Dry Weather Continued to Stress Crops

Crops throughout the state need rain, but received very little this past week, especially in north and central areas. Crops on lighter soils showed more stress, while crops on heavy soil are holding steady. Temperatures were fairly normal for the week, ranging from 2 degrees above normal to 1 degree below normal. Average high temperatures were in the low to mid 80s in most areas. Low temperatures averaged in the high 50s to low 60s during the week. Rainfall totals ranged from zero inches in Madison to 0.08 inches in La Crosse. Soil moisture conditions were at 30 percent very short, 37 percent short, 32 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus. Last week there was an average of 6.6 days suitable for fieldwork in Wisconsin.

Corn height was reported at an average of 52 inches, slightly taller than last year’s 51 inches and above the 5-year average of 39 inches, according to the Wisconsin Field Office of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. Corn looked good in most areas, despite continued dry weather. Corn on heavy soils is faring better, but all corn could use rain to keep moving.

Soybeans bloomed was at 21 percent, behind last year’s progress of 36 percent, but ahead of the 5-year average of 13 percent. Soybeans on lighter soils showed some moisture stress in north and central Wisconsin, while soybeans on heavier soils are holding steady.

Second cutting alfalfa was reported at 55 percent complete, above last year’s 35 percent and the 5-year average of 22 percent. Dry weather enabled farmers to harvest second crop. Farmers in some north and central areas of the state had low yields, since dry weather hindered strong regrowth. Overall quality was rated at good, but rain is needed to help with third crop regrowth. Leafhoppers have also been reported in the alfalfa, mostly in northern and central parts of the state.

Oats headed was reported at 97 percent, ahead of last year’s 94 percent and the 5-year average of 82 percent. Strawberry harvest is complete throughout the state. Sweet corn was tasseling in some areas.
Quotes from Farm Reporters and County Ag Agents

BAYFIELD-S.S.: Everything is stressed because of dry conditions. Fields that have been cut are brown. Corn leaves are curling, and oats are sure to be light.

RUSK-G.P.: Another week without widespread rain. Crops on lighter soils are in big trouble; just about beyond saving. On heavier soils, just holding their own. Soybeans seem to be having a harder time of it-more than corn is. Spraying and side-dressing just about done. Leafhoppers and aphids are in the alfalfa.

ASHLAND-A.R.: All crops are showing stress. We are in dire need of rain. Only had several refresher showers. Harvesting of second crop hay has begun, with quantity light and quality good.

PRICE-M.K.: Second crop forage harvest has begun on some of the better fields that were harvested early, with quality being excellent, but yielding very poor quantities. Most hayfields are not growing back well due to very dry conditions. Small grains look very good, but the hot and dry weather may reduce bushel weight without moisture in the near future. Corn is doing very well on most soils, despite the dry weather.

LANGLADE-A.K.: Need rain. Corn and soybeans are showing stress. Second crop hay is drying up fast. Rains have been scattered and uneven.

EAU CLAIRE-R.S.: Second crop hay is very short. Pastures are brown. Corn looks great, but rolling every afternoon. Need rain soon.

PIERCE-J.K.: Corn is rolling during the day on the knolls and lighter soils. We need rain very badly. Oats are ripening prematurely from lack of moisture and will probably have low test weight. Finished second crop hay—good quantity and quality.

PORTAGE-D.Z.: Dry land is hurting the corn in some areas; leaves are curling. Second crop hay is half of what first crop was. Some oat fields are headed out and only one foot tall.

WAUSHARA-L.K.: Corn and soybeans look good, but are starting to roll during the day. It is very dry here. Second crop hay is a poor crop, but has good quality. Lots of leafhopper damage so far.