Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - September 4, 2020

- In the **West**, record-setting heat is maintaining stress on rangeland and pastures. On September 3, a high temperature of 106°F in Bishop, California, tied a monthly record originally set on September 2, 1950. Excessively hot weather prevails in much of California and the Desert Southwest; today’s high temperatures could exceed 120°F in the hottest desert locations. Despite the heat, containment of California’s two largest lightning-sparked wildfire complexes (392,000 and 375,000 acres of vegetation burned, respectively) has reached 80%.

- On the **Plains**, dry weather favors fieldwork, including summer crop harvesting and winter wheat planting preparations. However, widespread soil moisture shortages across the High Plains are adversely affecting rangeland and pastures. In addition, temperatures are currently rebounding to near- or above-normal levels.

- In the **Corn Belt**, cool, dry weather favors summer crop maturation. On August 30, nearly two-thirds (63%) of the U.S. corn had dented, while 12% of the crop was fully mature. On the same date, 8% of the nation’s soybeans were dropping leaves.

- In the **South**, showers stretch from Arkansas into eastern Texas. Many creeks and streams in the mid-South are receding, following heavy rain earlier in the week. In Danville, Arkansas, the Petit Jean River is falling after cresting on September 2 at 7.28 feet above flood—the seventh-highest level on record in that location and the highest since December 2015.

**Outlook**: Aside from scattered showers mainly across the South, dry weather will prevail nearly nationwide into the weekend. However, a few thunderstorms may occur across Florida and the Midwest. By Labor Day, showers associated with a strong cold front will become numerous from the northern and central Rockies into the Great Lakes States. On Tuesday, rain will fall in an axis stretching from the southern Plains into the upper Midwest. As sharply colder air arrives in the Rockies, rain will change to snow. In fact, widespread freezes will occur next week (mainly on September 8-9) across the Rockies and northern Plains. Small grains across the northern Plains are largely mature (or have been harvested), but early freezes—combined with drought—could curtail autumn pasture growth across portions of the High Plains. In addition, late-developing corn in eastern North Dakota and environs will need to be monitored next week for possible freeze impacts. In stark contrast, record-setting heat will prevail in the West for the next few days, although markedly cooler air will arrive (except along and near the Pacific Coast) early next week. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for September 9 – 13 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures from the Rockies to the Mississippi Valley, while warmer-than-normal weather will prevail in the Atlantic Coast States and the Far West. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal precipitation from the Pacific Coast to the Plains should contrast with wetter-than-normal from the Mississippi River eastward.

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