Most Recent Experimental Forecast Guidance: Executive Summary (25 September 2006)

1. Weak-to-moderate El Niño conditions have developed over the course of the summer, and are expected to continue through the upcoming winter, possibly strengthening further.

2. Since late June, we have seen significant relief in terms of widespread above-normal precipitation around much of the interior Southwest, in particular over New Mexico and south-central Colorado. While this may have been too late for some agricultural interests, most of the crops benefited from this improvement. Recent mountain snow storms have no bearing on the upcoming winter snow pack.

3. My experimental forecast guidance for October-December covers all of New Mexico, as well as southern Utah with negatively tilted odds. For Arizona, the previously dry forecast has switched to "neutral", while the new forecast for eastern Colorado is modestly optimistic ("wet"). Unfortunately, the fall season has proven itself to be a difficult season to predict. My first outlook into January-March 2007 is pessimistic (dry) for Arizona, Utah and northeast Colorado in particular, backed up by good track record in these regions. New Mexico has the best odds for a wet late winter, again backed up by good verification skill. Colorado's north-central mountains will have to wait for next month to see a skillful forecast.

4. Bottomline: As expected, summer monsoon precipitation has been above-average from southwestern New Mexico into eastern Colorado, while temperature anomalies have switched from above-normal in July to below-normal in September. Consistent with a developing El Niño, eastern Colorado has better-than-average precipitation chances during the fall season, while New Mexico's dry forecast is inconsistent with El Niño. Moderate El Niño conditions tend to be unfavorable for Colorado's mid-winter snow pack, but the forecast is still quite uncertain for that region. Fortunately, such El Niño winters tend to be followed by wet springs which can make up for lost ground from the winter season.

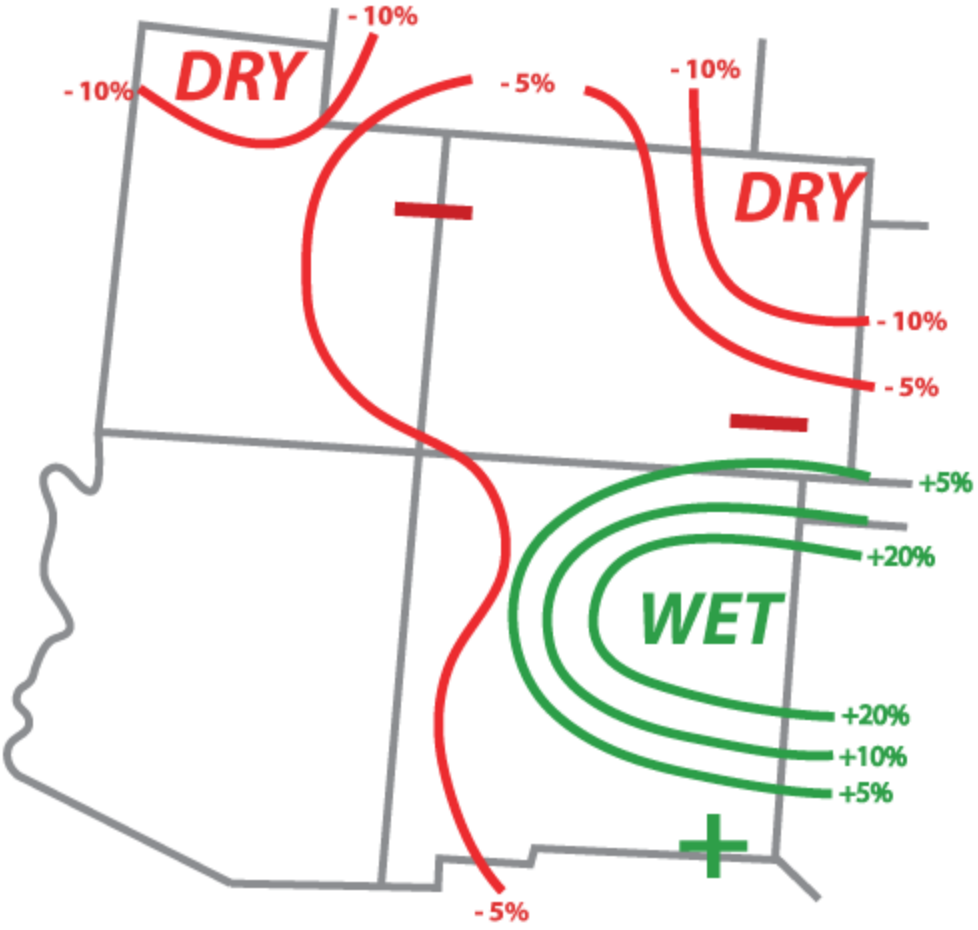
EXPERIMENTAL CDC PRECIPITATION FORECAST GUIDANCE
OCT - DEC 2006 (issued September 19, 2006)

Forecasted shifts in tercile probabilities for October-December 2006. In order to be shown on this map, a forecast tilt in the odds has to reach at least 3% either towards wet, dry, or near-normal. Shifts towards the wettest (driest) tercile (one third of the historical distribution) are indicated in green (red), with a green plus sign for shifts between +3% and +5% (none here), and a red minus sign for equivalent shifts towards the negative. Tilts towards near-normal are indicated by the letter "N", if at least by 3% (none here). Question marks denote a forecast with a greater likelihood of being either wetter OR drier than near-normal at the expense of near-normal odds (over northern Utah and northwest Colorado). Positive or negative shifts of over 5% are contoured in 5% increments. If any shift reaches over 10%, it is considered significant. In this go-around, the highest tilt stays just below that threshold (with +9% in eastern Colorado).

For more information on this product visit us on the web at:
http://www.cdc.noaa.gov/people/klaus.wolter/SWcasts/

Western Water Assessment

EXPERIMENTAL CDC PRECIPITATION FORECAST GUIDANCE
JAN - MAR 2007 (issued September 20, 2006)



Forecasted shifts for tercile probabilities for January-March 2007, see previous maps for detailed legend. There are three regions with significant tilts in the odds: dry for northeast Colorado and northwest Utah, and wet for northeast New Mexico.

For more information on this product visit us on the web at:
http://www.cdc.noaa.gov/people/klaus.wolter/SWcasts/

Western Water Assessment