern Vietnam. In the Philippines, Tropical Cyclone Mirinae made landfall in southeastern Luzon as a category 2 typhoon (83-95 kts) late in the week before exiting into the South China Sea by the end of the period. The heaviest rainfall for the week occurred in eastern and southern Luzon where over 100 mm renewed flooding in mainly urban areas. Mirinae was the sixth tropical cyclone of the year to make landfall in the Philippines, where on average, 9 tropical cyclones make landfall annually. With the seasonal southward migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), showers continued to increase across Indonesia and Malaysia. Over 50 mm of rain boosted moisture for oil palm in key producing areas. Additionally, the rain increased soil moisture for rice transplanting that typically begins in early November across Java, Indonesia.

AUSTRALIA: Wet weather overspread much of central and southern Queensland and northern New South Wales, bringing the first significant rainfall to the region since early September. The soaking rains (10-50 mm or more) provided a much-needed boost in topsoil moisture for summer crop germination and emergence and helped stabilize reservoir levels for irrigated crops. Although the wet weather stalled winter wheat harvesting, the rainfall was overall beneficial and will likely encourage farmers to sow additional cotton and sorghum in its wake. In southeastern and Western Australia, winter grains and oilseeds are generally in the filling to maturing stages of development. Scattered, light showers (3-22 mm) fell across these regions, helping to maintain good to excellent crop conditions and yield prospects. Temperatures in the Australia wheat belt averaged about 2 to 3 degrees C above normal.

ARGENTINA: Mostly dry, warmer-than-normal weather dominated major agricultural areas of central and northern Argentina. Temperatures averaged 2 to 4 degrees C above normal in the country's southern and eastern farming areas (including Entre Rios and most locations in Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, and La Pampa), hastening summer crop germination and advancing winter grains toward maturity. However, moisture remained limited for agriculture in La Pampa and nearby locations in Buenos Aires, and rain will be needed before corn and soybean planting can commence following the harvest of winter wheat and barley. Soybean planting usually occurs through the early part of January, so time remains for most farmers to plant within an acceptable window of opportunity. Farther north, unseasonable heat (weekly temperatures averaging 5-8 degrees C above normal, with highs reaching the middle 40s degrees C) stressed winter crops, pastures, and livestock from central Cordoba northward. In the western half of this region (including Santiago del Estero, Salta, and western Chaco), dry soils from the lingering, long-term drought prevented planting of rain-fed summer grains, oilseeds, and cotton. The unseasonable warmth in the eastern half of the region advanced development of cotton and other summer row crops, but additional rain will be needed soon.

BRAZIL: Beneficial rain continued throughout central Brazil as a long-awaited drying trend developed over the south. Rain (10-25 mm, locally exceeding 50 mm) was recorded early in the week from Rio Grande do Sul to Parana and Mato Grosso do Sul; drier conditions prevailed for the remainder of the week, bringing some relief from excessive wetness to unharvested winter wheat. The break in the rainfall will also allow soybean planting to advance. In addition, above-normal temperatures (highs reaching the lower and middle 30s degrees C) accompanied the dryness, helping to dry excessively wet fields. Elsewhere, moderate to heavy rain (25-50 mm, locally exceeding 100 mm) continued from Mato Grosso eastward through Minas Gerais, maintaining overall favorable moisture levels for newly planted summer grains, oilseeds, and cotton, as well as other forms of agriculture, including coffee and citrus. Somewhat heavier rain (greater than 100 mm) extended northward from central Minas Gerais into interior soybean and cotton areas of Tocantins and Bahia, maintaining abundant moisture levels for emerging crops but causing temporary delays in fieldwork. The wet weather resulted in slightly below-normal weekly average temperatures, but highs still reached the lower 30s degrees C on several days in the northeastern interior. Heavy rain was also recorded in coffee and cocoa areas of southeastern Bahia but drier conditions prevailed along Brazil's northeastern tip, favoring sugarcane harvesting and other seasonal fieldwork. Localized flooding was

possible in the vicinity of Espirito Santo, where weekly rainfall totaled more than 200 mm.

MEXICO: Seasonably drier conditions prevailed throughout the northwest, ending the recent pattern of tropical showers that gave an unseasonable late-year boost to the region's reservoirs. On average, northwestern reservoir levels are at about 85 percent capacity as of October 20, below last year but comparable to other recent years. Wheat planting should begin soon in these areas. Elsewhere, moderate to heavy rain (10-50 mm or more) continued in the vicinity of Veracruz, increasing irrigation reserves for winter agriculture. A late-season surge of moisture generated unseasonably heavy rain (25-50 mm or more) over eastern sections of the southern plateau and in the states along the southern Pacific Coast (Guerrero to Chiapas). The rain increased reservoir levels for the upcoming winter vegetable season but came too late for most rain-fed summer crops.

SOUTH AFRICA: Conditions remained overall favorable for corn and other summer crops in key eastern agricultural areas. Moderate to heavy rain (10-25 mm or more) fell over a large section of the eastern corn belt, including eastern Free State, southern Mpumalanga, and nearby commercial farming areas of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Corn and other crops are usually planted in these areas in October and November, making the rain especially timely. Seasonable warmth (highs mostly in the upper 20s degrees C) benefited emerging summer crops, pastures, and filling winter grains across the corn belt. Elsewhere, beneficial showers (exceeding 10 mm) also overspread outlying production areas of eastern North West and Limpopo, with heavier rain (25-50 mm or more) covering a broad area of coastal KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape. In Western Cape, scattered showers (2-30 mm) reduced irrigation requirements of fruits and vegetables but likely hampered seasonal fieldwork.