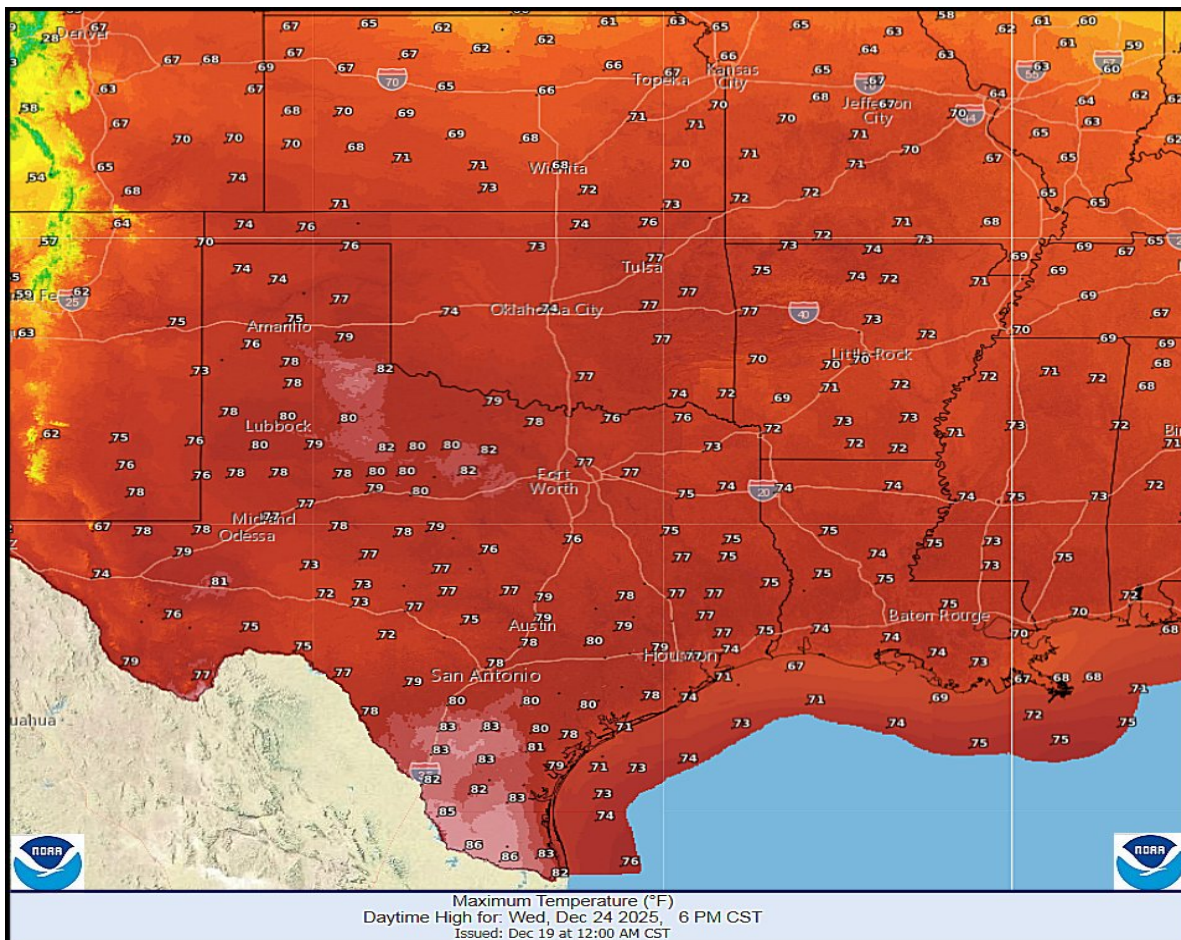


South U.S. Plains Heat To Stress Livestock, Remove Moisture

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, December 19 (World Weather Inc.) – As a follow up to Thursday's strong ridge high of high pressure article written by World Weather, Inc. it is very important to note the impact of the heat on agriculture. **Indeed warm and dry conditions will be ideal for holiday travel and outdoor activities, but with temperatures frequently rising into the 70s and some 80s Fahrenheit during the coming week to ten days there is liable to be some livestock stress and a further loss in soil moisture that may excite some of the wheat producers and commodity trade as winter crops lose hardiness and become more drought stressed.**

Portions of the southern Plains will see temperatures rise into the 70s and 80s Fahrenheit as soon as Saturday, although short term cooling is expected Sunday before another bout of 70- and 80-degree heat begins Sunday and lasts through the Christmas Holiday weekend. Soil moisture is already lacking across the region and another week to ten days of limited precipitation and well above normal temperatures will remove more moisture from the soil and eliminate much of the winter hardiness that may have been present in the region's wheat crop previously.

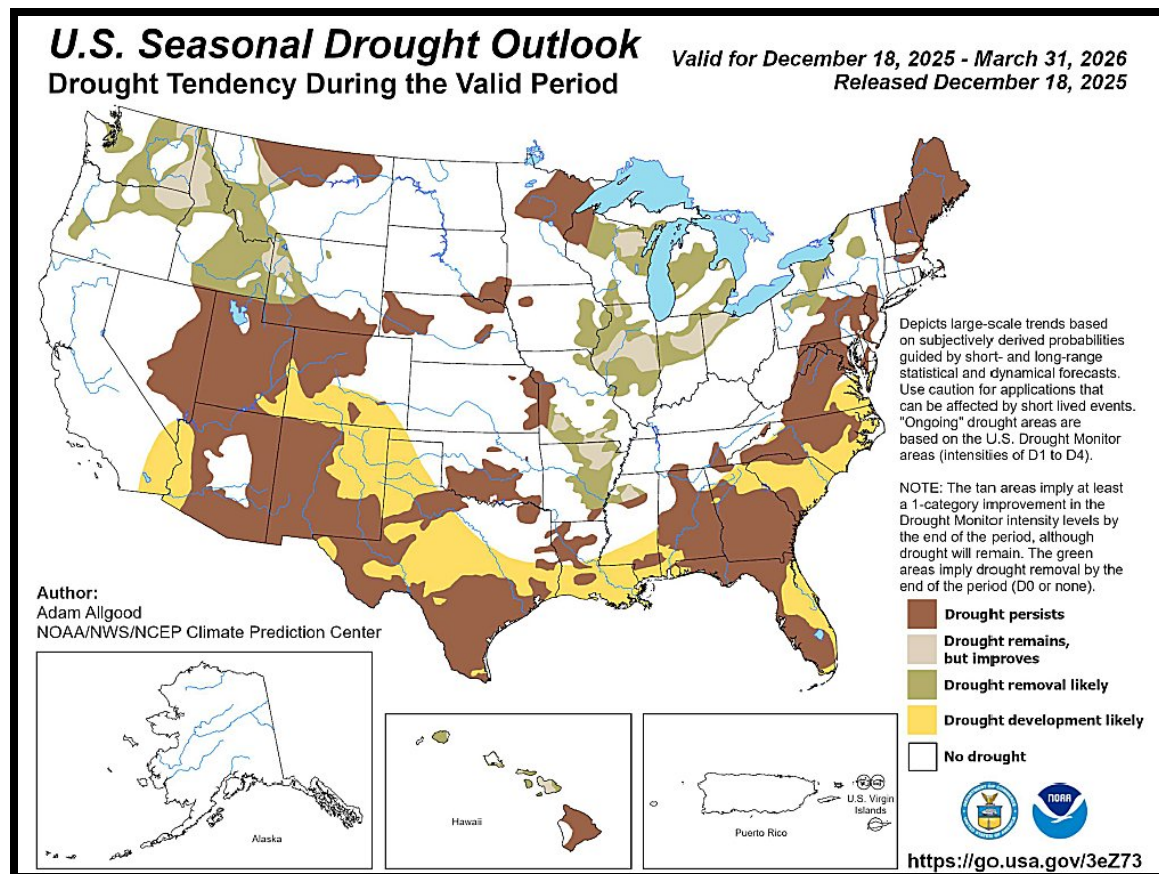


Similar high temperatures are expected Saturday and from Dec. 23 through Dec. 27

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Cooler weather will be needed to keep crops dormant, although with soil moisture already low there will not be much plant incentive to develop unless significant rain falls and the region stays warmer than usual. Without any question the southern Plains should be more closely monitored.

Some computer forecast models are hinting at a rain event in the last days of December, but given the environment that the storm is expected to come into there is potential that most of its significant rain will occur to the north and east of the region that will experience the greatest drying.



The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has already suggested an expansion of drought a little deeper into the southern Plains during the January through March period. Certainly the coming ten days of warm and dry weather will not help that situation very much. A lack of winter hardiness for crops in a growing region of drought could lead to some production threat later in the winter if temperatures suddenly plummet into a threateningly cold range without snow cover. The drier the air gets the more likely wild temperatures swings will take place and that poses at least some threat to winter crops in the region. Irrigated cropland should not be at much risk, although for all winter grain produced in the southern Plains some rain and cooler weather would still be a welcome change.

World Weather, Inc. believes that as La Nina dissipates in January the door should open for some late winter and early spring timely precipitation in the southern Plains, but between now and then there may be a growing concern over the fate of the

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region's wheat. Some concern over livestock conditions will also prevail, especially when temperatures rise into the 80s like that of Saturday and Dec. 24-27 since that can be stressful for animals carrying a heavy winter coat of fur.

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