

What Is Causing Our Weird Weather?

By Monroe S. Miller

It is human nature, I'd guess. Whenever confronted with something new, unusual or out of the ordinary, we always want to know...WHY?

So it is with the weather of late. Remarks like "what's going on with the weather?" and "when will we have normal, predictable weather again?" or "we'll never see this kind of weather in our lifetime again" are heard all the time.

The most common and frequent explanation I have heard from meteorologists is (of course) *El Nino*.

El Nino is the phenomenon that brings warm water from the Philippines to the equatorial eastern area of the Pacific Ocean. It has encouraged a moisture-laden high-level tropical jet stream from Baja California to invade the Midwest, giving us the unusual, intense and more frequent thunderstorms we experienced this summer.

Those storms were exacerbated by a Bermuda High, a mass of air under unusually high pressure that migrated west from Bermuda and got stuck over the continental U.S. Clockwise-spinning winds off this high pressure swept additional moisture from the gulf of Mexico into the central and upper United States.

Added to this was another flow of moisture up from Mexico itself. Although it was weaker in force, it nevertheless added moisture we surely didn't need.

The *El Nino* effect started, as we well know, last year. It seems incredible that so much more atmospheric moisture can result and jet streams redirected by the mere 2°F. increase *El Nino* brings to ocean water temperatures. Scientists are not sure why this effect happens or how long each will last. Previous recent ones were in 1982-1983 and 1986-1987. More rain for us resulted those times, too.

In between the *El Nino* are phenomenon that have come to be called *La Ninas* (real creative!). These are colder-than-average sea-surface temperatures off the west coast of South America. They usually bring drier, colder weather in North America.

That is the meteorology theory of it all.

Robert W. Reuschlein, a Madison author and researcher, is writing a book called "Weather, Wealth and War". In it he promotes a different theory that explains a lot of the weather, especially the flooding, we are now experiencing.

He believes that many weather, economic and political events repeat themselves every 54 years, more or less. British wheat prices have confirmed this pattern for over 700 years.

Usually, U.S. rainfall averages out every nine years, except for the drought and drench 20-year period that occurs every 54 years. Fifty-five years ago, like now, we were bouncing back from the heavy drought of the 1930s that was worldwide, and beginning to experience the floods that followed.

In 1938 (55 years ago), Wisconsin had the wettest year in modern history. Iowa and Minnesota each had their wettest year of the 30s. Illinois, Nebraska and Missouri each had

their second wettest year of the 30s, second only to 1935. Then, as now, the heaviest rains were in late spring, especially May.

So, another great flood has occurred in the same area, only one year off a perfect 54-year cycle.

Nationally, he predicts the rains will peak around 1998, 54 years after the 1944 peak of last time. The many severe coastal and other droughts of recent years will be replaced by floods for the next few years.

Reuschlein believes the pattern is natural and unavoidable. I am in no position to argue about it, one way or the other. But it is interesting to notice the human need to explain everything!

It is also a universal trait among golf course superintendents to hope for "normal" weather.

That day may never come. 🙏

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