

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena - October 2012

Location	Date/Time	Deaths & Injuries	Property & Crop Dmg	Event Type and Details
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TEXAS, South Panhandle

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z023) SWISHER, (TX-Z024) BRISCOE, (TX-Z025) HALL, (TX-Z026) CHILDRESS, (TX-Z027) BAILEY, (TX-Z028) LAMB, (TX-Z029) HALE, (TX-Z030) FLOYD, (TX-Z031) MOTLEY, (TX-Z032) COTTLE, (TX-Z033) COCHRAN, (TX-Z034) HOCKLEY, (TX-Z035) LUBBOCK, (TX-Z036) CROSBY, (TX-Z037) DICKENS, (TX-Z038) KING, (TX-Z039) YOAKUM, (TX-Z040) TERRY, (TX-Z041) LYNN, (TX-Z042) GARZA, (TX-Z043) KENT, (TX-Z044) STONEWALL

10/01/12 00:00 CST	0	Drought
10/31/12 23:59 CST	50M	

Drought conditions remained nearly unchanged through the month of October. Severe (D2) to extreme (D3) drought levels persisted over much of the region while exceptional (D4) conditions continued across the northwestern South Plains and a small portion of Stonewall County. Rainfall was extremely sparse throughout the month with near average temperatures.

The region was undergoing its transition from the warm season to the dry season. The entire month of October saw nearly zero rainfall. The exception was on the 12th where several supercells produced rainfall, large hail and tornadoes. Long term rainfall deficits remained big over a large portion of the area. Temperatures ended up near seasonal averages but there were wide ranges of temperatures throughout the month. Many record maximum and minimum temperature records were set. An early cold snap in the second week of October brought nearly the earliest first freeze dates. A strong cold front brought a widespread hard freeze on the 27th and 28th. Keetch-Byram Drought Index values worsened through the month. Values at the beginning of the month ranged anywhere from less than 200 over portions of the Rolling Plains to values between 500-600 over the western South Plains. By the end of the month, the maximum values between 500-600 remained unchanged but the Rolling Plains increased to between 200-300.

Agricultural impacts began to be realized during the month of October with harvesting underway. Irrigated fields were reporting near average yields but many lands were zeroed out by insurance adjusters. Winter wheat remained in good condition but needed rainfall to survive. The hard freeze experienced during the last week of the month resulted in plants and grassland transitioning into their dormant winter phase. Fire weather conditions increased with the curing and drying of grassland fuels but no significant wildfires were reported.

Economic losses due to drought through October since the drought began were estimated near \$2.5 billion.

LUBBOCK COUNTY --- 0.9 NW SHALLOWATER [33.69, -101.99]

10/12/12 17:06 CST	0	Hail (1.00 in)
10/12/12 17:06 CST	0	Source: Trained Spotter

A trained spotter estimated quarter size hail near Shallowater. No damage was observed.

HALE COUNTY --- 0.9 SW HALE CENTER [34.06, -101.84]

10/12/12 17:21 CST	0	Hail (2.00 in)
10/12/12 17:21 CST	0	Source: Trained Spotter

A trained spotter estimated two inch diameter hail and winds of 65 mph. The extent of damage was not known.

HALE COUNTY --- 0.9 SW HALE CENTER [34.06, -101.84]

10/12/12 17:21 CST	0	Thunderstorm Wind (EG 56 kt)
10/12/12 17:21 CST	0	Source: Trained Spotter

A trained spotter estimated wind gusts to 65 mph with two inch diameter hail. The extent of damage was not known.

HALE COUNTY --- 2.6 NNW ALLEY [33.93, -101.85], 5.6 N ALLEY [33.98, -101.83]

10/12/12 17:39 CST	30K	Hail (2.75 in)
10/12/12 17:48 CST	0	Source: Trained Spotter

A swath of very large hail up to baseball size fell along I-27 between 6 and 12 miles south of Hale Center. The hail caused various degrees of damage to several vehicles; particularly those that sought limited shelter availability at a rest stop about 12 miles south of Hale Center. In some cases, complete windshields were cracked and rear windows shattered. Fortunately, no injuries were reported. Area cotton crops primed for harvest likely suffered damage as well; however, loss estimates were not known.

HALE COUNTY --- 0.9 SW HALE CENTER [34.06, -101.84]

10/12/12 17:58 CST	0	Hail (2.75 in)
10/12/12 17:58 CST	0	Source: Trained Spotter

A trained spotter estimated baseball size hail. The extent of any damage was not known.

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SWISHER COUNTY --- 3.5 N KRESS [34.42, -101.75]				
	10/12/12 18:01 CST		0	Hail (1.75 in)
	10/12/12 18:01 CST		0	Source: Broadcast Media

Broadcast media estimated golf ball size hail along with wind gusts estimated to 75 mph. Although damages likely occurred to area property and crops, no specific information was available.

SWISHER COUNTY --- 3.5 N KRESS [34.42, -101.75]				
	10/12/12 18:01 CST		0	Thunderstorm Wind (EG 61 kt)
	10/12/12 18:01 CST		0	Source: Broadcast Media

Broadcast media estimated wind gusts to 75 mph along with golf ball size hail. Although damages likely occurred to area property and crops, no specific information was available.

HALE COUNTY --- 3.5 NE ALLEY [33.94, -101.80], 5.3 NE ALLEY [33.96, -101.77]				
	10/12/12 18:05 CST		0	Tornado (EF0, L: 1.80 mi , W: 200 yd)
	10/12/12 18:11 CST		0	Source: Storm Chaser

Storm chasers observed a diffuse and intermittent tornado over open land about nine miles southeast of Hale Center. At times, this weak tornado exhibited cyclical multiple vortices rotating about the larger tornadic circulation that was estimated as wide as 200 yards wide at one point. Video evidence showed intermittent circulations at ground level throughout a period of about six minutes spanning nearly two miles in length. This otherwise weak tornado remained over farm land and caused no known damage.

SWISHER COUNTY --- 0.7 N TULIA [34.54, -101.77]				
	10/12/12 18:10 CST		0	Hail (1.75 in)
	10/12/12 18:10 CST		0	Source: Law Enforcement

The Tulia Police Department estimated golf ball size hail. No mention of damage was provided.

HALE COUNTY --- 7.3 SSE FERGUSON STA [34.03, -101.70], 7.3 SSE FERGUSON STA [34.03, -101.70]				
	10/12/12 18:14 CST		0	Tornado (EF0, L: 0.14 mi , W: 20 yd)
	10/12/12 18:15 CST		0	Source: Storm Chaser

Storm chasers documented a narrow and very brief EF0 tornado in a field. A small amount of debris was observed rotating in a tight fashion underneath a condensation funnel. No damage occurred.

Unusually moist air for mid-October was carried into the Texas South Plains on the 11th ahead of a vigorous upper low in the four corners region. By the afternoon of the 12th, this upper low tracked into Colorado accompanied by a strong subtropical jet that overspread the South Plains. With surface dewpoints in the mid to upper 60s and diminishing stratocumulus clouds, strong instability developed by late afternoon over the central South Plains. Very strong wind shear already in place was made even stronger near a warm front that began lifting slowly north between Lubbock and Plainview. By 1700 CST, a pair of strong and severe storms erupted near Shallowater and began moving north-northeast. One of these storms developed strong low-level rotation as it crossed the warm front near Hale Center and assumed an easterly motion. This rotation culminated in two tornadoes over open land in eastern Hale County. Earlier, this same storm produced very large hail up to baseball size that damaged several vehicle windows at a rest stop on I-27. Also, large hail up to golf ball size accompanied a left-moving supercell that raced northward near I-27. Both of these supercells decayed around 1900 CST before a third supercell late this evening entered Yoakum County from neighboring Lea County, NM. Although NWS Lubbock Doppler Radar indicated the likelihood of large hail west and northwest of Plains, this final supercell did not produce any known severe weather before it evolved into a line of strong thunderstorms while overspreading much of the South Plains before midnight.

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One of several vehicles near I-27 south of Hale Center that was heavily battered by hail of 2 to 2.75 inches in diameter. Photo courtesy of KCBD news.

(TX-Z042) GARZA

10/22/12 03:30 CST	0	High Wind (MAX 50 kt)
10/22/12 03:30 CST	0	

During the early morning hours on the 22nd, a sharp short wave aloft moved over the West Texas region. Scattered thunderstorms developed as far south as northern Mexico the previous evening with this short wave. Thunderstorms continued to develop ahead of this wave across far western Texas and southwest Texas through the rest of the evening into the early mornings hours. Most storms decreased in intensity as they reached the South Plains. However, the storms had produced an outflow boundary that generated a wind gust to 58 mph at a Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet site near Graham (Garza County).