



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

Agricultural Weather Highlights – Thursday - May 23, 2024

- In the *West*, a winter-like storm is unfolding across the *northern Rockies*, including *southwestern Montana*, where event-total snowfall could top a foot. In contrast, dry weather favors fieldwork and crop development from *California into the Southwest*, although a significantly elevated wildfire threat exists in the *southern Rockies* and environs. On May 19, *New Mexico* led the U.S. with 59% of its rangeland and pastures rated very poor to poor, versus the national value of 20%.
- On the *Plains*, chilly conditions—accompanied by rain showers—linger across *Montana* and much of *North Dakota*, where today’s high temperatures will mostly remain below 60°F. Elsewhere, warm, mostly dry weather is promoting a rapid pace of fieldwork and crop development. Nationally, 69% of the winter wheat had headed by May 19, well ahead of the 5-year average of 57%.
- In the *Corn Belt*, producers in *Iowa* and other parts of the *upper Midwest* continue to assess farm infrastructural damage in the wake of Tuesday’s large outbreak of severe weather, including high winds and isolated tornadoes. Currently, warm, mostly dry weather favors a limited return to fieldwork in areas that have sufficiently dried out from recent rainfall. Despite some fieldwork delays, corn and soybeans that have been planted are generally emerging and quickly developing.
- In the *South*, very warm, humid weather prevails. Morning showers and thunderstorms, noted in several areas, are heaviest in *Arkansas*. Currently, drought is scarce across the *South*, although parts of *Florida’s peninsula* are enduring some agricultural impacts—such as stressed pastures (rated 29% very poor to poor, statewide, on May 19) and heavy irrigation demands for citrus—due to short-term heat and dryness.

Outlook: Active weather will continue through the holiday weekend across the *North* and much of the *eastern half of the U.S.*, with rainfall totaling 1 to 2 inches or more across portions of the *Northwest, Midwest, mid-Atlantic, and interior Southeast*. Locally severe thunderstorms will accompany the rain. Memorial Day weekend will begin with relatively cool weather in the *North* and *West* contrasting with not weather in the *South*. However, that temperature contrast will diminish during the next several days, as warmth builds in the *West* and spreads northward across the *nation’s mid-section*. Unlike the remainder of the country, mostly dry weather will prevail during the next 5 days from *coastal Texas to the southern Atlantic Coast* and from *California to the southern High Plains*. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for May 28 – June 1 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures in the *Pacific Northwest*, as well as the *eastern Corn Belt* and *interior Southeast*, while warmer-than-normal weather will cover *Maine, the Deep South, and much of the western half of the U.S.* Meanwhile, near- or below-normal rainfall across most of the country should contrast with wetter-than-normal weather in a few areas, including the *Northeast, Pacific Northwest, and central and southern sections of the Rockies and Plains*.

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