Agricultural Weather Highlights – Wednesday - October 18, 2023

- In the **West**, warm, dry weather favors autumn fieldwork, including previously delayed cotton and rice harvesting in **California**. The rice harvest in **California** was just 45% complete by October 15, versus the 5-year average of 71%. Advisories for heat have been issued for today in typically temperate near-coastal sections of **central and southern California**, where today’s high temperatures will approach or reach 100°F.

- On the **Plains**, cooler air is overspreading the **Dakotas** and environs, accompanied by a few showers. The remainder of the **nation’s mid-section** is experiencing warm, dry weather, with today’s high temperatures expected to range from 80 to 90°F on the **southern Plains**. The late-season warmth favors fieldwork, but a lack of soil moisture in drier areas of the **Plains** is a concern with respect to winter wheat establishment.

- In the **Corn Belt, upper Midwestern** rain showers are developing in conjunction with an intensifying storm system. Still, cool, dry weather across much of the region continues to promote fieldwork, including corn and soybean harvesting. By October 15, the **Midwestern** corn harvest ranged from 32% complete in **Michigan** to 76% in **Minnesota**. On the same date, **Midwestern** winter wheat planting ranged from 32% complete in **Missouri** to 52% in **Ohio**.

- In the **South**, cool but dry weather remains nearly ideal for autumn fieldwork, including winter wheat planting and cotton, peanut, and soybean harvesting. However, significant drought impacts persist in portions of the **western and central Gulf Coast States**. On October 15 in **Louisiana**, for example, 32% of the sugarcane and 68% of the pastures were rated in very poor to poor condition.

**Outlook:** A low-pressure system currently crossing the **north-central U.S.** and its trailing cold front will surge eastward, with shower activity gradually increasing. Late in the week into the weekend, **Northeastern** rainfall will intensify, with 1- to 2-inch totals expected. Meanwhile, a new round of **Pacific** storminess will arrive along the **West Coast** during the weekend, mainly from **northern California and the Pacific Northwest to the northern Rockies**. In contrast, dry weather will prevail during the next 5 days in most areas from **southern California to the Plains**. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for October 23 – 27 calls for a progressive weather pattern, with warmth shifting into the **eastern half of the U.S.**, while cooler-than-normal conditions will cover the **northern High Plains** and the **West**. There is the potential for a substantial late-October cold outbreak in the **northwestern U.S.** Meanwhile, near- or above-normal precipitation across much of the country should contrast with drier-than-normal weather in the **Atlantic Coast States**.

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