



# Weather Outlook for 2006

by **Meghan Soderstrom**

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***Cattle-Fax presents  
temperature and  
precipitation  
forecast for the U.S.***

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DENVER, CO (Feb. 1, 2006) — The weather outlook for 2006 doesn't look much different from last year's outlook, long-range forecaster Arthur Douglas said Feb. 1 at the 2006 Cattle-Fax Outlook during the Cattle Industry Convention in Denver, Colo. Drier-than-normal conditions and lower temperatures are likely to occur in most of North America this year.

The surface temperatures of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans have the greatest influence on North America's weather forecasts, Douglas explained before launching into forecasts for February, spring and summer.

## **Sea temperature effects**

Cold surface water along the equator west of South America and off the west coast of Mexico will limit the production of moisture near the west coast of North America, Douglas said.

Dry winter conditions will likely continue across the Southwest into the Plains as the Pacific Ocean continues in its cool phase. This cool phase will, however, jumpstart winter precipitation in the Pacific Northwest, with rainfall diminishing by late winter and early spring.

The Atlantic Ocean, on the other hand, is now in a warm phase, which has largely been responsible for the recent increase in tropical cyclone activity, he explained. This year may have more moderate levels of tropical cyclone activity, but high water temperatures off western Africa threaten to be a breeding ground for storms. Although tropical cyclone activity may be above normal, drier-than-normal conditions will persist in North America, Douglas said.

## **February forecast**

The warmer conditions experienced in January will subside to cooler temperatures from the West Coast to the Plains. While the entire country will experience a cooling trend, the northern Rockies and into the Northern Plains will see temperatures falling to below normal, he forecasted.

## **Spring forecast**

Moisture levels will continue to deteriorate in the Southwest. By mid- and late spring, temperatures in the Southern Plains will be above normal as result of persistently dry soils, Douglas said.

Spring rainfall is likely to be near normal or above normal in the eastern one-third of the Corn Belt.

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Conditions are expected to be dry along the eastern seaboard, while the Tennessee Valley into the eastern Ohio Valley and along the Canadian border west of the Great Lakes should experience above-normal precipitation.

#### **Summer forecast**

High-altitude winds along the equator should switch this summer from eastwardly to westwardly blowing, which will enhance monsoon systems in North America, Douglas explained.

The desert Southwest should see higher-than-normal precipitation as a result of displaced monsoons in Mexico.

The Atlantic Ocean is likely to see another active hurricane year,

though probably not as active as last year, Douglas said.

The warm, dry summer conditions seen across the central and eastern sections of the Corn Belt last summer should reappear this year. With spring rainfall expected to be at least normal, subsoil moisture conditions should be adequate, Douglas said.

He cautioned that if spring ends up drier than forecasted, the Midwest crop regions should be closely monitored. The Southwest and Southern Plains will see a poor grass season, while range conditions in the northwestern quarter of the country should be enhanced.



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