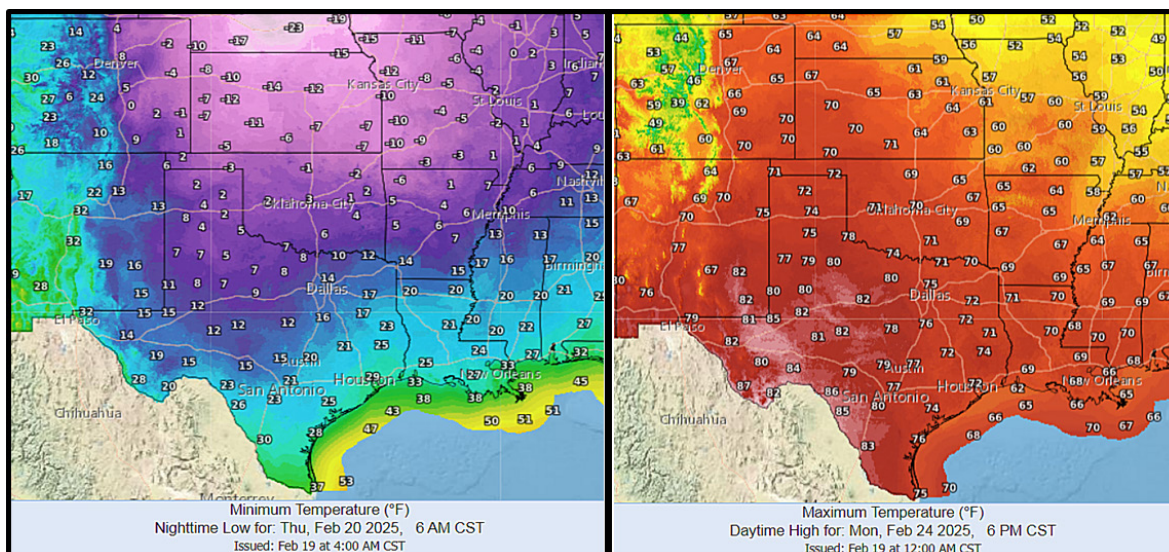


Southern U.S. Heaving Soil, Livestock Stress Induce Concern

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, February 19 (World Weather Inc.) – *Temperatures have been on a bit of roller coaster ride in the southern Plains, Delta and southeastern states in recent weeks. The environment has sent temperatures well below freezing and then well above freezing and now back well below freezing. The impact has been stressful on livestock while threatening winter wheat. Concern over animal health and some winter crops has risen, although the impact overall may be low. The cycle will continue with bitter cold into Thursday and then much warmer weather this weekend.*

Highest temperatures this past weekend reached the 60s and lower 70s Fahrenheit in southwestern Kansas, southeastern Colorado and the Texas Panhandle where temperatures this morning were in the negative and positive single digits. Such conditions are stressful for animals and crops, although both have likely survived the roller coaster ride. There will be some debate over the impact of these conditions especially since a similar wide range of temperature extremes have been occurring periodically since the end of December.

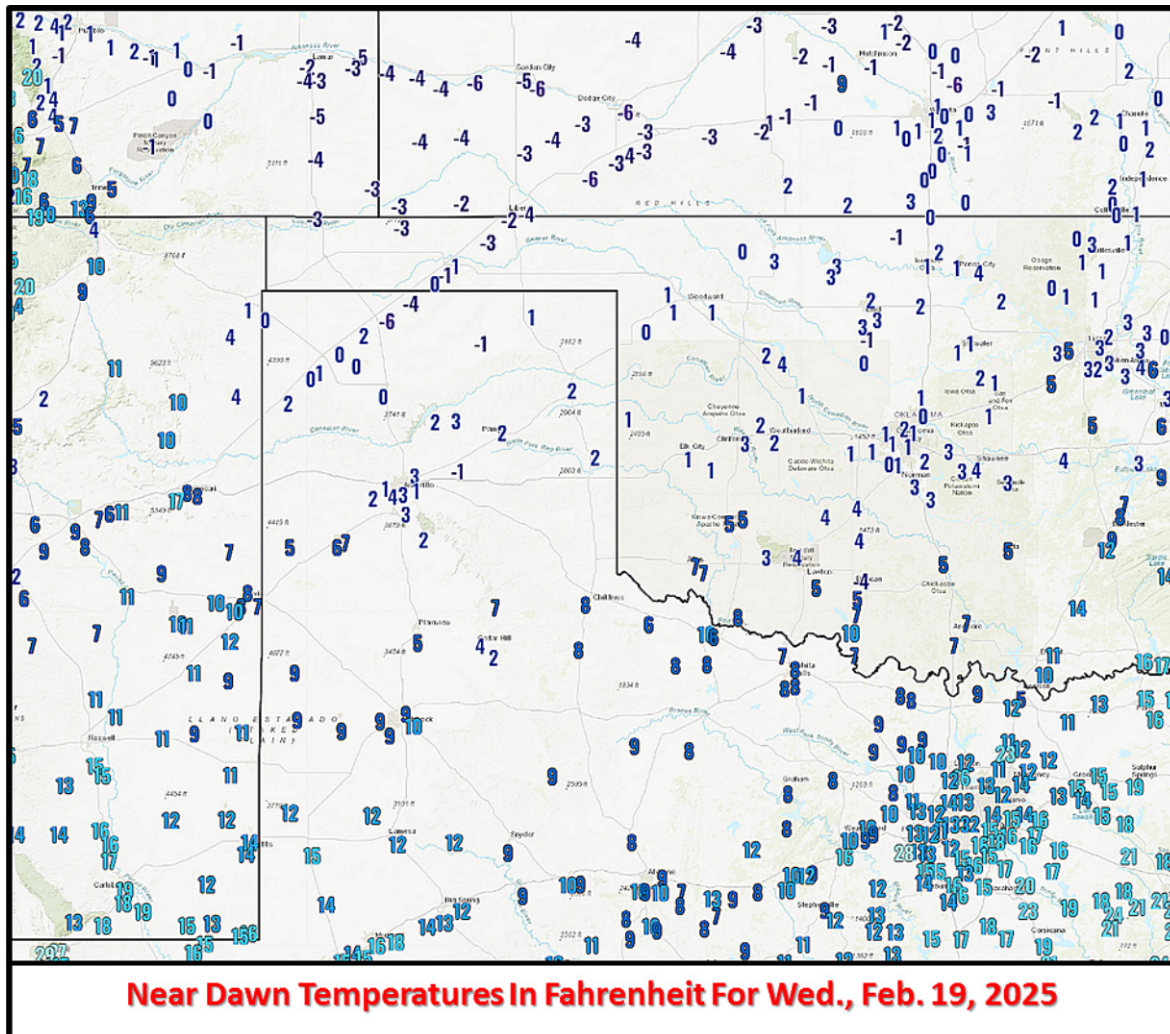


A similar situation has impacted the remainder of the southern Plains, the Delta and portions of the southeastern states. Highest temperatures this past weekend in the central Delta were in the 80s Fahrenheit and readings this morning were in the 20s Fahrenheit and lows Thursday morning will fall to the teens. Another round of freezing temperatures will also impact Louisiana sugarcane areas in the next couple of nights, although it will not be as cold as it was last month. Sugarcane production is vulnerable to a decline this year because of the bitter cold that occurred in mid-January and the return of freezes this week.

The impact of such gyrating conditions is multifaceted, but both livestock and winter crops are durable enough to manage this environment to some degree. Frequent freezing and thawing of soil can heave the topsoil placing stress on the root systems of winter crops and there is some potential for some root damage. Livestock stress can lead to animal health issues and poor weight gain.

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Another round of gyrating temperatures is forthcoming with temperatures likely to rebound to the 60s and 70s in the central Plains this weekend and early next week while 70s and some 80s return to Texas and southern Oklahoma as well as the Delta.



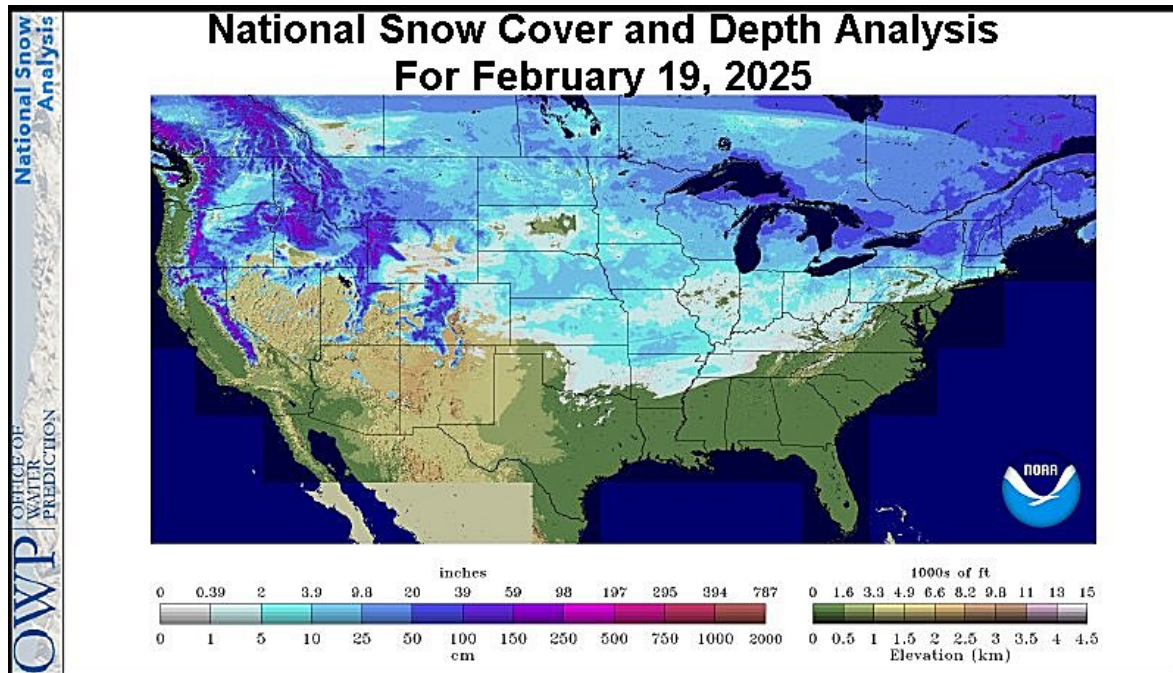
There has already been a considerable amount of debate over winter wheat production potential in the Plains and Midwest this year. South Dakota and parts of Montana experienced weeks of bitter cold conditions with little or no snow and the bout of bitter cold in mid-January in the central Plains occurred with restricted snow on the ground as well. Debate over production cuts has been rampant in recent weeks, although **World Weather, Inc. believes there is still potential for crop improvement if a mild and moist spring evolves.** Temperatures this morning were down near the damage threshold in parts of Texas and Oklahoma where snow cover was limited or non-existent suggesting possible damage in these areas which may need to be added to the list of possible damage from the January freeze.

Rain has tended to occur frequently and significantly in many spring seasons in which La Nina conditions quickly abate. That would be great for this year's damaged winter crops, but there is some concern that some of the wetter bias may be limited this

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year due to negative Pacific Decadal Oscillation and a strong northwesterly wind flow pattern aloft that will restrict some of the moisture.

A close watch on the situation is warranted, although for now producers are hopeful for better conditions in the spring that might help reduce the risk of yield losses in wheat areas. A similar hope remains for better livestock conditions and the sooner that occurs the better off animals will be.



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