Central U.S. Recovering From Significant Rain Of Last 60 Days

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Rounds of impressive and significant rainfall have greatly impacted the central United States since late April. The significant rain has put many agricultural areas under water, prevented or seriously delayed the planting of many grain and oilseed crops and caused plenty of river flooding. Rainfall has been well above average and record breaking. Here in Kansas City, it has been the wettest year on record through June 23 and it is beating the previous record by close to 2.00 inches. Some of the most significant rain anomalies have been near Wichita, Kansas, however.

In the last 60 days, since late April, there has been a swath of anomalous rainfall varying from 8.00 to 16.00 inches extending from north-central and northeastern Oklahoma through eastern Kansas and northern and far western Missouri to northern Illinois. The greatest anomalies have been near Wichita, in far northeastern Oklahoma and a few spots in northern Missouri. Flooding of any kind can have a serious impact on agricultural and farming activity, but this event has been devastating for many producers.



From a percent of normal perspective, the rainfall anomalies over the past 60 days have varied from two to three times normal. Many areas in the central Corn Belt received 150% to 200% of average rainfall along with northern Texas, western Arkansas, western South Dakota and Nebraska. The southeastern states have been notably drier-biased during this same period of time, although recent rain has brought relief to the region after a very dry month of May.

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A majority of the excessive rainfall was related to a weather pattern that set up in much of May. A ridge of high pressure settled into the southeastern states and a trough of low pressure was present in the western part of the U.S. This helped create a southwesterly wind flow pattern aloft through the central U.S. and Corn Belt. Weather disturbances frequently moved through the central United States in this southwesterly flow pattern and had access to plenty of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico to help generate frequent bouts of significant rainfall leading to recent flooding.

The ridge of high pressure over the southeastern states during May caused that area to become notably dry and hot. The ridge did break down eventually and an area of low pressure then moved in earlier this month and brought relieving rainfall to the region.

Additional significant rain impacted the central U.S. this past weekend and caused flooding to worsen again after some temporary improvement occurred earlier this month. Additional relief from the most recent bout of excessive rain is expected later this week as a new region of high pressure builds aloft into the central states. The ridge will promote sinking air, warmer temperatures and less rainfall near the center of the high pressure system. There will still be some thunderstorm activity, especially near the outer edges of the ridge, but net drying will be evolve in many areas and that will be a welcome change after the recent expansive flooding.

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The ridge will likely weaken some after this weekend and then build into the western states in early July. This will help result in northwesterly flow aloft over the central U.S. that will cause greater rainfall to return to areas such as the Hard Red Winter Wheat Region and southwestern Corn Belt due to frontal boundaries and associated weather disturbances more easily being able to move into these regions. Some flooding may occur again in July; though, the rain will prevent fields from drying out too much.

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