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Crops continue to suffer from hot temperatures and a lack of significant rainfall. It seems this opening statement has been the norm for the past month. This week the National Drought Monitor designated a second area in Nebraska in extreme drought including Hitchcock and Red Willow counties. Unfortunately, the latest models and extended forecasts offer little evidence of a pattern change that will end this nightmare scenario.

The extended outlooks for August, just released by the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), indicate above normal temperatures are likely for the entire state. They indicate a tendency for below normal moisture across eastern Nebraska, but equal likelihood of above normal, normal, or below normal precipitation for the remainder of the state.

The Climate Prediction Center's outlook for August-October continues the bias toward above normal temperatures for the entire state. However, only extreme eastern Nebraska is assigned a tendency for below normal moisture; the remainder of the state has equal chances of above normal, normal, or below normal precipitation.

On a positive note, the movement away from drier conditions in the three-month forecast could indicate that better moisture may occur in September and October. How can I come to this conclusion? August represents approximately 40 percent of the moisture that normally falls in this three-month period. With a dry August forecast for eastern Nebraska, the three-month map may be indicating that enough moisture could fall in the latter two months to compensate for the below normal moisture projected for August.