Agricultural Weather Highlights – Thursday - September 3, 2020

- In the **West**, a heat wave west of the Rockies is gaining momentum. The heat, accompanied by dry weather, is causing further degradation in rangeland and pasture conditions. Largely due to drought across the western half of the country, U.S. rangeland and pasture conditions—currently 46% very poor to poor—have fallen to their lowest level since 2012.

- On the **Plains**, dry weather accompanies a surge of cooler air. This morning’s low temperatures fell below 40°F in scattered locations across the northern High Plains. Large sections of the High Plains continue to experience drought, with adverse impacts on rangeland, pastures, and immature summer crops. On August 30, Colorado led the nation—among major production states—in very poor to poor ratings for corn (44%) and sorghum (43%).

- In the **Corn Belt**, heavy rain is falling early today in parts of the Ohio Valley, particularly near the Indiana-Kentucky border. Meanwhile, a cold front sweeping across the upper Great Lakes region is sparking a few rain showers. However, drought continues to affect an area of the Corn Belt generally extending eastward from Nebraska and Iowa. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor dated September 1, drought covers 83% of Iowa and 49% of Nebraska.

- In the **South**, showers and thunderstorms continue from Kentucky to eastern Texas but generally have diminished in coverage and intensity. Some flooding persists, however, especially in parts of Arkansas, where this week’s precipitation fell days after Hurricane Laura’s soaking rainfall. Meanwhile, hurricane recovery continues in southwestern Louisiana and environs amid very warm, humid conditions.

**Outlook:** Aside from lingering showers across the **South** and **East**, dry weather will prevail nearly nationwide during the next few days. However, late in the weekend and early next week, scattered to widespread showers will develop across the northern Plains and the Midwest, in advance of an unusually strong cold front. During the first half of next week, freezes will end the growing season across the northern High Plains. Freezes will also affect the northern and central Rockies, while scattered frost and light freeze may occur as far south as the central High Plains and as far east as the far upper Midwest (e.g. eastern Dakotas). In stark contrast, a late-season heat wave will grip the Far West, including the Pacific Coast States. During the weekend and early next week, temperatures could peak near 110°F as far north as California’s Sacramento Valley. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for September 8 – 12 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures from the Rockies into the Mississippi Valley, while warmer-than-normal weather will prevail in the Atlantic Coast States and the Far West. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal precipitation across the northern Plains and much of the West should contrast with wetter-than-normal conditions on the southern Plains and from the Mississippi Valley to the East Coast.

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