

FEATURE – STORMIER AND COOLER THAN NORMAL IN MARCH

INTRO: A U-S-D-A meteorologist says it will be stormier and cooler March across much of the nation. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more.

MARCH WEATHER WILL BE STORMIER THAN NORMAL FROM CALIFORNIA INTO THE SOUTHEAST AND COOLER THAN NORMAL ACROSS MOST OF THE EASTERN TWO THIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES. THAT'S ACCORDING TO U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE METEOROLOGIST BRAD RIPPEY WHO SAYS A HIGH PRESSURE SYSTEM OFF OF THE CANADIAN COAST IS KEEPING COLDER AIR OVER LAND.

Brad Rippey, USDA Agricultural Meteorologist: There's nowhere for the cool air to go from Canada except to pour southwards into the plains and into the southeast. We probably still will see some snow in the northeast and as the storm track begins to shift northward in the Spring we could begin to see some significant snows into the Midwest and the Plains as well.

AND THAT MEANS FARMERS IN THE THOSE AREAS COULD HAVE LATER THAN NORMAL ACCESS TO THEIR FIELDS.

Rippey: The expectation of more wet weather in the southern Corn Belt as well as the melting snow in the western Corn Belt should lead to delayed planting in some areas. We are looking at the likelihood for major spring flooding in a few basins in the upper Midwest.

MEANWHILE, THE WESTERN U-S WILL KEEP EXPERIENCING THE EL NINO CLIMATE PATTERN, WHICH AFFECTS WATER TEMPERATURE IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN AND THE WEATHER IN NORTH AMERICA.

Rippey: We expect to see significant snow in March from California into the southwest. But again given the El Nino type signature on the storm pattern, we do expect drier than normal conditions to continue across the northwest.

IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.