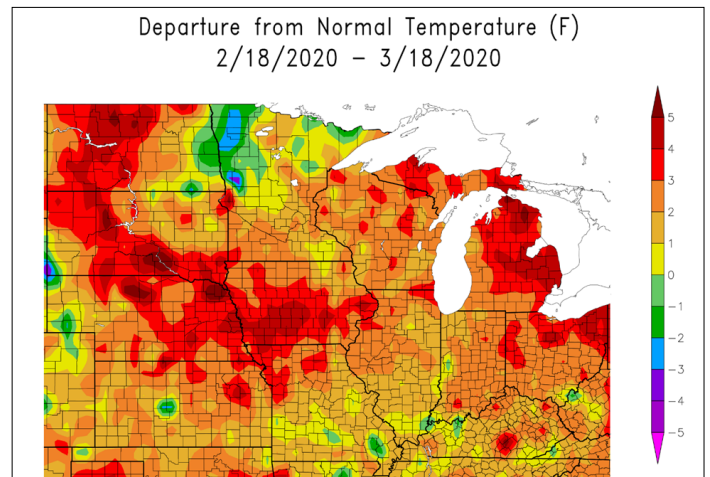
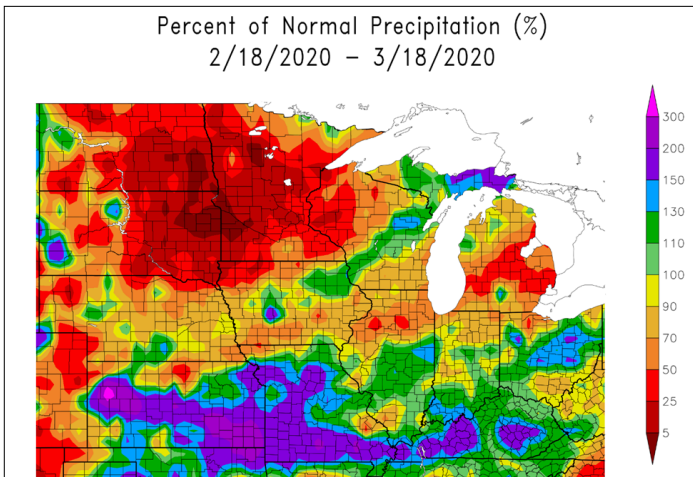


## Midwest Ag-Focus Climate Outlook

### Current Conditions



The latter part of winter/early spring has been relatively quiet across northern areas of the region with several rains across the south and eastern Corn Belt. Temperatures have been generally warmer than average across the region by as much as 4-5°F. Most areas have been above average, though to a lesser extent. Precipitation has been much below normal in the Dakotas and Minnesota to 25% or even in areas at 5% of normal. Kansas to Kentucky has been quite wet at 150% of normal across parts of those states. North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa had top 15 driest February's. Snow cover has been generally eliminated into far northern areas. Late winter blizzards have been fewer with only a couple that did not seem to have major impacts. Winter was top 10 warmest across the eastern Corn Belt and top 15 wettest in several of the same states.



Images from High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Online Data Services: [ACIS Climate Maps](#). Generated: 3/19/2020

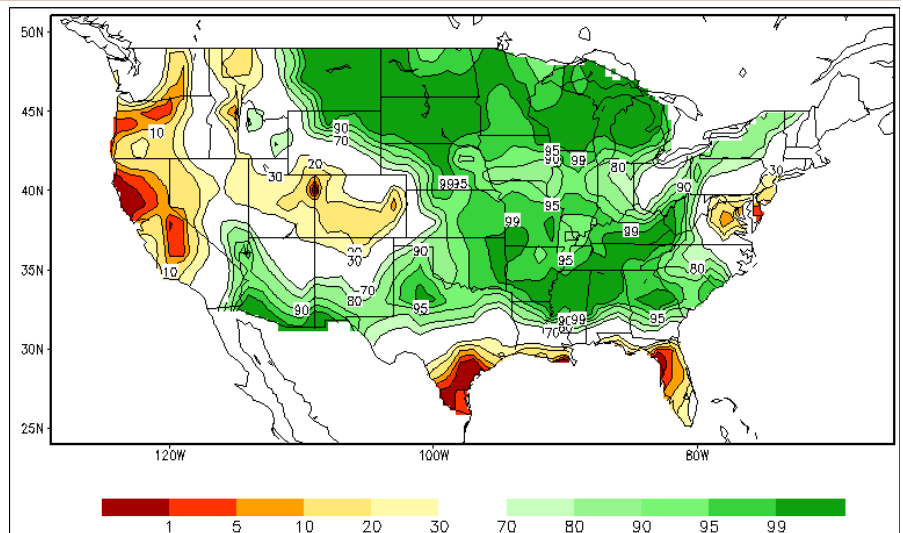


### Impacts

The dryness and warmth has allowed for drying of soils and beginning of some early field work. Soils are still wetter than average nearly across the region and will continue to be a problem through the spring. Planting delays are still likely given current conditions and the outlooks. Soil temperatures have started to rebound. Frost still exists at depth in the northern states.

Livestock have had a generally easier spring with few major storm events in the plains.

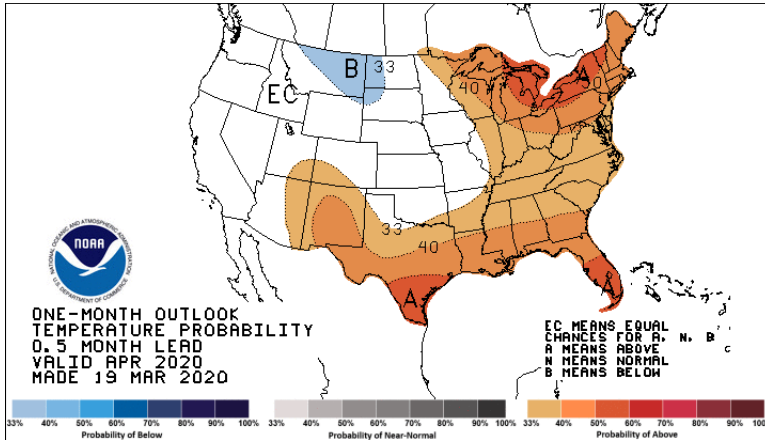
Winter wheat and cover crops have started emerging and growing especially in southern states. Bud break and other horticultural crop progress has moved more quickly, also, mostly in the eastern and southern areas. Freeze risk is not too large but still existent.



Calculated Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile, 3/19/20. [Provided by Climate Prediction Center.](#)

(Impacts Cont.) Harvest of crops left over from last year continues in northern states with North Dakota having still by far the most to harvest. This along with wet soils will create even slower spring progress. The last USDA-NASS report had 61% of corn harvested as of February 29th. That number has increased, but new numbers will not be available until the end of March. Flood issues are still very possible along especially major rivers given the widespread wetness and potential for spring precipitation.

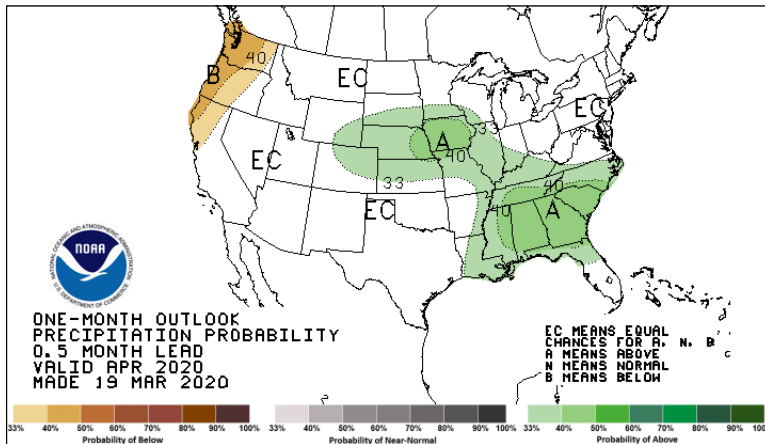
 **Outlook**



The [updated outlooks for April and the Spring from the Climate Prediction Center](#) have a mixed set of indicators for Midwest/Plains agriculture. The April outlooks lean a little to the warm side for the Great Lakes and eastern Corn Belt with a small area of possible below average in the northern Plains. Slightly higher chances of wetness exists in the central Plains and Midwest. This would be better news for the eastern Corn Belt with a chance to move earlier possibly on planting. But there will probably be windows for progress throughout the region.

The spring outlooks (April-June) are interesting with increased chances of warm and wet over nearly the whole region. The warmth would create more chances for drying and warming soils. But this could be counteracted by increased precipitation. Widespread warm and wet conditions usually do not occur simultaneously in the warm season in the Midwest/Plains.

Comparing the two outlooks (April versus Spring) indicates that the better chances for above average precipitation would come later in the spring along with more potential for a warm-up. Overall spring hints at problems with wetness on already wet soils. Conditions are not expected to be as bad as last year given less late snow, more early warmth and dryness, and slightly dryer soils in places. That said, planting delays are still likely. Producers should be looking at options and set decision points in the spring for shifting plans with delayed progress. Windows for planting will exist, but they will need to be balanced with soils ready for planting and field access.



**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 and to access the 3-month outlook, select here: [Climate Prediction Center](#)

 **For More Information**

Charlene Felkley, Coordinator  
USDA Midwest Climate Hub  
1015 N University Blvd., Ames, IA 50011  
515-294-0136  
[charlene.felkley@ars.usda.gov](mailto:charlene.felkley@ars.usda.gov)

For more information, please visit:  
<https://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/hubs/midwest>

