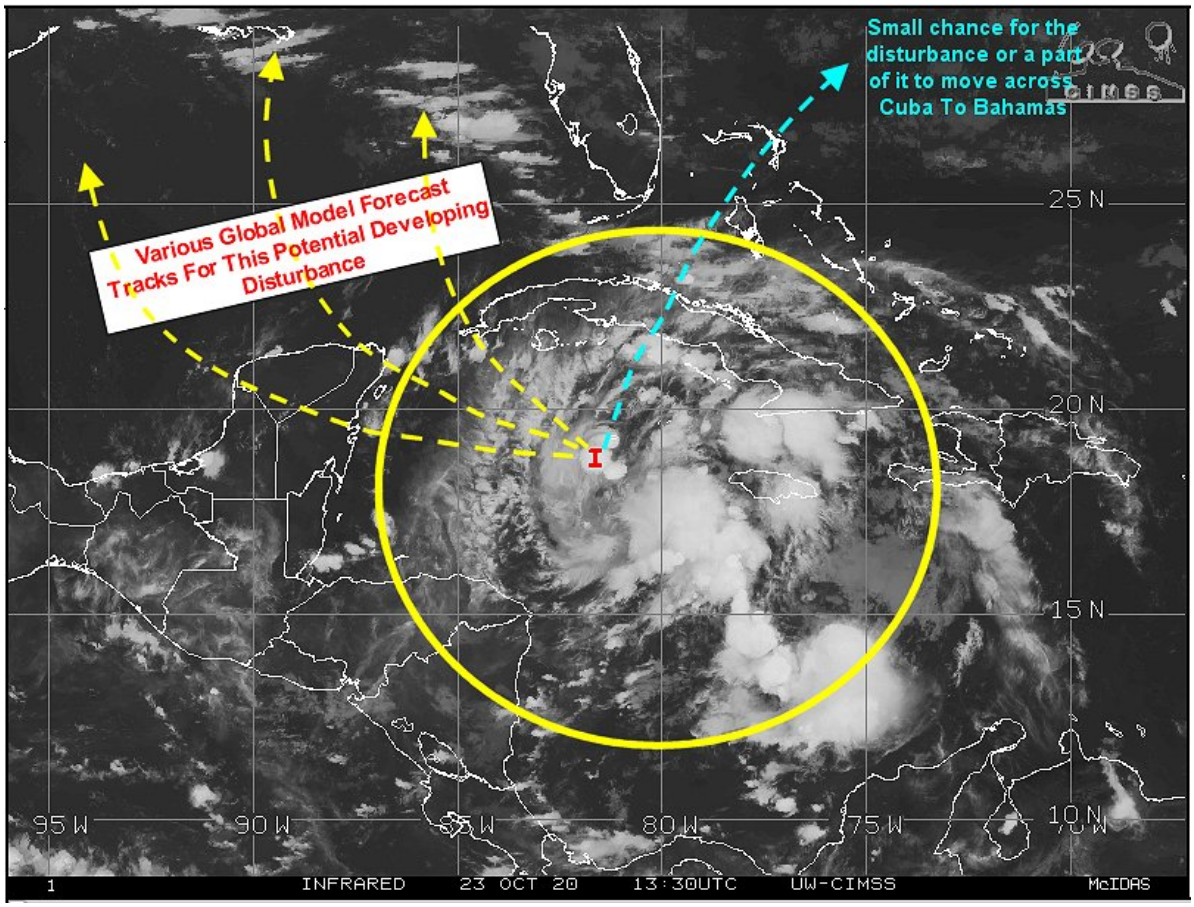
SE U.S. Cotton May Be Subjected To Heavy Rain Next Week

By Drew Lerner

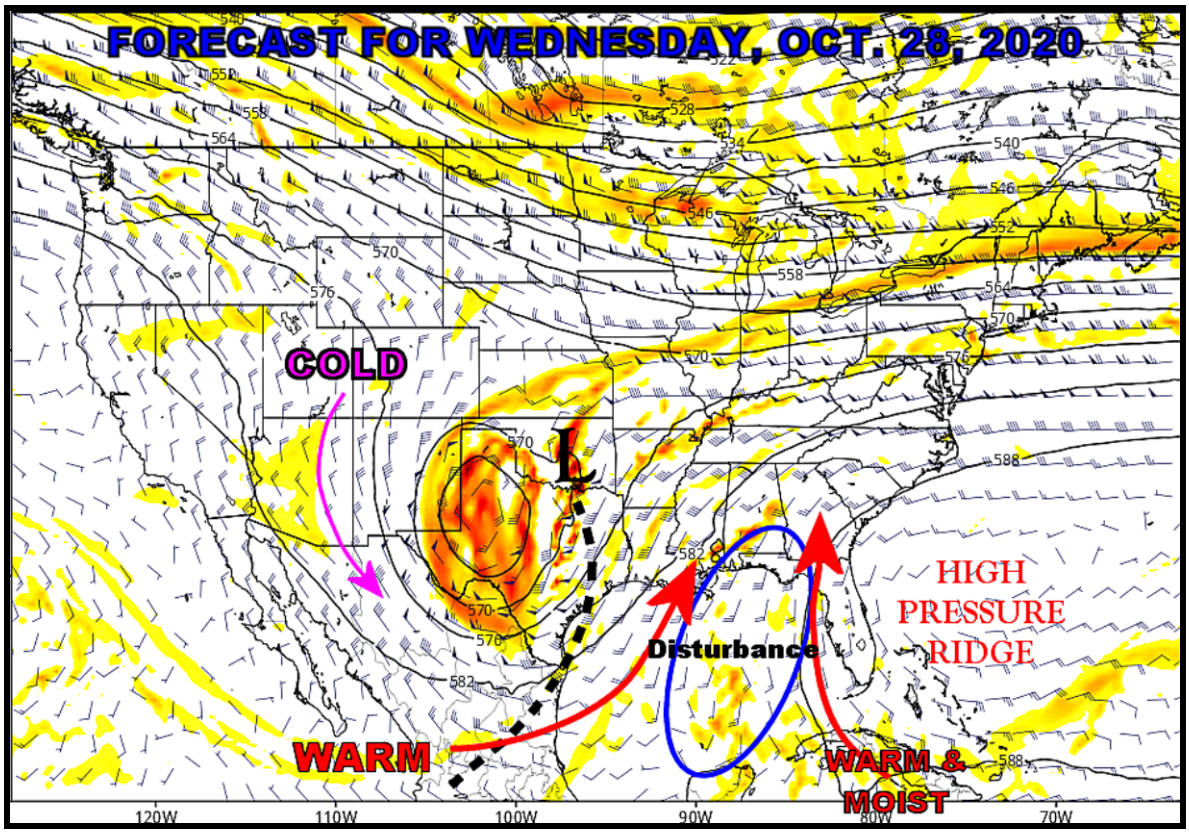
Kansas City, October 23 (World Weather Inc.) – ***A tropical disturbance in the Gulf of Mexico has potential to evolve into a tropical cyclone, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. The system has been advertised to move north northwest from near the Cayman Islands today into the Gulf of Mexico next week. The system will be closely monitored over the weekend, but the potential for it to merge with a mid-latitude storm system over the southeastern United States later next week could further enhance the tropical system's potential rainfall bringing a new round of harvest delays to cotton and soybean production areas from northwestern Florida and southeastern Alabama through Georgia to the Carolinas.***



Disturbed tropical weather has been present in the Caribbean Sea most of this week, but until today the system was disorganized and not very likely to develop. Conditions have been changing in the past 24 hours and the potential for a tropical cyclone to develop is rising, according to the National Hurricane Center. A low pressure center has formed near the center of the thunderstorm clusters and there is some potential for additional development today and into the weekend.

Forecasting the fate of this disturbance is very difficult today because of conflicting computer forecast model opinions. Late last night there was support for the system to move

across Cuba and into the Bahamas passing immediately south of Florida. However, most of the forecast models today have turned the system more to the north or northwest suggesting the system will reach into the Gulf of Mexico early next week. The system will have potential for further development through the weekend as the U.S. weather pattern supports ridge building over the southeastern United States while a bitter cold airmass and trough of low pressure push south across the Great Plains.



An upper level low pressure center is expected to evolve in the southwestern United States this weekend and it will move toward the lower Mississippi River Valley during the middle part of next week. Once the mid-latitude upper level low pressure center gets to the southeastern Plains it will begin drawing moisture from the tropical disturbance northward into the southeastern states. The center of the tropical disturbance by that time ought to be somewhere over the Gulf of Mexico. Most likely the tropical disturbance will be in the central or eastern Gulf of Mexico and upper level low pressure center to the northwest should be successful in dragging the tropical system northward toward the eastern north coast region of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico Coast by mid- to late-week next week.

The combination of warm, tropically moist, air flowing northward from the Gulf of Mexico and cool dry air coming in behind the mid-latitude upper level low pressure center should result in enhanced rainfall for the southeastern United States. Rain totals may range from 2.00 to 4.00 inches with local totals to 6.00 inches. The region most likely to see the heavier rainfall will be northwestern Florida, southeastern Alabama and Georgia with some rain also expected in the Carolinas.

Cotton is the crop most vulnerable to a quality decline by the heavier rainfall. As of Sunday, only 19% of Georgia's cotton had been harvested which is down from 32%

average. Alabama was 20% harvested down from 44% average. South Carolina only had 6% of its cotton harvested and North Carolina had 14% of the crop picked.