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National Weather Summary December 20 - 26, 2009

Highlights: Stormy weather shifted back into the **Nation's mid-section**, where snow blanketed much of the **Plains** and **Midwest**. The snow, which fell from December 23-26, disrupted holiday travel, severely stressed livestock, and halted final corn harvesting. Cold weather and high winds accompanied and trailed the storm, which dropped measurable snow as far south as **northern Texas** and buried portions of the **eastern Plains** and **upper Midwest** with 1 to 2 feet of snow. Meanwhile, flooding rains soaked the **Mid-South** and the **middle Mississippi Valley**. Storm-total rainfall -- most of which fell on December 23-24 -- exceeded 8 inches in **central Arkansas**. In the **Southeast**, wet weather continued to hamper cotton harvesting and other late-season fieldwork. Elsewhere, cool but relatively dry weather settled across the **West**, following some early-week rain and snow showers. Cotton harvesting neared completion in the **Southwest**, while some of **California's** citrus growers used protective measures against frosty conditions on December 23-24. Weekly temperatures were only slightly below normal in **California**, but averaged more than 10 degrees F below normal across parts of the **Intermountain West**.

Early in the week, warmth briefly affected the **Pacific Northwest**, where daily-record highs on December 20 in **western Washington** included 57 degrees F in **Seattle** and 56 degrees F in **Olympia**. Showers accompanied the warmth, with **Quillayute, WA** (1.77 inches), registering a daily-record rainfall for December 20. By mid-week, however, cool air settled across much of the **West**, resulting in a daily-record low of 32 degrees F on December 23 in **Camarillo, CA**. Two days later, **Casper, WY** (-15 degrees F), experienced its lowest Christmas Day temperature on record.

Heavy snow lingered into December 20 across the northern **Mid-Atlantic region** and **southern New England**. With 14.3 inches of snow on December 20, **Providence, RI**, set a record for its greatest calendar-day snowfall in December (previously, 10.6 inches on December 12, 1960). **Providence** noted a December 19-20 storm total of 16.0 inches, narrowly missing its December single-storm record of 17.0 inches established from December 5-7, 2003. On **Long Island, Islip, NY**, received 14.3 inches on December 20, achieving a 2-day storm total of 23.9 inches.

By December 22, a developing storm over the **West** produced widespread snow, while a narrow band of snow affected the **Midwest**. December 22-23 snowfall totaled more than a foot in **Williams, AZ**. Daily-record snowfall totals for December 22 included 4.8 inches in **Ely, NV**; 3.8 inches in **Madison, WI**; and 3.4 inches in **Rockford, IL**. A day later, torrential rains developed across the **Mid-South**, where records in **Arkansas** for December 23 reached 5.00 inches in **North Little Rock** and 3.84 inches in **Texarkana**. Significant rain also reached the **middle Mississippi Valley**, resulting in a daily-record total (1.49 inches) in **Springfield, IL**. During the 5-day period from December 23-27, **Springfield** received 3.31 inches. In **Arkansas**, December 22-24 rainfall

totals reached 9.51 inches in **North Little Rock** and 6.98 inches in **Jonesboro**. In addition, more than two dozen tornadoes ripped across the **Deep South** on December 23-24 from **eastern Texas to southern Mississippi**.

December 24 was the snowiest day on record in **Oklahoma City, OK** (previously, 11.3 inches on March 19, 1924), and the snowiest day since March 5, 1989, in **Wichita Falls, TX**. Christmas Eve totals reached 14.1 inches in **Oklahoma City** and 7.8 inches in **Wichita Falls**. Farther north, December 23-26 snowfall totals included 25.1 inches in **Grand Forks, ND**; 20.7 inches in **Sioux City, IA**; 20.4 inches in **Huron, SD**; 19.1 inches in **Norfolk, NE**; 10.6 inches in **Topeka, KS**; and 8.1 inches in **Kansas City, MO**. In all of those locations, it was also the snowiest Christmas Day on record, with totals of 15.7 inches in **Grand Forks**, 8.0 inches in **Sioux City**, 9.5 inches in **Huron**, 11.8 inches in **Norfolk**, 3.9 inches in **Topeka**, and 3.7 inches in **Kansas City**. On December 25, wind gusts were clocked to 62 m.p.h. in **Oklahoma City** and 59 m.p.h. in **Valentine, NE**. Farther east, it was the wettest Christmas Day on record in locations such as **Columbia, SC** (3.06 inches), and **Asheville, NC** (2.46 inches). By December 26, a number of monthly snowfall and precipitation records had been broken. New December precipitation records included 10.50 inches in **Savannah, GA**; 9.06 inches in **Columbia, SC**; 8.69 inches in **Augusta, GA**; and 7.92 inches in **Richmond, VA**. In **New Orleans, LA**, the month-to-date rainfall of 25.43 inches surpassed the October 1937 all-time record of 25.11 inches. Meanwhile, December 1-26 snowfall totals climbed to monthly record-setting levels in locations such as **Sioux City** (32.4 inches) and **Huron** (26.0 inches). **Sioux City** also achieved its snowiest month on record, edging the January 1982 standard of 29.1 inches.

Mild weather covered **Alaska**, accompanied by occasional precipitation. Weekly temperatures averaged as much as 20 degrees F above normal in **western Alaska**. In **McGrath**, the temperature rebounded from a low of -45 degrees F on December 19 to a daily-record high of 43 degrees F on December 21. In **southern Alaska**, **Kodiak's** daily-record rainfall of 2.21 inches on December 19 contributed to a weekly sum of 6.72 inches. Meanwhile in **Hawaii**, locally heavy showers early in the week yielded to cool, mostly dry conditions. One exception was the western islands, where locally heavy showers briefly returned after mid-week. On December 24-25, the **Oahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge** received 5.52 inches in a 24-hour period.

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board.
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Agricultural Summary **December 21 – 27, 2009**

Highlights: Strong winter storms delivered above average precipitation to many areas east of the Rocky Mountains, leaving producers with unharvested crops in their fields struggling to complete any fieldwork during the week. Total accumulations throughout most of the Great Plains and Mississippi Valley exceeded 400 percent of normal. In contrast, areas in the Southwest, Rocky Mountains, and southern Florida received 2 percent or less of their normal precipitation for the week. Cool temperatures prevailed across much of the western half of the Nation, with several areas in the Great Basin and northern Montana falling to more than 12 degrees below average. Elsewhere, warmer than normal temperatures blanketed the Great Lakes, Corn Belt, and Ohio Valley.

In California, small grain producers continued to seed wheat, oats, and barley. Grape growers spent the week pruning, cultivating, irrigating, and removing old vines. Satsuma and Clementine mandarins, navel oranges, and grapefruit were picked in the Central Valley, while the lemon harvest in the desert region progressed normally. Greenhouse cucumbers, cauliflower, and broccoli were harvested in Tulare County. Elsewhere, radicchio fields and tomato beds were being prepared for planting.

Cotton producers in Arizona were busy harvesting their remaining cotton fields, while vegetable growers shipped a variety of winter crops including broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and lettuce.

Persistent wet conditions in Florida's Panhandle continued to delay fieldwork, leaving fall plantings behind schedule and winter plantings at a standstill. Sugarcane harvest was active in the Everglades although locally heavy rainfall delayed progress for couple of days in some areas. A variety of winter vegetables were harvested to meet holiday demands, although volume was light on many items. Wet weather across the major vegetable growing regions had caused some disease and quality problems as well as a higher number of culls.

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