Midwest Ag-Focus Climate Outlook

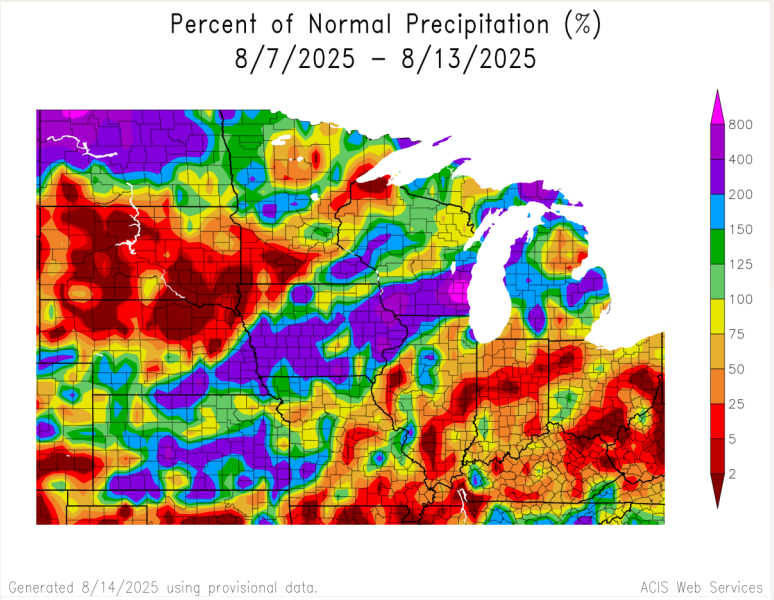
August 14, 2025

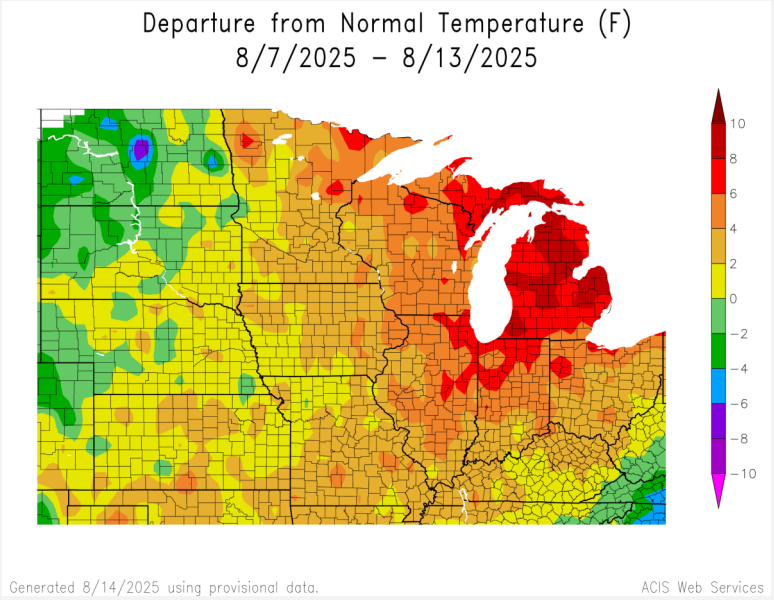
Main Points

- Warm temperatures and spotty rainfall this past week across the Corn Belt.
- Corn and soybeans remain in good to excellent condition.
- Record breaking rainfall in parts of Wisconsin resulted in widespread flash flooding.
- Cooler than average temperatures expected in the coming weeks.

Current Conditions

Above average (2-3” totals) to spotty heavy rainfalls fell from eastern Nebraska and Kansas to Wisconsin and Michigan over the last seven days. Some of the rainfalls were heavy with extreme rainfalls reaching over 10” in the Milwaukee area. Outside this area, precipitation was much more limited. Some of the rainfalls added to existing wet conditions for agriculture and led to flooding in several areas and fell outside existing drought areas. The dry conditions worsened levels on the US Drought Monitor in several eastern Corn Belt areas. Largely warmer than average temperatures covered the region from slightly above in the Plains to 4 to 8°F above around the Great Lakes. The additional heat could push crop progress, but may add stress to crops in drought areas. Warmer temperatures also increase the evapotranspiration in crops. Where soil moisture is plentiful this is not an issue, but in the smaller but existing drought areas of the east, increased heat is causing some crop stresses.



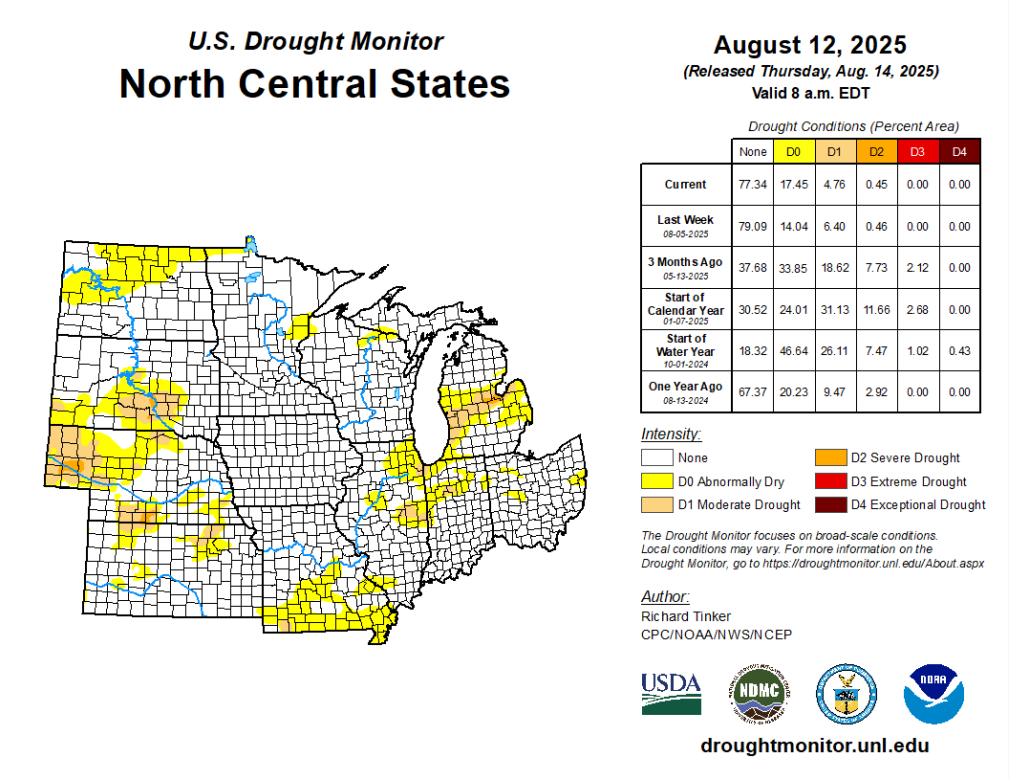


Images from High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Online Data Services: ACIS Climate Maps. Generated: 08/14/2025.

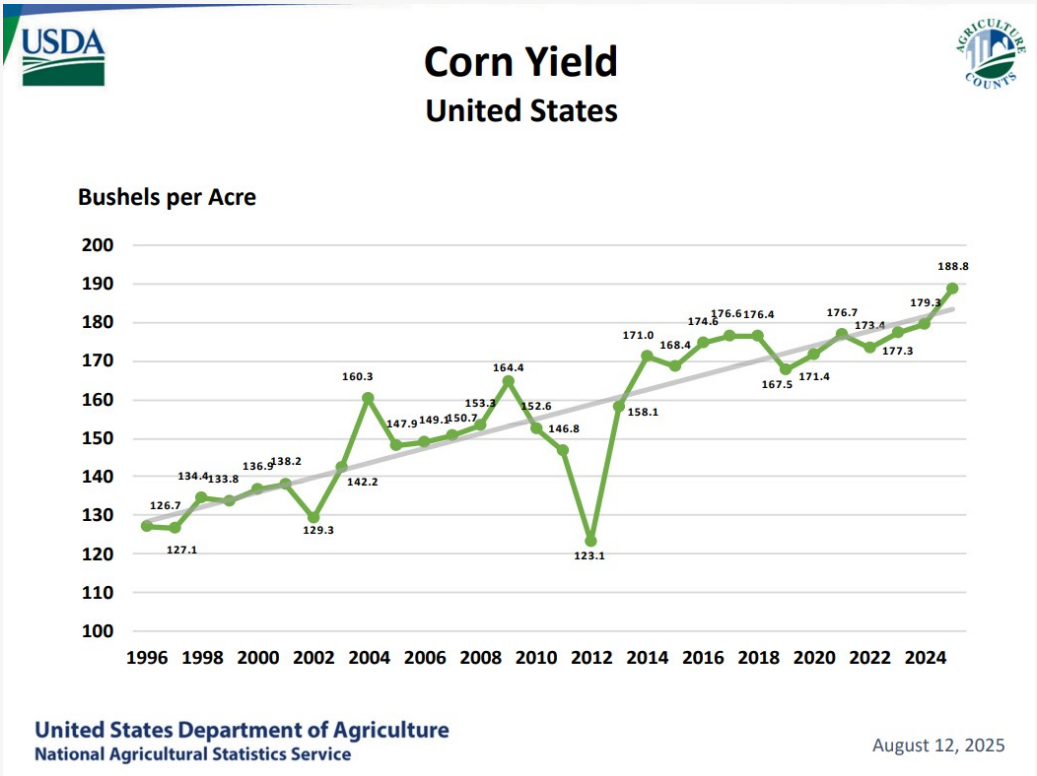
Impacts

Drought

As of August 12th, 77% of the region is classified as no drought intensity, 17% as abnormally dry (D0), 5% as moderate drought (D1), and less than 0.5% as severe drought (D2). Compared to last week, drought conditions improved by 1-class across the upper edge of North Dakota. However, drought conditions degraded by 1-class across northern Missouri, eastern Michigan, and small pockets scattered across the Corn Belt. Currently, only 3% of the Corn Belt is officially in drought.



As of the week ending August 10th, 47 to 76% of topsoil moisture is adequate across the North Central region. With continued heavy rainfall, 30% of topsoil moisture is surplus across Iowa. Hot temperatures have resulted in dry soil conditions across Michigan, and 52% of topsoil moisture is short to very short, a 24% increase from last week. Drier soil conditions also persist across Illinois and Indiana, with 37 and 34% of topsoil moisture short to very short, respectively.

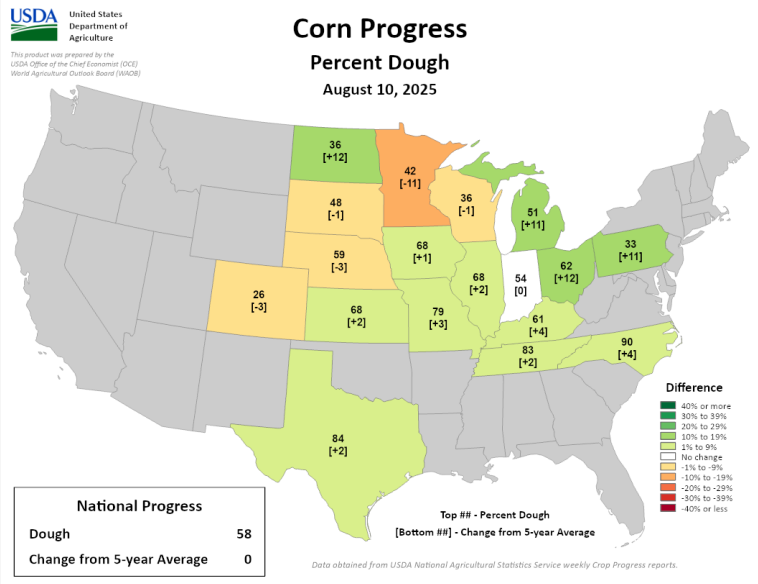


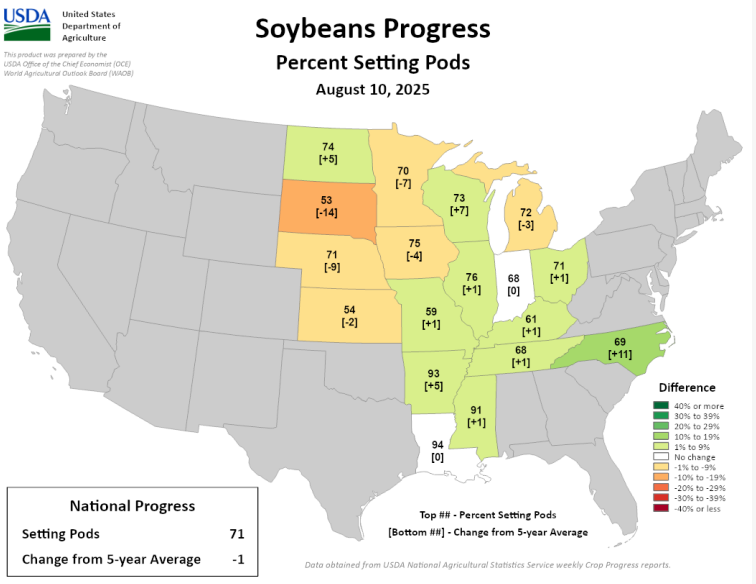
Maps generated by the National Drought Mitigation Center and Brad Rippey USDA Office of the Chief Economist.

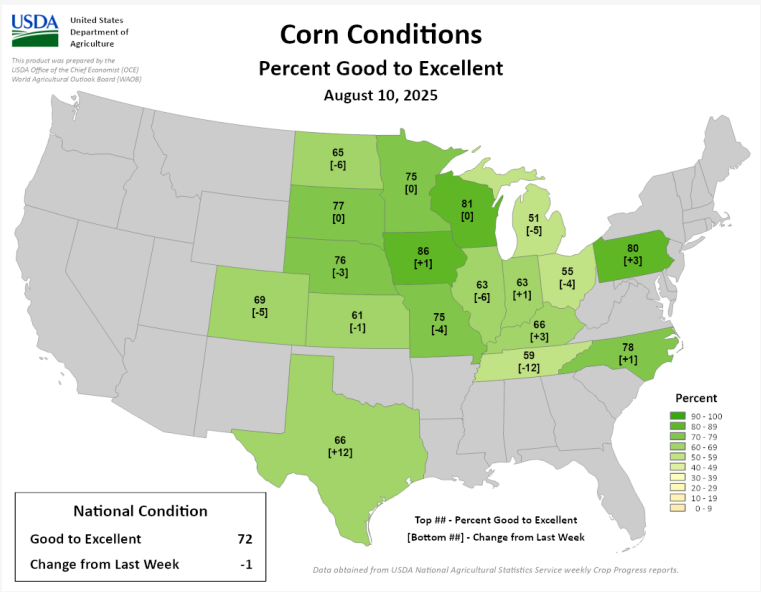
Soils, Crops and Livestock

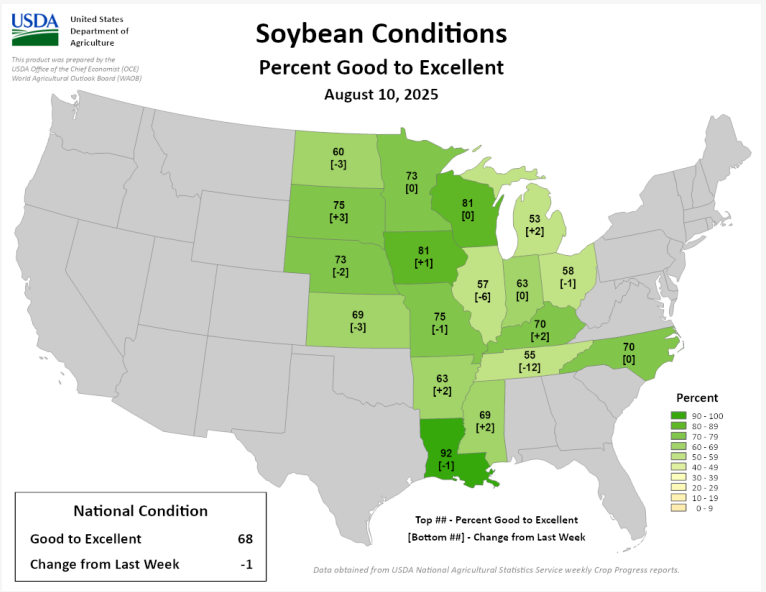
Across the Corn Belt, 90% or more of corn is silking and 36 to 79% is in the dough stage. Currently, Michigan and North Dakota are tracking 10%+ ahead of the 5-year average for dough stage, while Minnesota is lagging 11 points behind. Roughly 20% of corn is dented across the southern portion of the Corn Belt. Seventy-nine to 96% of soybeans are blooming and 53 to 76% are setting pods.

Winter wheat harvest is nearing completion and 9 to 43% of spring wheat has been harvested, tracking behind the 5-year average. Oat har-









Maps generated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

vest is also underway, with 17 to 86% of oats harvested across the region. Currently, Minnesota is 22 points behind the 5-year average for oat harvest progress. Wet soil conditions have hampered oat harvest and alfalfa and hay cutting in Iowa, with fields too wet to cut and challenges with drydown after cutting.

Across the Corn Belt, 51 to 86% of Corn and 53 to 81% of soybeans are in good to excellent condition. Recently, USDA forecasted record corn yields for the growing season. Pasture and range conditions range from 44 to 85% good to excellent across the region.

Severe Weather

Due to record breaking rainfall over the course of August 9-10th, Milwaukee, WI experienced widespread flooding. During this event, 10 to 13 inches of rain fell in parts of the city, resulting in a 1000-year flooding event.

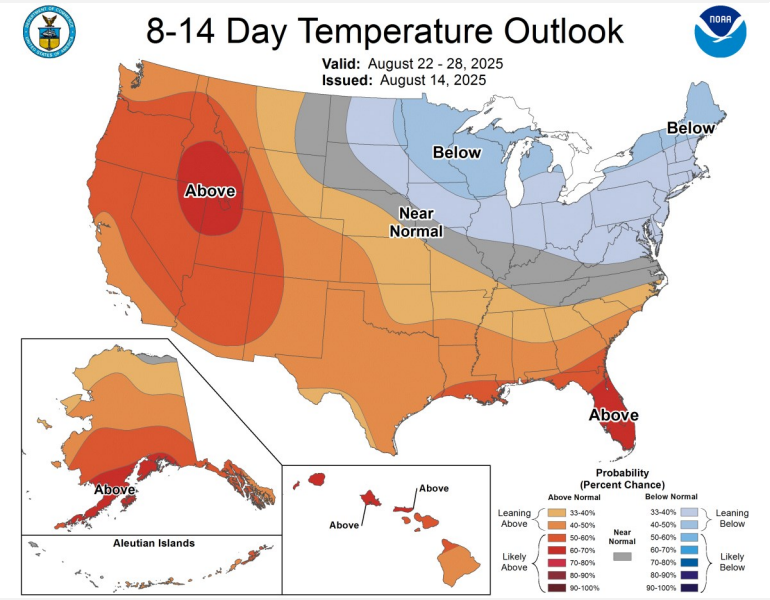
Fire

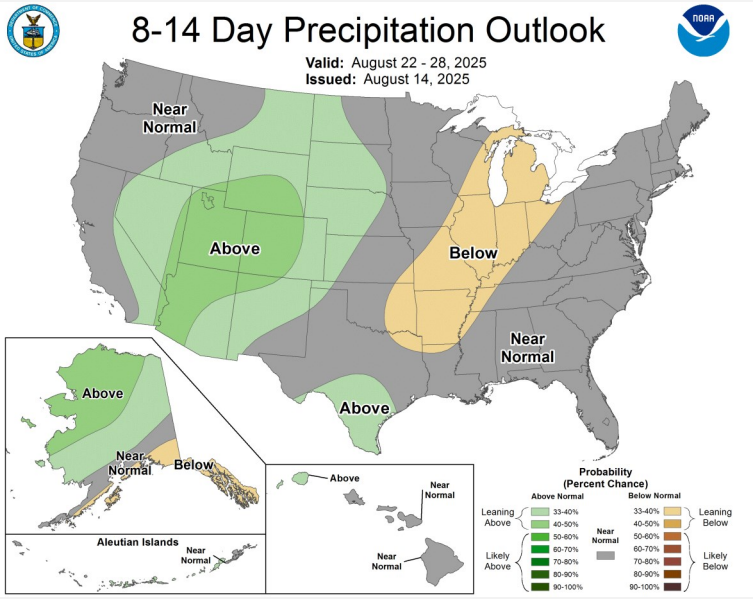
According to the National Interagency Fire Center, the region is at no to low risk for significant fire potential through the weekend.

Outlook

An overall pattern shift is occurring in the outlooks. Better chances for cooler than average conditions show in the 8-14 day outlook for the latter part of August. Warmer than average conditions are mostly confined to the western US. Along with the cool, hints toward drier than average conditions exist in a swath from Missouri to Michigan with near-normal more likely surrounding it. Hints toward wetter conditions exist in the Plains likely associated with monsoonal moisture in the western US.

Climatological temperatures start to drop off more quickly by this time of year – combined with cooler than average air temperatures could lead to cooler (but not dangerously cool) temperatures at the end of the month. The move away from wetter than average will be good news for the wetter locations of Iowa and surrounding states. The only potential issue is slowing crop progress slightly – and will benefit crops in some of the drought areas of the east. The cooler air will be of Canadian origin likely bringing more wildfire smoke into the northern and eastern Corn Belt. Dew points should also ease leading to less humid conditions in the east. Wetter conditions in the Plains could still help some of the drier areas of the region.





Outlooks provided by the Climate Prediction Center.

Partners and Contributors

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Climate Prediction Center (CPC)

National Weather Service (NWS)

National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI)

National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC)

National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)

Midwestern Regional Climate Center (MRCC)

Midwest State Climatologists

High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC)

For More Information

Dennis Todey

Director

USDA Midwest Climate Hub
1015 N University Blvd.
Ames, IA 50011

Dennis.Todey@usda.gov