Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - October 2, 2020

- In the **West**, record-setting heat continues in the Pacific Coast States and the Desert Southwest. On October 1, monthly record high temperatures were tied or broken in locations such as Phoenix, Arizona (107°F); Redding, California (106°F); and Tucson, Arizona (103°F). Across the West, nearly six dozen large wildfires in various stages of containment remain active and continue to cause a widespread degradation of air quality. This year has featured five of the six largest wildfires in modern California history, led by the 956,000-acre August Complex.

- On the **Plains**, freezes were reported this morning in much of Nebraska and portions of neighboring states. Cool, dry weather throughout the region is promoting autumn fieldwork but reducing soil moisture for recently planted winter wheat. Among the Plains States, winter wheat emergence on September 27 ranged from 5% in Texas to 19% in Colorado.

- In the **Corn Belt**, overnight freezes ended the growing season in several areas of the upper Midwest that had escaped the September 8-9 cold snap. Freezes extended southward into Nebraska and eastward across the northwestern half of Iowa. However, most corn and soybeans in the western Corn Belt are mature and in the process of being harvested. Aside from rain and snow showers downwind of the Great Lakes, cool, dry weather covers the remainder of the Midwest.

- In the **South**, locally heavy showers dot southern Florida. Across the remainder of the region, cool, dry weather favors summer crop harvesting—except in areas where wet soils are limiting fieldwork. On September 27, Louisiana led the nation with topsoil moisture rated 37% surplus, followed by North Carolina at 30%.

**Outlook:** Chilly conditions will persist for several days across the nation’s mid-section, with additional freezes expected across the northern Plains and the Midwest. Early next week, however, markedly warmer air will overspread the Plains and upper Midwest. Meanwhile, unusually warm, completely dry weather will prevail across the West during the next 5 days, leading to further drought intensification and maintaining the wildfire threat. Heavy rain should be limited to Florida’s peninsula, although some rain may graze the remainder of the Atlantic Seaboard. Development of a tropical cyclone appears likely over the western Caribbean Sea; progress of that potential system will need to be monitored as it moves toward the Yucatan Peninsula and possibly into the Gulf of Mexico. Elsewhere, weekend rain showers will spread from the Midwest into the Northeast, followed by the return of dry weather. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for October 7 – 11 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures in the Northeast, while warmer-than-normal weather will cover the lower Southeast and all areas from the Mississippi Valley westward. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal rainfall across most of the country should contrast with wetter-than-normal conditions in the lower Southeast, northern New England, and the Pacific Northwest.

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