Agricultural Weather Highlights – Friday - September 30, 2022

- In the West, widely scattered showers dot the northern Rockies and northern Intermountain West. Elsewhere, warm, dry weather remains ideal for early-autumn fieldwork, although moisture is lacking for recently planted winter grains. On September 25, Oregon led the Far West with topsoil moisture rated 71% very short to short.

- On the Plains, scattered showers are developing across Montana, which on September 25 led the nation with topsoil moisture rated 95% very short to short. Across the remainder of the region, warm dry weather—with high temperatures approaching 90°F—continues to promote summer crop maturation and harvesting, as well as winter wheat planting.

- In the Corn Belt, scattered frost was noted again today in the Great Lakes region, mainly outside primary corn and soybean production areas. As a result, late-developing corn and soybeans continue to move toward maturity, amid cool but favorably dry conditions. Today’s high temperatures will remain below 70°F in much of the Great Lakes region.

- In the South, rescue, recovery, and damage assessment efforts continue in storm-battered Florida, especially in the hard-hit corridor stretching northeastward from the Fort Myers area. However, record-setting, fresh-water flooding has developed along many inland waterways, including the Peace and St. Johns Rivers. In Zolfo Springs, Florida, the Peace River crested last night 11.16 feet above flood stage, more than 2 feet above the September 1933 high-water mark. Farther north, in the Carolinas and Virginia, producers have been rushing to complete fieldwork, including harvest efforts where possible, in advance of Hurricane Ian’s approach.

Outlook: Later today, Hurricane Ian—currently far weaker than the Category 4 storm that struck Florida’s Gulf Coast on September 28—will make a second landfall in coastal South Carolina. Still, Ian has the potential to produce a significant storm surge (as much as 4 to 7 feet) and will likely result in some wind damage and flash flooding. Storm-total rainfall in parts of the Carolinas and southern Virginia could reach 4 to 8 inches, with local amounts approaching 12 inches. Cotton with open bolls in storm-affected areas of the Atlantic Coast States could sustain damage due to high winds and heavy rain, while other unharvested summer crops, including corn, peanuts, and soybeans, could experience a degradation in quality. Rain along the East Coast will linger into early next week, as Ian’s remnants will be briefly trapped by a high-pressure system parked over the Great Lakes and Northeastern States. Much of the remainder of the U.S. will experience mild, dry weather into next week, although occasional showers will affect an area stretching from the Four Corners States to northern sections of the Rockies and High Plains. The NWS 6- to 10-day outlook for October 5–9 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 Great Lakes and Atlantic Coast States, while wetter-than-normal weather should be limited to the Southwest.

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