May 2010
Fire in the Sky, Hail Down Below

While the severe weather season for 2010 has been running behind schedule this year, due largely to colder than average Gulf of Mexico waters, the deadly and destructive events of this past weekend demonstrate that the atmosphere can catch up in a hurry.

Among the dozens of tornadoes and downburst wind incidents with this recent event, there were also a significant number of towering thunderstorms with hail.

Hail does not have to be large to cause significant damage, especially where crops or vegetation is concerned. However, the zone of hail reaching the ground, or hail shaft, is often relatively small. Hail melts quickly, leaving behind only the damage and a challenge to prove it was ever responsible at all.

Utilizing Doppler radar and proprietary algorithms, the AccuWeather.com Forensics Team is capable of estimating the size of hail stones and also the berth and track of a hail shaft.

This is of key importance for insurance purposes, as a specific hail policy would not cover damage from strong winds, heavy rain and flying debris, which also occur during severe thunderstorms. It is possible that only part of a large tract of farmland may have been hit with hail.