Agricultural Weather Highlights – Monday - September 26, 2022

- In the West, dry weather accompanies building warmth. Today’s high temperatures will top 100°F in much of the Desert Southwest and should range from 95 to 100°F in California’s Central Valley. Wildfire activity remains concentrated in the Northwest, primarily from the Cascades to the northern Rockies, with a few fires affecting California.

- On the Plains, dry weather is promoting summer crop maturation and harvesting, as well as winter wheat planting. However, unfavorably dry conditions dominate the Plains’ primary winter wheat production areas, maintaining concerns about a lack of soil moisture for germination and proper autumn establishment. In addition, unusually warm weather is returning across the northern High Plains, further reducing moisture availability.

- In the Corn Belt, cool weather prevails. Scattered to widespread rain showers are limited to portions of the Great Lakes region, mainly across Michigan. Most Midwestern corn and soybeans continue to mature and dry down with minimal complications, albeit at a slightly slower-than-normal pace.

- In the South, cool air has overspread interior sections of the region, including Kentucky and Tennessee, while late-season heat lingers from the western Gulf Coast region to the southern Atlantic Coast. Except across southern Florida, where showers continue, producers—especially those in the potential path of Hurricane Ian—are taking advantage of dry weather to harvest summer crops and tend to other early-autumn farm activities.

Outlook: Hurricane Ian, currently centered less than 300 miles southeast of the western tip of Cuba, will enter the Gulf of Mexico on Tuesday. Additional rapid strengthening of the hurricane is expected for at least the next 36 hours. Thereafter, some weakening may occur before Ian reaches Florida’s Gulf Coast during the latter half of the week. The shape of Florida’s coastline means that a small change in the angle of approach could lead to significant variation in the point of landfall. However, regardless of Ian’s eventual landfall location, there is a risk of severe storm surge, hurricane-force winds, and flooding rains across the west coast and panhandle of Florida by the middle of the week. Outside of Ian’s sphere of influence, strikingly quiet weather will prevail for the remainder of the week. In the Great Lakes region, cool, showery weather will linger for a couple of days. Farther west, spotty showers will develop later in the week from the Four Corners States to the northern Plains. Much of the remainder of the country will experience mild, dry weather. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for October 1 – 5 calls for near- or above-normal temperatures nationwide, except for cooler-than-normal conditions along the northern Atlantic Coast. The greatest likelihood of warmth will cover the western and central U.S. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal precipitation across most of the country should contrast with wetter-than-normal weather in portions of the Four Corners region and the Atlantic Coast States.

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