Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - February 5, 2021

- In the **West**, dry weather prevails, aside from some snow in the northern Rockies and a few showers in the Pacific Northwest. Despite some late-January storminess, drought covers 79.7% of the 11-state Western region, according to the latest (February 2) U.S. Drought Monitor. Exceptional Drought (D4) is affecting 70% of Utah and 54% of Arizona and New Mexico. There is also D4 coverage in Nevada (29%), Colorado (25%), Texas (5%), and California (4%).

- On the **Plains**, snow is overspreading Montana’s High Plains, providing winter wheat with much-needed moisture and insulation in advance of some of the coldest air of the season. Farther east, this morning’s low temperatures plunged below 0°F in parts of the Dakotas, accompanied by gusty winds. Dry weather covers the remainder of the Plains.

- In the **Corn Belt**, weather conditions are slowly improving across the upper Midwest, following Thursday’s winter storm. On February 4, snowfall topped 5 inches and winds gusted to at least 40 mph in locations such as Dubuque, Iowa, and La Crosse, Wisconsin, stressing livestock and rendering travel difficult across a broad area. Very cold weather and gusty winds trail the storm, with this morning’s low temperatures falling below 0°F in parts of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

- In the **South**, producers across portions of Florida’s peninsula are assessing impacts from Thursday’s light freeze, which is not believed to have resulted in significant injury to vegetables and other sensitive winter crops. Currently, rain showers associated with a cold front are sweeping across the lower Southeast, from the Carolinas to western Florida.

**Outlook:** During the next few days, cold air will continue to settle across much of the country. The cold weather will be particularly harsh across the northern Plains and upper Midwest, where temperatures will fall below 0°F each night and barely recover during the day. Early next week, temperatures could fall as low as -30°F near the Canadian border from Montana to northern Minnesota. Sub-zero temperatures may occur as far south as the central Plains and lower Midwest. However, sub-freezing temperatures should not reach winter agricultural areas of Texas and Florida. Meanwhile, relatively tranquil weather will accompany the cold wave, with 5-day precipitation totals greater than an inch generally limited to higher elevations of the Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies, as well as the lower Southeast and scattered locations along the Atlantic Seaboard. Weekend rainfall should ease dry conditions across Florida’s peninsula. Elsewhere, little or no precipitation will fall from California to the southern High Plains. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for February 10 – 14 calls for the likelihood of colder-than-normal weather nationwide, except for near- or above-normal temperatures across southern California, peninsular Florida, and the Desert Southwest. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal precipitation across much of the country, including the Pacific Coast States and the Midwest, should contrast with wetter-than-normal weather across the High Plains and the South.

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