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National Weather Summary January 27 - February 2, 2008

Highlights: Mild weather returned to the **southern Plains** and much of the **eastern half of the nation**, but cold weather persisted for a third consecutive week in the **West**. Meanwhile, extremely cold conditions lingered on the **northern Plains** near the **Canadian border**, where temperatures as low as -30 degrees F were reported. Weekly temperatures ranged from as much as 15 degrees F below normal in **northern Montana** to at least 5 degrees F above normal on the **southern High Plains**. Stormy weather accompanied the **West's** persistent chill, further improving high-elevation snow packs, aiding pastures and rangeland, and burying most **Northwestern** winter grains beneath a thick blanket of snow. Meanwhile, a fleeting warm spell on the **northern Plains** reduced the coverage and depth of winter wheat's protective snow cover. The same period of warmth boosted temperatures to 70 degrees F or higher as far north as **Kansas**, followed by some late-January snow across the **central and southern Plains**. Farther east, snow blanketed the **central Corn Belt** (mostly on January 31 - February 1), despite a return to mild weather. **Midwestern** precipitation (locally 1 inch or more) was heaviest in eastern areas, such as the **Ohio Valley**, where rain perpetuated muddy conditions in fields and feedlots. Rain also soaked parts of the **Southeast**, with at least 2 inches noted in many locations from the **Delta to the southern Appalachians**. (Similar amounts of precipitation, including some freezing rain, sleet, and snow, were reported in the **Northeast**.) Winter grains and cool-season pastures continued to benefit from **Southeastern** soil moisture improvements. However, **Florida's peninsula** remained mostly dry, maintaining irrigation requirements for citrus and winter vegetables.

Early in the week, heavy precipitation lingered across **Arizona** and **California**. Early-week rainfall in the **Santa Catalina Mountains**, near **Tucson, AZ**, totaled as much as 6 to 8 inches. Two-storm precipitation totals easily surpassed 10 inches in several **southern California** locations, including **Opids Camp in Los Angeles County** (18.16 inches) and **San Marcos Pass in Santa Barbara County** (12.68 inches). Elsewhere in **southern California**, **Big Bear Lake** (12.0 inches) netted a daily-record snowfall for January 28. Heavy snow also developed across the **Northwest**, where daily-record totals for January 27 included 9.3 inches in **Pendleton, OR**, and 6.1 inches in **Lewiston, ID**. **Spokane, WA**, received two rounds of heavy snow, totaling 13.7 and 9.2 inches from January 26-27 and 29-31, respectively. **Spokane** also observed 11.2 inches in a 24-hour period on January 26-27, just shy of its 24-hour record of 13.0 inches set on January 6-7, 1950.

Farther east, a brief surge of warmth preceded the passage of a strong cold front. On January 28, daily-record highs included 78 degrees F in **Gage, OK**, 73 degrees F in **Hill City, KS**, and 59 degrees F in **Ottumwa, IA**. The same day, however, **Harlem, MT**, reported a maximum temperature of -13 degrees F. By January 29, warmth was pushed into the **South** and **East**, while dramatic temperature declines were noted across the **Midwest**. Daily-record highs for January 29 soared to 73 degrees F in **St. Louis, MO**, and 64 degrees F in **Springfield, IL**. Those highs occurred in the early afternoon, but by midnight, temperatures had fallen to 15 degrees F (with a wind gust to 59 m.p.h.) in **St. Louis** and 9 degrees F (with a wind gust to 49 m.p.h.) in **Springfield**. For **Springfield**, the daily temperature range was its largest since January 18, 1996, when there was a 57-degree spread between the high of 60 degrees F and the low of 3 degrees F. In

La Crosse, WI, January 29 featured a high of 43 degrees F and a low of -10 degrees F, tying February 17, 1874, for its largest temperature variation (53 degrees F) during a calendar day. Similarly, **Minneapolis, MN** (high of 36 degrees F and low of -13 degrees F on January 29) experienced its second-largest temperature swing during a calendar day, behind only December 26, 1903 (high of 34 degrees F and low of -17 degrees F). At the height of the cold outbreak on January 29, wind chill temperatures below -50 degrees F were measured at several locations in the **upper Midwest**, including **Dickinson, ND** (-55 degrees F), and **Sand Lake, SD** (-53 degrees F).

High winds preceded and followed the Arctic blast. On January 27, a gust to 76 m.p.h. was recorded in **Buffalo, WY**. Two days later, peak gusts across the **Plains** and the **Midwest** included 73 m.p.h. in **Carbondale, IL**; 71 m.p.h. in **Evansville, IN**; and 66 m.p.h. in **Lubbock, TX**. Gusts were particularly severe on January 29 across the **lower Midwest** and **interior Southeast**, with preliminary accounts indicating at least four tornadoes and more than 250 reports of damaging winds. A tornado in **Posey County, IN**, was responsible for two deaths. On January 30, high winds swept into the **Northeast**, where **Buffalo, NY**, clocked a gust to 68 m.p.h. On the east end of **Lake Erie**, the water level rose 3.06 feet above flood stage during the wind event, less than a foot shy of the record (4.02 feet above flood stage) established on December 2, 1985.

During the mid- to late-week period, a new storm from the **West** interacted with the cold air already in place from the **Plains to the East Coast**. In **Utah's Wasatch Range**, about 2 feet of snow blanketed Alta on January 29-30. Alta's monthly snowfall of 178.5 inches (nearly twice the normal) tied its January record previously set in 1996. As the storm moved eastward, January 30-31 snowfall reached 2.6 inches in **Amarillo, TX**, followed by January 31 - February 1 totals of 8.4 inches in **St. Louis, MO**, and 7.4 inches in **Chicago, IL**. **Springfield, IL**, measured 11.3 inches of snow in 24 hours on January 31 - February 1, representing its fourth-highest 24-hour total on record but well below the standard of 15.0 inches set on February 28, 1900. Farther east, a multitude of daily rainfall records were established on February 1, with some of the precipitation falling as freezing rain across the **Appalachians** and **interior Northeast**. Record totals included 2.56 inches in **Richmond, VA**, 2.36 inches in **Harrisburg, PA**, and 1.97 inches in **Atlantic City, NJ**. **New York City's Central Park** closed the month with only a trace of snow, marking only its third occurrence of no measurable January snow (along with 1890 and 1933). At week's end, snow returned to the **Northwest**, where **Yakima, WA** (3.4 inches on February 2), netted a daily-record sum.

Phenomenally heavy rains developed across **Hawaii's** windward areas after mid-week. On the **Big Island, Hilo** (10.82 inches on February 2) experienced its third-wettest February day on record behind 16.87 inches on February 20, 1979, and 11.50 inches on February 19, 1979. When 9.44 inches fell on February 3, **Hilo's** 2-day total climbed to 20.26 inches. Elsewhere, 72-hour (February 1-4) rainfall totals on the **Big Island** reached 46.71 inches at the **Waiakea Experiment Station**, 21.47 inches in **Glenwood**, and 19.77 inches in **Mountain View**. Farther north, bitterly cold weather across **eastern Alaska** contrasted with near- to above-normal temperatures across western areas. On January 28, lows of -13 degrees F in **Haines** and -14 degrees F at the National Weather Service office in **Juneau** were records for the date. Three days later, lows on January 31 across **interior eastern Alaska** dipped to -56 degrees F at both **Fort Yukon** and **Chandalar Lake**. Meanwhile, early-week snow blanketed **western Alaska**, where daily-record totals for January 27 included 8.6 inches in **Nome** and 13.0 inches in **Bethel**. **Nome's** weekly snowfall reached 15.1 inches, while **Bethel's** 13.0-inch daily sum represented its second-highest calendar-day total on record behind 17.6 inches on January 3, 1952.

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board.
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National Agricultural Summary

January 28 - February 3, 2008

In California, ground preparations for grain and silage corn were delayed due to wet conditions. However, the moisture has promoted emergence and growth of dryland grain crops. California alfalfa herbicide treatments were ongoing with slight rain delays. Arizona small grain planting was active but behind last year and the 5-year average pace. Roughly half of the State's alfalfa acreage had been harvested. Georgia producers prepared for spring planting and wheat side dressing while wet fields slowed nitrogen treatments. However, rains were welcomed as they continued to ease drought conditions and improve the condition of small grains. Contrasting dry, windy weather in Texas had a negative effect on small grains as cotton harvest continued and was near complete in the Low Plains and sugarcane harvest continued in the Lower Valley.

Vegetable growers in California were applying chemicals and fumigating hotbeds for carrots and tomatoes. Producers continued harvesting several crops for farmer's markets while early plantings of beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, garlic, onion, and lettuce crops were growing well. In Arizona, shipping of many different vegetables continued. In Texas, potato planting continued in the south and irrigation of cool season vegetables continued. Florida producers were also steadily planting potatoes and harvest of several vegetable crops continued. Harvest plans were beginning on the southern peninsula.

In California, although pruning was complete in some areas, excessive moisture delayed producers in vineyards and orchards in some areas as spraying to break dormancy and orchard planting continued. California tree fruit growers were preparing insect trapping programs for the new season. Cherries were budding but not yet blossoming, while strawberries were growing well in Tulare County and in Fresno Counties. In Texas, wine grape producers were pruning vines and pecan producers were pruning trees.

Navel oranges, mandarins, lemons, grapefruit, and pummelo were being harvested in California but soggy fields delayed picking in some areas. Texas citrus harvest continued in the Lower Valley, while Arizona shipments continued. Dry, warmer than average conditions were evident during the week in Florida as good fruit set conditions were evident. Overall, trees and fruit were in good condition with good fruit set.

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