Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - March 18, 2022

- In the West, outside of light snow across the northern Rockies, mostly dry weather prevails in advance of a fast-moving disturbance approaching the Pacific Northwest. Despite a wet start to the 2021-22 Water Year, drier-than-normal conditions since the middle of winter have caused severe to exceptional drought to persist across much of the region.

- On the Plains, rain and wet snow are subsiding from Nebraska into Oklahoma as a storm exits the region, while a weak disturbance is triggering some light snow in Montana. Severe to exceptional drought continues to adversely affect pastures and winter grains across the southern half of the region.

- In the Corn Belt, very warm weather across the Ohio Valley ahead of an approaching storm is advancing pasture green up and winter grain growth. In contrast, rain and snow are falling in the southwestern Corn Belt, while dry and seasonably mild weather prevails over the upper Midwest.

- In the South, heavy showers and locally severe thunderstorms are sweeping eastward across the Gulf Coast region, providing beneficial soil moisture in areas beset by short-term dryness—particularly in the lower Southeast. However, soils remain saturated by recent downpours across much of northern and central Florida. Very warm weather is promoting winter grain green up and development across the southern and central Atlantic Coast States.

Outlook: A pair of storms will be responsible for much of the nation’s weather over the next 5 days. The lead system currently centered over the southeastern Plains will bring a mix of rain and wet snow to the central Corn Belt and Great Lakes region, while diminishing shower and thunderstorm activity occurs across the Southeast. Light showers will accompany the trailing cold front as it sweeps across the Atlantic Coast States Saturday. The second storm will track rapidly across the Northwest and northern Rockies over the weekend, accompanied by beneficial rain and snow. The latter storm will slow considerably upon reaching the southern Plains by Monday and intensify, producing heavy snow in the front range of the Rockies while a mix of rain and wet snow falls from the central Plains into the Dakotas. Out ahead of this second storm system, an influx of Gulf moisture coupled with the storm’s slow movement may result in heavy rainfall over the lower Mississippi River Valley early next week. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for March 23 – 27 calls for the likelihood of drier-than-normal weather over much of the central and western U.S., with wetter-than-normal conditions confined to the East Coast States. Below-normal temperatures from the Gulf Coast into the Great Lakes region will contrast with warm weather west of the Rockies and east of the Appalachians.

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, April 8. On other weekdays, this product will be posted by 9 am EDT.