

**Southwest Michigan Field Crops Updates
January 2021**

Happy New Year! Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates—whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed—please send me an email or call the office.

New MDARD Emergency Order Extends Pesticide Applicator Credentials Until June 2021

A [new emergency rule](#) filed on December 30, 2020 by Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Director Gary McDowell extended pesticide applicator credential expiration dates as part of the state’s continued COVID-19 response. Applicators whose credentials expired on December 31, 2019 or December 31, 2020 will have those credentials extended to June 30, 2021. In addition to extending the expiration date, the rule gives applicators six additional months to renew their credential via continuing education courses.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department is not offering in-person exams. Metro Institute, a private company MDARD has partnered with to offer computer-based exams, is providing limited in-person exams at some of their testing centers. To schedule a computer-based exam, please visit Metro Institute’s website: www.metrosignup.com or call 877-533-2900.

Here are two key portions of the newly-released emergency rule:

- A certified or registered applicator credential with an expiration date of December 31, 2019, is considered valid until June 30, 2021. A qualified certified or registered applicator who renews a credential with an expiration date of December 31, 2019, shall be issued a credential that is valid until December 31, 2022. A certified or registered applicator credential with an expiration date of December 31, 2020, is considered valid until June 30, 2021. A qualified certified or registered applicator who renews a credential with an expiration date of December 31, 2020, shall be issued a credential that is valid until December 31, 2023.
- An applicant who desires to renew his or her credential by seminar shall earn all renewal credits before the expiration of the credential, except that an applicant with a credential that expires on December 31, 2019 or December 31, 2020 who wishes to renew his or her credential by seminar, shall earn all renewal credits before June 30, 2021.

What does this mean in plain English?

First, that if your license expired either at the end of 2019 or 2020, it is being renewed automatically until the end of June of this year. Second, if you would like to renew your license by earning continuing education (a.k.a. RUP) credits, you can now do that until the end of June of this year.

APPLICATOR TYPE	CREDITS REQUIRED EVERY 3 YEARS
Private Core	16
Commercial Core	8
Commercial Category (each)	8
Registered Core	8
Registered Category (each)	8
Standards (Aerial/Fumigation) (each)	2

Here is a related note from Bruce MacKellar: “We will be holding educational sessions to provide re-certification for private and commercial applicators that need to gain credits to recertify in specialized categories such as grain fumigation and right of way applications. For more information on these programs as they become available, contact the Van Buren County MSU Extension office at (269) 657-8213 and request to be notified of our

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programs via email. For those that would like to take a complete course where you can earn 12 RUP credits in one place, the [Pesticide Applicator Training Course](#) is a multiple-hour online class that takes you through the complete core manual at your own pace. The base price for completing the course is \$75/person, with price reductions available for veterans.”

More information about MDARD’s recertification by continuing education program and a listing of approved courses can be found at Michigan.gov/MdardPestCert. For additional information on MDARD’s Pesticide and Plant Pesticide Management Division, visit Michigan.gov/MDARD.

Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Conference

Each winter, irrigated corn and soybean farmers in southern Michigan and northern Indiana have enjoyed receiving critical research updates—and a painfully delicious Blue Gate lunch—at the Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Workshop. This year, Purdue and MSU will be hosting this event differently due to pandemic restrictions. The program will be online and held on two consecutive Monday evenings on Feb. 1 and 8 from 6:30-9:00pm. Two RUP and two CCA credits will be available each night to participants (sorry, not available for recordings). The good news is that we will help you achieve any weight loss goals you may have set since you won’t have the Blue Gate buffet to fend off, and you can participate on your laptop, tablet or phone while you work out on your new elliptical (OK, that’s mainly for me). Cost is FREE, but you will need to [register online](#) to receive the Zoom webinar link.

2020 Michigan Corn Hybrids Compared Extension Bulletin Available

The 2020 Michigan Corn Hybrids Compared Extension Bulletin E-431 has been posted on the [MSU Variety Trial website](#). Individual datasets by zone for grain, silage, and conventional hybrids are also available on the webpage. A hard copy of this bulletin was also available with the Dec. 15 “Michigan Farm News”.

FFA Issues Much-Anticipated Drone Rules

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced last month final rules for Unmanned Aircraft (UA), commonly known as drones. The new rules will require Remote Identification (Remote ID) of drones and allow operators of small drones to fly over people and at night under certain conditions. Remote ID will help mitigate risks associated with expanded drone operations, such as flights over people and at night, and both rules support technological and operational innovation and advancements.

[Remote ID](#) (PDF) is a major step toward the full integration of drones into the national airspace system. Remote ID provides identification of drones in flight as well as the location of their control stations, providing crucial information to our national security agencies and law enforcement partners, and other officials charged with ensuring public safety. [Part 107 of the federal aviation regulations](#) currently prohibits covered drone operations over people and at night unless the operator obtains a waiver from the FAA. The new FAA regulations jointly provide increased flexibility to conduct certain small UAS without obtaining waiver.

The [Remote ID rule](#) (PDF) applies to all operators of drones that require FAA registration. There are three ways to comply with the operational requirements:

1. Operate a standard Remote ID drone that broadcasts identification and location information of the drone and control station;
2. Operate a drone with a Remote ID broadcast module (may be a separate device attached to the drone), which broadcasts identification, location, and take-off information; or
3. Operate a drone without Remote ID but at specific FAA-recognized identification areas.

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The [Operations Over People and at Night rule](#) (PDF) applies to Part 107 operators. The ability to fly over people and moving vehicles varies depending on the level of risk a small drone operation presents to people on the ground. Operations are permitted based on four categories, which can be found in the [executive summary](#) (PDF) accompanying the rule. Additionally, this rule allows for operations at night under certain conditions.

The final rule also replaces the requirement to complete a recurrent test every 24 calendar months with the requirement to complete updated recurrent training that includes operating at night in identified subject areas.

Both rules will become effective 60 days after publication in the Federal Register which is expected this month. The Remote ID rule includes two compliance dates. Drone manufacturers will have 18 months to begin producing drones with Remote ID, with operators having an additional year to start using drones with Remote ID.

MSU Extension Farm Bill Program & Crop Insurance Webinars

For the upcoming 2021 production year, producers once again have the opportunity to select which Farm Bill program will work best for their farms. However, the choice between Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Loss Coverage (ARC) will now only focus on one production year and may be a different decision than the one made for 2019/2020. Crop insurance options like the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and the new Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) are also important factors in determining which program may be best. MSU Extension is partnering with Michigan Farm Bureau to help guide producers through these considerations and make the best choice for their farms.

Introducing the “2021 Farm Bill Program & Crop Insurance Decisions – What Fits Your Farm?” series. The program will be held via Zoom on January 18, 19, 25, 26 and February 1, 2 at 5-6 p.m. each day. There will be an additional 30 minutes of informal discussion following each session. Registration is free, but you will need to [register online](#) for one of the dates to receive the link.

At these informational meetings, producers will:

- Hear highlights from the 2020 decisions and how those decisions played out across the state
- Learn the latest changes regarding ARC and PLC
- Learn about the current and new crop insurance options available
- Work through case examples using the “updated” MSU Extension Farm Bill Calculator to help make better decisions on ARC versus PLC (Each crop and FSA farm number may result in a different choice)
- Discuss specific program details with experts

Michigan Soybean Yield Contest Winners

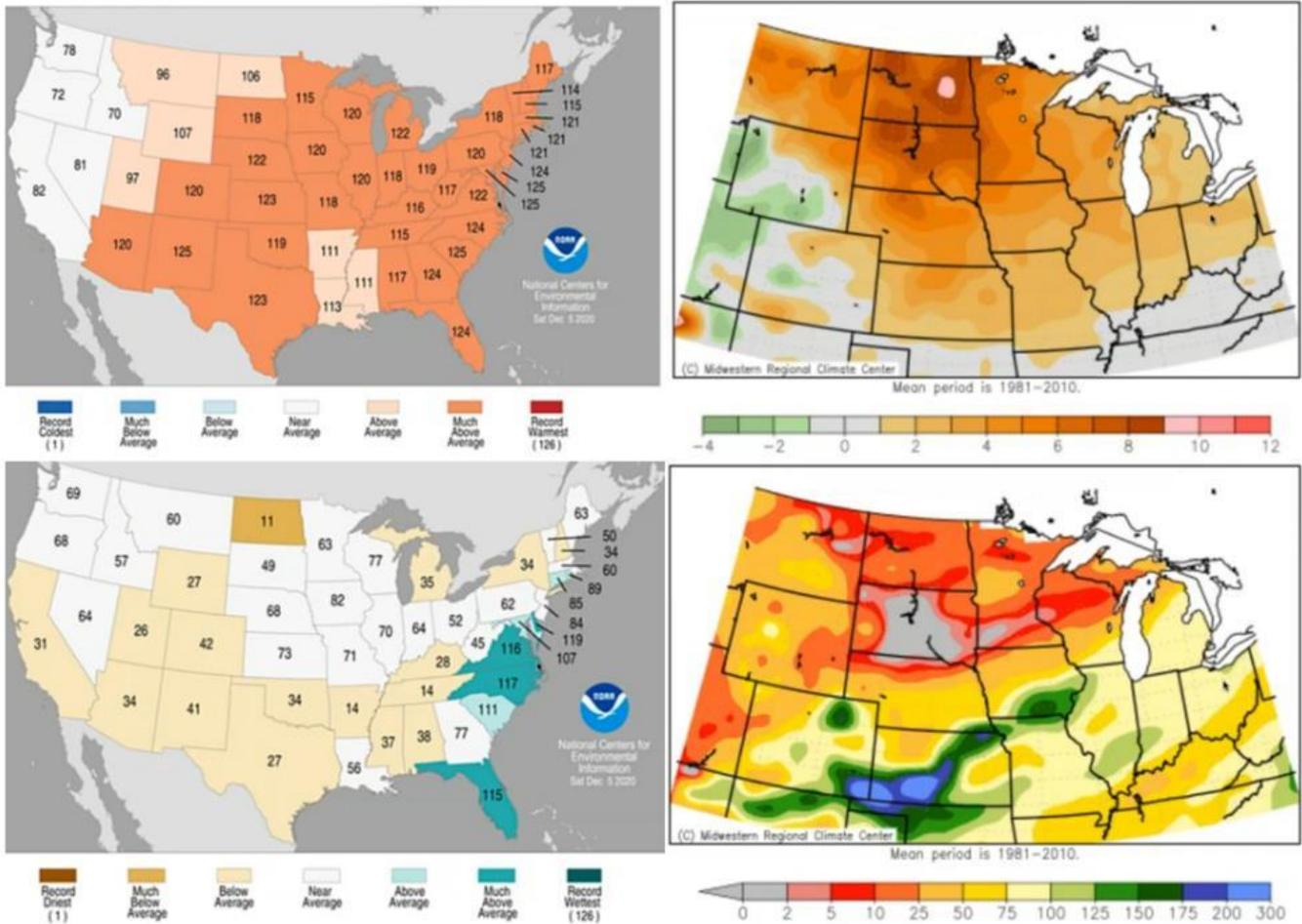
Last month the Michigan Soybean Association announced the winners of the 2020 Soybean Yield Contest. We had a few winners in the southwest region—congratulations to each of you!

Don Stall	Eaton	Late Maturity Non-Irrigated	134.75 bu/a
Randy Cuthbert	Cass	Late Maturity Irrigated	93.85 bu/a
David Eickholt	Saginaw	Mid Maturity Non-Irrigated	97.15 bu/a
Ron Hoeksma	Barry	Mid Maturity Irrigated	85.90 bu/a
Steve Koroleski	Huron	Early Maturity	72.44 bu/a
Luke Gentz	St. Joseph	Non-GMO	94.61 bu/a

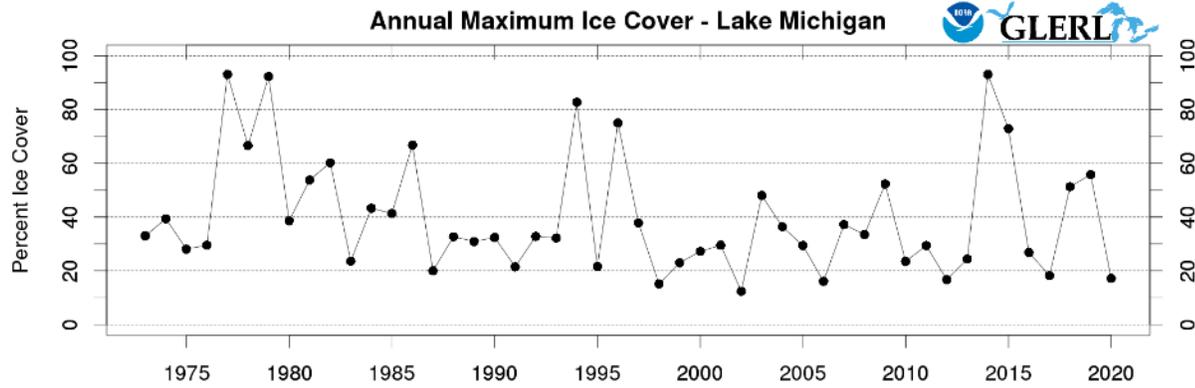
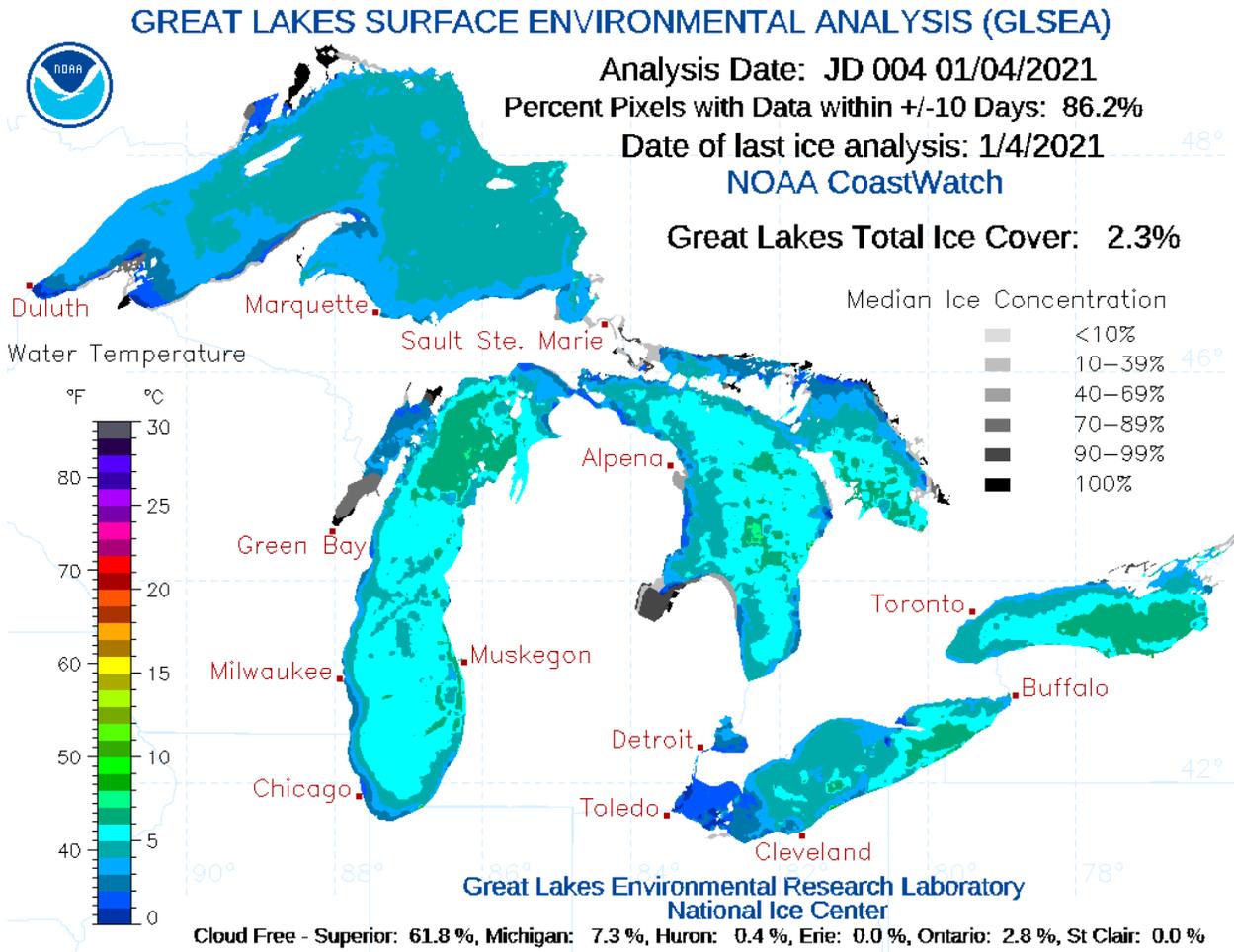
Don Stall’s winning entry was also the highest yield ever entered in the contest!

Weather Update

The winter thus far has been much warmer than normal and, for much of the southwest and south central region, drier than normal. Not surprisingly, there is a gradient with precipitation moving away from the Lake. As I mentioned before, the variability in La Niña years makes it nigh impossible to predict weather based on that one phenomenon. With surface water still in the 40's F and only 7% of ice cover for Lake Michigan, lake-effect snow is likely when weather patterns are out of the north/northwest. However, with little precipitation on the horizon for early- to mid-January, we'll need to wait on late-winter and spring precipitation to replenish drier soils heading into the 2021 season.

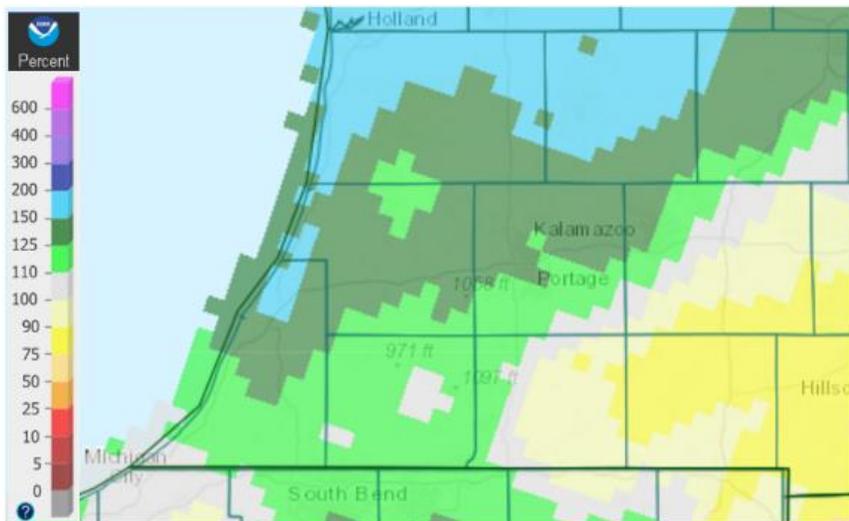


Statewide average temperature (upper left) and precipitation (lower left) ranks, Nov. 2020 and average departure from normal, Nov. 17-Dec. 15 for temperature (upper right) and precipitation (lower right). So far this season, La Niña has brought warmer and drier than normal conditions for most of the Midwest.

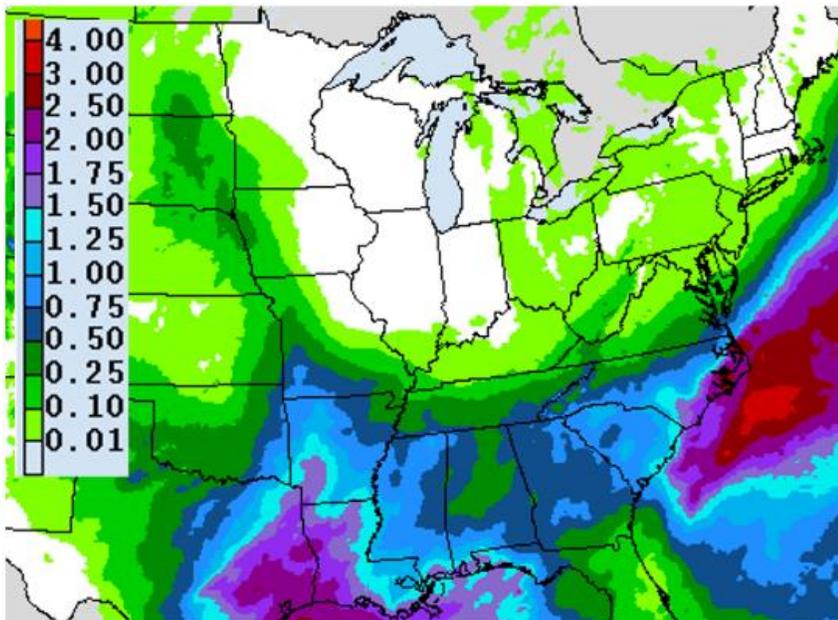


Ice coverage on the Great Lakes as of January 4, 2021 (top) and annual ice coverage on Lake Michigan (bottom).

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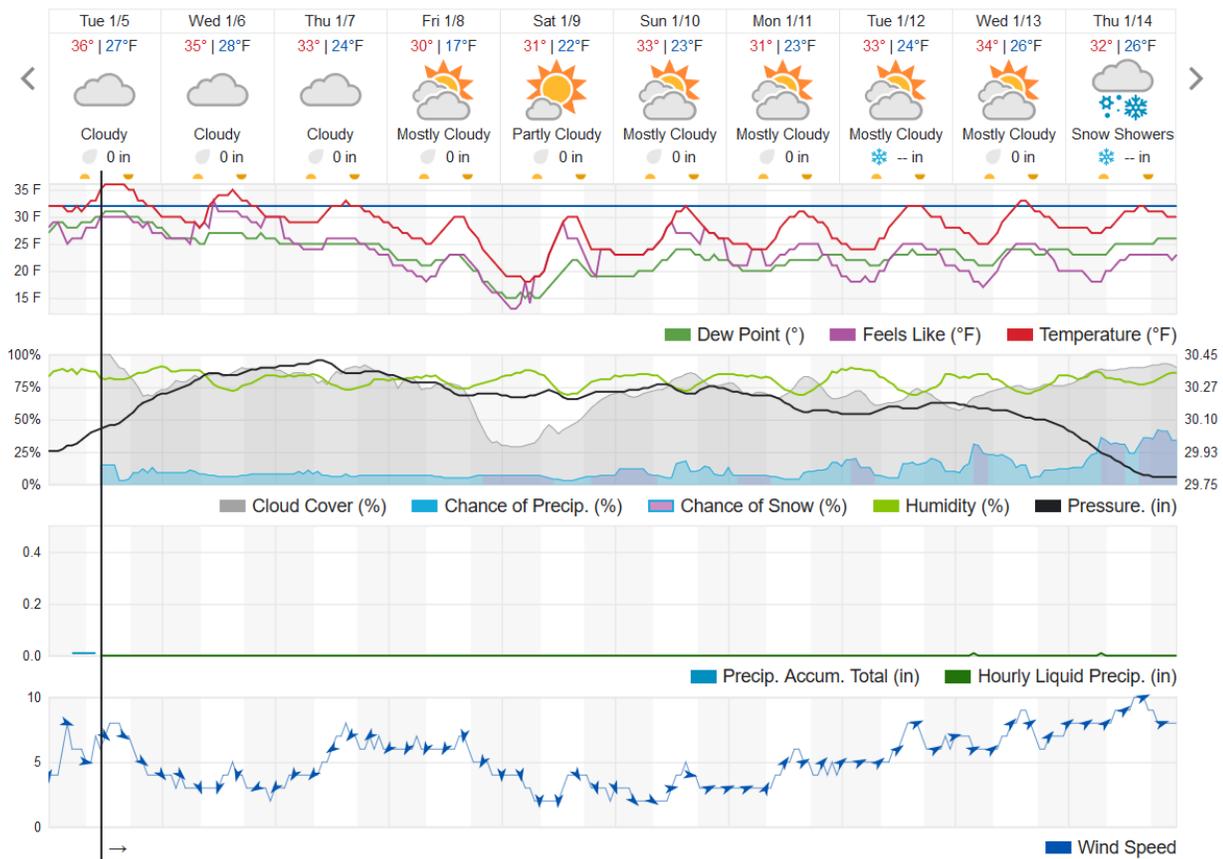


Precipitation percentage of normal for the last 30 days. There is a definite NW-SE gradient with Grand Rapids being the epicenter for above-normal precipitation.

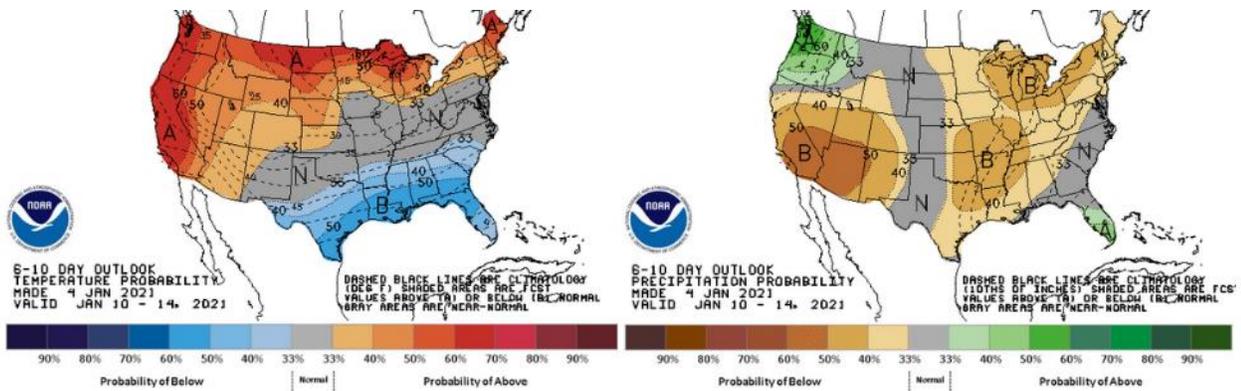


No precipitation in the forecast for Jan 5-12. This looks strikingly similar to the forecast from a month ago.

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The 10-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to wunderground.com.



The 6-10 day outlook (Jan 10-14) for temperature (left) and precipitation (right). The 8-14 day outlook is essentially the same. The 30 day outlook points to warmer and wetter than normal.

Calendar

Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined

Jan 4 **CRP General Signup.** General signup runs from Jan. 4 to Feb. 12. Contact your local FSA office for more information and to apply.

Jan 11+ **Can You Explain Your Tax Bill?** 7:00-8:30PM. An (Online) Property Owner’s Guide to Understanding Michigan Property Taxes. Participants will learn the meaning of Tax Day and how property is valued by your local assessor. Participants will also learn the five different values for each property and the purposes of each as well as how local millages are determined. **Class also offered Jan. 27, Feb. 11, 23, Mar. 6.** Cost is \$20, register online. For additional information Contact: David S. Rowley, MAAO (3), MCPPE, MSU Extension Educator at rowleyd2@msu.edu or (989) 400-3904.

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- Jan 18+** **Do You Think Your Property Value is Too High?** 7:00-8:30PM. A Property Owner's Guide to Understanding the Local Board of Review and Michigan Tax Tribunal. Your notice of assessment arrives in late February to early March each year. It is filled with information such as property classification, something called the Inflation Rate Multiplier, and local Board of Review appeal information. But what does it all mean? **Class also offered Feb. 3, 18, Mar. 2, 6.** Cost is \$20, register online. For additional information Contact: David S. Rowley, MAAO (3), MCPPE, MSU Extension Educator at rowleyd2@msu.edu or (989) 400-3904.
- Jan 18+** **2021 Farm Bill Program & Crop Insurance Decisions – What Fits Your Farm?** 5-6PM. See note above for more details. **Class also offered Jan 19, 25, 26, Feb. 1, 2.** Cost is FREE, register online. For additional information Jon LaPorte (269-445-4438).
- Jan 28** **Purdue's Crop Management Workshop.** 8:00AM-12:35PM. Looks like a good line-up of Purdue specialists and topics. No Michigan RUP credits offered, only CEU's. \$50 registration.
- Jan 29** **SW MI Virtual Pest and Crop Management Update 2021.** 9:00AM-12:00PM. Registration is \$15 including a 2021 MSU Weed Guide compliments of your Michigan commodity check-off programs. Three RUP and CCA credits will be available.
- Feb 1&8** **Michiana Irrigated Corn and Soybean Conference.** 6:30-9:00pm. Two RUP and two CCA credits will be available each night to participants (sorry, not available for recordings). Credits also available for IN applicators. Cost is free, register online.
- Feb 15+** **MSU Extension Field Crop Webinar Series.** Monday nights, 7-8pm. The series this year will focus on different crop and pest management and novel marketing strategies with an eye toward improving the bottom line. Cost is \$20 for the 6-week series or \$5 for each session, register online. One RUP and one CCA credit available for each session.
- Feb 15-19** **MI Ag Ideas to Grow With.** 8am-8pm. This unique week-long opportunity combines several ag-related meetings in the southwest, including Branch County Farmers Day, Ag Action Day, and Southwest Hort Days. Different tracks (ex. field crops, soil health, fruit, veg/home hort, etc.) will run different days with livestock-oriented sessions held each evening. Cost is free, register online, RUP and CCA credits will be available for several sessions.
- Mar 15** **ARC & PLC Election Deadline.** Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) signup for the 2021 crop year opened Oct. 13, 2020 and closes Mar. 15, 2021. Contact your local FSA office for more information and to apply.
- Mar 15** **CRP Grasslands Signup.** CRP Grasslands signup runs from Mar. 15 to Apr. 23. Contact your local FSA office for more information and to apply.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Published on December 17, 2020

- [2020 MICHIGAN SOYBEAN ON FARM RESEARCH REPORT IS AVAILABLE](#)
- [2021 MICHIGAN SOYBEAN ON-FARM RESEARCH WINTER MEETINGS](#)
- [MICHIGAN SOYBEAN ON-FARM RESEARCH REPORTS](#)
- [CROP BUDGET ESTIMATOR TOOL FOR FORAGES \(DETAILED\)](#) This is the detailed version of the Crop Budget Estimator Tool for Forages. This tool allows more in-depth analysis and budget construction.
- [CROP BUDGET ESTIMATOR TOOL FOR FORAGES \(SIMPLE\)](#) This is the simple version of the Crop Budget Estimator Tool for Forages. This tool allows users to develop a quick crop budget using reasonably estimated figures.

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- [INCREASING THE ABUNDANCE OF SAMURAI WASP FOR BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG](#)

Published on December 16, 2020

- [ONLINE CONSERVATION PLANNING TOOL OUTLINES SENSITIVE AREAS IN FIELDS](#)
- [2021 MSU WEED CONTROL GUIDE FOR FIELD CROPS IS AVAILABLE](#)

Published on December 14, 2020

- [IN-PERSON, ON-FARM LEARNING FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#) The MSU Organic Farmer Training Program (OFTP) is returning in 2021 to offer safe beginning farmer training.

Published on December 11, 2020

- [WHAT IS THE LENDER LOOKING FOR?](#) One of the most important activities you may have during the year is meeting with your local lender. It is also probably the one that causes you the most anxiety. Whether the meeting is for general operating funds or to purchase capital assets (i.e. equipment, livestock, real estate), you want the lender to make an investment in the farm and approve your request.

Published on December 10, 2020

- [BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF INVASIVE SWALLOW-WORT VINES IN MICHIGAN](#)

Published on December 4, 2020

- [LEGACY OF THE LAND](#) Through the MDARD/FRSAN Legacy of the Land grants, MSU Extension can help support you and your farm to help you stay or get back on a successful track.
- [SAVING SOIL WITH COVER CROPS](#)
- [CHRISTINA DIFONZO AWARDED ESA PROFESSIONAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EXTENSION](#)

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