

2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show

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Weather Outlook

Cold winter, hot summer predicted for the remainder of the year.

by Micky Wilson

NASHVILLE, TENN. (Feb. 1, 2007) — Art Douglas, Creighton University, presented a weather outlook during the Cattle-Fax Outlook seminar Thursday morning at the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention. Well-outlined topics of discussion included current drought conditions, world weather conditions, the current El Niño status, and the spring and summer outlook.

The temperature patterns the U.S. has been experiencing have been prominent since 1998, and have been responsible for widespread drought in the U.S., along with strong hurricane years in the Gulf and Atlantic states.

Regional droughts continue, especially in the North and West. However, a moderate El Niño effect in the equatorial Pacific has fueled a strong subtropical jet across northern Mexico and the southern Plains, easing drought conditions in these areas.

El Niño years, Douglas defined, are generally associated with warm waters along the West coast and cold waters in the central Pacific. However, 2007 had the opposite pattern.

Douglas explained cold water doesn't yield enough energy to produce storms, thus leaving land lax on precipitation. A strong ridge of high pressure formed, preventing

Pacific storms from moving into California; therefore, much of California will miss out on a wet winter tied to El Niño.

Moving into world weather conditions, Douglas predicted the Northern Hemisphere weather patterns to be shaped by the influence of warm waters in the North Atlantic and cold waters in the East Pacific.

Parts of the Southern Hemisphere are experiencing extreme drought, especially Australia. Other parts, South America in particular, are experiencing conditions bordering on too wet, but allowing for optimum crop conditions.

With so many changes taking place, Douglas predicted the end of El Niño in March or April of this year, bringing with it a hot summer.

But before summer arrives, the U.S. will experience more cold weather. A high-pressure pattern along the West and East coasts has protected the country from cold air, Douglas said. That pattern has changed, allowing cold air into much of the country. This pattern, peaking in the first half of February, will continue, allowing cold temperatures in much of the country.

The western and northern half of the country will be drier than normal in February, with only moderate accumulations

of snow, Douglas said. But March should bring higher temperatures in the east-central U.S.

The summer weather pattern will bring a stronger upper-level high-pressure system in the Great Lakes region, bringing with it a warm, dry summer across the crop areas of the north central U.S., while the Pacific Northwest will be slightly cooler than normal under a weak upper-level trough. A weak trough of low pressure is also forecast to form in the Southeast and will probably become a focal point for tropical storm tracks in the summer, Douglas said.

The cold-water pool in the eastern Pacific also favors drought in the Southwest; this unfavorable sea surface temperature pattern will probably dominate weather patterns in the winter of 2007-2008.

Douglas presented his comments Feb. 1 during the 38th Annual Cattle-Fax Outlook Seminar at the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Nashville. The outlook seminar is sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health. Summaries of other presentations during the outlook are also posted to the www.4cattlemen.com newsroom.

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