

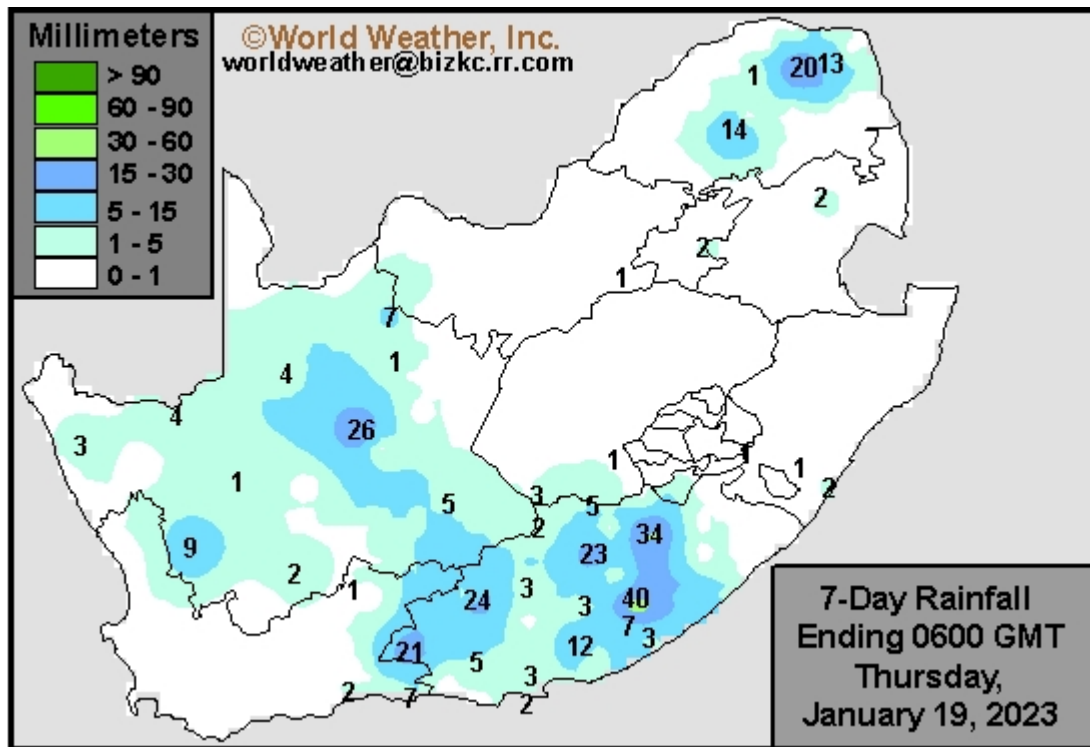
South Africa Drying Of Little Concern For Now

By Andrew Owen and Drew Lerner

Kansas City, January 19 (World Weather Inc.) – Rainfall was limited across the main production areas in South Africa during the past week. The eastern half of the country still had plenty of moisture to support aggressive growth despite the drying trend. Western sections of Free State and North West into Northern Cape otherwise dried down a little too much for ideal development, most notably in the rain-fed areas. However, no significant production impacts were suspected. Central South Africa will see more frequent rain during the coming week that will restore soil moisture and support generally good crop conditions. Periodic rain will also fall in eastern South Africa, though the northeast will be last in getting rain and could dry down a little more notably. Overall production potentials remain favorable for this season’s coarse grains, oilseeds, cotton, sugarcane and other crops.

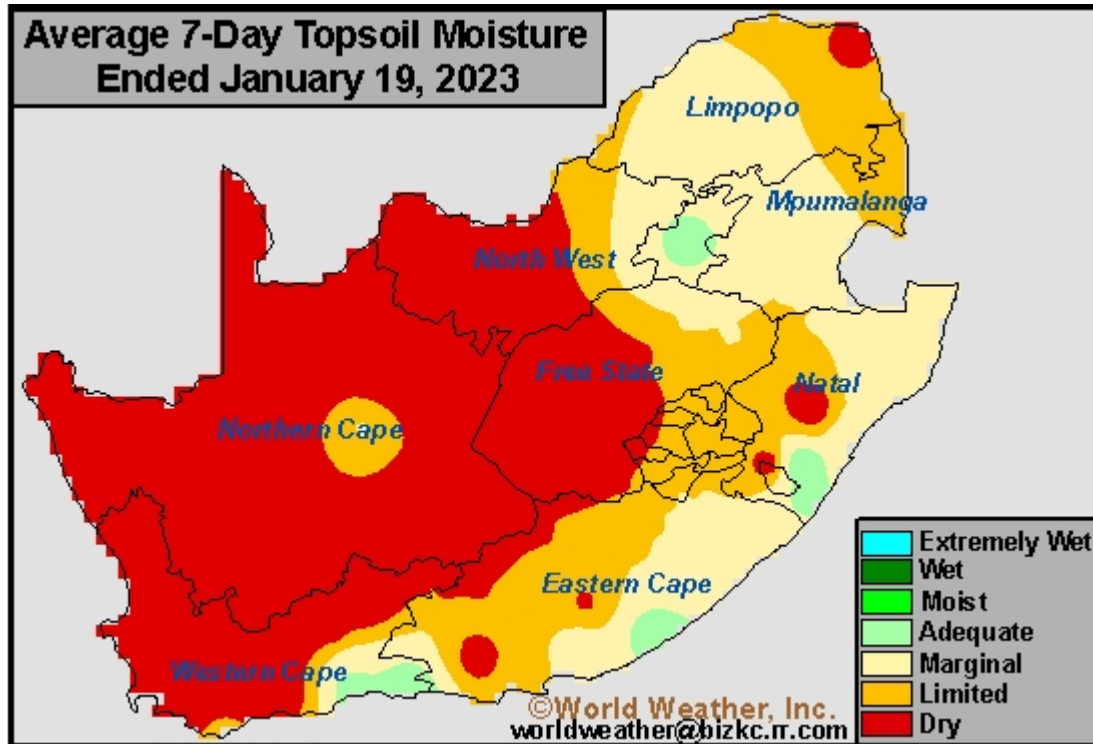
Net drying occurred in the majority of summer crop areas in South Africa during the week ending today. Eastern Cape and portions of Northern Cape saw a mix of rain and sunshine with moisture totals ranging from 0.12 to 1.02 inches. Locally greater rainfall occurred in Eastern Cape with a few areas getting 1.00 to 1.57 inches. Portions of Limpopo also received 0.51 to 0.79 inch of rain while most other areas were dry.

In addition to the lack of rain, temperatures peaked above normal on a frequent basis. Daytime highs reached the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit with portions of Northern Cape and Eastern Cape often warming above 100 degrees. Low temperatures were in the 60s and 70s with pockets in the east cooling to the 50s.

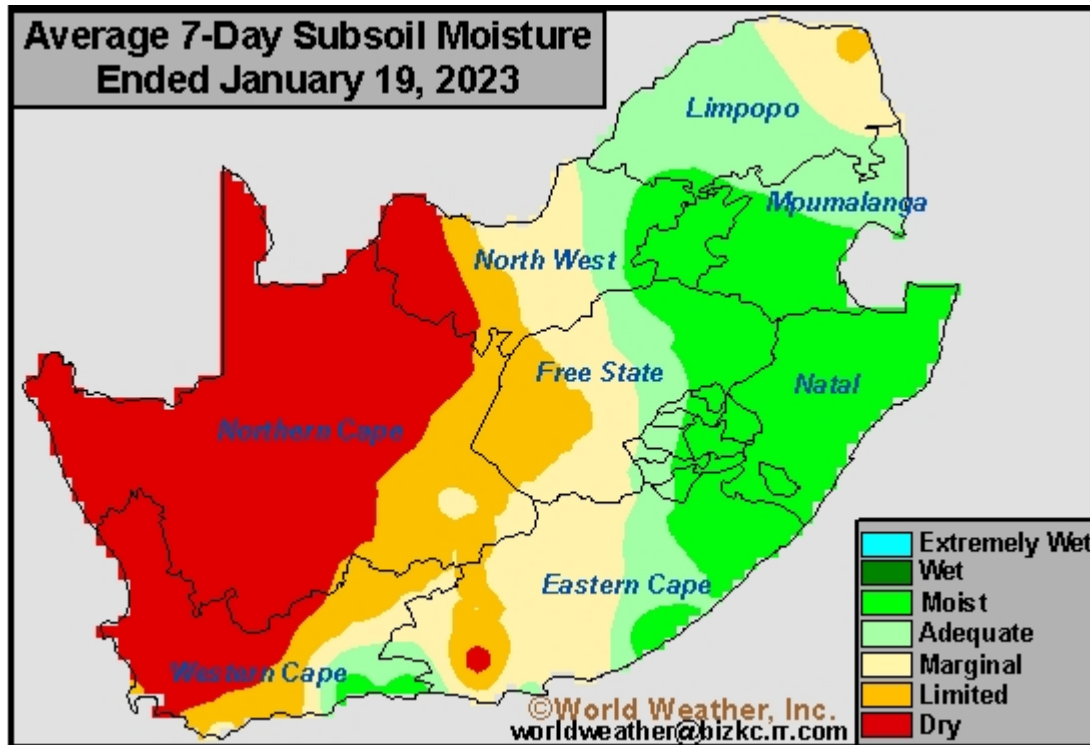


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The lack of rain and warm weather promoted aggressive drying for much of South Africa during the past week. The eastern half of the country has marginally adequate to very short topsoil moisture while subsoil moisture is still rated adequately. Summer crops at this time of year rely more on subsoil moisture than topsoil moisture and conditions were ideal for ongoing crop development because of the moisture profile deep into the ground. The western half to two-thirds of South Africa have much drier soil leaving a strong dependency upon irrigation water to support normal crop development in some areas.



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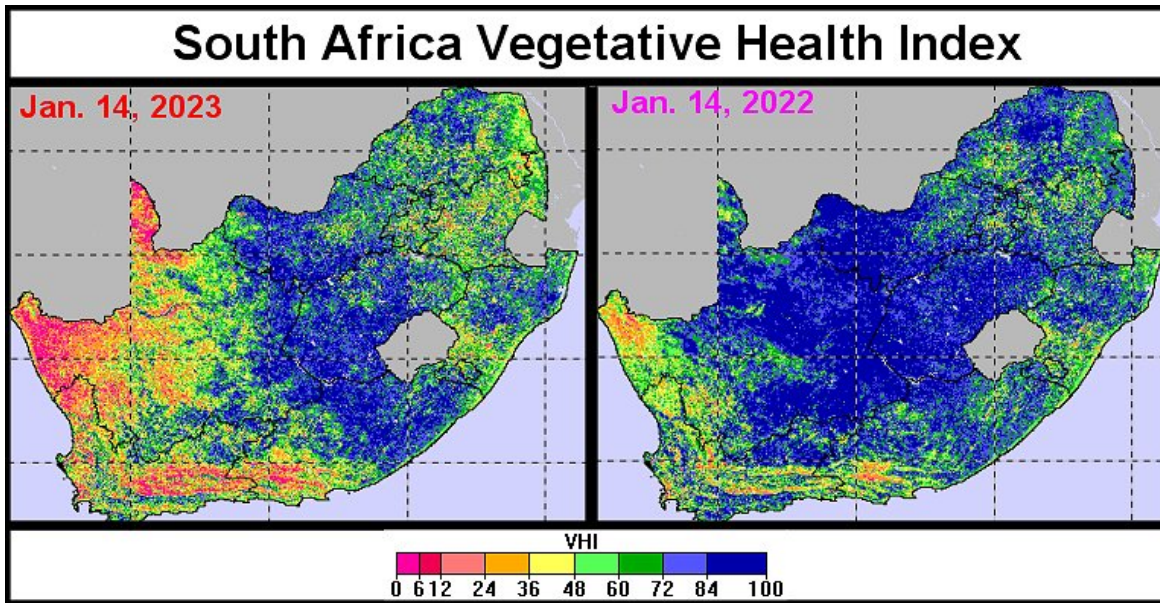


Eastern South Africa still had plenty of moisture in the subsoil to support aggressive growth during the past week while the topsoil dried down. The outlook for coarse grains, oilseeds, cotton and other crops remains good due to the timely rain and warm weather for much of the planting and growing season.

Crops produced in western sections of Free State and North West into Northern Cape may have seen development slow in recent days due to the lack of moisture. No significant production impacts were suspected and overall production potentials remain favorable. Timely rain will be needed later this month into early February to ensure a good environment for late-season development. If the ground continues to dry down, production potentials may be marginally reduced. February is a critical month in determining yields.

Overall, *the moisture profile in South Africa remains supportive of normal crop development, but the Vegetative Health Index does reflect a less robust rainy season this year relative to that of last year. Crops are still mostly in good condition, but vegetative health may not be quite as great as that of last year in some areas. This week's drying will add a little more stress, but with rain expected to return in this coming week there should be sufficient timing to limit the impact of heat and moisture stress in the driest areas.*

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WEATHER OUTLOOK

A disorganized disturbance will often generate scattered showers and thunderstorms for central South Africa and neighboring areas in Natal, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape today into Monday. Erratic rainfall will continue Tuesday and Wednesday for these locations as a frontal boundary advances over the country. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.50 to 2.00 inches in much of Free State, North West, southern and western Natal, and western Mpumalanga with local rain totals of 3.00 inches or slightly more. Eastern Cape will otherwise receive 1.00 to 3.50 inches of rain and locally more. Limpopo, Western Cape, and the remaining portions of Northern Cape and Mpumalanga will otherwise receive little to no rain. *Eastern and central South Africa will then continue to see a mix of rain and sunshine January 27 – February 2 while western South Africa is drier biased.*

The temperature profile through next Thursday will remain near to above normal in much of South Africa. Daytime highs will peak in the 80s and 90s with many areas in central South Africa only warming to the 70s due to rain and cloudiness. Low temperatures will be in the 60s and 70s with pockets in the 50s.

Rainfall in Free State, North West, Eastern Cape, and neighboring areas in Northern Cape, Natal, and Mpumalanga will be enough to keep soil moisture near current levels or bolster soil moisture in most locations through the latter part of next week. Crop development conditions will either improve or remain favorable for the region. *Limpopo and other areas in Mpumalanga and natal will continue to dry down. These locations will still have enough moisture in the subsoil to maintain generally good development conditions as well, but significant rain will soon be needed.* Overall production potentials will remain favorable for South Africa.

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