USDA Midwest Climate Hub
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

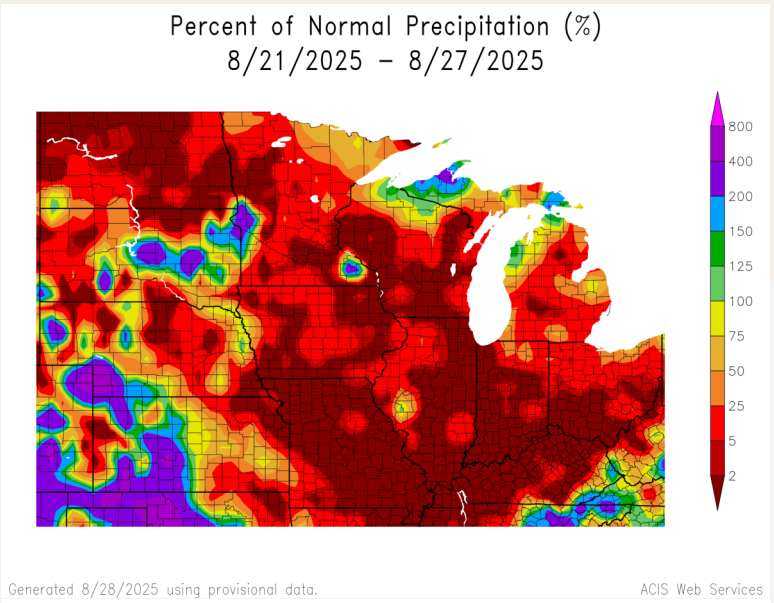
MRCC Midwestern Regional Climate Center

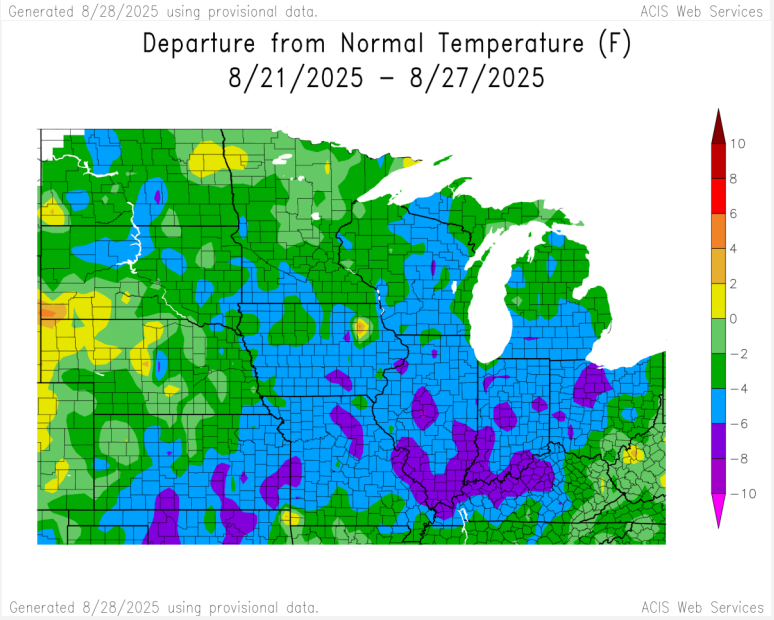
Midwest Ag-Focus Climate Outlook

August 29, 2025

Main Points

- Cooler and drier air has covered the region in late August.
- Drought persists in parts of the southern and eastern Corn Belt while improving in the Northern Plains.
- Crop conditions remain good across the region.
- Some corn has begun drying down due to reaching GDD accumulation, disease and/or drought pressure.
- Cooler than average conditions seem likely to continue with mixed messages on precipitation.
- First frosts in northern areas cannot be ruled out. Forecasts should be monitored.





Images from High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Online Data Services: ACIS Climate Maps. Generated: 08/28/2025.

Current Conditions

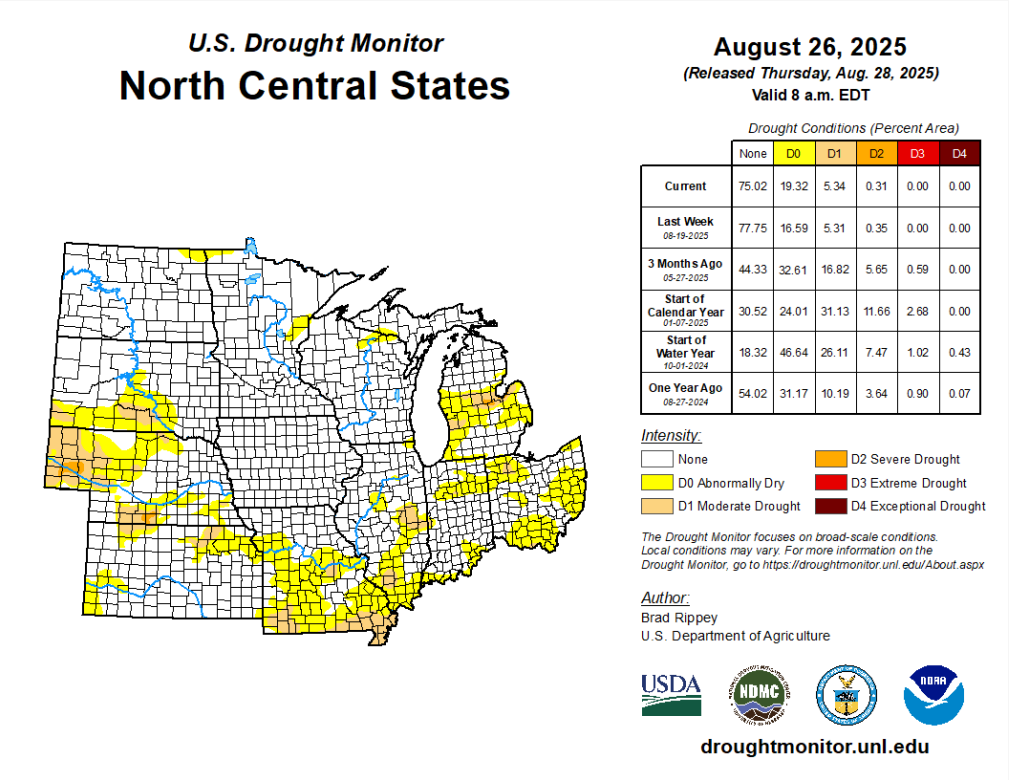
The end of August provided a marked shift in conditions across much of the Corn Belt. All of the Corn Belt, except for a few small pockets, was cooler than average. The central to eastern area was 4 to 8°F below average while the Plains and northern states were mostly 2 to 4°F below average. The cooler conditions occurred after much of the summer was above average. Most of the Corn Belt received no precipitation August 21-27. Some of the Plains and locations closer to the northern Great Lakes received a couple inches or less. While the drying is welcomed in some areas, the lack of precipitation is leading to increased dryness. The cooler temperatures did ease some crop stress in the driest areas. Along with the cooler temperatures (including some of the first 30s (°F) temperatures) came much less humid conditions as drier Canadian air covered the region.

Since April 1st, 1190 to 3480 modified Growing Degree Days (GDD) have accumulated across the region. Currently, central Iowa is tracking about 200 GDD's ahead of normal, reaching black layer accumulation already in

places. Producers and managers can use the Corn Growing Degree Day decision support tool to determine corn GDD accumulation for a given location.

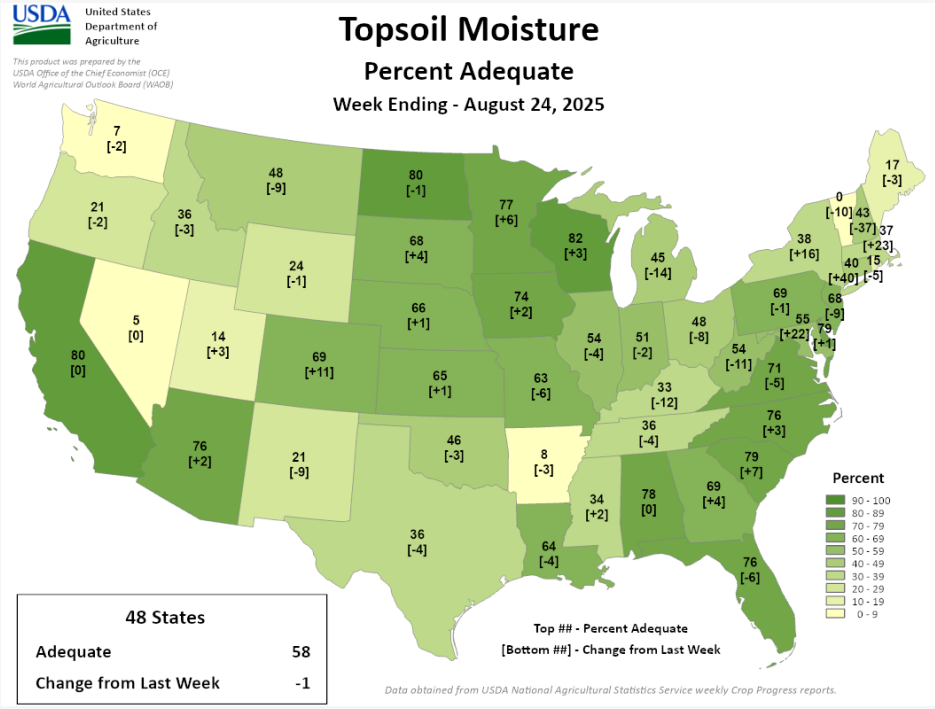
Impacts

Drought



As of August 26th, 75% of the North Central region is classified as no drought intensity, 19% as abnormally dry (D0), 5% as moderate drought (D1), and 0.3% as severe drought (D2). Pockets of drought persist in South Dakota, Nebraska, southern Missouri, north central Illinois, and central Michigan. Compared to last week, drought conditions degraded by 1-class from northeast Kansas to Ohio. Drought conditions improved in pockets of South Dakota, and small pockets of improvement are scattered across the southern and eastern edges of the region. Currently, only 5% of corn and 11% of soybeans planted nationally are growing under drought conditions. Flash drought conditions have been in play in the southern Corn Belt.

According to USDA-NASS, as of the week ending August 24th, 45 to 80% of topsoil moisture is adequate across the region. The northeast corner of the region remains dry, and 43, 46, 51, and 55% of topsoil is short to very short in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, respectively. Further south, dry conditions are even more prevalent, and 66% of Kentucky topsoil is short to very short.

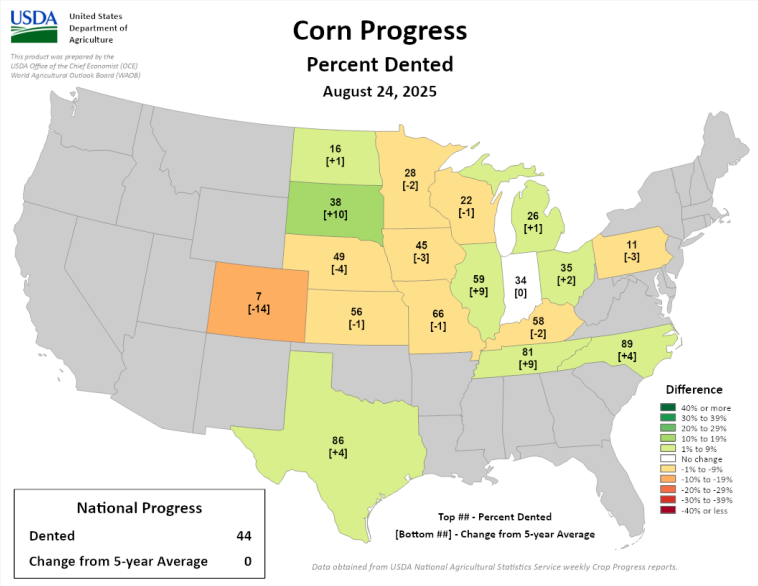


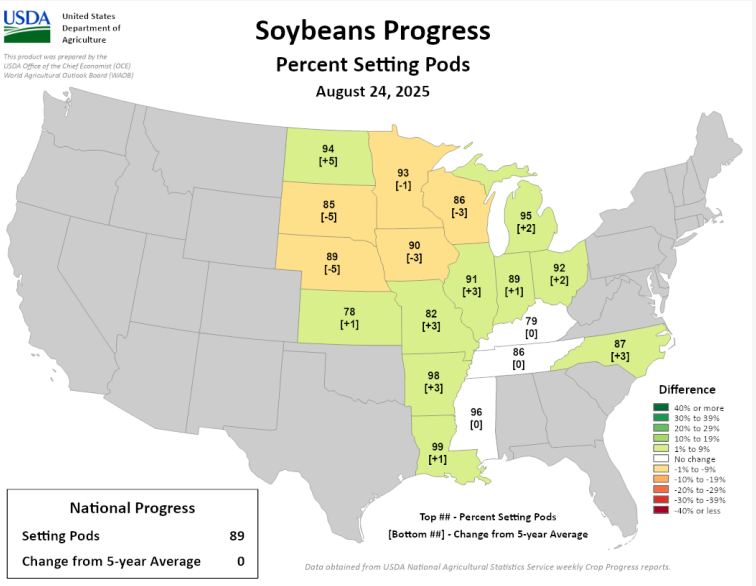
Maps generated by the National Drought Mitigation Center and United States Department of Agriculture.

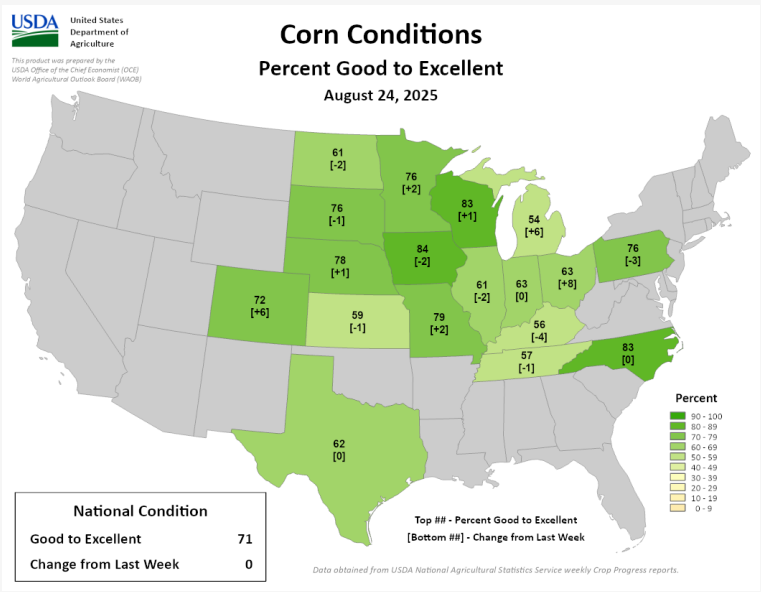
Soils, Crops and Livestock

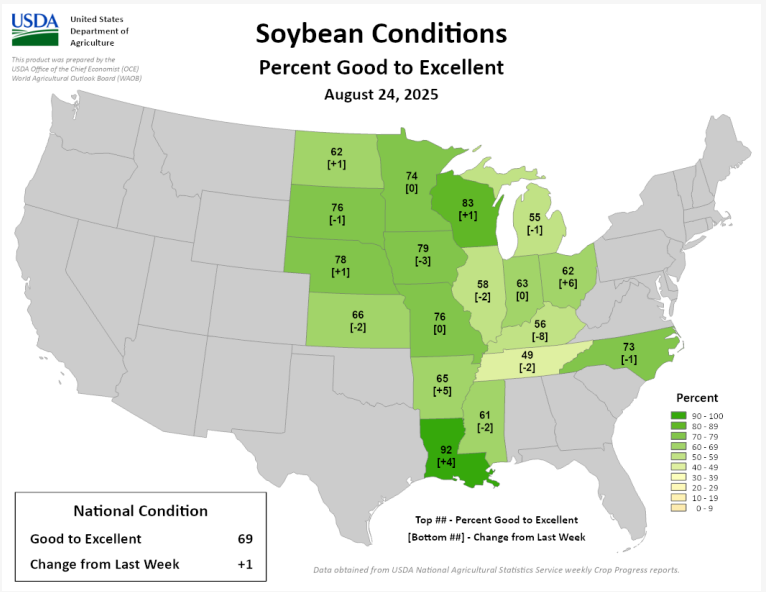
Across the Corn Belt, 62 to 94% of corn is at the dough stage and 16 to 66% has dented. Up to 15% of corn has reached maturity across some states in the region. Soybean pod setting is near completion across the region (78 to 95% are set), and soybeans have begun dropping leaves, though most states are reporting 2% or less have begun dropping leaves. Winter wheat harvest is complete and 40 to 84% of spring wheat and 43 to 97% of oats are harvested.

Crop conditions generally remain good across the region, with 54 to 84% of corn and 55 to 83% of soybeans in good to excellent condition across the region. However,









Maps generated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

southern rust continues to impact corn grown in the Upper Midwest and may reduce corn yield across the region. As of August 24th, 39 to 80% of pasture and range are in good to excellent condition. Drought conditions in the northeast corner of the region have contributed to slight degradations in pasture conditions.

Severe Weather

Over the past week, a tornado was reported along the North Dakota and South Dakota border, in addition to some hail reports across the Plains and Midwest.

Fire

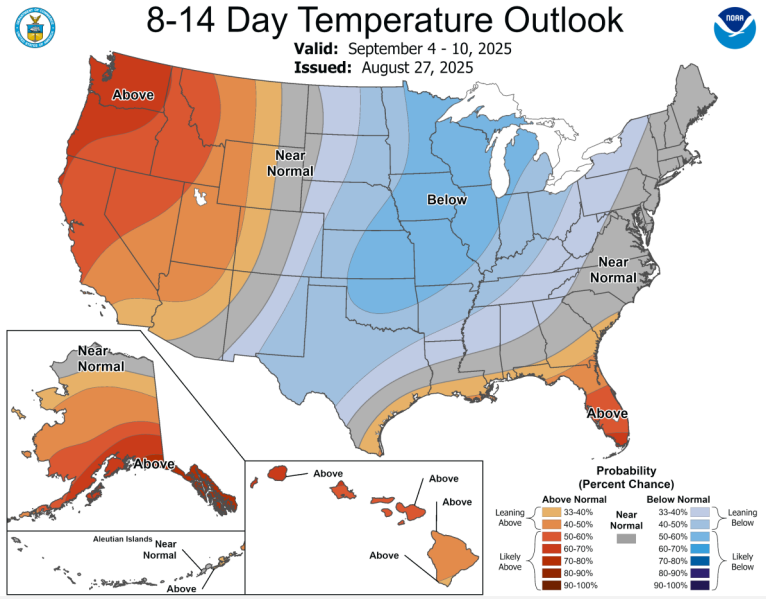
According to the National Interagency Fire Center, as we enter the weekend and into early next week, there is no to low significant fire risk across the region.

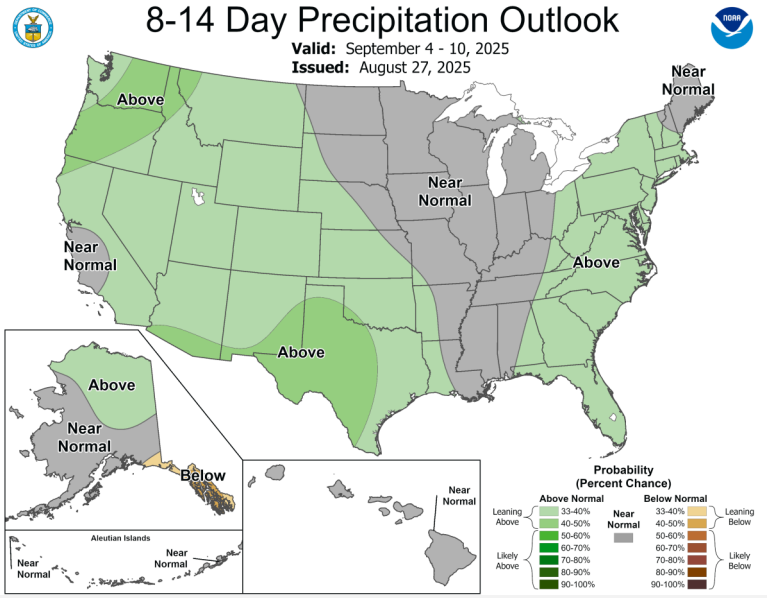
Outlook

The 6-10 and 8-14 day outlooks have been relatively consistent on temperatures pointing to more likely cooler than average conditions into the middle of September across the area. Precipitation outlooks have wavered a little from leaning wet to near-normal. The cooler and drier air will feel very fall-like and ease some stress on drier crops and livestock. Crop progress will also slow some for corn, accumulating fewer degree days. Northern areas could also be susceptible to possible frost conditions as we approach early climatological times for frost. Stakeholders should watch for updated forecasts.

The precipitation probabilities lead to mixed outcomes. Eastern to southern areas of the Corn Belt have dried and seen steady increasing coverage and severity on the US Drought Monitor. These locations are in need of some rainfall to help finish the crop. The dry conditions have been good for some wetter areas in the central to northern Corn Belt to dry soils and allow some flooding to recede.

Crops reaching maturity will also slow a bit with the cooler temperatures.





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)

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