

Midwest Ag-Focus Outlook

September 25, 2025

Main Points

- Much warmer than average in the last seven days.
- Precipitation across much of the region.
- Crops maturing quickly—harvest ramping up.
- More of the same conditions are expected with warmer expected into early October and mixed precipitation chances.

Current Conditions

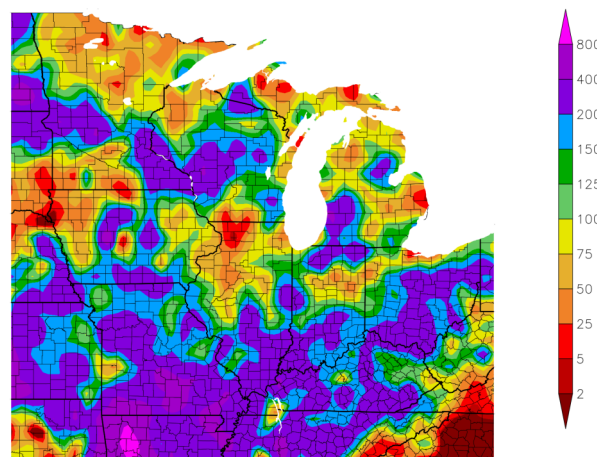
Much warmer than average temperatures covered much of the North Central US over the last seven days. Areas around the Great Lakes and eastern Corn Belt were 6-10 F above average while temperatures in the Plains were also warmer but closer to average (+0-4 F). Precipitation was more common throughout the region with 1-3" common (200-400%+) especially in the Plains and Ohio Valley. Far northern areas and a band from Nebraska to northern Indiana missed most of the precipitation receiving less than 50% average (< 1").

Impacts

Drought

As of September 23rd, 59% of the North Central region is classified as no drought intensity, 18% as abnormally dry (D0), 17% as moderate drought (D1), 5% as severe drought (D2), and 0.4% as extreme drought (D3). Compared to last week, drought conditions were improved a category in the Plains and Ohio Valley, while seeing 1 category worsening around the Great Lakes.

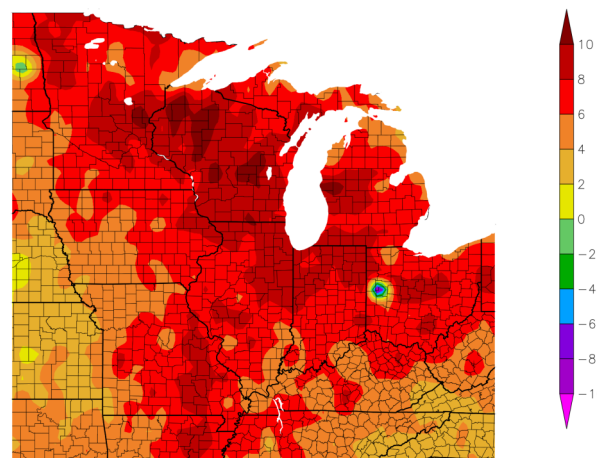
Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
9/18/2025 – 9/24/2025



Generated 9/25/2025 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
9/18/2025 – 9/24/2025



Generated 9/25/2025 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

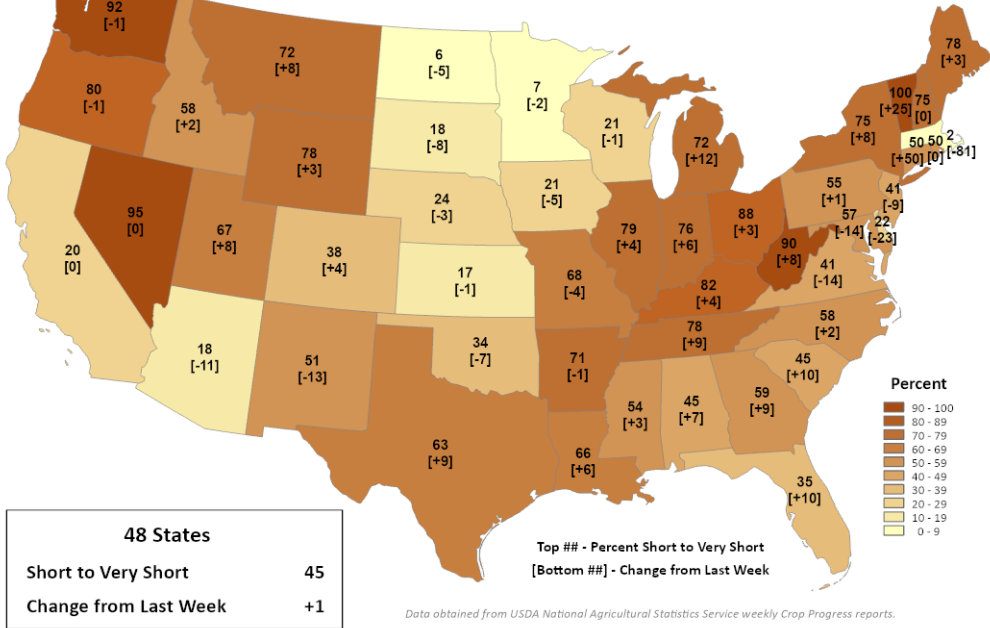
Images from High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Online Data Services: [ACIS Climate Maps](#). Generated: 09/25/2025.

According to USDA-NASS, as of the week ending September 21st, 12 to 79% of topsoil moisture is adequate across the region with higher percent adequate in the Plains and north central states. Lower percent adequate was noted in the eastern Corn Belt/Ohio Valley. In the eastern states, topsoil moisture percent Short to Very Short is in the 70s to 80s%.

Soils, Crops and Live-stock

The growing season is rapidly winding down with crops maturing quickly and harvest ramping up. Some concerns about standability in corn is being noted in some of the diseased crops. Fall seeding of winter grains is well under way. No specific livestock issues have been noted.

Across the Corn Belt 19 to 83% of corn has reached maturity, and up to 43% is harvested. Corn maturity/harvest is generally ahead of the 5-year average in the south/east while being behind in the north/west. Roughly 41 to 71% of soybeans are dropping leaves and soybean harvest has begun everywhere with up to 19% completed in Kentucky. Similar to corn progress, south/east areas are ahead of the 5-year average while the north and west are behind average.



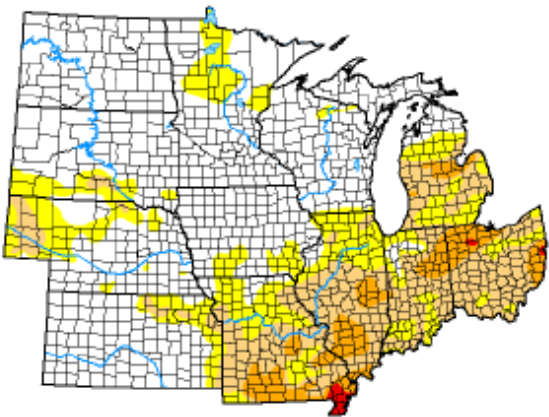
Maps generated by the [National Drought Mitigation Center](#) and [United States Department of Agriculture](#).

U.S. Drought Monitor North Central States

September 23, 2025

(Released Thursday, Sep. 25, 2025)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	59.09	40.91	22.89	5.81	0.41	0.00
Last Week	56.01	43.99	23.47	5.01	0.42	0.00
3 Months Ago	56.79	43.21	17.17	2.78	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year	30.52	69.48	45.47	14.34	2.08	0.00
Start of Water Year	18.32	81.68	35.03	8.82	1.45	0.43
One Year Ago	24.09	75.91	31.65	8.09	2.10	0.06

Intensity:
None D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:
Brad Rippey
U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA NDMC NOAA droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Winter wheat planting ranges from 2% to 36%. Hard red winter wheat areas in the Plains are most planted but behind the 5-year average. Eastern soft red wheat areas are less planted but closer to the 5-year average. Currently, 8 to 60% of pasture and range are in Poor to Very Poor conditions with eastern states reporting the worst. Conditions there have worsened by 9-21% over the last week.

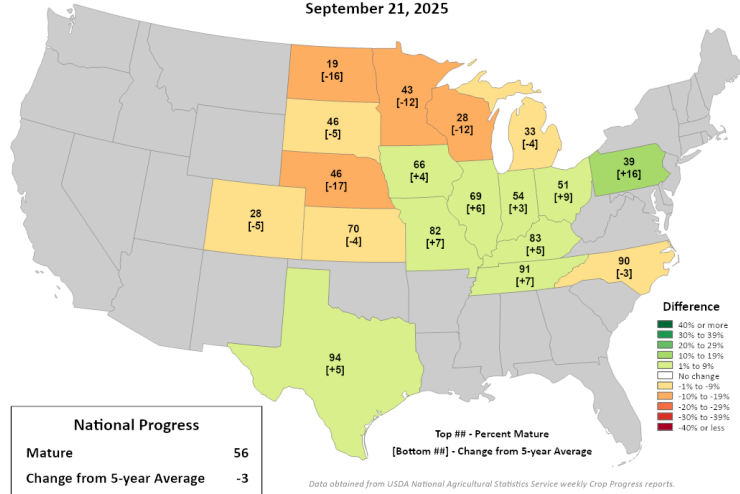
Severe Weather

The storms that produced the rain also brought a mixture of severe weather scattered mostly in the central

Corn Progress

Percent Mature

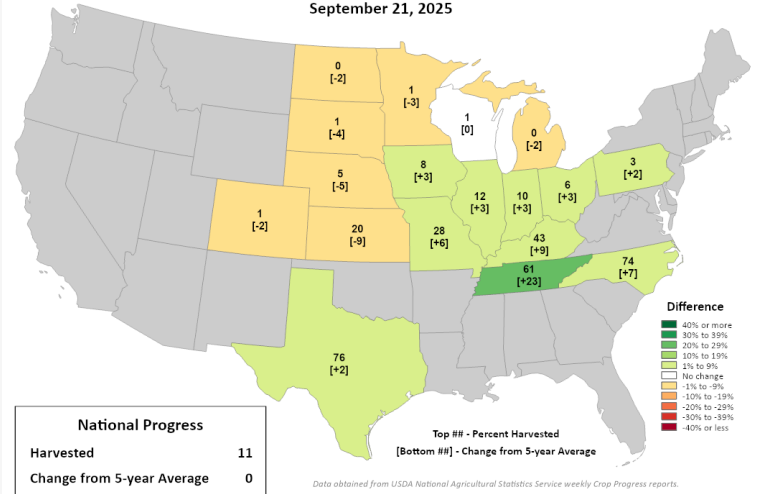
September 21, 2025



Corn Progress

Percent Harvested

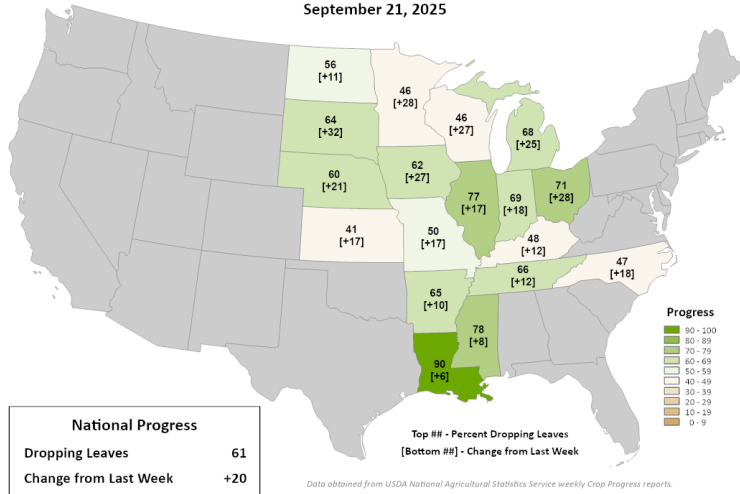
September 21, 2025



Soybeans Progress

Percent Dropping Leaves

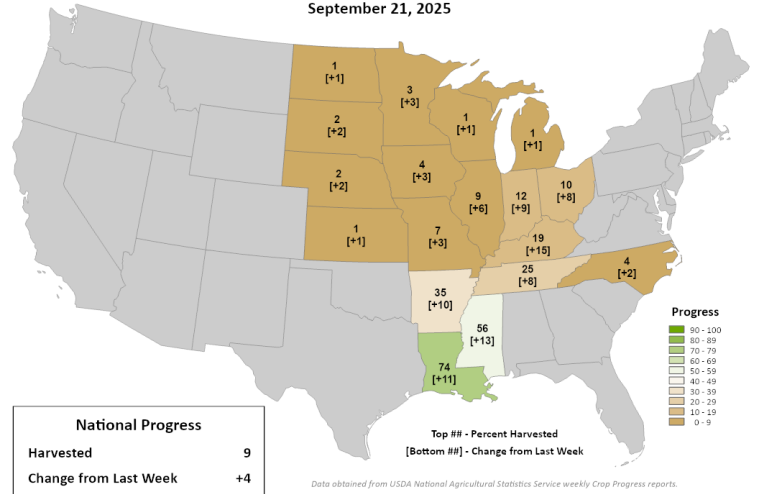
September 21, 2025



Soybeans Progress

Percent Harvested

September 21, 2025



Maps generated by the [United States Department of Agriculture](https://www.usda.gov/).

Plains to eastern Corn Belt. Strong wind gusts, isolated hail and a few weak tornadoes were reported. Overall damage seemed very limited.

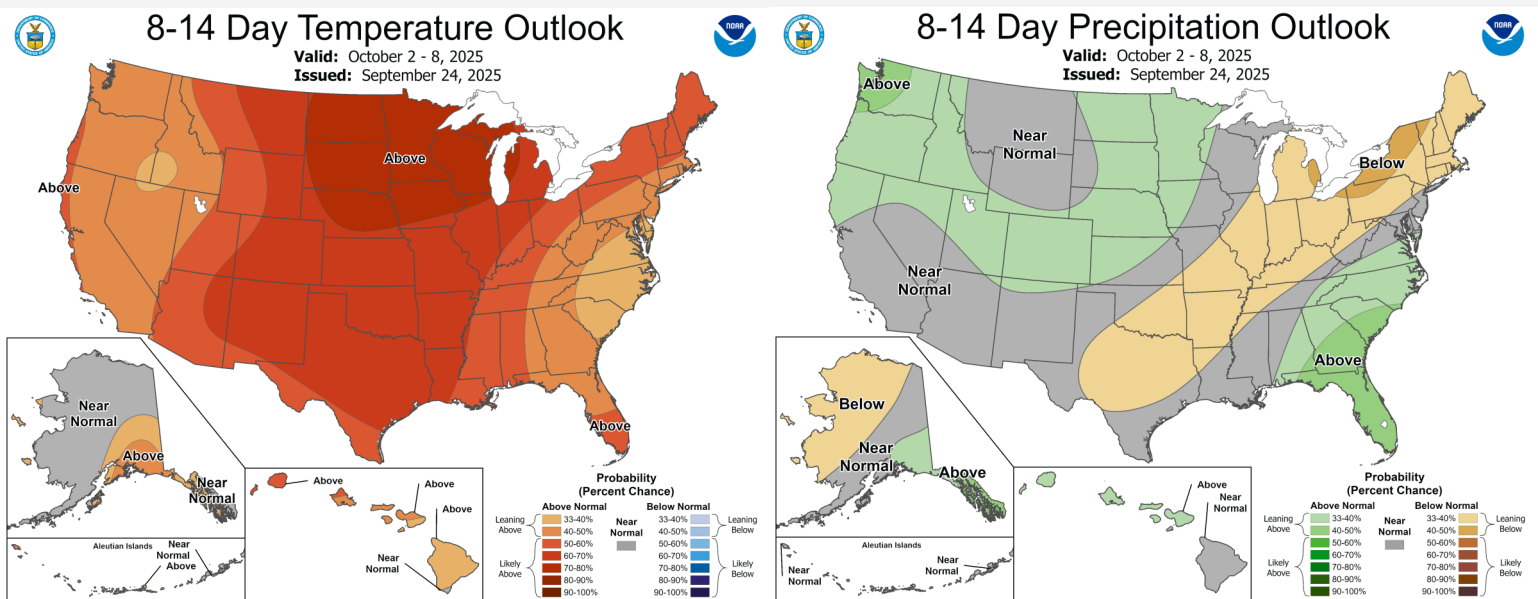
Fire

According to the National Interagency Fire Center, the Dakotas have an increasing risk of fire potential. Most of the rest of the region is at low risk, though local reports from KY, IL, IN and OH do note many county burn bans and concerns about field fires during harvest.

Outlook

The outlooks indicate more of the same conditions are possible heading into October. Temperature outlooks into the middle of October indicate very likely warmer than average for the whole region. These conditions are unlikely to be dangerously warm because the maps compare to average temperatures (which are cooling quickly this time of year). As usual precipitation indications are not as strong. But the pattern seems to indicate slightly better chances for drier east and wetter west.

Agronomically these conditions should continue to push crop maturity and dry down quickly. Drought conditions are likely to worsen in the central to eastern Corn Belt in to October. Producers should also monitor fire conditions during harvest because of the quickly drying conditions. Soil temperatures should stay warmer; hence, fall applications should be delayed until soils cool.



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
USDA-ARS
1015 N University Blvd.
Ames, IA 50011
Dennis.Todey@usda.gov