

# Unusual conditions lead to major spring flooding



## Show-Me Weather

By PAT GUINAN

**T**HE spring flooding that occurred along the Missouri River and its tributaries last month caught a lot of people by surprise — not because hydrologists didn't see it coming, but more so from the rapid evolution of flash-flood-like conditions that we normally do not see with major river systems. The conditions that resulted in this severe flood were unusual in many respects, but first let's look at the situation that set the stage for a potential flood.

It's hard to believe much of Missouri was experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions in the fall; this began to change with a transition to a wetter precipitation pattern in the winter that resulted in above-normal precipitation throughout the Missouri River Basin. Since evaporation is minimal across the region during the winter months and vegetation is dormant, much of

### Key Points

- Flash flood event turned into major spring flood for Missouri.
- Conditions creating Missouri River flooding were unusual.
- Waves of precipitation caused incredible amount of river flow.

the precipitation served as recharge for the soil profile.

The wet pattern persisted in March and April, especially over a large part of Iowa and Nebraska, where much-above-normal precipitation fell in April. As May approached, soil conditions were moist, and the Missouri River and its tributaries were running higher than normal — due in part to the very wet conditions upstream in Iowa and Nebraska.

### Waves of rain

During the first week of May, a very unstable weather pattern established itself across the Great Plains as two slow-moving storm systems affected the region. Each system had an abundant supply of Gulf of Mexico moisture, and combined with additional favorable criteria, they resulted in severe

thunderstorm outbreaks from South Dakota to Texas.

Two lines of thunderstorms evolved into large, slow-moving and prolific rain producers as they rolled into southeastern Nebraska, eastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri on May 6 and 7. These waves of precipitation triggered the rapid flood event along the Missouri River and its tributaries in northwestern and west-central Missouri.

The coverage, intensity, and amount of rainfall that occurred with these events were nothing short of incredible. According to radar estimates and rain gauge reports, 4 to 8 inches of rain fell over most of northeastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri in a 24-hour period, with more than a dozen counties in northwestern Missouri receiving 6 inches or more. At least four Missouri counties received greater than 7 inches, which meets the criteria of a one-in-100-year 24-hour rain event.

Guinan is Extension climatologist for the University of Missouri Commercial Agriculture Program. E-mail him

## Ag director surveys flood-damaged farmland

**K**ATIE Smith's first task as the new director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture took her to the northern part of the state on May 17 to assess damage and crop loss caused by flooding along the Missouri River and its tributaries.

Smith was joined by Gerald Hrdina, conservation specialist with the Missouri Farm Service Agency, and other state agriculture officials in

touring three farmland locations in Buchanan, Carroll and Livingston counties.

During the tour, ag officials met with producers, community leaders, county commissioners, and levee and drainage district board leaders.

"We saw firsthand the devastation to crops and farmland and now better understand the economic challenges that these farmers will be up against in the upcoming days

and months," Smith says.

On May 15, Gov. Matt Blunt requested damage assessment reports in 34 counties: Andrew, Atchison, Boone, Buchanan, Caldwell, Callaway, Carroll, Cass, Chariton, Clay, Clinton, Cole, Cooper, Daviess, DeKalb, Franklin, Gasconade, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Holt, Howard, Jackson, Lafayette, Linn, Livingston, Mercer, Moniteau, Nodaway, Osage, Platte, Ray, Saline and Worth.

## Newsmakers

### Riegel joins '07 New Century Farmer class

Nathan Riegel, Washington, has been selected to participate in the 2007 New Century Farmer Program by the National FFA Organization. The program develops young men and women who are committed to pursuing a career in production agriculture.

Riegel and participants representing 24 states will take part in an intensive five-day seminar in Des Moines, Iowa, in July. They will learn from each other and industry experts during a series of workshops and sessions on topics ranging from the global marketplace to farm financing, and from demographic trends to risk management.

In addition to classroom learning, the class will be exposed to the latest developments in agricultural technology and field tours, plus sessions on personal and professional development and team building.

The New Century Farmer Program is sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. and Rabo AgriFinance as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

### Soybean council directors elected

The Missouri Department of Agriculture has released the results of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council elections. The following farmers were re-elected to serve additional three-year terms: District 1 (northwest region), Paul Thomas, Bethany; District 2 (north-central region), Todd Gibson, Norborne; District 3 (northeast region), Jim Underhill, Palmyra; and District 7 (southeast region), Will Spargo, Neelyville.

Gibson, who serves as chairman of the MSMC, is encouraged by advancements in research and new possibilities for soybeans. "Missouri soybean farmers realize the importance and versatility of our commodity," he says. "We were among the first groups to invest in biodiesel research in the early 1990s. That investment is now beginning to pay off, and we will continue to look for innovative ways to bring added value to the industry."

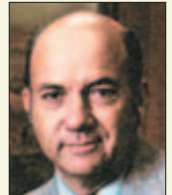
The soybean checkoff program began in Missouri in 1979. The MSMC is a producer-run organization, with 13 farmer-directors overseeing the investment of 50% of Missouri's checkoff dollars. The directors are volunteers and are elected by fellow soybean farmers to represent their district.

### Sweet passes away; livestock industry loses leader, promoter

Orville Sweet, 83, died April 19 in Springfield. Sweet was a leader and friend to the Missouri and U.S. livestock industries. He served as president/executive secretary of the American Polled Hereford Association from 1963-79. He served as executive vice president of the National Pork Producers Council until 1989 and spearheaded the "Pork. The Other White Meat" advertising campaign.

During retirement years, he was active in his church and volunteered at Lives Under Construction Boys Ranch, Lampe.

Sweet was married to Mary Lowellwyn Gwaltney Sweet for nearly 61 years. The couple have four children, 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



**THE PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY YOU NEED TO GET THE JOB DONE.**



### J Series Tractors and Haytools

- Models range from 55 to 98 hp (41.0 to 73.1 kW) so you're sure to find a tractor perfectly powered for you.
- Impressive power and rugged versatility allow these tractors to handle heavy-duty applications from loader work to mowing, baling, leveling and more.
- Built-in comfort features and responsive control boosts operator productivity.

FINANCING PROVIDED BY  
**CNH Capital**  
LENDING | LEASING | CREDIT CARDS | INSURANCE

\*For agricultural use. Offers subject to CNH Capital America LLC credit approval. See your Case IH dealer for details and eligibility requirements. Down payment may be required. Offers good for a limited time at participating Case IH dealers in the United States. Equipment model and financing may vary. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. ©2007 CNH America LLC. Case IH and CNH Capital are registered trademarks of CNH America LLC. All rights reserved. www.caseih.com/na

**CASE IH**  
FOR THOSE WHO DEMAND MORE™

**0% FINANCING\***

**ON MANY SMALL TRACTORS AND HAYTOOLS. SEE YOUR DEALER TODAY. OFFERS END SOON!**