

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Updates August 17, 2019

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates—whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed—please send me an email or call the office.

New Farm Stress Webinar Series

The demands of farming are plentiful — unpredictable growing seasons, equipment breakdowns and more. Unfortunately, these demands take a toll on the dedicated people who drive our agriculture industry, which can lead to stress, mental health issues and even suicide.

For the past several years, Michigan State University Extension has been building a suite of resources to help farming professionals take care of their mental health. Now, in recognition of September as National Suicide Prevention Month, MSU Extension is proud to announce a new addition to the farm stress toolbox: [“Bury Seeds, Not Stress,” a free four-course webinar series.](#)

Led by MSU Extension educators, the webinars cover a variety of topics, from the mental health stigma facing men to how to incorporate stress-reducing techniques into your day. Sessions are open to farmers, family members, industry workers — anyone who wants to learn more about how to manage the stresses of farming and support our agriculture professionals.

See the full schedule and descriptions of webinars below, and register for one, two, or even all four sessions. Please pass this information along to your colleagues and professional networks outside of Extension to help spread the word! **Check out the full suite of MSU Extension's farm stress resources at canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress.**

- Thursday, September 12 | 8:00 a.m. "Effects of Stress on Our Bodies"
- Tuesday, September 17 | 12:00 p.m. "The Power of Positive Self Talk"
- Wednesday, September 18 | 1:00 p.m. "Men and Mental Health - Breaking the Silence"
- Wednesday, September 25 | 10:00 a.m. "Youth & Farm Stress"

New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department's self-service website for farmers.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is

applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

More than 19 Million Acres of prevented planting

Agricultural producers reported they were not able to plant crops on more than 19.4 million acres in 2019, according to a [new report](#) released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This marks the most prevented plant acres reported since USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) began releasing the report in 2007 and 17.49 million acres more than reported at this time last year.

Of those prevented plant acres, more than 73 percent were in 12 Midwestern states, where heavy rainfall and flooding this year has prevented many producers from planting mostly corn, soybeans and wheat. See the table below for a portion of those data.

USDA supported planting of cover crops on fields where farmers were not able to plant because of their benefits in preventing soil erosion, protecting water quality and boosting soil health. The report showed where producers planted 2.71 million acres of cover crops so far in 2019, compared with 2.14 million acres at this time in 2018 and 1.88 million at this time in 2017.

To help make cover crops a more viable option, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) adjusted the haying and grazing date of cover crops, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service held signups in select states that offered producers assistance in planting cover crops. Meanwhile, USDA added other flexibilities to help impacted producers, including adjusting the deadline to file acreage reports in select states.

State	CORN	SOYBEANS	WHEAT	Grand Total
Illinois	1,140,026	330,638	27,107	1,501,731
Indiana	708,746	231,161	3,562	944,215
Iowa	381,015	82,216	1	463,339
Michigan	498,046	349,481	20,366	870,026
Minnesota	999,513	161,528	7,608	1,170,579
South Dakota	2,845,194	850,864	126,403	3,864,567
Wisconsin	457,158	125,281	8,749	592,808
Grand Total	11,210,627	4,350,704	2,209,457	19,259,925

WBC Trapping Ending

It is time to end the western bean cutworm (WBC) moth trapping for the year. Purdue says their peak flight period was July 18-24. Traps in western Branch County caught only 4 and 31 moths this past week and the trap in SE Kalamazoo County had 0. If you are scouting for egg masses and find that you have reached threshold, let me know—I have not had any reports of concern come in yet this season.

Weather and Crop Update

[This week's crop report brought to you by MSU Extension field crops educator Bruce MacKellar. For more details, check the [MSU Extension Field Crops](#) site for the Southwest Regional Field Crops report early next week.]

Corn: Drought has impacted corn to some degree across much of the region. Irrigated corn is growing well, and depending upon planting date, is in the grain fill period. Corn planted up to about June 28 is beginning to tassel. Dry conditions during pollination and the subsequent 3 weeks have the most detrimental impact on yields. The duration and timing of drought stress, coupled with the extremely variable planting dates across the region, means that impact from this stress will vary by location.

Tar spot is on the increase in fields in southwest and west Michigan. Growers should continue scouting, particularly on fields that under irrigation or have received adequate rainfall in recent weeks. Look for small black raised areas on corn leaves as signs of initial infection. These lesions will become larger as the season progresses. I have seen symptoms in Ottawa, Allegan, Van Buren and Southern Calhoun Counties. Consider treating with fungicides when leaf symptoms are evident on most of the plants observed at or near the ear leaf. Leaf wetness for prolonged periods (6-7 hours or more) helps the infection to spread. Dry conditions, bright sunshine and dry breezes can help reduce the chance that the disease will spread. So far, it has been easier to find on field edges than in the center of fields.

2019 has been a year for the record books. On the insect side of the pest ledger, we have seen an incredible amount of corn earworm feeding symptoms in vegetative growth stage corn, something I had not seen before. The symptoms of this is larger shot hole leaf feeding on the ear leaf and above, as well as feeding on the corn tassels. There was also evidence of egg laying by western bean cutworm moths on later planted corn, way more immature than they would normally lay eggs on, with little sign of larvae survival in fields that are pollinating during the second week of August. Field Crop Entomologist Chris DiFonzo has provided an excellent update on this topic, and what it might mean for future challenges from this pest. Check out her article: [Identifying Late Season Caterpillars Feeding in Corn Ears](#).

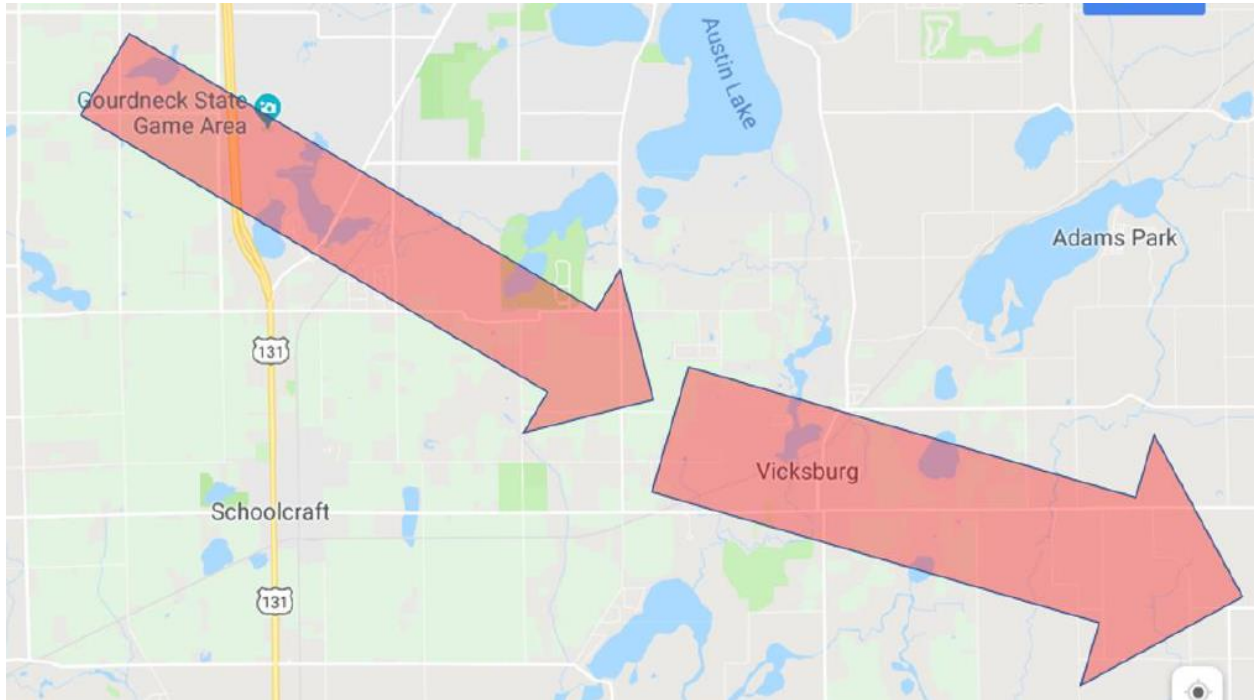
Purdue's Bob Nielsen has re-posted a few articles for those interested in learning more about corn development and management: [Estimating Corn Grain Yield Prior to Harvest](#); [Grain Fill Stages in Corn](#); and [Effects of Severe Stress During Grain Filling in Corn](#).

Soybeans: Soybeans are all over the board in terms of growth and development. Irrigated soybeans are looking better than dryland fields across most of the region. One of the most visible things you notice when looking at soybeans is the lack of canopy closure in 30" rowed soybeans this late in the season. Later planted beans have been hurt in terms of plant height because of the dry conditions. Lots of beans are less than knee high. Keep an eye out for spider mites on soybean fields. I observed several fields in northern Berrien county that had minor areas of spider mite damage along the edges of fields on August 14th. Treatment along edges often can help reduce populations with having to treat the entire fields. Usually consider treating around 120 feet deeper into a field than the symptoms exist. Remember that spider mite populations build quickly in dry and dusty areas along field edges. When populations build, the mites spin a small streamer and can sail to a new location in the field.

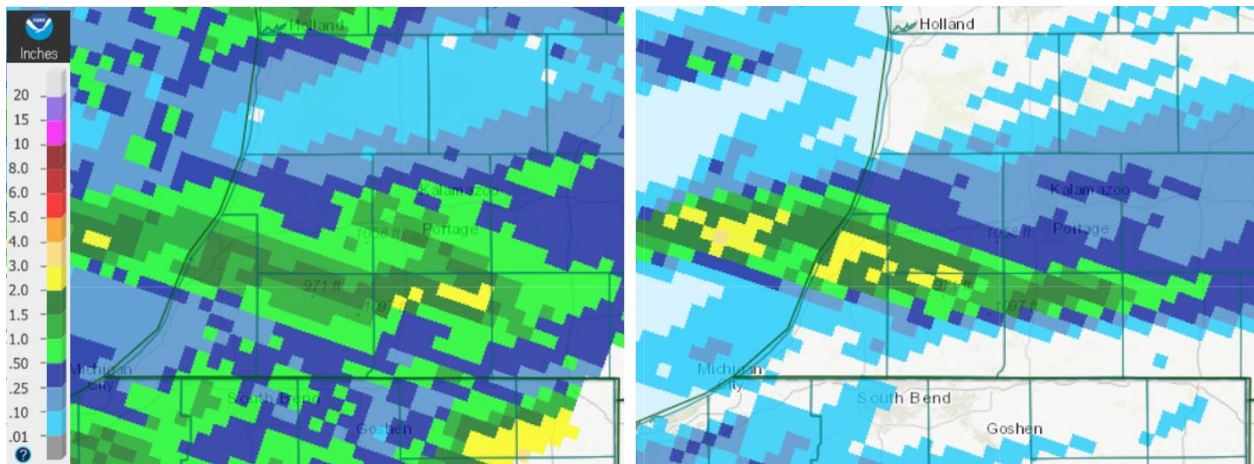
Weather: Temperatures this past week have been below normal, and rainfall in the region was less than an inch in most places although scattered storms brought patchy totals as high as 1.5 to 2 inches. The forecast for the next two weeks is for above-normal temperatures which should help push the crops faster toward maturity. Toward the end of August, rainfall is currently predicted to be above-normal which would help to alleviate the moisture deficit of 1-2 inches that most parts of southwest Michigan are under these past 30 days. Rainfall totals for this coming week are predicted to be 0.75 to 1.5 inches.

There was devastating hail damage east of Vicksburg along W Avenue from a storm on the evening of August 14. I was out of town, but Bruce MacKellar provides the following report. "The area most significantly impacted was bounded by V to the north and XY to the south. Runs out more or less by 31st

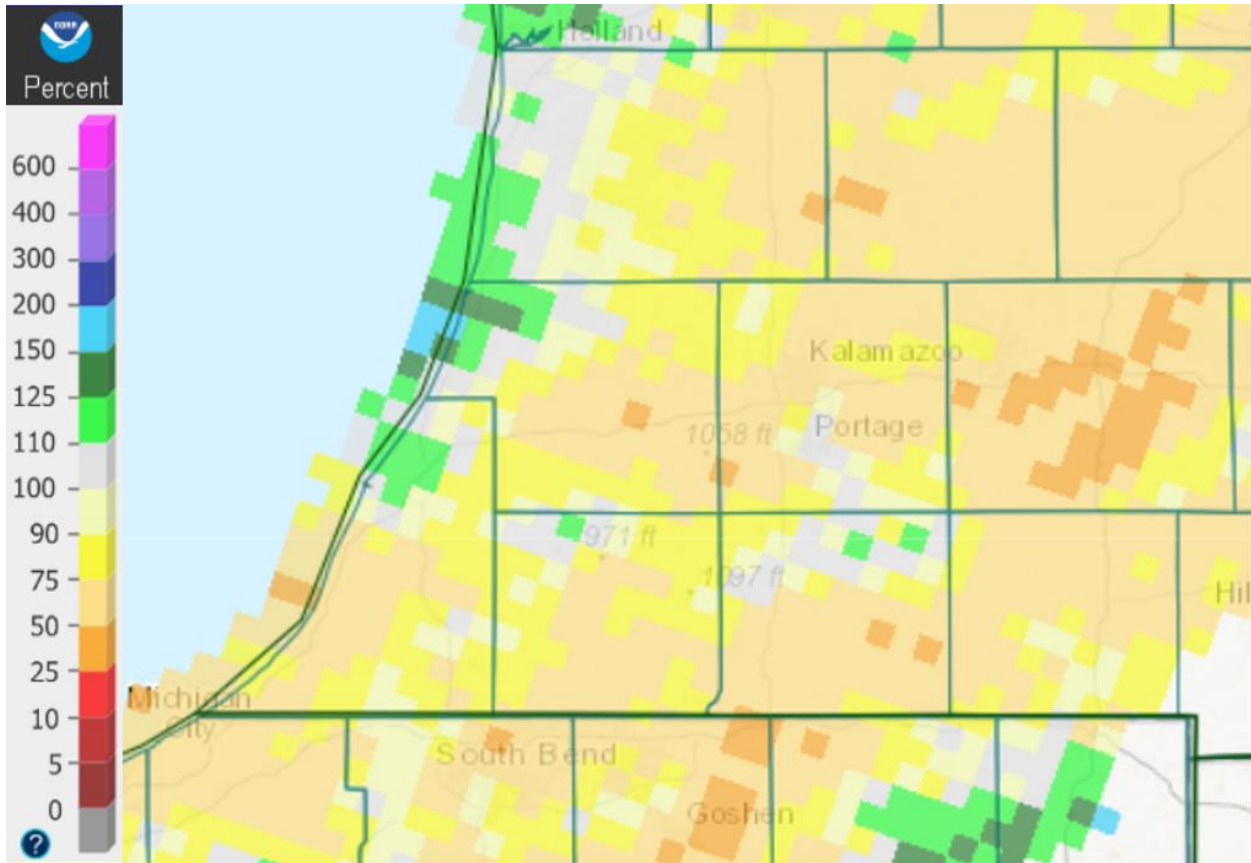
street to the east. Hail damage started west of 131 around 10th street but had limited width and impacted some fields northwest of Vicksburg along the way. Most damage was to irrigated seed corn fields, then to irrigated soybean fields. At least one commercial watermelon field was impacted northwest of Vicksburg. Unfortunately, Wiley's Veggies on U avenue in Schoolcraft suffered severe damage from the hail as well. Fields within 2 miles east of Vicksburg along W avenue are likely to be total losses. Width of this swath is probably 2 miles, north to south. Damage begins to tail off to a narrowing band as it moved east. See the map below for areas hit by hail."



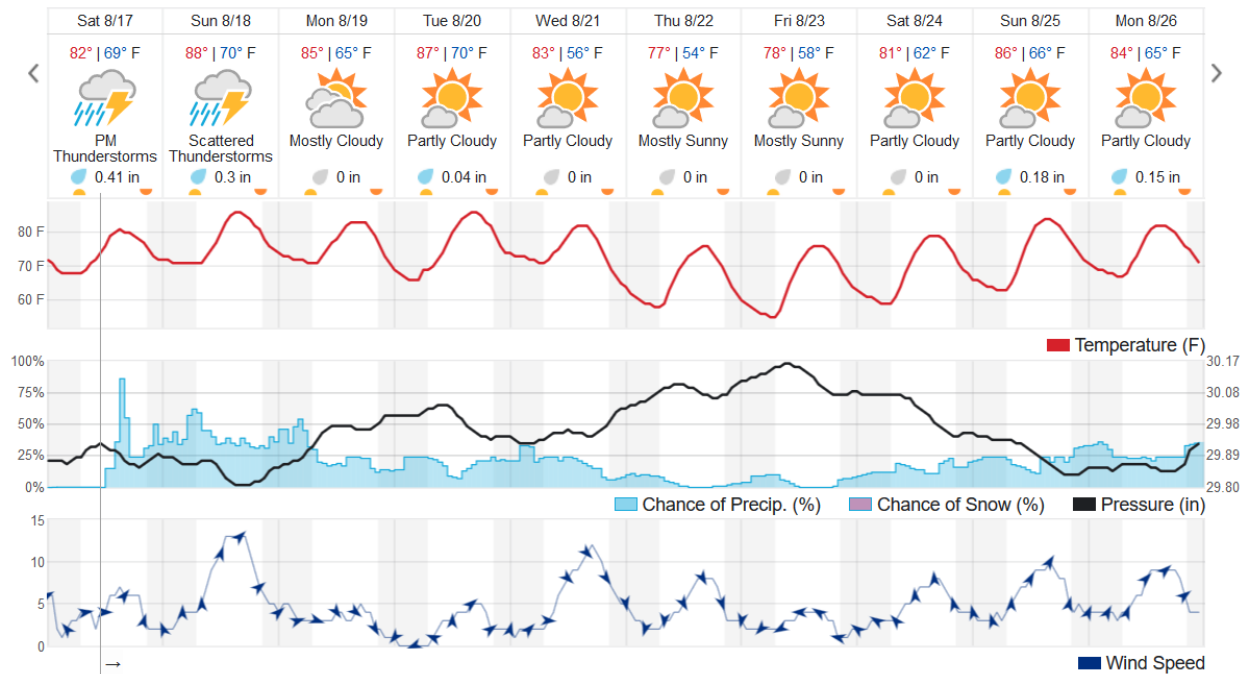
Areas hit by hail on August 14. Graphic courtesy of Bruce MacKellar.



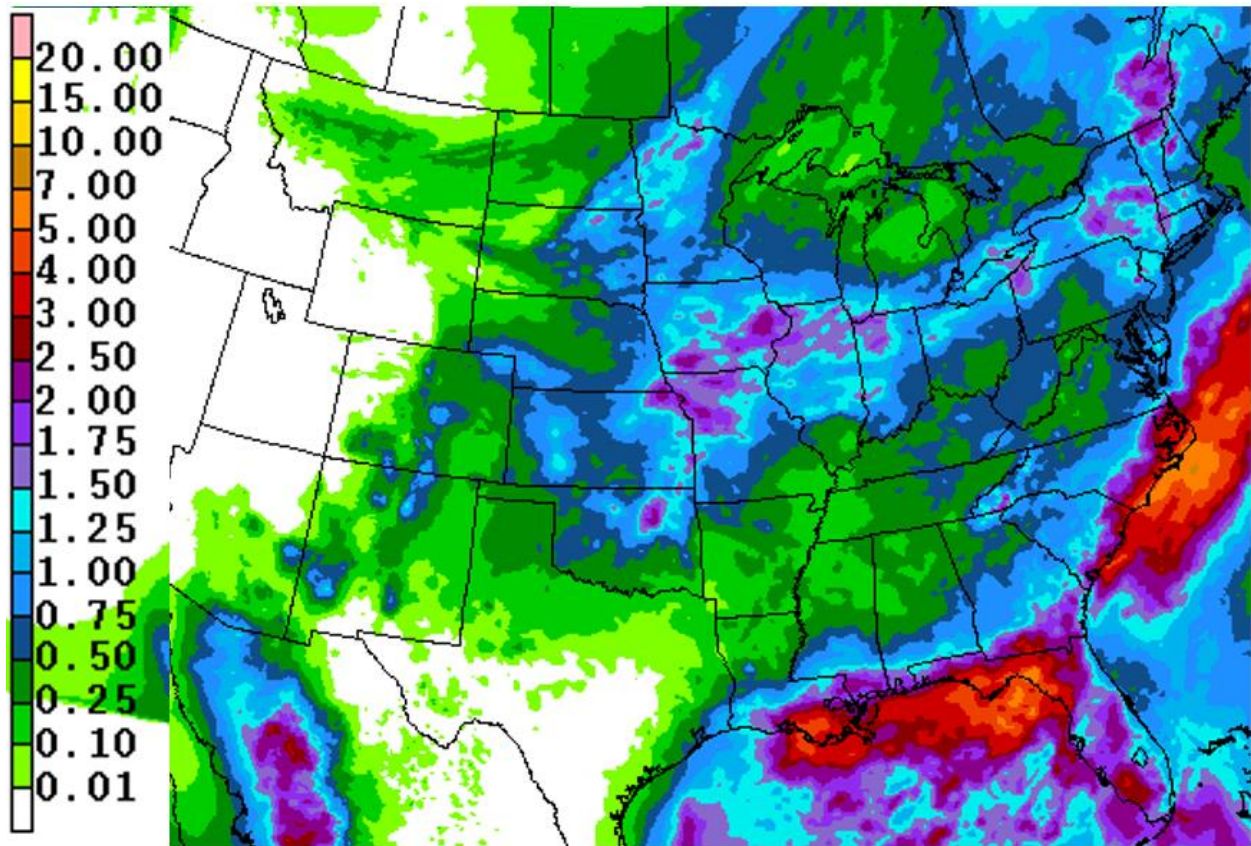
Rainfall totals for the past 7 days (left) and the past 24 hours (right) as of Saturday morning in southwest Michigan.



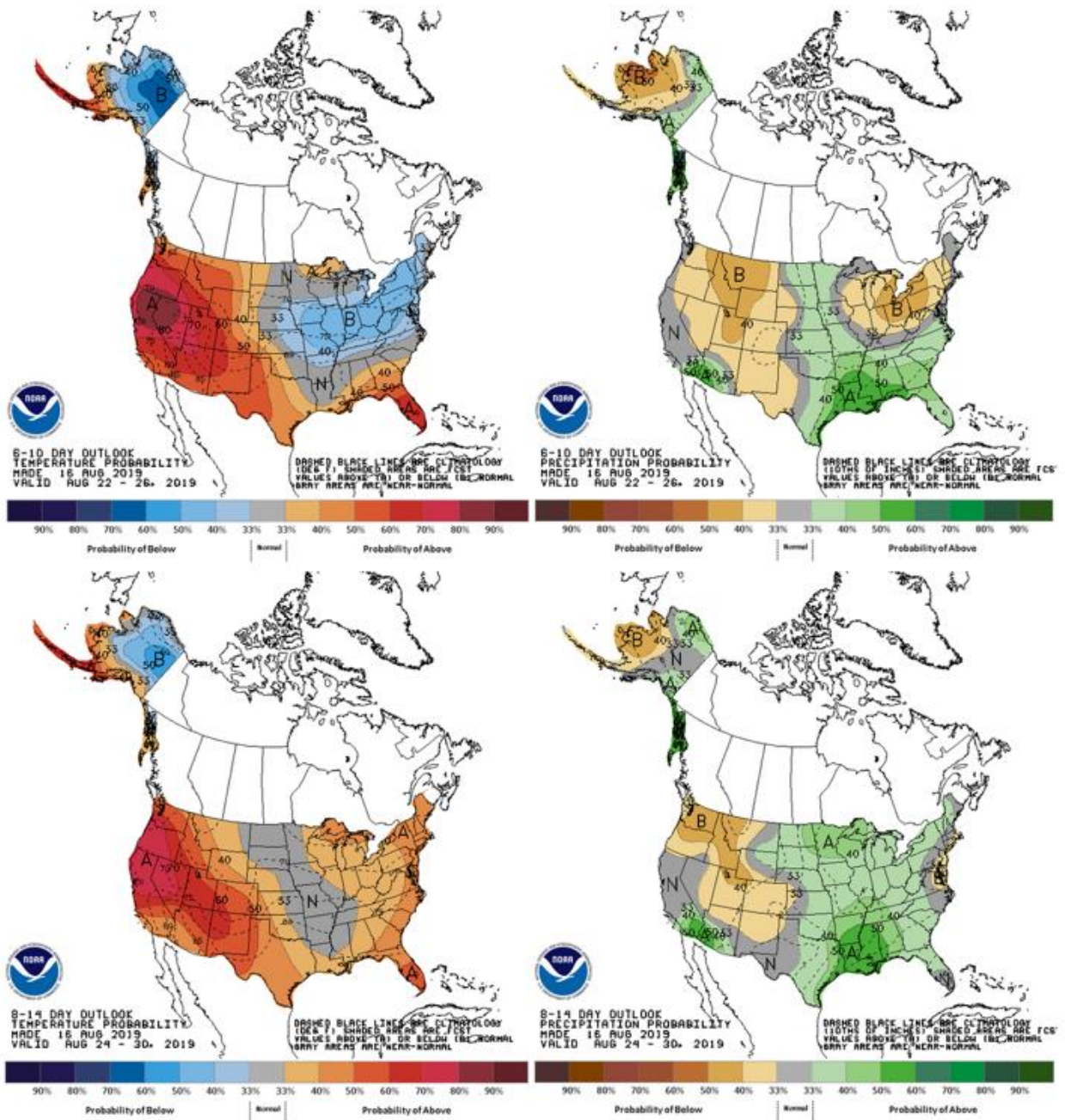
Rainfall percent of normal over the past 30 days. For most of the region, that equates to 1-2" below normal.



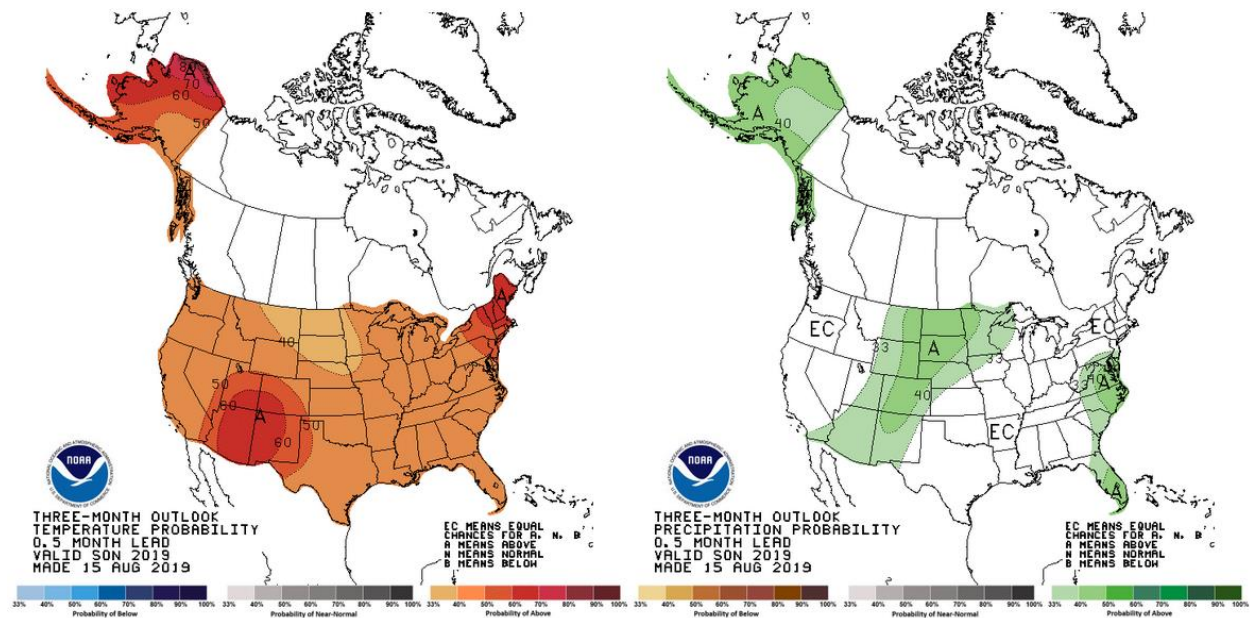
The 10-day forecast for Centreville according to wunderground.com.



Forecast for precipitation totals for the week of Aug 17-24, 2019....3/4" to 1.5 inches depending on location, most of that falling over the weekend.



National Weather Service 6-10 day outlook (Aug 22-26, top) and the 8-14 day outlook (Aug 24-30, bottom) for temperature (left) and precipitation (right). Cool and dry will give way to warmer and wetter by the end of August.



The long-lead outlook for the fall (Sept-Nov) predicts warmer than normal temperatures. That would be good news for pushing back the first frost date. The fact that the entire US is included in that prediction hopefully means the chances are pretty good that it is accurate.

Calendar

Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined

- August 20-21** **[2019 Bridging the Experience Gap.](#)** Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center, 3775 S Reese Rd, Frankenmuth, MI. This program provides a platform for professionals to gain experience, network with their peers and ask questions from knowledgeable instructors without fear of rejection or criticism. Cost is \$350, supplies and lunches included, register online.
- August 21** **[Small Farm Environmental Education Day.](#)** 10am-2pm. Food Forest Farm and Nursery, 558 River Rd, Coldwater, MI. \$10/person includes lunch. MAEAP Phase I credit available. Call the Branch Conservation District (517-278-2725 x5) to RSVP.
- August 22** **[Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Free Webinar.](#)** Thursdays 7:00-7:30 AM. This week: MSU's cropping systems agronomist Manni Singh will talk about "Corn Silage Disease & Quality Management". Join via computer or mobile device (audio and video, <https://msu.zoom.us/j/552324349>) or by phone (audio only, **669-900-6833** and enter meeting ID **552-324-349**). To receive a weekly reminder of the Virtual Breakfast, sign up at <http://eepurl.com/gm-PIv>.
- September 5** **[Cass MAEAP Field Day.](#)** 4-7pm. Crane Pond DNR office, 60887 M-40, Jones, MI. Managing for Forestry Health and Profit. Program offers 2 RUP credits. Co-sponsored by SWMLC, DNR, SWxSW CISMA & MAEAP. Dinner provided to registrants. Call Erez Brandvain, the Cass County MAEAP Technician, at 269-228-7084, to register or email Erez.Brandvain@macd.org.
- September 25** **[Calhoun County Cover Crop Demonstration Plots.](#)** MSU Extension in cooperation with the Homer FFA is planning a short field tour of cover crop demonstration plots in Homer, MI on Wednesday, Sept. 25 from 10am-12pm. The plots are located at 24425 M-60, Homer, MI. Plots will include a replication of statewide strip plots as well as several recommended mixes for a variety of goals. More details to come.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

2019 MSU Extension cover crop field days across Michigan

PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 16, 2019

Learn how to add cover crops to your rotation at one of the many cover crop field days coming up in Michigan.

Field Crop Virtual Breakfast to address challenges associated with managing immature corn silage

PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 15, 2019

The challenges of the delayed planting season continue for corn producers who plan to harvest corn silage.

More than projects at the county fair

PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 13, 2019

Look for opportunities to increase youth leadership at your local fair.

Identifying late-season caterpillars feeding in corn ears

PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 9, 2019

Those dudes in corn ears could be earworm!

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