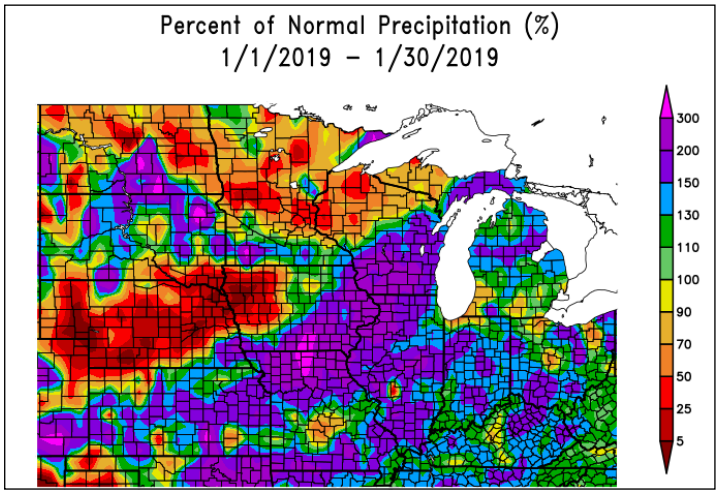
USDA Midwest Climate Hub
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

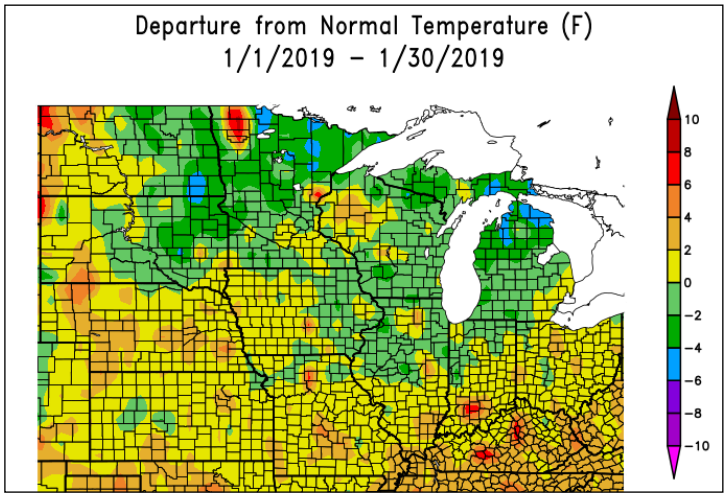
January 31, 2019

Midwest Ag-Focus Climate Outlook

Current Conditions

Temperatures at the end of January came crashing down across the Northern Plains and Midwest with extreme cold most comparable with an event in February 1996. The late month conditions were in sharp contrast to early month and much of the rest of the winter which had been fairly mild. Only northern areas were slightly below average for the month. Several storm systems brought snows across the area also changing what was limited snow cover into widespread cover. Well-above-average precipitation reached from Kansas eastward through the Corn Belt. A quite dry area covered Nebraska and areas along the Canadian border.



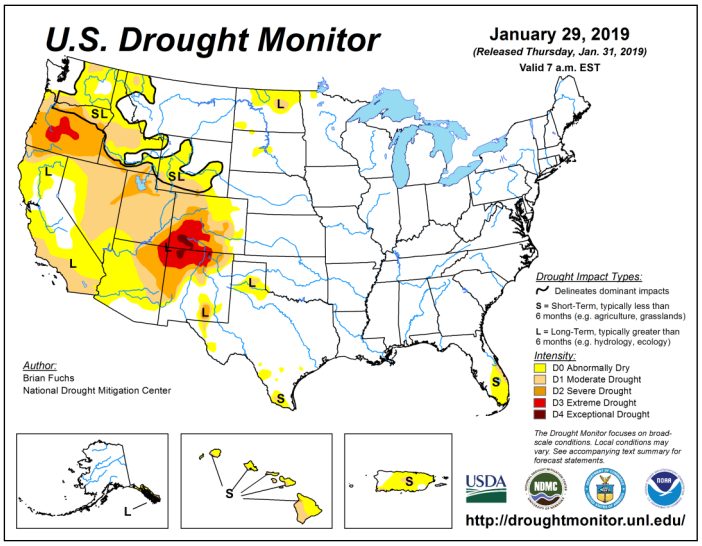


Images from High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC), Online Data Services: ACIS Climate Maps. Generated: 1/31/2019

Impacts

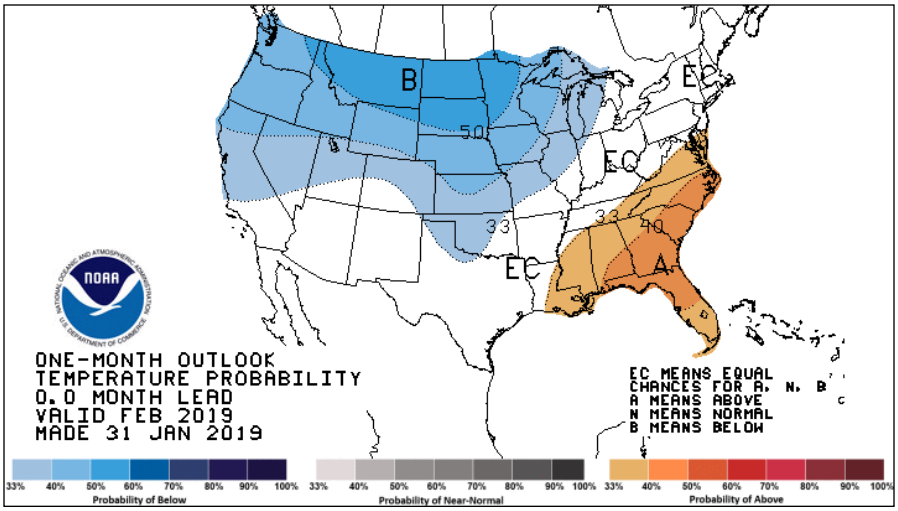
The cold had a severe effect on agriculture which may not be completely measurable until spring. Direct impacts were stress on livestock and those managing livestock. The delayed effects may not show up until spring when the impact on winter grains, tree fruits and other perennials will become more apparent. An additional unknown impact is that on insects. While cold usually would be good for over-winter mortality, the extensive snow pack could insulate enough in some areas to reduce the mortality. The snowpack has in fact kept some soils not or marginally frozen.

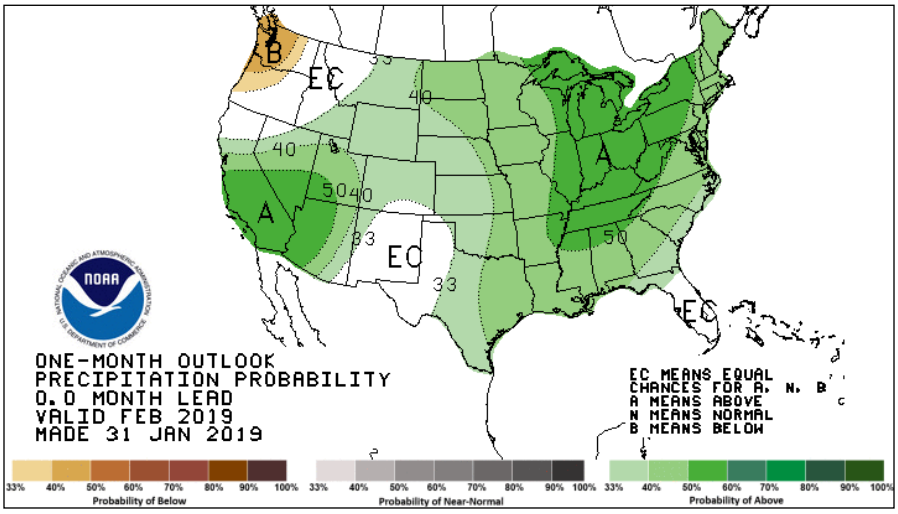
**Current drought conditions in the region are limited to a small pocket of D1 in North Dakota as depicted on the USDM.



Outlook

The winter temperature variability will likely continue with warm conditions spreading over the region in the early part of February. But the overall outlook for the month of February has higher likelihood for cold across the Northern Plains into the Upper Midwest. Higher chances for precipitation exists across the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes with lesser chances into the plains. Colder temperatures with additional precipitation would probably lead to more snow adding to the decent snow pack.





Spring snow melt along with already wet soils are likely to be problems early in the spring given the current snow pack and wet soil conditions from the wet fall especially from Kansas through Iowa and southern Minnesota and Wisconsin. The higher likelihood for precipitation in February is over the less-wet area of the Corn Belt, adding to the potential spring wetness issues.

Climate Prediction Center

Partners and Contributors

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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)
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