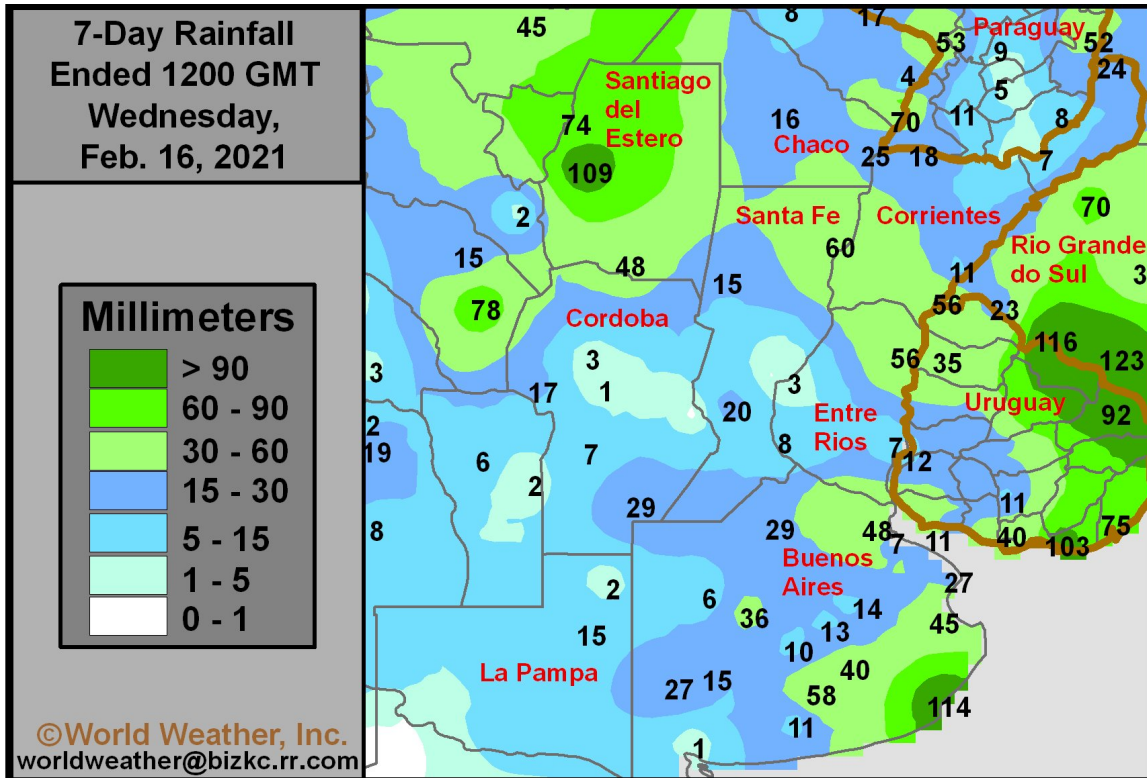


Argentina Soil Moisture Still Good, But For How Long?

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, February 17 (World Weather Inc.) – [Rainfall in Argentina so far this month has been trending poorly from central through southwestern portions of the nation and in a few locations in the interior north. Soil moisture is still rated favorably because of abundant late January and early February rainfall, but net drying in many areas in this next ten days will lead to a more significant decline in soil moisture and rising crop stress that could threaten late season soybeans, corn, sorghum and peanuts.](#)

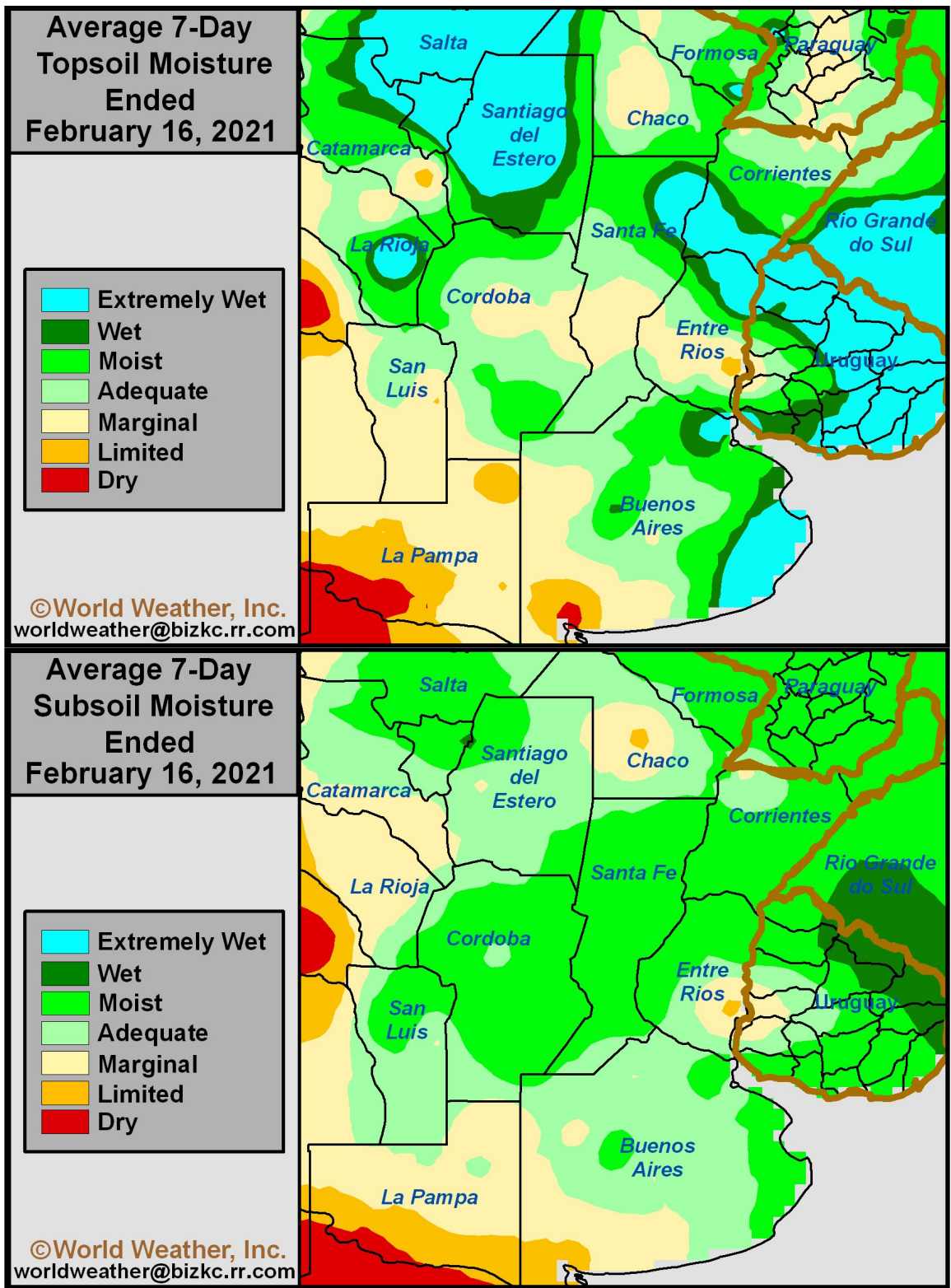


Rainfall during the 7-day period ending Wednesday (Feb. 16) was too light to counter evaporation in a large part of Cordoba, portions of central Santa Fe, west-central Entre Rios, portions of Buenos Aires, San Luis and La Pampa. Moisture totals in each of these areas varied from 0.05 to 0.60 inch and over seven days in the middle of summer that is not enough to counter evaporation and net drying has resulted.

The greatest rainfall noted over the past week was in southeastern Buenos Aires and Santiago del Estero where 1.57 to 4.47 inches of rain resulted. Other areas in central and northeastern Buenos Aires received 0.60 to 1.87 inches of rain and as much as 2.35 inches occurred in northeastern Santa Fe, southern and western Corrientes and extreme northeastern Entre Rios.

[One the most important reasons why soil moisture is still rated favorably is the milder than usual weather that has been prevailing. Temperatures over the past week were near to below average and readings for the past 30 days were also below normal. The milder conditions have helped to conserve soil moisture through lower evaporation and that has left soil conditions rated mostly very good.](#)

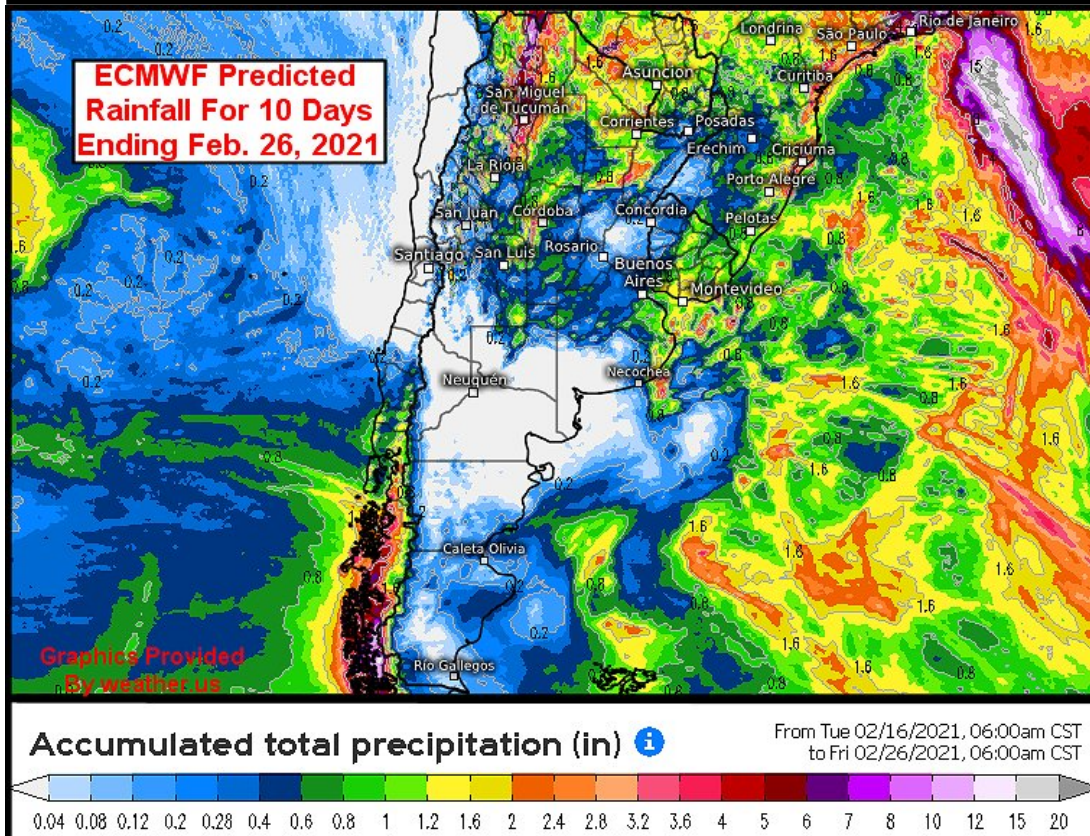
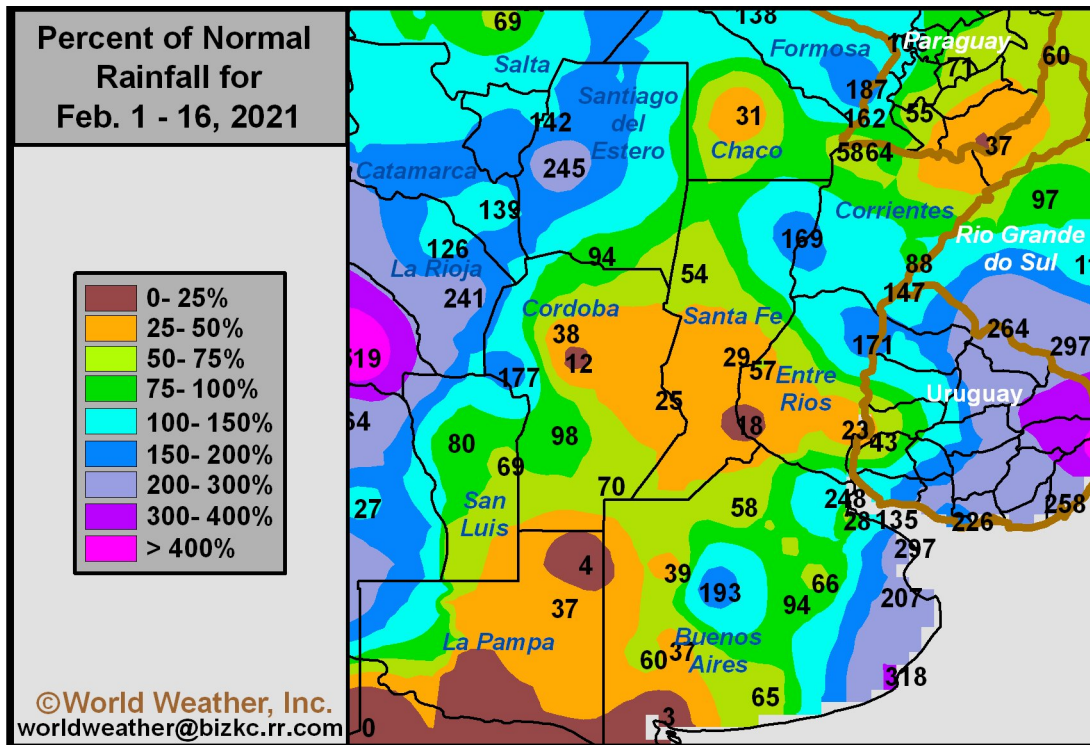
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Subsoil moisture is rated marginally adequate to adequate in most of Argentina, but there are a few pockets that are now reporting slightly short moisture. The trend of the past two weeks is showing up more notably in the topsoil analysis in which soil moisture is rated short to very short in La Pampa and western Buenos Aires while marginally adequate to

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slightly short from central Cordoba into central and southern Entre Rios. Another region of short topsoil moisture was noted in central Chaco and areas north into central Formosa. Most other areas in the nation still have adequate to surplus topsoil moisture.



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Precipitation as a percentage of normal is a little more disturbing and more clearly describes the direction Argentina's soil moisture is headed if drying lasts much longer.

Rainfall this month has been less than half of normal in the heart of Argentina and also in La Pampa and western Buenos Aires. Central Chaco has also reported well below average rainfall. Some of these areas have received less than 25% of normal rain.

The combination of seasonably warm temperatures and restricted rainfall over the next ten days will lead many of these drier biased areas into a more notable moisture shortage in the topsoil and subsoil moisture will decrease as well. That will translate into rising crop stress and some concern over late season crop development.

Rainfall through February 26 is expected to be inadequate in countering evapotranspiration leading to additional drying and more plant moisture stress.

Temperatures will be near to above average and rainfall will not be more than 0.60 inch in many areas of central and southwestern Buenos Aires, east-central and southern La Pampa and in the heart of Santa Fe, Entre Rios and a few easternmost Cordoba locations. All of these areas will be much drier a week from now than they are today and crop stress will be rising making the following week or two extremely important for late season crop development.

Other areas in Argentina are expecting more significant rainfall during the coming ten days that should be sufficient to hold crop and field conditions much closer to those of today. There will be several days of isolated showers and thunderstorms from Cordoba to northeastern Buenos Aires Thursday into early next week that will help slow drying rates, but may not stop the net drying trend.

The bottom line warrants a close watch on crop and field conditions during the next two weeks. One or two generalized rain events of significance might be enough to carry many crops to the end of the growing season without much threat of lower production. Without those precipitation events the nation is probably going to be faced with a little more yield loss potential.

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