Agricultural Weather Highlights – Tuesday - March 2, 2021

- In the West, freeze warnings are in effect again this morning across parts of northwestern California. Meanwhile, dry weather prevails throughout the region. Hydrological concerns are growing from California into the Southwest, where dry soils could quickly soak up spring runoff from below-average snowpack, leaving little water to replenish reservoirs.

- On the Plains, mild, dry, breezy weather is eroding any remaining snow cover and promoting post-cold wave recovery and assessment. In Texas, 75% of the oat crop was rated in very poor to poor condition at the end of February, up from 41% on January 24. Today’s high temperatures will generally range from 45°F in parts of North Dakota to near 70°F on the southern High Plains.

- In the Corn Belt, generally minor flooding is occurring in parts of the Ohio Valley, due to a combination of runoff from melted snow and recent rainfall. Meanwhile, temperatures have begun to rebound in advance of an approaching cold front; today’s highs should range from around 40°F in the eastern Corn Belt to near 60°F in the lower Missouri Valley.

- In the South, moderate to major flooding continues along the Kentucky River and some of its tributaries. On March 1, the South Fork of the Kentucky River crested 17.33 feet above flood stage in Booneville, Kentucky, eclipsing the January 1957 high-water mark by 0.93 foot. Currently, cold, dry weather covers the flood-affected areas. Meanwhile, heavy rain has shifted southward but lingers in the central Gulf Coast region.

Outlook: Southern rain will end on Wednesday, following additional amounts of 1 to 3 inches from the central Gulf Coast into parts of Georgia, South Carolina, and northern Florida. Farther west, a storm system crossing the southwestern and south-central U.S. will generate widespread but generally light precipitation, mainly from March 3-5. Late in the week, some additional rain will fall in the Southeast, mainly south of the areas currently experiencing significant flooding. Elsewhere, mid- to late-week precipitation will push inland along the Pacific Coast, briefly extending as far south as central California. During the next 5 days, cold air will be largely absent from the Lower 48 States, aside from chilly conditions in the Great Lakes and Northeastern States. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for March 7 – 11 calls for the likelihood of near- or above-normal temperatures nationwide, except for cooler-than-normal conditions in the Far West and the southern Atlantic States. Meanwhile, below-normal precipitation in the southern and eastern U.S. should contrast with wetter-than-normal weather in much of the West and Midwest.