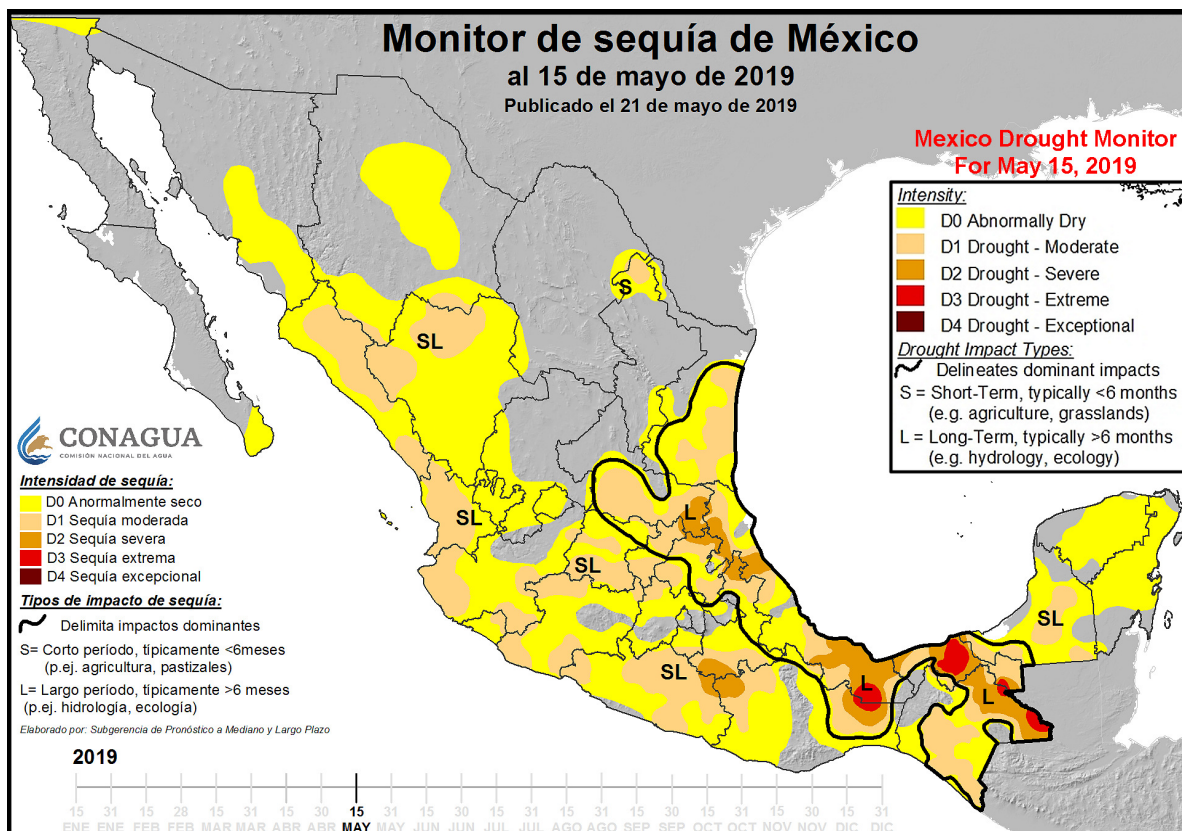


Mexico Remains Dry; Little Relief Expected Through Next Week

By Andrew Owen and Drew Lerner

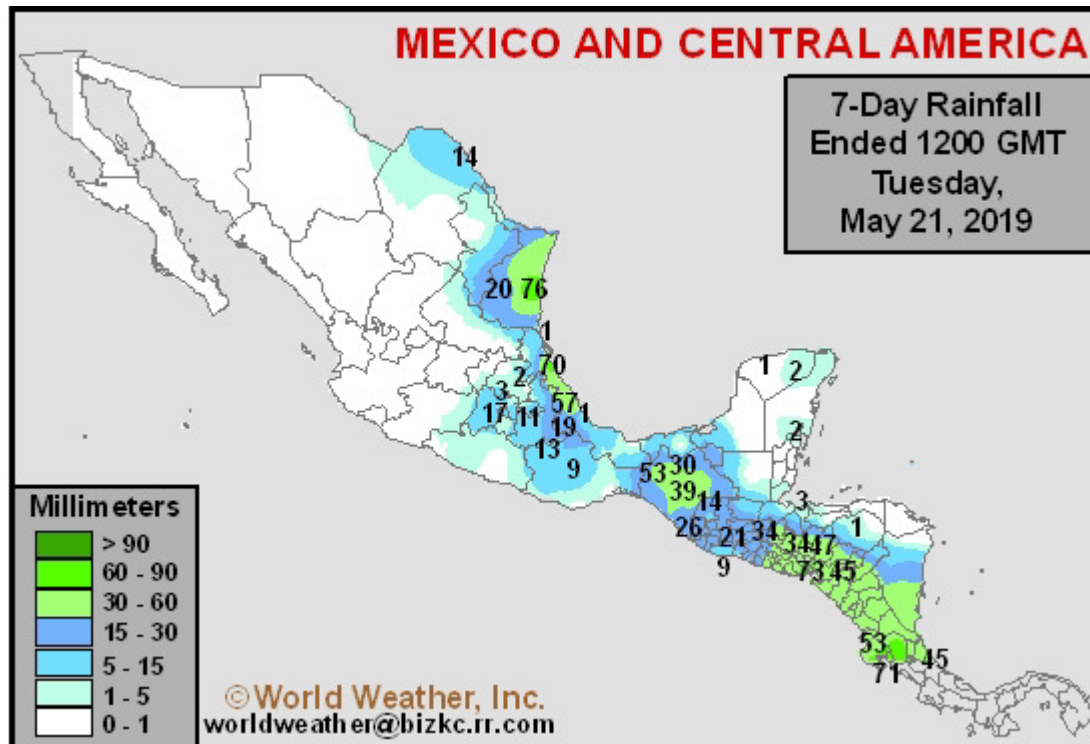
Kansas City, May 23 (World Weather Inc.) – *Seasonal rainfall has been spotty at best for much of Mexico so far this spring.* A few locations along the Gulf of Mexico coast and in extreme southeast Mexico received timely rain in recent days, but overall much of the main production areas reported little to no rain. **Drought has expanded across much of the nation in recent weeks** raising concern over delayed planting and possible production cuts. Light rain will be scattered across several areas through the end of next week, though rainfall will generally be too light to counter evaporation or impact long-term soil conditions. *Corn, sorghum and rice planting have been impacted and will continue to be impacted until weather conditions trend wetter. Citrus, coffee, cocoa, sugarcane and many other crop production losses are possible if the dryness lasts much longer.* **Central America**, in the meantime, experienced a mix of rain and sunshine recently and there has been a trend toward improvement from dryness in that part of the world.



This year's El Nino phenomenon has been largely responsible for delayed seasonal rainfall from Colombia and Venezuela northward through Central America to Mexico. Changes in the pattern have begun with northern South America already reporting greater rainfall and the outlook is calling for much greater rain in Central America over the next two weeks. Mexico weather, however, will be slower to change.

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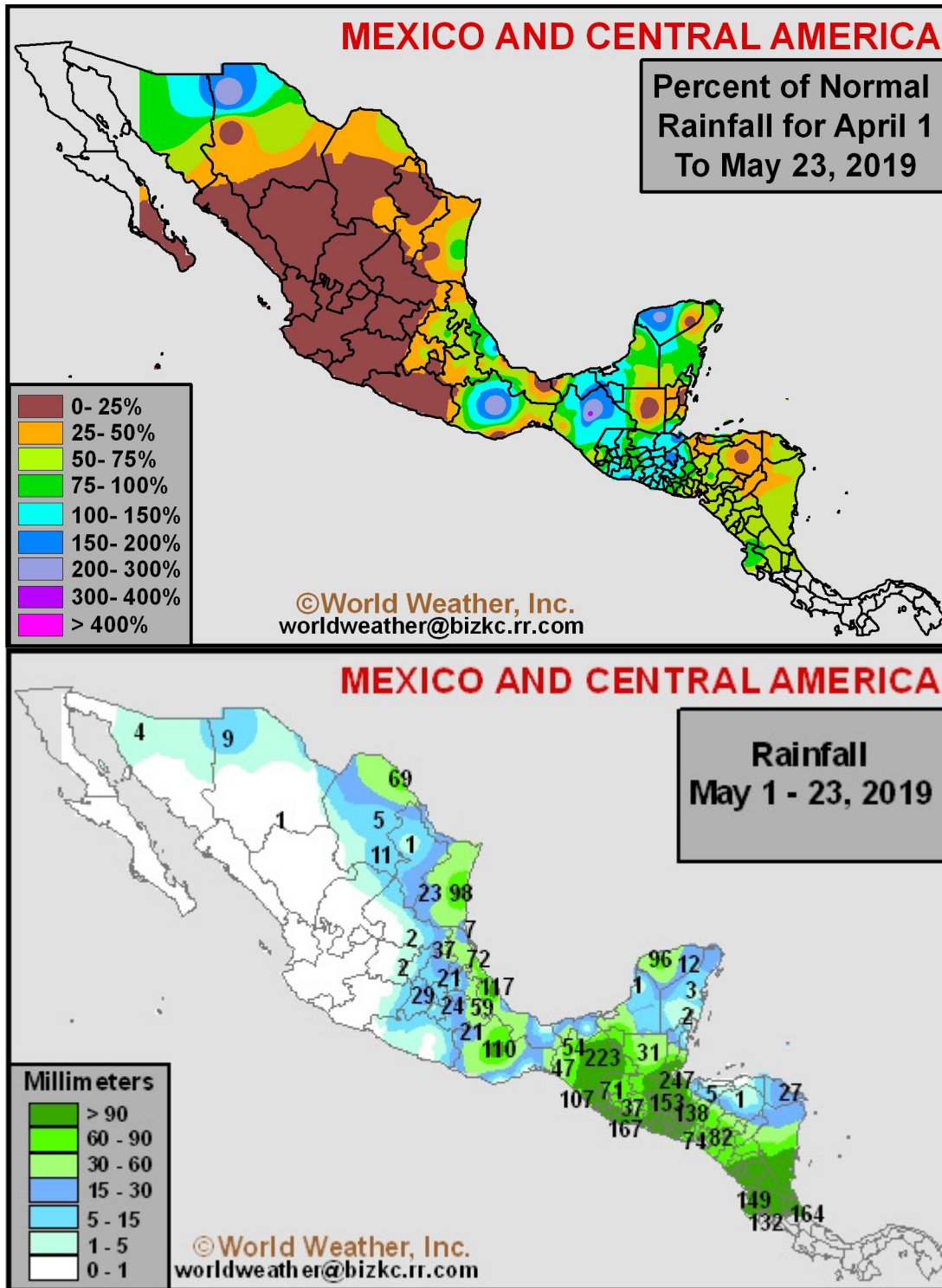
Portions of Chiapas and a few coastal locations in Veracruz and Tamaulipas received 1.00 to nearly 3.00 inches of rain for the seven-day period ending May 21. Topsoil moisture improved for these areas, though subsoil moisture remains short to very short. A few other locations in south-central, east-central, and northeast Mexico received light to moderate rain as well during this time. However, much of the rain was too light to counter evaporation. The remaining portions of Mexico were dry and continue to have a critical shortage of moisture.



Other than a few pockets in the east, south and northwest, Mexico has been drier biased since the beginning of April. Although abundant rain does not normally occur in some of these areas at this time of year, seasonal rain normally begins in some of the production areas ahead of the monsoon. The rain helps promote a good environment for corn, sorghum, rice and cotton planting and establishment. Normally, rain would be falling frequently in southern and eastern Mexico in April and especially May, but that has not been the case recently. This has not only delayed planting of seasonal crops, but it has threatened production for coffee, cocoa, citrus, sugarcane and other deep rooted crops. Planting of row crops is likely well behind in much of the country due to the lack of rain and significant changes are needed very soon to prevent these delays from translating into significant production cuts in 2019.

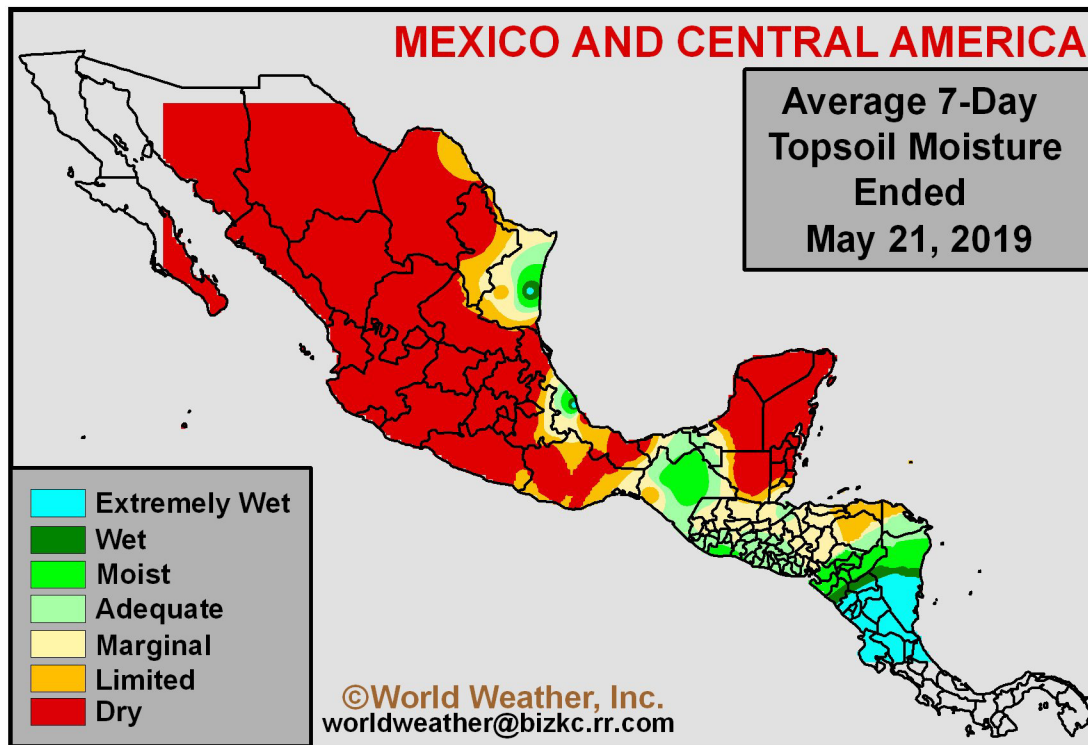
Citrus development is behind the usual pace and has suffered from prolonged dryness with reduced flowering and fruit droppage reported from many areas. Citrus flowering normally begins in February in portions of eastern Mexico. However, flowering and fruit development conditions were delayed for a while and the flowering that did occur was considered mostly poor except in irrigated groves where production will not likely be seriously harmed. Concern for production losses has been increasing in recent weeks.

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Scattered showers will produce varying amounts of rain on a frequent basis for portions of southern, central, and eastern Mexico during the coming week. Moisture totals will range from a trace to 2.00 inches most often with local amounts of 4.00 inches or more from Chiapas through Oaxaca, Guerrero, and a few neighboring areas. Northwest and west-central Mexico will otherwise remain dry.

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Corn and other coarse grain and oilseeds produced in southern Mexico and portions of central and eastern Mexico will see minor improvements for planting, germination and establishment through the end of next week. However, many areas will remain too dry to support ideal growth and will need additional rainfall. Crop production areas in west-central and northwest Mexico will remain too dry to support aggressive planting. Cotton prospects in northern Mexico are generally favorable despite the lack of rain in the coming week due to irrigation. Minor improvements to the citrus, coffee and cocoa crops are also expected in Oaxaca, Guerrero, and neighboring areas while east-central, northeast, and the remaining production areas along the west coast still need more frequent rain.

CENTRAL AMERICA

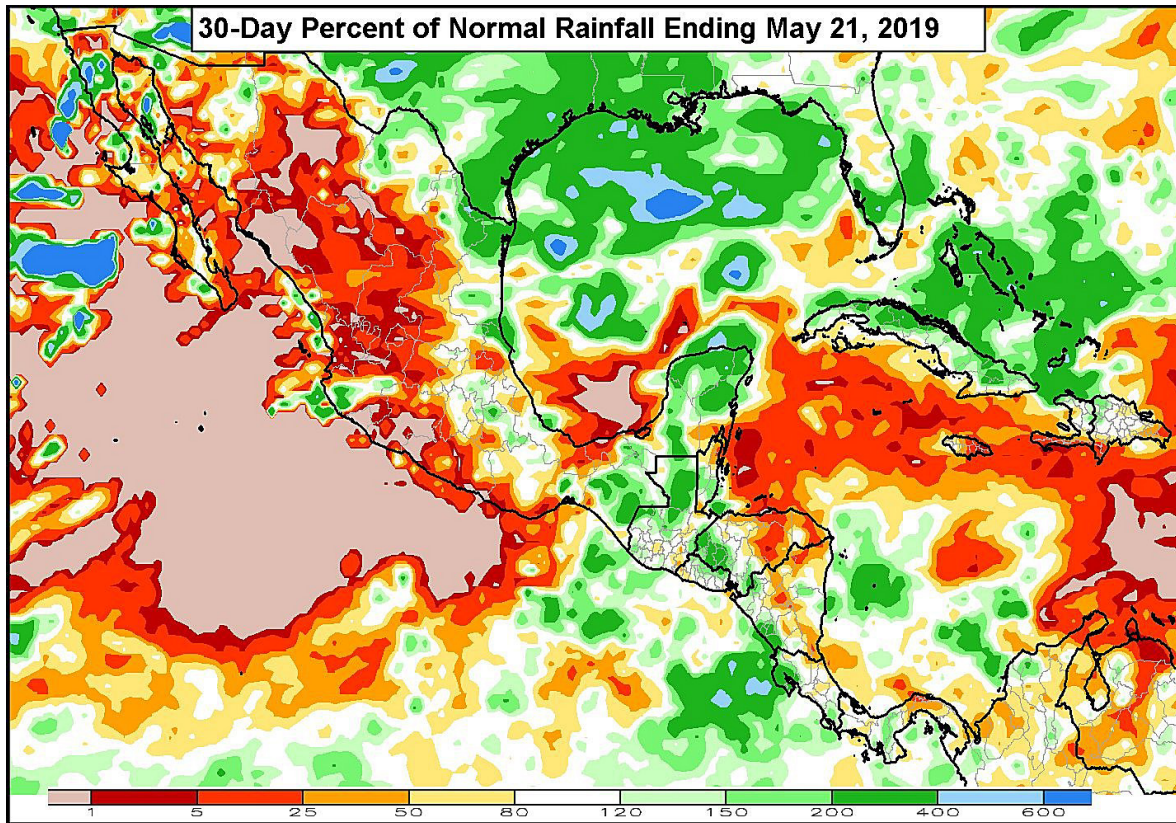
In the meantime, rainfall in **Central America** was variable during the past month. Eastern and central Honduras into much of Nicaragua was generally drier or much drier than normal for the 30-day period ending May 21. Other portions of Central America received near to above normal precipitation during this time. Portions of Honduras and Nicaragua are drier biased and would benefit from more significant rain to improve crop prospects in the next few weeks. Most other production areas in Central America have adequate to abundant moisture.

A tropical disturbance will remain nearly stationary near the eastern Pacific Coast of Central America west of El Salvador during the next few days. This disturbance will wander around in Central America for a while possibly moving across the region and into the southwestern Caribbean Sea for a while and possibly moving back inland next week. The movement of this disturbance will have much to say about rainfall in the coming week. The odds are very high that for the next week to ten days rain will fall more abundantly across

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Central America resulting in significant improvements in soil moisture and crop development potential.

Rainfall by next Thursday morning will range from 2.00 to 8.00 inches with local amounts over 12.00 inches in Costa Rica, Panama, and southern Nicaragua. Flooding will be possible in the wettest areas. The less intensive rainfall areas in Nicaragua and Honduras will still receive enough rain to bolster soil moisture without causing flood conditions.



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