Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - August 18, 2023

- In the **West**, a tropically enhanced fetch of monsoonal moisture well in advance of Hurricane Hilary is spreading across **Arizona** and environs, leading to isolated showers. Lingering heat covers the remainder of the **West**, with a significantly elevated wildfire threat continuing **east of the Cascades** due to dry conditions, low humidity levels, and gusty winds.

- On the **Plains**, extreme heat continues in **Texas** and is gradually overspreading the remainder of the **nation’s mid-section**. Today’s high temperatures could reach 110°F in portions of the **Red River Valley**, along the **Texas-Oklahoma border**, and should top 100°F as far north as **eastern Montana** and the **western Dakotas**. The **Plains’** hot, dry weather is ideal for **Northern** small grain harvesting, but has the potential to adversely affect immature summer crops.

- In the **Corn Belt**, cool weather lingers in the **Great Lakes States**, with many locations expected to remain below 80°F today. Farther west, however, a late-season heat wave is arriving. Later today, temperatures should reach 100°F or higher in **western and central sections of Nebraska and the Dakotas**. The heat could contribute to a loss of yield potential for corn and soybeans in the filling stage of development.

- In the **South**, lingering showers are limited to **Florida’s peninsula**. Meanwhile, much of the **Deep South** is experiencing a brief reprieve from extreme heat and humidity, but exceptionally hot weather persists in the **western half of the Gulf Coast region**. With a high temperature of 109°F on August 17, **College Station, Texas**, marked its 40th consecutive day of triple-digit heat—a record in that location—and came within 1°F of its highest-ever August reading.

**Outlook:** Category 4 Hurricane Hilary is expected to reach peak intensity today before weakening and accelerating northward toward **southern California**. Regardless of exact location and intensity at landfall late Sunday or early Monday, Hilary has the potential to cause dangerous flash flooding in **southern California**, **southern Nevada**, and **western Arizona**, as some desert locations could receive one year’s worth of rain (3 to 6 inches or more) in just a few hours. As the remnant core of Hilary moves inland, tropical storm-force winds (39 mph or greater) could cause infrastructural and agricultural damage in **southern California** and environs, with possible adverse impacts on cotton and citrus. Farther east, a powerful ridge of high pressure over the **nation’s mid-section** will lead to multiple days of triple-digit (100-degree) heat across large sections of the **Plains**, **South**, and **western Corn Belt**. Aside from tropical showers in the **West**, precipitation will be scarce during the next 5 days, with meaningful rain confined to **New England** and a few areas along and near the **Gulf Coast**. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for August 23 – 27 calls for the likelihood of hotter-than-normal weather nationwide, except for cooler-than-normal conditions in the **Northeast** and the **Desert Southwest**. Meanwhile, near- or below-normal rainfall across much of the eastern half of the U.S. should contrast with wetter-than-normal weather in **New England** and from the **Pacific Coast to the High Plains**.

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