Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - May 29, 2020

- In the West, hot, dry weather prevails. Exceptions include widely scattered Northwestern showers and cooler air starting to arrive in coastal California. A warning for excessive heat remains in effect in the Desert Southwest, where yesterday’s high temperatures reached 120°F in Death Valley, California, and 109°F in Phoenix, Arizona.

- On the Plains, cool, dry weather is promoting fieldwork but slowing crop emergence and development. Scattered temperatures below 40°F were reported early today in the Dakotas. Only 51% of the U.S. spring wheat crop had emerged by May 24, above last year’s 41% on that date but well below the 5-year average of 65%.

- In the Corn Belt, scattered showers continue along and east of a line from Michigan to southern Illinois. Meanwhile, cool, dry air is overspreading the western Corn Belt—a region where spring planting activities are nearing completion, except in areas of the far upper Midwest (e.g. eastern North Dakota) dealing with lingering wetness.

- In the South, drier air is overspreading areas from the Mississippi Delta westward, aside from lingering showers and thunderstorms across southern Texas. Meanwhile, warm, humid, showery weather in the Southeast is perpetuating fieldwork delays. On May 24, cotton planting was at least 20 percentage points behind the average pace in Missouri (30% planted vs. 78% on average), Tennessee (47 vs. 74%), and North Carolina (46 vs. 66%).

Outlook: Cooler, drier air will continue to overspread eastward across the central and eastern U.S., reaching the Atlantic Seaboard during the weekend. Before dry air arrives in the East, additional rainfall could total 1 to 2 inches, with locally higher amounts. Meanwhile, little or no precipitation will fall during the next 5 days across the western and central U.S., although some heavier showers may occur on Saturday in northern California and the Pacific Northwest. Cooler weather will accompany and trail the Northwestern showers, ending an early-season heatwave across the Far West. Meanwhile, heat will spread eastward, reaching the High Plains during the weekend and the remainder of the nation’s mid-section early next week. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for June 3 – 7 calls for the likelihood of warmer-than-normal weather nationwide, except for near- or below-normal temperatures in the Pacific Northwest, Deep South Texas, and the Atlantic Coast States. Meanwhile, near- or above-normal precipitation across the northern and western U.S., as well as southern sections of Texas and Florida, should contrast with drier-than-normal conditions from the central and southern Plains into much of the Southeast.

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