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## National Weather Summary February 21 - 27, 2010

**Highlights:** A powerful, slow-moving storm battered the **Northeast** with high winds and heavy rain and snow, causing power outages, disrupting travel, and triggering flooding. Meanwhile, light to moderately heavy precipitation fell across the **South**, where unfavorably wet conditions in some areas remained a concern with respect to spring fieldwork and the health of winter wheat. Farther west, cold, dry weather prevailed across the **northern half of the Plains**, although a widespread snow cover continued to protect most winter wheat from weather extremes. On the **southern Plains**, some rain and snow maintained generally favorable moisture reserves for pastures and winter grains. Elsewhere, cool, unsettled weather covered much of the **West**. Precipitation was heaviest in the **Pacific Coast States**, particularly across **northern and central California**. Despite the **Western** precipitation, most river basins across the northern half of the region continued to face the prospect of below-average spring and summer runoff.

Cold weather prevailed from the **Plains and upper Midwest into the Southeast**, while unusual warmth covered **New England**. Cool air also spilled into the **West**, excluding the **Pacific Northwest**. Weekly temperatures averaged as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit below normal in **Florida** and were at least 10 degrees Fahrenheit below normal in the **western Corn Belt**, but ranged from 10 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit above normal in **northern New England**. In **northern Minnesota** and the **eastern Dakotas** readings below -20 degrees Fahrenheit were noted on February 24. By February 26, unusually cool air reached **Florida's peninsula**, where scattered readings near the freezing mark (32 degrees Fahrenheit) were observed as far south as **Lake Okeechobee**.

Early in the week, snow fell across portions of the **West, Plains, and Midwest**. Daily-record snowfall totals for February 21 included 10.9 inches in **Reno, NV**; 5.6 inches in **Peoria, IL**; and 5.1 inches in **Kansas City, MO**. Reno's 2-day (February 20-21) snowfall reached 15.1 inches, with nearby totals topping 2 feet. By February 22, daily-record snowfall amounts in **Michigan** included 8.5 inches in **Detroit** and 4.9 inches in **Grand Rapids**. In the snow's wake, chilly air settled across much of the Nation. Daily-record lows for February 22 dipped to -15 degrees Fahrenheit in **Laramie, WY**; -8 degrees Fahrenheit in **Sidney, NE**; and 21 degrees Fahrenheit in **Olympia, WA**. The following day, **Dalhart, TX** (3 degrees Fahrenheit), notched a record for February 23. By February 24, daily-record lows included -6 degrees Fahrenheit in **Omaha, NE**, and -4 degrees Fahrenheit in **St. Joseph, MO**. Cold air shifted into the **Southeast** by February 25, when daily-record lows included 20 degrees Fahrenheit in **Greenwood, MS**, and 26 degrees Fahrenheit in **Mobile, AL**. Meanwhile, a new area of snow developed across the **south-central U.S.**, while rain and snow spread into the **Northeast**. In **Texas**, daily snowfall records for February 23 were broken in **Midland** (4.4 inches) and **Waco** (3.1 inches). Farther east, daily precipitation records for February 23 included 1.17 inches at **JFK Airport in New York** and 1.15 inches in **Newark, NJ**. On February 24, **Burlington, VT**, noted daily records for both precipitation (1.44 inches) and snowfall (12.9 inches). Wet weather also returned to **California**, where daily rainfall records for February 23 reached 1.25 inches in **Modesto** and 1.03 inches in **Stockton**.

Late in the week, ingredients came together for a major **Northeastern** storm. The storm moved ashore on the night of February 25-26 across **southern New England**, where minimum barometric pressures included

28.68 inches (971 millibars) at the **Blue Hill Observatory in Milton, MA**, and 28.72 inches (973 millibars) at **New Haven, CT**. The same night, peak wind gusts were clocked to 68 miles per hour in **Concord, NH**, and 67 miles per hour in both **Portland, ME**, and **Beverly, MA**. Late on February 25, a gust to 91 miles per hour was recorded on **Isle of Shoals, NH**. February 25-26 snowfall reached 20.9 inches in **New York's Central Park**, where the February total of 36.9 inches surpassed its March 1896 monthly standard of 30.5 inches. Combining the effects of two storms, February 22-27 precipitation totaled 4.83 inches at **Central Park**. Weekly precipitation totals of 4 to 8 inches were common elsewhere across **southeastern New York** and **southern and coastal New England**, with 6.17 inches measured from February 24-28 in **Portland, ME**. Farther inland, weekly snowfall totals ranged from 2 to 5 feet at a few locations in the **Catskill Mountains of southeastern New York**. Elsewhere in **New York**, February 22-28 snowfall totaled 21.9 inches in **Binghamton**, 20.4 inches in **Syracuse**, and 20.0 inches in **Rochester**. February 26 featured 11.8 inches of snow in **Rochester**, representing its snowiest calendar day since February 14, 2007 (17.8 inches). Farther west, beneficial precipitation returned to the **West** at week's end. In fact, **Wenatchee, WA** (1.24 inches on February 26), experienced its wettest February day on record, surpassing the 1.12-inch total from February 1, 1960. By month's end, the average water content of the **Sierra Nevada** snow pack climbed to 27 inches (106 percent of normal for the date), according to the **California** Department of Water Resources.

Although scattered showers developed late in the week across the **western Hawaiian Islands**, drought persisted or intensified across the majority of the state. February rainfall totaled just 1.38 inches (16 percent of normal) at **Hilo**, on the **Big Island**. On February 27-28, however, **Kokee, Kauai**, netted 1.92 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. Farther north, mild weather prevailed across much of **Alaska**, although bitterly cold weather overspread western areas toward week's end. On February 27, **Nome's** minimum temperature of -35 degrees Fahrenheit represented its lowest reading since January 30, 2000, when it was also -35 degrees Fahrenheit. Earlier in the week, on February 21, **Nome** had recorded a high of 34 degrees Fahrenheit. **Alaskan** daily-record highs for February 21 included 44 degrees Fahrenheit in **King Salmon** and 34 degrees Fahrenheit in **Kotzebue**. Meanwhile, much of **Alaska** remained in a "snow drought." Through the end of February, for example, the season-to-date snowfall in **Fairbanks** totaled just 23.2 inches (39 percent of normal).

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board.  
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## **Agricultural Summary** **February 22 - 28, 2010**

**Highlights:** Much of the Nation experienced a second week of cooler than normal temperatures, with areas in the Corn Belt as many as 15 degrees below average. In contrast, much of the Interior and Pacific Northwest, the Great Lakes, and northern Atlantic Coast recorded above average temperatures. While temperatures in Maine reached as many as 20 degrees above average for a second straight week, a major winter storm delivered an abundance of snow to the northeast, leaving precipitation totals as much as 400 percent of normal across the region. Elsewhere, areas in the northern Rocky Mountains and northern and central Great Plains received 2 percent or less of their normal precipitation.

Average temperatures in Florida were 4 to 8 degrees below normal, with subfreezing temperatures reported as far south as Hardee County. Soil moisture remained mostly adequate for all districts except the Panhandle where surplus soil moisture conditions prevented producers from cutting stubble. With the exception of the southern region, fieldwork was further delayed due to wet conditions. Cold temperatures presented problems for vegetable growers in the western Panhandle trying to prepare beds and lay plastic and slowed growth in crops across the central and southern regions. Citrus bloom was observed on Valencia trees in Hendry County groves signaling the natural start of the 2011 crop. Citrus producers were busy harvesting and completing maintenance activities.

In Georgia, fields were beginning to dry out following a week of favorable weather conditions. Portions of the winter wheat crop reached the jointing stage and peach trees in several southern counties were starting to bloom. Where conditions allowed, producers were harrowing, shredding cotton stalks, and preparing fields for spring planting.

The central and eastern regions of Texas received up to 1.5 inches of rainfall while other areas received little to no moisture during the week. Statewide, winter wheat conditions continued to improve following increased soil moisture levels as the crop in the Southern High Plains neared the jointing stage. Recent rain and snowfall in some areas of the State further delayed corn planting, leaving overall progress behind last year and the 5-year average. In South Texas, a hard freeze during the week delayed the start of early sorghum planting. Vegetables in the Lower Valley were growing well, but some producers were replanting acreage due to seed problems in saturated soils.

Temperatures in Arizona were mostly below normal during the week. Precipitation was recorded at all but one weather station, pushing year-to-date totals well above average everywhere except at the Grand Canyon. Durum wheat and barley emergence had occurred on 95 and 75 percent of this year's acreage, respectively. Overall progress for both crops was behind both last year and the 5-year average.

A wave of Pacific storm systems bombarded California during the week bringing moderate to heavy rain and mountain snow to northern areas midweek and heavy rainfall to southern regions on the weekend. Where conditions allowed, producers completed fieldwork in preparation for spring planting. Weed control continued in many oat, rye, and wheat fields where early planted crops had begun to head. Cherry, peach, plum, and prune trees were in full bloom. Stone fruit grafting continued in the San Joaquin Valley. Vineyards and olive groves were pruned. Early almond trees were in full bloom, with late varieties approaching half bloom. Most producers have applied their first protective spray to help limit the impact of bloom disease.

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