



Take Five

five-minute summary of industry activities for members of the largest state agribusiness association in the nation
The Agribusiness Association of Iowa

La Nina Diminishes

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By Elwynn Taylor, Department of Agronomy

The La Nina of the past several months, as determined by the 90-day average Southern Oscillation Index (SOI), has ended. The SOI is a measure of the atmospheric pressure deviation from normal and directly influences meteorological conditions in numerous distant locations. The SOI diminished to 0.8 standard deviations on May 19, 2008.

Although now in "neutral" condition, there is normally a time lag and risk associated with the La Nina though clearly reduced does not fully disappear at least for several weeks (often about 6 weeks). A significant number of (but by no means all) severe droughts in the Midwest are associated with La Nina.

Planting under less-than-favorable conditions tends to exacerbate the impact of subsequent hot and dry weather. Drought in the southeastern U.S. is often a precursor to development of drought in the Corn Belt. The adverse factors do not make widespread drought likely for 2008 but below trend crop yields are and remain likely.

I will make my next computation of "most likely yield" during early June. At this time it appears that the previously estimated most likely yield of 142 bushels per acre for U.S. corn will be increase somewhat.

Iowa DOT Offering Educational Program About Commercial Vehicle Regulations

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OFFERING EDUCATIOAL PROGRAM ABOUT COMMERCIAL VEHICLE REGULATIONS

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is joining forces with the Missouri State Highway Patrol and Missouri Department of Transportation's Motor Carrier Services to offer an educational program for farmers and ranchers in Missouri and Iowa about commercial vehicle regulations that affect their businesses.

The educational program is intended to provide farmers and ranchers transporting agricultural goods and livestock across state lines with information regarding federal and state commercial vehicle laws and regulations. This includes movements by pickup trucks, stock trailers, straight trucks, and tractor-trailer units.

Four, no-cost programs have been scheduled in Missouri and Iowa. Affected farmers and ranchers and their employees are encouraged to attend one of the three-hour sessions.

Iowa locations

- June 10, 2008, 6:30 p.m., Youth Learning Center in Donnellson
- June 17, 2008, 6:30 p.m., Mutchler Community Center in Bloomfield

Please inform any farmers or ranchers you know about these meetings, because the regulations do affect their business. For more information please read the attached flyer or contact Iowa DOT Training Officer Chris Boswell or Major Ned Lewis at 515-237-3247

Additional Information Attached

Seven Iowa Watersheds Projected to Receive \$5.4 Million to Improve Water Quality

SEVEN IOWA WATERSHEDS PROJECTED TO RECEIVE \$5.4 MILLION TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

This summer, seven new projects are projected to receive \$5.4 million in grant assistance over the next three years from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and local organization and land owners to improve water quality in Iowa lakes and streams.

The projects are a partnership between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD).

The funds target the most critical needs and apply conservation measures. The measures can either be structural (sediment basins, terraces, grade stabilization, grassed waterways, pasture planting, etc.) or better management by land users (no-till, contouring, filter strips, field border, etc.).

The projected funding for these new watersheds over the next two to three years from the DNR, IDALS, NRCS and local sources include:

- Union Grove Lake, Tama SWCD - \$550,010
- Nutting Creek, Fayette SWCD - \$744,975
- Walnut Creek, Poweshiek SWCD - \$567,919
- Prairie Creek, Clinton SWCD - \$671,175
- Prairie Rose, Shelby SWCD - \$562,153
- Rathbun Lake, Appanoose SWCD - \$1,771,994
- Littlefield Lake, Audubon SWCD - \$540,002

These projects are just some of the more than 50 current watershed projects across the state that the three agencies have helped fund to date.

Agribusiness
Association of Iowa
900 Des Moines Street
Des Moines . Iowa
50309
515.262.8323
800.383.1682
Fax: 515.262.8960
www.agribiz.org



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New Report Outlines Climate Change Effects on Agriculture

U.S. CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE PROGRAM RELEASES REPORT ON THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND AND WATER RESOURCES AND BIODIVERSITY

The U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) has released "Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.3 (SAP 4.3): The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity in the United States." The CCSP integrates the federal research efforts of 13 agencies on climate and global change. Today's report is one of the most extensive examinations of climate impacts on U.S. ecosystems. USDA is the lead agency for this report and coordinated its production as part of its commitment to CCSP.

"The report issued today provides practical information that will help land owners and resource managers make better decisions to address the risks of climate change," said Agriculture Chief Economist Joe Glauber. The National Center for Atmospheric Research also coordinated in the production of the report. It is posted on the CCSP Web site at: <http://www.climatechange.gov/Library/sap/sap4-3/default.php>

The report was written by 38 authors from the universities, national laboratories, non-governmental organizations, and federal service. The report underwent expert peer review by 14 scientists through a Federal Advisory Committee formed by the USDA.

The report finds that climate change is already affecting U.S. water resources, agriculture, land resources, and biodiversity, and will continue to do so. Specific findings include:

- Grain and oilseed crops will mature more rapidly, but increasing temperatures will increase the risk of crop failures, particularly if precipitation decreases or becomes more variable.
- Higher temperatures will negatively affect livestock. Warmer winters will reduce mortality but this will be more than offset by greater mortality in hotter summers. Hotter temperatures will also result in reduced productivity of livestock and dairy animals.
- Forests in the interior West, the Southwest, and Alaska are already being affected by climate change with increases in the size and frequency of forest fires, insect outbreaks and tree mortality. These changes are expected to continue.
- Much of the United States has experienced higher precipitation and streamflow, with decreased drought severity and duration, over the 20th century. The West and Southwest, however, are notable exceptions, and increased drought conditions have occurred in these regions.
- Weeds grow more rapidly under elevated atmospheric CO₂. Under projections reported in the assessment, weeds migrate northward and are less sensitive to herbicide applications.
- There is a trend toward reduced mountain snowpack and earlier spring snowmelt runoff in the Western United States.
- Horticultural crops (such as tomato, onion, and fruit) are more sensitive to climate change than grains and oilseed crops.
- Young forests on fertile soils will achieve higher productivity from elevated atmospheric CO₂ concentrations. Nitrogen deposition and warmer temperatures will increase productivity in other types of forests where water is available.
- Invasion by exotic grass species into arid lands will result from climate change, causing an increased fire frequency. Rivers and riparian systems in arid lands will be negatively impacted.
- A continuation of the trend toward increased water use efficiency could help mitigate the impacts of climate change on water resources.
- The growing season has increased by 10 to 14 days over the last 19 years across the temperate latitudes. Species' distributions have also shifted.
- The rapid rates of warming in the Arctic observed in recent decades, and projected for at least the next century, are dramatically reducing the snow and ice covers that provide denning and foraging habitat for polar bears.

USDA agencies are responding to the risks of climate change. For example, the Forest Service is incorporating climate change risks into National Forest Management Plans and is providing guidance to forest managers on how to respond and adapt to climate change. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency are encouraging actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration through conservation programs. USDA's Risk Management Agency has prepared tools to manage drought risks and is conducting an assessment of the risks of climate change on the crop insurance program. For more information, please visit: http://www.usda.gov/oce/global_change/; <http://www.climatechange.gov/Library/sap/sap4-3/default.php>; <http://www.sap43.ucar.edu/>.