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CROP REPORT

AUGUST 2015 - VOLUME 8 / ISSUE 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Sunflower Confections Acres Update

Provided by Michael Todd, Director of Sunflower Sales

It's the middle of August and the Dakotas are receiving the heat units they need to move the crop along nicely. The USDA Crop Progress report from Monday showed that North Dakota is well ahead of last year's pace. While it is still too early to start making estimates on yield the crop is certainly in position to have average to above average yields, which will be a welcome change from the last two years. As long as the fields get a little drink every once in a while and harvest remains dry, we should see a noticeable improvement in quality with the new crop. This year, we have been challenged with low test weights and high sclerotinia which impact the quality that we are able to provide our customers.

Con-Oil Production; North Central North Dakota

Taking a look at the international markets we see improved weather in Eastern Europe from last month, and the dollar has maintained its strength. We would expect Eastern European kernel to be somewhat cheaper than US kernel, but the spread will not be as great as it was this year as farmers have been holding out for higher prices. The Chinese crop is considerably smaller than last year so we should expect inshell prices to eventually move higher as the global glut diminishes. I would expect a reduction in Chinese acres will provide more opportunities for US product to be competitive in the export markets.

As I have mentioned in the past, SunOpta is now producing Roasted Chickpeas. While a few national retailers and brands are selling Chickpeas as a standalone snack, we are seeing increased movement toward mixes given the healthy protein and fiber profile of Chickpeas. Please reach out to your SunOpta salesperson if you would like to request a sample or learn more.

Market Update - August 10, 2015

Provided by The National Sunflower Association

On Wednesday, USDA will release its latest supply and demand estimates. The market has been anxiously awaiting the report. It will include information obtained in a resurvey of soybean growers in states that experienced delayed; sometimes impossible planting conditions this spring. Many in the trade believe that it will give the market USDA's first realistic crop estimate this year as actual field data is included in it. The USDA report could have a powerful impact on prices depending on if it contains bullish news. Some traders believe that we could see CBoT prices rally. A potential drag on oilseed prices in general could be the recent slow demand for US soybean and soymeal exports. This could make prices trend lower after trader's factor in the USDA news. In the week ahead, traders will continue to watch economic events unfold in China. However weather and crop conditions will be the main traded features as oilseeds are in the most important reproductive time frame between now and the first week of September. Traders continue to view weather forecasts in key soybean production states as a non-threat at this time.

Sunflower Crop Progress Report

As of mid-August

Provided by the SunOpta Crop Procurement Team

Minnesota - Northwest Region

Provided by Tim Petry

Growth stages range from R-2 to R-6 with most production fields between R-5.1 to R-6. Recent hot and dry weather has been helpful in promoting maturity and reducing the risk of disease. Yield and quality potential look good with the most crucial part of the growing season ahead of us. Lower humidity and warm temperatures will greatly reduce the risk of production issues and allow for an earlier than normal harvest in some cases.

Con-Oil Production; Northwestern Minnesota

Minnesota - Red River Valley & Southwestern Region

Provided by Jim Smith

Growth stages are R-5.5 to R-6. Downy mildew is present in areas that received an abundance of moisture in June. Farmers have done an excellent job of controlling insect pressure with timely insecticide applications. Average plant height is 5.5 – 7.5' in the region. Minimal hail damage has occurred to date. The potential yields are expected to be average in this growing region.

North Dakota - Northern Half

Provided by Brenton Wiesz

Due to the warm dry weather we have been having the last couple weeks, the sunflower crop has progressed nicely. The current heat units are ideal for the crops, and with the 10 day forecast showing temperatures in the 80's and 90's with little chance for precipitation, the progress should continue. Some of the flowers in areas with lighter soil could use a shot of rain to finish them up and push them to maturity. Crop quality is average to above average. Bloom in the growing region is at about 70-75% with the remaining not far behind. Growth is varied throughout the R-5 stage. Some of the earlier planted acres are beginning to drop petals. August is a very crucial month for sunflowers. We need good growing conditions to avoid diseases like sclerotinia head rot. So far, only a couple isolated cases of downy mildew have been seen, but not enough to affect the quality of the crop. There have been some reports of insects in the crops; however, with the spraying programs that growers use now they will have this taken care of in no time.

Con-Oil Production; North Central North Dakota

North Dakota - Southern Half

Provided by Jim Smith

Growth stage is R-4 to R-5.9. Petal drop has not transpired. Above normal rainfall coupled with isolated hail damage in June and July has resulted in crop failure for some growers. Downy mildew will result in a significant yield loss for some growers as well, due to the wet conditions experienced at planting time and through the month of June. The remaining acres are expected to see average yields.

South Dakota

Provided by Jim Smith

West River: Growth stage ranges from R-3 to R-5.9. Some downy mildew is present in the extreme western portions of the state as a result of excess moisture at spring planting. Farmers in this growing region will have storage concerns at harvest due to the catastrophic wind storm that occurred in June and damaged storage bins. It has been very warm this past week with temperatures reaching into the upper 90's, this has accelerated the reproductive stage of growth. Insect pressure is average in this region. The farmers have done an excellent job of controlling further damage with timely insecticide applications. Expecting the harvest timeframe for this region to be mid to late October.

East River: Current growth stage ranges from R-5.1 to R-6. The northern portion received excessive wind and hail damage in late July causing production losses. Average to above average rainfall was received in the past month and average yields are anticipated. This area is seeing average insect pressure. Farmers are on top spray applications. Plant heights range from 4 – 6'. The southern portion of this region has received below normal precipitation and could use additional rain to aid crop development. The competing crops in this growing region are showing signs of stress due to high heat and minimal rainfall. Yields could be affected without additional rainfall.

Sunflower Crop Progress Report

As of mid-August

Provided by the SunOpta Crop Procurement Team

Texas

Provided by Jim Smith

Harvest is wrapped up in this region. Yields and test weights were below average due to the 20 plus inches of rainfall and lack of sunshine that occurred throughout the growing season. They received more rain in this time period than they did over the last three years combined. Some of the competing crops were not harvested because of damage caused by excess moisture. On a positive note, the sub-soil moisture profile has been replenished.

Wyoming

Provided by Tim Petry

Growth stages range from R-5.5 to R-6. Crop maturity is ahead of last year reducing the risk of problems associated with an early frost. There are isolated cases of reduced stands and excess weed pressure however in general crop potential is average or better.

Organic

Provided by Tim Petry

Growth stages range from R-3 to R-5.9. Good rainfall has replenished moisture levels in some of the more arid growing regions and allowed good crop progress. Excess rain early in other areas did causes some disease issues reducing plant stands and allowing for more weed pressure and limited means to control them in organic production fields. Average yields can be expected with continued warm temperatures to advance plant maturity and timely rainfall.

Sunflower Crop Conditions - August 10, 2015					
State	**VP**	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Ex**
N. Dakota	0	8	19	65	8
S. Dakota	0	2	27	68	3
Minnesota	0	2	35	57	6
Colorado	0	5	29	51	15
Kansas	1	2	28	60	9

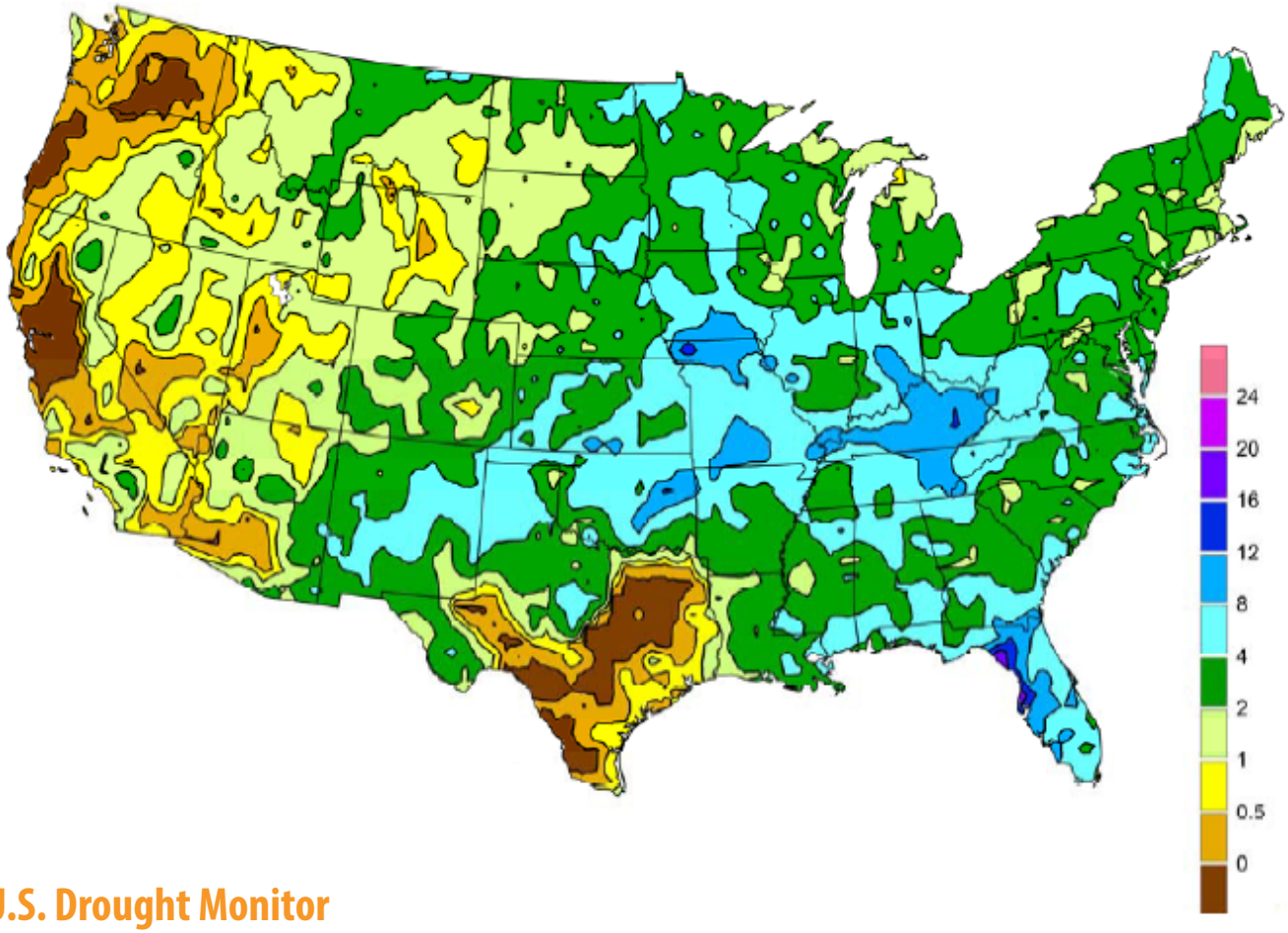
Con-Oil Head Fill; Northwestern Minnesota

Growth Stages of a Sunflower

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
VE Vegetative Emergence	Seedling has emerged and the first leaf beyond the cotyledons is less than 4 cm long.
V (number) Vegetative Stages (i.e. V-1, V-2, V-3, etc.)	These are determined by counting the number of true leaves at least 4 cm in length beginning as V-1, V-2, V-3, V-4, etc. If senescence of the lower leaves has occurred count leaf scars (excluding those where the cotyledons were attached) to determine the proper stage.
R-1 Reproductive Stages	The terminal bud forms a miniature floral head rather than a cluster of leaves. When viewed from directly above the immature bracts form a many-pointed star-like appearance.
R-2	The immature bud elongates 0.5 to 2.0 cm above the nearest leaf attached to the stem. Disregard leaves attached directly to the back of the bud.
R-3	The immature bud elongates more than 2.0 cm above the nearest leaf.
R-4	The inflorescence begins to open. When viewed from directly above immature ray flowers are visible.
R-5 (decimal) (i.e. R-5.1, R-5.2, R-5.3, R-5.4, R-5.5 through R-5.9, etc.)	This stage is the beginning of flowering. The stage can be divided into substages dependent upon the percent of the head area (disk flowers) that has completed or is in flowering. Ex. R-5.3 (30%), R-5.8 (80%) etc.
R-6	Flowering is complete and the ray flowers are wilting.
R-7	The back of the head has started to turn a pale yellow color.
R-8	The back of the head is yellow but the bracts remain green.
R-9	The bracts become yellow and brown. This stage is regarded as physiological maturity.
From Schneiter, A.A., and J.F. Miller. 1981. Description of Sunflower Growth Stages. Crop Sci. 21:901-903.	

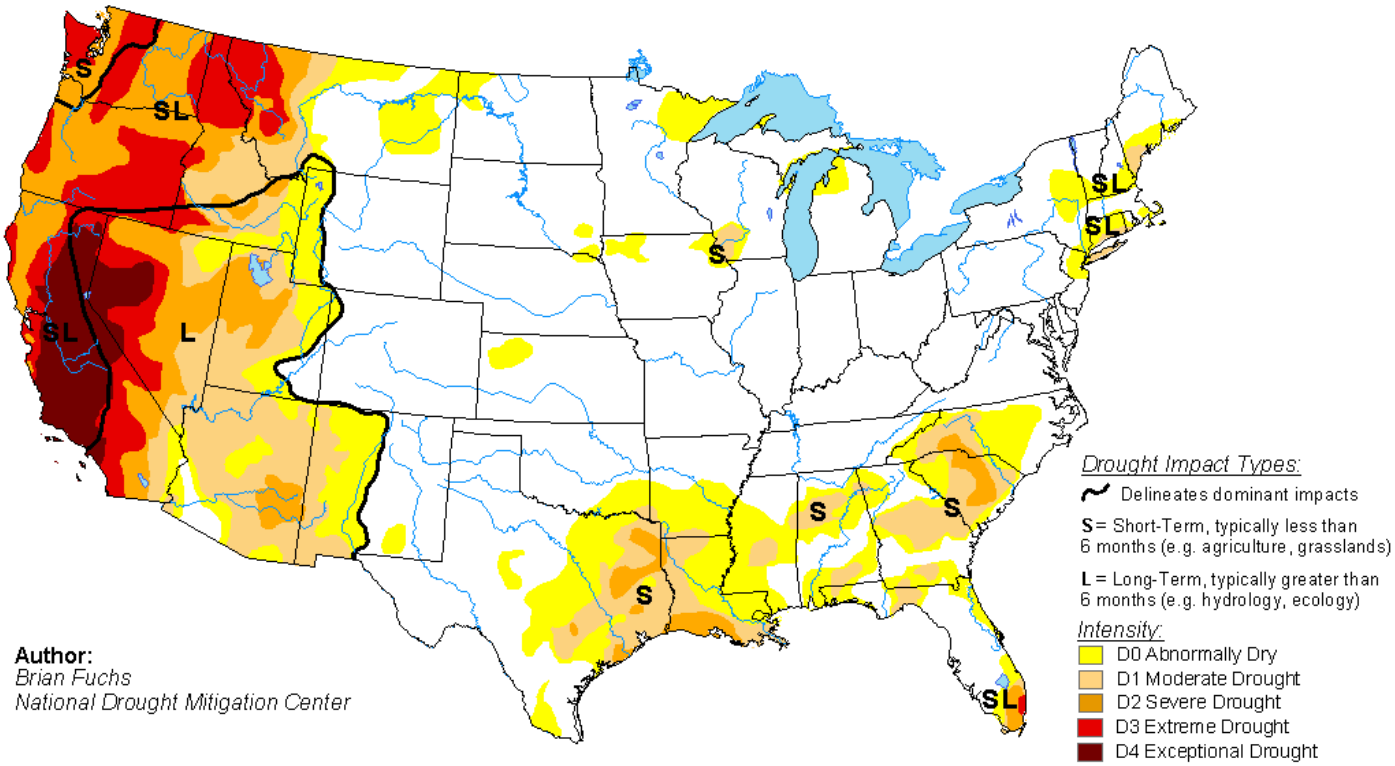
Total Precipitation (Inches)

July 2015



U.S. Drought Monitor

August 11, 2015



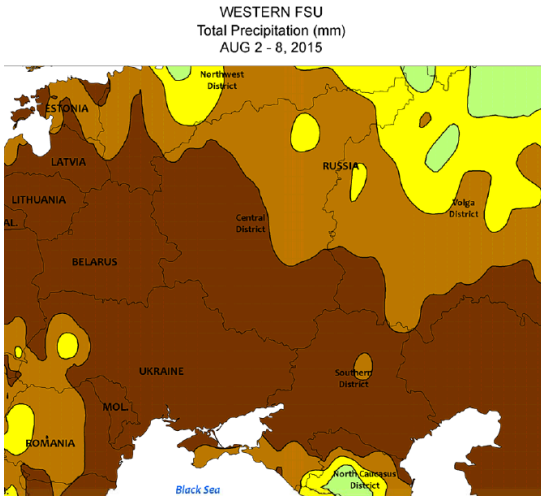
Source: USDA

Weather and Crop Conditions Worldwide

August 11, 2015

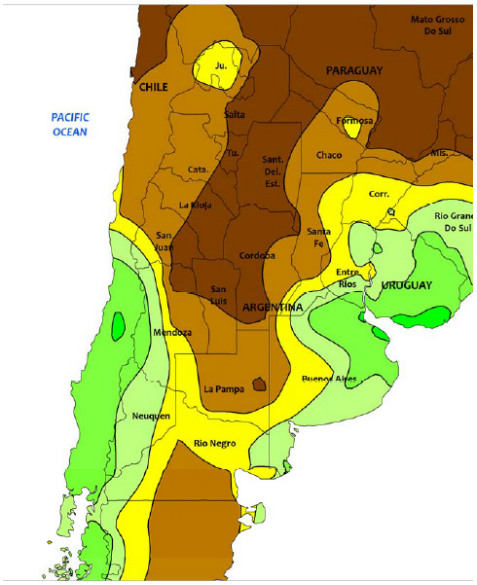
Western FSU

Last week's excessive heat abated somewhat, easing stress on reproductive to filling summer crops. In Ukraine, where prospects for corn and sunflowers are good to excellent following timely rainfall and a lack of extreme heat, high temperatures remained below the critical 35-degree threshold in most major corn areas. Consequen ly, despite temperatures averaging 2 to 5°C above normal as corn progressed through the silk and blister stages of development, there were few — if any — concerns over heat damage. Farther east, da time temperatures as high as 37°C in Russia's Southern District (down from last week's 40-degree readings) coincided with corn in the late grainfill stage of development; consequently, little additional detrimental impact to corn and the more heat-tolerant sunflower crop is expected from this week's above-normal temperatures. In addition, dry weather across most of the region promoted small gran harvesting and field preparation for winter crop planting.



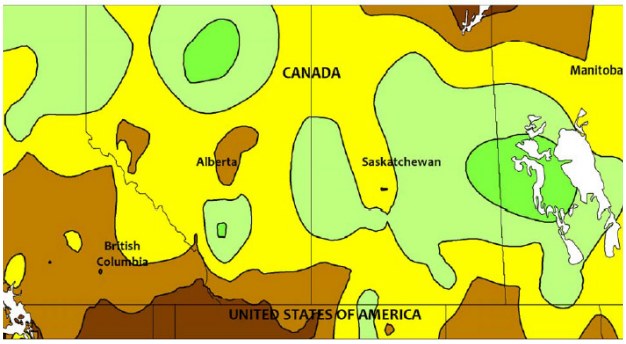
Argentina

Locally heavy rain further improved moisture reserves for winter grains in Buenos Aires, but drier conditions prevailed in western production areas. For a second week, rainfall totaled more than 50 mm in northern and eastern sections of the state, with more moderate amounts (10-50 mm) recorded in key southern production areas (the delegations of Tandil and Tres Arroyos). However, amounts d clined to below 5 mm to the west, where topsoil moisture was likely limited for establishment of wheat and barley; above-normal temperatures (1-4°C above normal, with freezes confined to traditionally cooler southern farming areas) exacerbated the impacts of the dryness on field moisture. Similar conditions were recorded across the north, with showers (greater than 10 mm) in eastern production areas and weekly temperatures averaging well above normal (4-8°C above normal, with daytime highs exceeding 30°C). According to Argentina's Ministry of Agriculture, corn was 93 percent harvested as of August 6 versus 81 percent last year. Wheat was 98 percent planted, 8 points ahead of last year's pace. Planting was 97 percent complete in Buenos Aires, well ahead of last year's pace (76 percent), but the pace of fieldwork was lagging in La Pampa (86 percent planted versus 100 percent last year).



Canadian Prairies

Rain helped to stabilize the condition of spring grains and oilseeds in drought-affected agricultural districts in Alberta, but the moisture came too late for earlier-planted crops that are maturing or being harvested. Rainfall totaled up to 50 mm, with the driest weather (rainfall totaling below 10 mm) recorded along the U.S. border. Unseasonably heavy rain (10-50 mm in most locations) continued for a second week across Saskatchewan and Manitoba, improving long-term moisture reserves but slowing the early stages of spring grain and oilseed harvesting. For example, according to the government of Saskatchewan, harvesting was underway in many regions as of August 3, with hay 80 percent baled or put into silage. Weekly temperatures averaged near to slightly below normal but no freezes were recorded. The first autumn freeze typically occurs during the early part of September, which would give lateplanted crops in most areas an additional 4 weeks of growth.

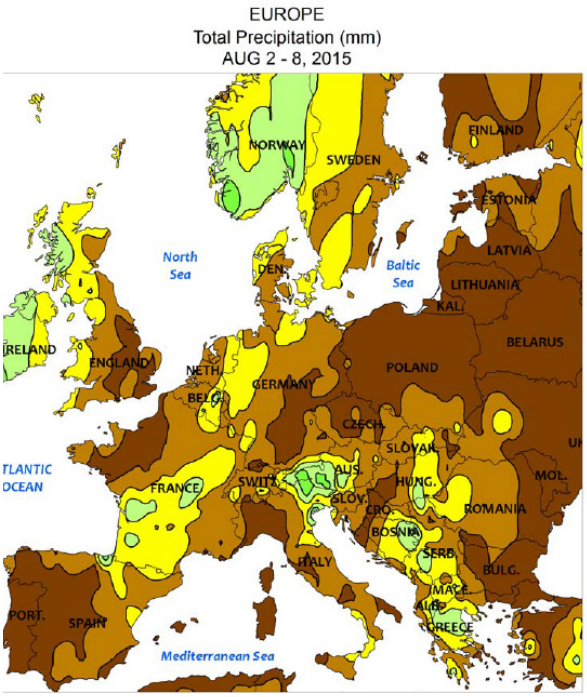


Weather and Crop Conditions Worldwide

August 11, 2015

Europe

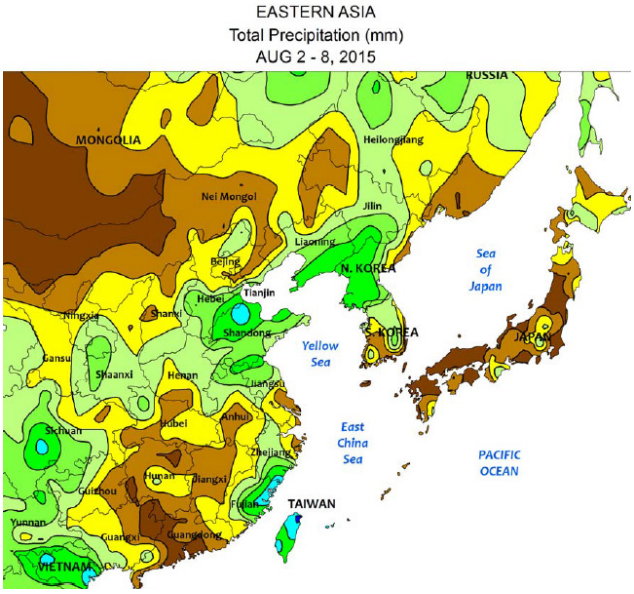
After last week's respite, a resumption of excessive heat renewed stress on reproductive to filling small grains and summer crops. Temperatures for the week averaged 2 to 5°C above normal over much of western Europe (except for the United Kingdom, where temperatures were near normal), and 3 to 7°C above normal across eastern growing areas. In northern Spain, temperatures mostly stayed below the threshold for additional heat damage to corn, with highs reaching 35°C on August 2 and 3. In contrast, southwes ern France saw temperatures as high as 38°C further reducing yield prospects for corn in the early grain-fill stage of development. In northern Italy, where excessive heat has persisted since the beginning of July, readings in the upper 30s (degrees C) impacted late-filling corn and soybeans. In the Balkans, 4 consecutive days of 35- degree (or greater) heat cut yield prospects for filling corn. Farther north, temper tures topped 35°C in Germany on 3 days (a peak of 38°C) as corn progressed through the tassel and silk stages of development, likely trimming yield prospects somewhat. Excessive heat (35-38°C) in Poland likewise was untimely for reproductive to filling small grains and summer crops. Mid-week showers and thunderstorms (10-40 mm) provided much-needed moisture and heat relief from southern and central France into the northern and western Balkans. The rain bypassed winter crops areas of southern and eastern Germany into Poland, where moisture will be needed soon for the planting of winter wheat and rapeseed.



Eastern Asia

Typhoon Soudelor raked across Taiwan late in the period bringing heavy showers (over 100 mm) and improving water supplies for rice. Earlier in the week Soudelor had achieved super typhoon status with winds in excess of 155 knots, but weakened rapidly as it approached Taiwan, making landfall with winds below 110 knots. After passing over Taiwan, Soudelor made final landfall in southeastern China (Fujian) where the storm dropped heavy rainfall (over 100 mm) and dissipated rapidly. Little crop damage was reported from the storm, likely as a result of its rapid weakening. In other parts of China, heavy monsoon showers continued to ring the Yellow Sea, bringing over 100 mm of rain to eastern portions of the North China Plain, lower northeastern China, and much of North Korea. While the rainfall boosted water supplies for summer crops, ponding was likely in many row crop fields. Much of the corn crop in the remainder of northeastern China received less than 10 mm of rain, doing little to ease seasonal rainfall deficits. Elsewhere in the region, short-term dryness in southern China and Japan lowered paddy water levels for rice, while seasonal deficits continued to mount for rice in South Korea.

Source: USDA



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