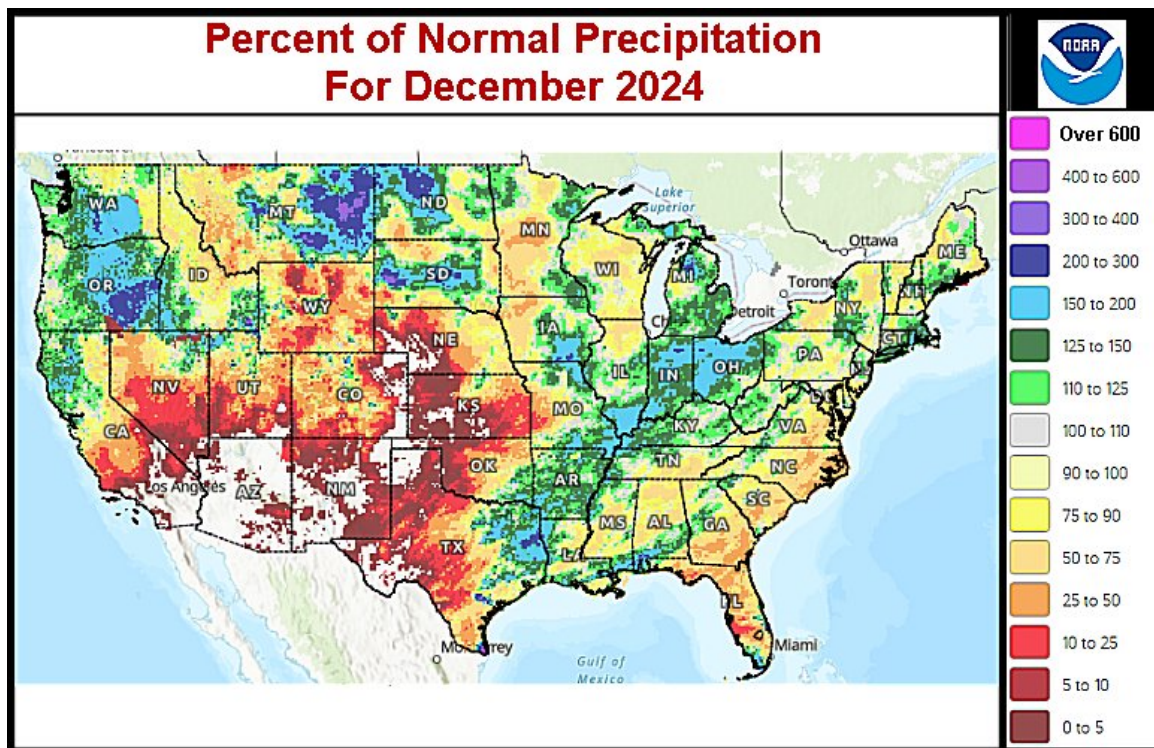


U.S. Will Be Impacted By Active Weather Pattern

By Andrew Owen

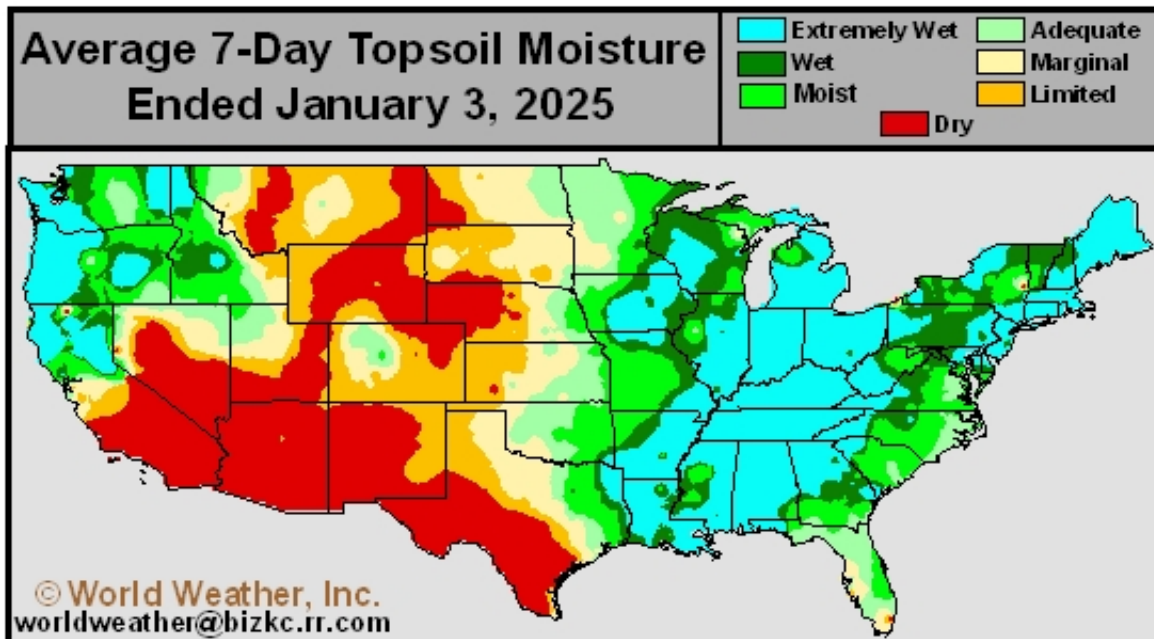
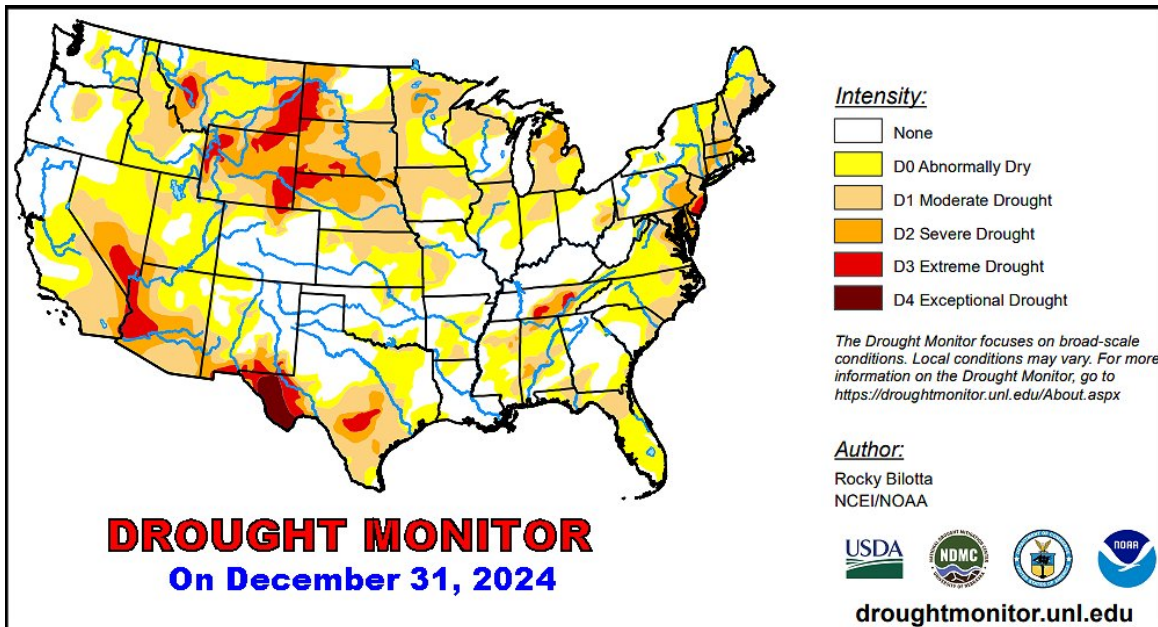
Kansas City, January 3 (World Weather Inc.) – ***Drought or abnormally dry conditions persist from portions of the U.S. Plains into the Upper Midwest and southeastern states. The most extreme drought was noted in portions of the northern Plains despite several locations receiving above normal precipitation during the past month.*** An active weather pattern is slated for the U.S. in the coming week, most notably a strong winter storm that will impact portions of the central Plains and Midwest later this weekend and early next week. Major travel delays and animal stress are expected, though the moisture will eventually be welcome when melting and reaching the soil. The Delta and southeastern states will also receive enough precipitation to marginally improve the moisture profile as will Montana while precipitation is limited elsewhere in the northern Plains.

Several areas in eastern Montana and the Dakotas, along with portions of the Delta and Midwest, received near to above normal precipitation in December. Precipitation as a percent of normal ranged from 100% to 200% in most locations with pockets that received up to 300% of normal precipitation. However, several areas in Minnesota, western Iowa, Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and the southern Delta were drier than normal during this time. The southeastern states received near to slightly below normal precipitation outside a few pockets in Georgia. The central and southern Plains otherwise trended much drier than normal during this time with several locations receiving little to no precipitation. Soil moisture was short to critically short in much of the high Plains region while the main production areas farther east in the U.S. had adequate to excessive amounts of moisture.



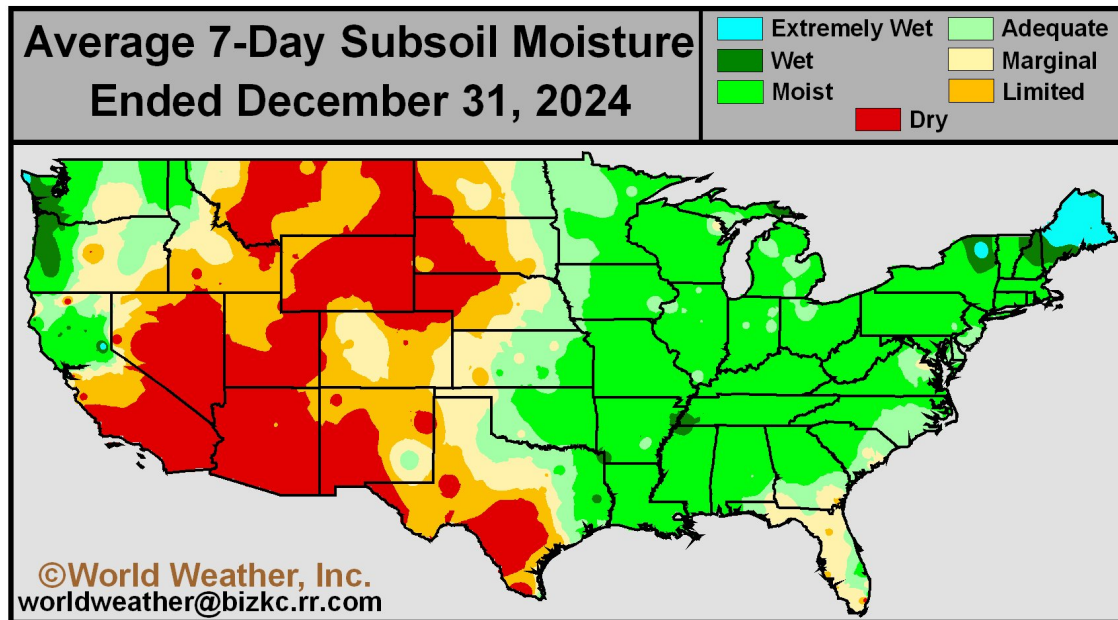
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As of December 31, a large section of the U.S. northern Plains were in the midst of drought or abnormally dry conditions with exceptions for portions of eastern and central North Dakota. Several locations in the northern Plains had light amounts of snow on the ground earlier this morning, though snow-water equivalents are minimal. Drought or abnormally dry conditions were also noted in several areas of Nebraska and Kansas into Iowa, Minnesota, northern section of Illinois and Indiana, the Upper Midwest, and portions of the U.S. southeast despite some timely precipitation later in December.



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Portions of the southern Plains and Ohio River Valley were warm enough at the end of December to keep winter grains from going dormant. The remaining winter grain and oilseed areas in the U.S. were generally cold enough to send crops into dormancy.



Moisture shortages will be a concern heading into the spring for much of the Plains. Hard red winter wheat was planted under relatively good conditions last autumn, though there are several crops that entered the winter season under poor or very poor conditions. There is still plenty of time for precipitation in coming weeks to support better development potentials this spring once seasonal warming brings the crops out of dormancy. Timely precipitation will also be needed to support a better outlook for early-season planting this spring, most notably in the driest areas of the Dakotas and Montana.

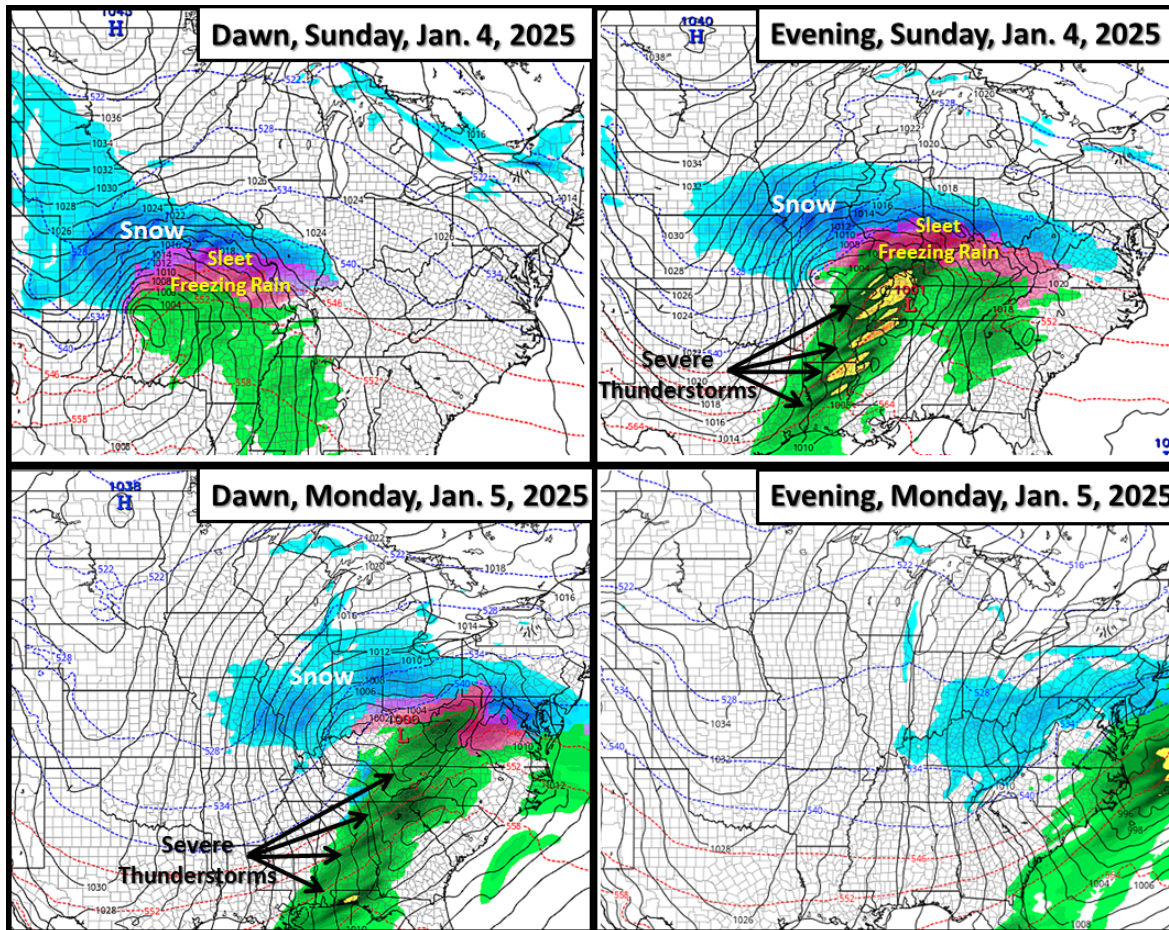
The Midwest, Delta, and southeastern states should have ample moisture to support relatively good planting prospects early this spring despite several areas still under drought or abnormally dry conditions. Timely precipitation would still be welcome in the coming weeks before seasonal warming begins. Winter wheat prospects in the Midwest are also favorable due to good planting conditions and favorable moisture profile.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

The feature of note in the U.S. through the end of next week will be a strong winter storm that will advance from the central Plains into eastern North America later this weekend and early next week. A disturbance off the coast of the eastern Pacific Ocean will make its way across western North America today and Saturday before reaching central and eastern North America Sunday and Monday. The disturbance will draw moisture from the Gulf of Mexico while colder air advances over eastern Canada and neighboring locations, which will bring heavy snow and varying amounts of ice from Kansas and southern Nebraska into Missouri, central Illinois, and the Ohio River Valley. Moisture totals from this event will range from 0.50 to 2.00 inches and locally greater amounts to 3.00 inches.

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Snowfall will vary from 4 to 10 inches with local totals of 15 inches or more. A few tenths of an inch of ice will also accumulate for several locations. The main concern will be deteriorating travel conditions and power outages due to the snow and ice. Livestock may also be stressed.



The Delta and southeastern states will also receive rain later this weekend and early next week as the disturbance travels to the north across North America. Moisture totals will range from 0.50 to 2.00 inches in the Delta and 0.25 to 1.00 inch in the southeastern states with locally greater amounts in Alabama and northern Georgia.

The remaining production areas in the Plains into the Upper Midwest will otherwise only receive light amounts of precipitation through the end of next week. Several areas in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and northern Iowa will miss out on the precipitation completely while most other locations receive trace amounts to 0.50 inch of moisture by next Friday morning. Local precipitation totals up to 1.00 inch will also be possible in Montana.

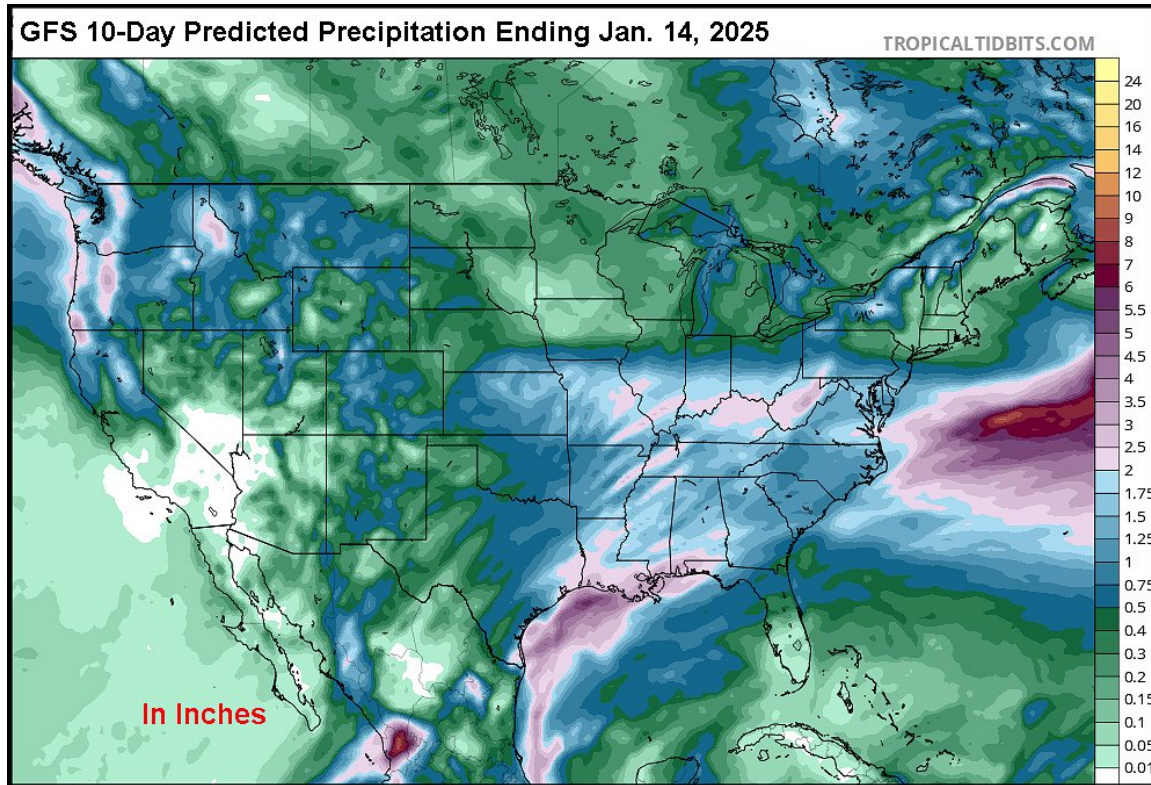
Arctic air will settle over eastern North America on a frequent basis through the end of next week. These air masses will also reach central North America at times. As a result, seasonably cool weather will be most common for a large section of crop country. Colder biased conditions, with several areas from the northern Plains into the Midwest cooling near or below zero degrees Fahrenheit at times, will increase energy demand.

Precipitation in the Plains will be welcome where it occurs through the end of next week. Minor improvements to the moisture profile are expected in portions of Kansas,

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southeastern Nebraska, and Montana once the snow melts, though the Plains as a whole will need additional precipitation to completely fix the moisture deficits. The outlook for hard red winter wheat will remain mostly unchanged.

In the meantime, the Midwest, Delta, and southeastern states will either see the moisture profile increase or remain near current levels. Winter wheat prospects for the Midwest will be mostly unchanged. Early-season planting conditions will also remain favorable.



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