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# Weekly Weather And Crop Bulletin

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## National Weather Summary January 20 - 26, 2008

**Highlights:** Storminess increased across the **West**, first in **California**, then eventually as far east as the **Rockies**. Rain and snow showers were frequently heavy in **California**, where precipitation caused local flooding and mudslides but further improved high-elevation snow packs and aided pastures and winter crops. Meanwhile, mostly dry weather prevailed on the **Plains**, where milder weather replaced bitterly cold conditions by week's end. Late-week warmth began to erode winter wheat's protective snow cover on the **central Plains**. Farther east, a band of heavy snow blanketed the **Midwest** (mostly from January 20-22) from the **middle Missouri Valley into Michigan**. Heavy snow squalls persisted for much of the week downwind of the **Great Lakes**. By week's end, snow depths greater than a foot were common in the **upper Midwest** and parts of the **Great Lakes region**. Elsewhere, additional rain fell across the **South**, mainly south and west of pre-existing drought areas. Rainfall was heaviest along and near the **central Gulf Coast**, while some freezing rain and sleet was reported on January 25 as far south as **northern Louisiana** and **central Mississippi**.

Cold air blanketed much of the nation, holding weekly temperatures as much as 20 degrees F below normal across the **northern Rockies**. Temperatures remained below 32 degrees F for the entire week from the **northern Corn Belt into northern New England**, and dipped to 0 degrees F or lower as far south as the **Ohio Valley** and **northern portions of Kansas and Missouri**. Persistently cold weather increased stress on livestock, especially in the **upper Midwest** and other areas with a substantial snow cover. However, snow also provided insulation for much of the winter wheat crop across the **northern and central Plains** and the **Northwest**. Across the **southern and eastern Corn Belt**, however, where temperatures near 0 degrees F were reported on January 20 and 25, cold weather with a shallow or non-existent snow cover posed a slightly greater threat to winter wheat. Nevertheless, winter wheat is a notoriously hardy crop during the overwintering period; perhaps a greater threat to the nation's wheat is poor crop establishment on the **central and southern High Plains** due to autumn dryness prior to dormancy.

On January 20, the low of -22 degrees F in **La Crosse, WI**, represented the lowest reading there since December 25, 2000, when it was -26 degrees F. Later, even colder air settled across the **northern Rockies** and the **interior Northwest**. In **western Montana**, daily-record lows for January 21 included -34 degrees F in **Potomac** and -30 degrees F in **Neihart**. A day later, records for January 22 dipped to -30 degrees F in **Stanley, ID**, and -23 degrees F in **Meacham, OR**. Meanwhile in **Wyoming**, lows on January 22 included -39 degrees F in **Yellowstone National Park (Canyon Ranger Station)** and -38 degrees F in **Bondurant**. Farther south, **Salt Lake City, UT** (-2 degrees F on January 22), noted its lowest reading since February 13, 2004, when it was -5 degrees F. Bitterly cold air reached as far east as the **upper Midwest**, where the coldest mornings were generally January 20 and 24. In **Wisconsin**, lows on those two mornings were -35 and -28 degrees F near **Necedah, Juneau County**, and -31 degrees F (both days) in **Sparta, Monroe County**. Extremely cold air also extended into **northern New England**, where **Caribou, ME** (-29 degrees F), tallied a daily-record low for January 25. A sample of other daily-record lows scattered across the country included -16 degrees F (on January 22) in **Chadron, NE**; -9 degrees F (on January 23) in **Omak,**

**WA**; -29 degrees F (on January 24) in **Waterloo, IA**; -26 degrees F (on January 24) in **Yankton, SD**; -11 degrees F (on January 25) in **Lincoln, IL**; and 1 degree F (on January 25) in **Beckley, WV**.

From January 20-22, significant snow fell across parts of the **northern Plains** and the **Midwest**. In **South Dakota, East Rapid City** (3.4 inches) measured a daily-record total for January 20. A day later, **Midwestern** snowfall records for January 21 reached 7.2 inches in **Madison, WI**, and 5.6 inches in **Waterloo, IA**. **Wisconsin** snowfall for January 21-22 reached 14.2 inches in **Saukville**, 8.8 inches in **Madison**, and 8.5 inches in **La Crosse**. Elsewhere in **Wisconsin, Green Bay's** month-to-date precipitation climbed to 3.23 inches (22.8 inches of snow), representing its third-highest January total behind 3.75 inches in 1899 and 3.29 inches in 1890. Later in the week, frozen precipitation returned to parts of the **South**, with some freezing rain reported on January 25 in the **central Gulf Coast States**. A day later, **Memphis, TN**, reported a trace of snow, while **Mobile, AL** (1.39 inches), collected a record rainfall total for January 26. However, the week's most impressive precipitation occurred in the **West**. On January 23, daily-record rainfall amounts in **southern California** reached 4.16 inches in **Santa Barbara** and 2.10 inches in **Santa Maria**. A second surge of moisture on January 27 again brought daily-record totals to both locations (1.50 inches in **Santa Barbara** and 1.17 inches in **Santa Maria**). **Opids Camp (Los Angeles County)** netted a two-storm total of 15.98 inches, while **San Marcos Pass (Santa Barbara County)** collected 11.62 inches. **Downtown Los Angeles** received 5.78 inches from January 21-28, compared with a record-low total of 3.21 inches during last year's entire wet season (July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007). By January 24, snowfall locally topped 2 feet in **southern California**, between **Los Angeles** and **Bakersfield**, with as much as 27 inches reported in **Lockwood Valley** and 24 inches in **Frazier Park**. Elsewhere, heavy snow returned at week's end to the **Northwest**, where **Mullan Pass, ID**, received 32 inches in a 24-hour period on January 26-27. **Spokane, WA**, measured 13.7 inches on January 26-27, while as much as a half-foot of snow blanketed **Eugene, OR**. Farther east, snow squalls eventually subsided in the **Great Lakes region**, where 24-hour snowfall rates had ranged from 2 to 3 feet on January 20-21 in **Oswego County, NY**.

Early-week warmth in **Alaska** was replaced by colder weather. Early-week daily records included 33 degrees F (on January 20) in **Barrow** and 39 degrees F (on January 22) in **McGrath**. Later on January 22, **McGrath** clocked a wind gust to 54 m.p.h., representing its highest January wind gust in the last decade. By January 26, **McGrath's** low temperature dipped to -40 degrees F. Similarly, temperatures in **Fairbanks** fell from a daily-record high of 37 degrees F on January 22 to a low of -44 degrees F on January 26. During the second half of the week, snow developed across much of **Alaska**. January 23-26 snowfall totals included 5.4 inches in **McGrath**, 6.8 inches in **Anchorage**, and 8.8 inches in **Juneau**. **Bethel** netted 8.3 inches of snow on January 24. Farther south, mostly dry weather persisted in **Hawaii's** leeward areas, while scattered showers affected windward locations. Through January 26, month-to-date rainfall totaled 0.06 inch (3 percent of normal) in **Honolulu, Oahu**, and 0.19 inch (6 percent) in **Kahului, Maui**. In contrast, weekly rainfall totaled 3.33 inches in **Hilo**, on the **Big Island**, including 1.88 inches in a 24-hour period on January 25-26.

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board.  
For more information, call (202) 720-2397.*

## National Agricultural Summary

January 21-28, 2008

Recent California rains enhanced small grain growth but some oat fields were turning yellow due to cold, wet weather. California alfalfa emergence and weed control were ongoing but limited due to the widespread rains across the State. In Arizona, small grain planting remained active and a quarter of the alfalfa crop had been harvested. Texas winter wheat continued to struggle across most of the State due to the lack of moisture. Winter wheat was emerging slowly in the Northern Low Plains while wheat producers continued to spray in the Cross Timbers and Blacklands for green bugs. Cotton field preparations were underway in the High Plains and Trans-Pecos regions of Texas as harvest neared completion in the Low Plains. Florida sugarcane harvest continued in the Everglades region.

Wet fields in a few areas of California hindered extensive fieldwork during the week. Treatment of weeds and insects were ongoing as well as fumigations for carrot and tomato hot beds. Harvest continued in Fresno County for farmer's market crops, while early planted vegetables were growing well. Vegetable planting continued slowly in Tulare County due to wet fields. Central and western Arizona growers shipped broccoli, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, greens, miscellaneous Asian vegetables and herbs, parsley, and spinach. Central Arizona growers were also shipping carrots while western growers were also shipping cauliflower, celery, endive, escarole, and frisee. Lettuce shipments were also ongoing for Arizona vegetable producers which included Boston, green leaf, iceberg, red leaf, and romaine lettuce. Cabbage and spinach harvest resumed in South Texas while planting of potatoes was in full swing. Florida potato planting was in full swing while harvest and planting of vegetables progressed on schedule. Florida vegetables marketed during the week included avocados, snap beans, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, squash, sweet corn, and tomatoes.

Rains delayed vineyard and orchard preparations for the new season in California. However, the rains were advantageous for cherry and almond trees as they were budding in Kern County. Fresno County growers were planting new blueberry bushes, and in Merced County, strawberry nursery stock digging was ongoing while raspberry nursery stock digging was complete. Florida strawberry packing was ongoing during the week. Pecan harvest neared completion in the Cross Timbers, Blacklands, and Trans-Pecos regions of Texas.

California citrus harvest continued where weather permitted. In Florida, cool mornings, moderate afternoon temperatures, and steady showers during the week provided ideal growing conditions for the upper portion of citrus-producing areas. Grove owners were scheduling and applying fertilizer, hedging, topping, and irrigating where needed. Early and mid-season orange harvest was estimated at more than 6 million boxes for the week. Navel orange and Sunburst tangerine harvest has slowed, while honey tangerine harvest was gaining momentum. Florida fruit sets were above average on all varieties while harvest of early and mid-season Navel and Temple oranges, grapefruit, sunburst and honey tangerines, and tangelos continued.

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