



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures for 6:10 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights – Wednesday - May 18, 2022

- In the *West*, unusual warmth prevails across the *southern half of the region*, leading to further drought intensification. The surface elevation of *Lake Mead at Hoover Dam* has fallen to its lowest level since 1937, when the reservoir was being filled. The lake’s current elevation is more than 175 feet below the record-high level of 1,225.85 feet set in July 1983. Meanwhile, showers overspreading the *Northwest* are benefiting winter grains and spring-sown crops.
- On the *Plains*, overnight thunderstorms resulted in isolated wind and hail damage, mainly across *Kansas* and *Nebraska*. A wind gust to 75 mph was reported in *Russell, Kansas*. Meanwhile, blazing heat continues across the drought-stricken *southern Plains*, negating the benefits of any isolated thunderstorms. Today’s high temperatures should range from 100 to 105°F throughout *central Texas*. Farther north, wetness-related planting delays linger in *eastern North Dakota*.
- In the *Corn Belt*, showers and thunderstorms are curtailing fieldwork, following a favorable period for corn and soybean planting. Early today, some of the heaviest rain is falling in the *middle Mississippi Valley*. During the week ending May 14, more than one-quarter (27%) of the U.S. corn and 18% of the soybeans were seeded, although overall planting progress for both crops—49% for corn and 30% for soybeans—is the slowest since 2019.
- In the *South*, hot, dry weather favors fieldwork and crop development, although short-term dryness is becoming a concern in a few areas. On May 14, *Georgia* and *South Carolina* tied for the Southeastern lead in topsoil moisture rated 62% very short to short. Early today, thunderstorms are just starting to overspread the *mid-South*, including *northern Arkansas*.

Outlook: An early-season heat wave will gradually end across the *southern and eastern U.S.*, although *Eastern* heat will linger through the weekend. Meanwhile, markedly cooler air will overspread much of the country, including the *northern and central Plains* and the *Midwest*. Weekend frost and freezes could affect the *northwestern half of the Plains*, extending as far south as *eastern Colorado* and *northwestern Kansas*. Frost may also extend into parts of the *upper Midwest*. Prior to the arrival of the cool, dry air, widespread showers and thunderstorms will span the *northern U.S.* Additionally, late-week and weekend rainfall could total 1 to 2 inches or more along and east of a line from the *southeastern Plains to the Great Lakes region*. In contrast, dry weather will prevail during the next 5 days from *California to the southern Rockies*. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for May 23 – 27 calls for the likelihood of near- or below-normal temperatures across the *northern half of the U.S.*, while hotter-than-normal conditions will stretch from *California to the southern Atlantic Coast*. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal rainfall from *California to the High Plains* should contrast with wetter-than-normal weather in the *Pacific Northwest* and much of the *eastern half of the country*.

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

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The outlook is an interpretation of National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts and products.

The next scheduled noon release of the “Agricultural Weather Highlights” will be Friday, June 10. On other weekdays, this product will be posted by 9 am EDT.