Agricultural Weather Highlights – Thursday - September 29, 2022

- In the West, late-season warmth continues, despite an increase in cloudiness and the development of scattered showers. Most of the precipitation is falling in the northern Rockies and environs. Early-autumn fieldwork continues in California, with 20% of the rice harvested and 5% of the intended winter wheat acreage planted by September 25.

- On the Plains, dry weather favors summer crop maturation and harvesting, as well as winter wheat planting. Record-breaking warmth has developed across the northern High Plains, where today’s high temperatures will approach or reach 90°F. Rangeland and pastures—currently rated more than two-thirds very poor to poor in Oklahoma (75% very poor to poor on September 25), Kansas (71%), and Nebraska (70%)—continue to exhibit significant drought stress.

- In the Corn Belt, frost and sub-freezing temperatures were reported again this morning in the Great Lakes region, including parts of Michigan, Wisconsin, and northern Illinois. However, most Midwestern corn and soybeans were mature enough to withstand frost or did not experience a freeze. In Wisconsin, 54% of the soybeans were dropping leaves by September 25, versus the 5-year average of 60%.

- In the South, Ian—now a tropical storm—has completed a destructive traversal of Florida’s peninsula, from Cayo Costa Island on the Gulf Coast to near Cape Canaveral along the Atlantic Seaboard. Storm surge is subsiding in coastal southwestern Florida, but rainfall-induced flooding continues at many inland locations. In addition, power outages broadly continue in Florida. Hardest-hit areas in wind- and storm surge-battered Fort Myers and nearby communities are awakening to severe infrastructural damage and a transformation of coastal geographic features.

Outlook: Ian will spend the remainder of today and Friday morning over coastal waters of the western Atlantic Ocean before making a likely final landfall in South Carolina. Ongoing threats associated with Tropical Storm Ian include flash flooding, damaging wind gusts, a modest storm surge, and isolated tornadoes. Southeastern cotton bolls, ranging from 66 to 80% open, could be harmed over the next few days by wet, windy weather. Other unharvested Southeastern summer crops, including corn, peanuts, and soybeans, should be more resilient to wind and rain than cotton. Through early next week, additional Southeastern rainfall could total 4 to 8 inches, with isolated totals near 12 inches. In contrast, dry weather will prevail during the next 5 days in the Mississippi Valley, Far West, Great Lakes and Northeastern States, and the southeastern half of the Plains. Widespread showers will occur, however, from the Four Corners States to northern sections of the Rockies and High Plains. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for October 4 – 8 calls for near- or above-normal temperatures and near- or below-normal rainfall across most of the country. Cooler-than-normal conditions will be mostly confined to the Atlantic Coast States, while wetter-than-normal weather should be limited to the Southwest.

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