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National Weather Summary February 14 - 20, 2010

Highlights: Relatively tranquil weather prevailed for much of the week, although cold conditions persisted from the **Plains into the Southeast**. Meanwhile, relative warmth covered the **West** and areas from the **Great Lakes region into New England**. Weekly temperatures averaged more than 10 degrees Fahrenheit below normal in the **lower Southeast** and across parts of the **northern Plains**, but ranged from 10 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit above normal in **northern New England**. Despite the continuation of significantly below-normal temperatures across the **Deep South**, crops in winter agricultural areas of **Texas** and **Florida** were not harmed by freezes. During the early- to mid-week period, however, scattered frost was noted as far south as the **central portion of Florida's peninsula**. Generally light rain and snow showers dotted the **West**, although pockets of heavier precipitation were noted across the **Great Basin** and the **Intermountain region**. Meanwhile across the **Nation's mid-section**, precipitation was heaviest on the **central Plains**. In fact, late-week precipitation on the **central Plains** provided beneficial moisture for winter wheat and replenished the crop's protective snow cover. Farther east, occasional snow fell across much of the **Midwest**, while cool, favorably dry weather replaced early-week showers in the **South**. In parts of the **western Corn Belt**, where snow has been on the ground since the December blizzards, some seasonal snowfall records were in danger of being broken. Water locked into the deep and extensive **upper Midwestern** snow pack maintained concerns about spring flood potential.

Early in the week, cold weather from the **Plains into the Southeast** contrasted with unusual warmth in **southern California**. **Casper, Wyoming** (-14 degrees Fahrenheit), posted a daily-record low for February 14, followed the next day by records in **Dalhart, Texas** (8 degrees Fahrenheit), and **Orlando, Florida** (35 degrees Fahrenheit). Additional daily-record lows across the **Deep South** on February 16 included 26 degrees Fahrenheit in **Pensacola, Florida**, and 27 degrees Fahrenheit in **Alexandria, Louisiana**. Meanwhile in **southern California**, February 16 highs of 84 degrees Fahrenheit at both **UCLA** and **El Cajon** tied daily records. Farther north, **Washington** locations such as **Winthrop** and **Ephrata** experienced their warmest January 1-February 20 period on record. In **Wisconsin**, however, **La Crosse** noted at least 81 consecutive days (December 2-February 20) with high temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the longest such streak in that location since 2000-01 (101 days from November 16-February 24).

Light snow accompanied the early-week chill across the **Mid-South**, where daily-record totals for February 14 included 1.0 inch in **Jackson, Tennessee**, and 0.2 inch in **Tupelo, Mississippi**. The following day, **lower Midwestern** snowfall totals reached 9.7 inches in **Columbus, Ohio**; 6.3 inches in **Indianapolis, Indiana**; and 5.0 inches in **Lexington, Kentucky**. Aided by an 8.3-inch total on February 15, **Cincinnati, Ohio**, achieved a February snowfall record (23.6 inches; previously, 21.4 inches in 1914). Elsewhere in **Ohio**, **Akron-Canton** (28.9 inches) also set a February snowfall record, edging the 2008 standard of 25.8 inches.

During the second half of the week, the focus for significant precipitation shifted into the **Intermountain West** and adjacent **Plains**. February 17-21 snowfall totaled 11.3 inches in **Scottsbluff, Nebraska**, and

9.8 inches in **Cheyenne, Wyoming**. Elsewhere in **Wyoming, Lander** (8.2 inches) netted a daily-record snowfall for February 18. In **western Colorado**, 24-hour snowfall totals on February 19-20 included 29 inches at **Gothic** and 12 inches at **Coal Bank Pass**. Late-week snow also reached the **western Corn Belt**, where **Des Moines, Iowa** (4.3 inches on February 19), moved within 10 inches of its all-time seasonal snowfall record (72.0 inches in 1911-12). **Des Moines** also continued to break records for the longest duration with a snow depth of at least 5 inches (74 days from December 9-February 20), previously set with a 54-day streak in 1961-62. Late-week snow also affected the **western Great Basin**, where **Reno, Nevada**, received 15.1 inches on February 20-21. Farther east, somewhat drier weather allowed the **Sabine River at Deweyville, Texas**, to fall below flood stage on February 19 for the first time since October 29, 2009.

Much of **Hawaii** remained locked in a dry weather pattern. During the first 20 days of February, rainfall totals included 0.64 inch (11 percent of normal) in **Hilo**, on the **Big Island**, and 0.28 inch (16 percent) in **Kahului, Maui**. Farther north, record-setting warmth overspread **Alaska**, where weekly temperatures averaged more than 20 degrees Fahrenheit across parts of the mainland. **Alaskan** records for February 15 included 48 degrees Fahrenheit in **Petersburg** and 42 degrees Fahrenheit in **Delta Junction**. Later, **Yakutat** (49 and 53 degrees Fahrenheit) posted consecutive daily-record highs for February 18-19. Other **Alaskan** records for February 19 reached 53 degrees Fahrenheit in **Klawock**, 50 degrees Fahrenheit in **Skagway**, and 36 degrees Fahrenheit in **Galena**. In addition, much of **Alaska** remained in a “snow drought.” In **Fairbanks**, for example, season-to-date snowfall through February 20 totaled just 21.0 inches (36 percent of normal). Similarly, **McGrath’s** July 1-February 20 snowfall totaled 33.0 inches (43 percent of normal).

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA’s World Agricultural Outlook Board.
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Agricultural Summary **February 15 - 21, 2010**

Highlights: Cool temperatures reigned over much of the country from the Rocky Mountains eastward, with averages in areas of Florida as many as 15 degrees below normal. Conversely, the Pacific Coast, Intermountain West, Great Lakes, and northern Atlantic Coast regions were warmer than normal. In northern Maine, temperatures reached as many as 21 degrees above average. Most of the Nation was relatively dry during the week, with many areas receiving 75 percent or less of their normal precipitation. In contrast, areas in the central Rocky Mountains and Great Plains accumulated up to 800 percent of their normal precipitation.

In Florida, drier weather prevailed, giving many fields and orchards a chance to dry out following abnormally wet conditions in previous weeks. Potato harvest was underway in fields that were unaffected by freezing temperatures in late January while sugarcane growers in Hendry County reported reduced yields. Below average temperatures in many southern areas of the State slowed the development of vegetable crops. Nursery growers in Miami-Dade County reported that freeze damage was more prevalent than what was originally observed. Citrus producers were busy with maintenance activities such as brush removal, ditch cleaning, fertilizing, hedging, mowing, and topping.

Despite a week of warmer temperatures and limited rainfall, many fields in Georgia remained too wet to complete much fieldwork. Where conditions allowed, producers were busy tilling fields and applying fertilizer.

Recent rainfall in Texas saturated the wheat crop in the Northern Low Plains and delayed the seeding of spring oats in the Northern High Plains. Excessive moisture in the Coastal Bend, Cross Timbers, and South Central regions of the State prevented the planting of any corn and sorghum acreage. In contrast, a week of dry weather in South Texas promoted the start of the cabbage and spinach harvest.

Temperatures in Arizona were mostly above average during the week with precipitation measured in most areas. Half of the alfalfa crop was reported in good to excellent condition. Small grain seeding remained active, and vegetable growers continued to ship a variety of crops.

Mild, dry weather dominated California until late in the week when two areas of low pressure brought light rainfall to many southern counties and rain and snow to the northern counties. Herbicide applications continued in an effort to control the spurt of weed growth in alfalfa, oat, rye, and wheat fields. Alfalfa fields have started to bloom and the first cutting of hay is expected to begin in the coming weeks. Rice producers spent the week draining their fields. Vineyard and orchard maintenance activities increased as the ground has dried out. Blooming was evident in some peach, plum, and prune trees. Grapefruit, lemons, Navel oranges, and tangerines were picked at a near normal pace.

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