Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - January 29, 2021

- In the **West**, a long-duration winter storm near the **Pacific Coast** has finally begun to shift inland. However, significant precipitation is still falling across **central and southern California** and the **Great Basin**. Rain and snow showers are also overspreading the **northern Rockies**, **Intermountain West**, and **Southwest**. According to the **U.S. Drought Monitor**, nearly 80% of the **western U.S.** was experiencing drought on January 26, prior to the latest storm’s arrival.

- On the **Plains**, dry weather accompanies a warming trend. Substantial snow remains on the ground across the **central Plains**, following recent storminess, but no snow cover exists across winter wheat production areas of the **southern Plains** and **northern High Plains**. On January 24, prior to the **central Plains**’ latest snowfall, USDA/NASS rated topsoil moisture as 79% very short to short in **Colorado**, along with 60% in **Nebraska** and 55% in **Kansas**.

- In the **Corn Belt**, cold, dry weather prevails across the **eastern half of the region**, aside from lingering snow showers downwind of the **Great Lakes**. Meanwhile, mild but breezy weather has developed **west of the Mississippi River**. Much of the **Midwest**, particularly from **Iowa to Ohio**, is preparing for a winter storm that will arrive on Saturday.

- In the **South**, cool, dry weather prevails. Light freezes occurred this morning as far south as **northern Florida**—well north of the state’s citrus and winter vegetables. Patchy snow remains on the ground across the northern tier of the region, from the **Ozark Plateau to the mid-Atlantic**, following a mid-week storm. Official January 27-28 snowfall totals included 3.5 inches in **Lexington, Kentucky**, and 3.1 inches in **Elizabeth City, North Carolina**.

**Outlook:** The sprawling storm system that has been affecting the **West** will move eastward, crossing the **central and southern Plains** on Saturday and the **Ohio Valley** on Sunday. Subsequently, the system should stall and intensify near the middle **Atlantic Seaboard**, resulting in storm impacts (e.g. wind and snow) lingering into Tuesday across parts of the **Northeast**. Wintry precipitation will cover a broad area, stretching from the **Midwest into the middle and northern Atlantic States**, while showers and thunderstorms will briefly affect the **Southeast**. Meanwhile, a new **Pacific** storm system will arrive in the **Northwest** during the weekend. Although that system will take a slightly more northerly path across the **West**, drought-easing precipitation could again reach as far south as **California** and the **Great Basin**. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for February 3 – 7 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures across the **western half of the U.S.**, while warmer-than-normal weather will be limited to the **East** and areas along the **Gulf Coast**. Meanwhile, below-normal precipitation in portions of the **Pacific Coast States**, as well as **southern sections of Florida and Texas**, should contrast with wetter-than-normal conditions in most other areas, especially from the **central Plains into the Midwest**.

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