



Satellite image with enhanced low ground and cloud-top temperatures for 5:10 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights – Thursday - March 7, 2024

- In the **West**, following recent storminess, the average water equivalency of the **Sierra Nevada** snowpack has climbed to nearly 25 inches—slightly above average for early March—according to the California Department of Water Resources. Currently, loosely organized rain and snow showers cover the **southern half of the western U.S.**, mainly from **southern California to the central and southern Rockies**. Meanwhile, cold, dry air has settled across the **Northwest**.
- On the **Plains**, lingering warmth is confined to **Texas** and **Oklahoma**. Across the **southern High Plains**, including much of **western Texas**, warm weather, low humidity levels, and gusty winds are contributing to a significantly elevated wildfire threat, despite widespread cloudiness. Farther north, patchy snow is developing on the **central Plains**, mainly across **northeastern Colorado** and **western Nebraska**. Cold weather prevails along and near the **Canadian border**, where this morning's low temperatures dipped below 10°F in **northern sections of Montana and North Dakota**.
- In the **Corn Belt**, mild weather prevails, except for chilly conditions in the **Red River Valley of the North**. Showers in the **western Corn Belt** are expected to become more widespread later today, especially in **Missouri** and environs. Recent precipitation has eased dryness in parts of the **central and eastern Corn Belt**, but drought concerns persist in areas of the **upper Midwest** that were affected by dryness last summer and did not receive much snow during the winter of 2023-24.
- In the **South**, warm weather prevails between storm systems. However, locally heavy showers are already returning **west of the Mississippi Delta**, resulting in fieldwork delays. In parts of the **Southeast**, soils are saturated from heavy rain that fell earlier in the week.

Outlook: Heavy rain along the **northern Atlantic Coast** will end later today. Meanwhile, locally severe thunderstorms will develop this afternoon into tonight across the **south-central U.S.**, though rain will largely bypass the **southern High Plains**. The **Southern** threat of severe weather will gradually shift eastward, reaching the **southern Atlantic Coast** by Saturday evening. In addition, rainfall could total 1 to 3 inches in parts of the **South**, increasing the flood threat in areas that already experienced downpours a few days ago. Significant, late-week rain, generally 1 to 2 inches, will extend as far north as the **southern and eastern Corn Belt**, as well as the **Northeast**. In contrast, mostly dry weather will prevail during the next 5 days across the **northern Plains** and **far upper Midwest**. Elsewhere, much of the **West** will experience several days of cool, tranquil weather, although precipitation will return during the weekend across the **Pacific Northwest**. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for March 12 – 16 calls for the likelihood of near- or above-normal temperatures and precipitation across most of the country. Colder-than-normal conditions will be confined to portions of the **northern Intermountain West**, while drier-than-normal weather should be limited to areas along and near the **Pacific Coast**, including much of **California**.

Contact: Brad Rippey, Agricultural Meteorologist, USDA/OCE/WAOB, Washington, D.C. (202-720-2397)

Web Site: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/TODAYSWX.pdf>