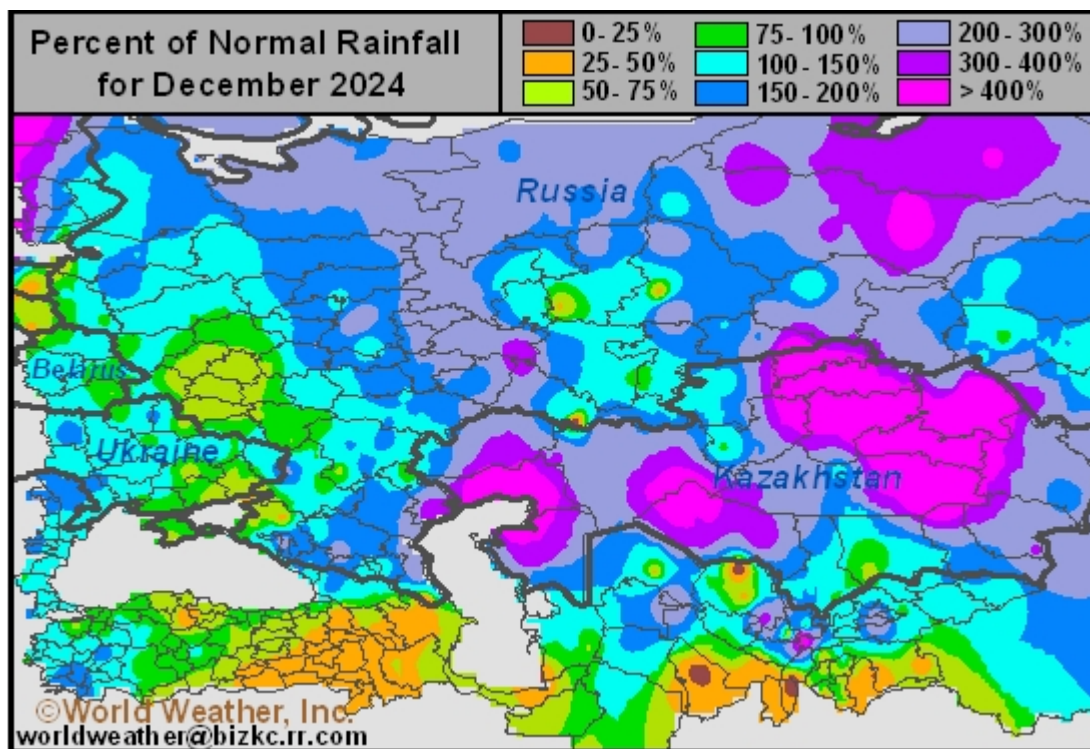


Russia, Ukraine Winter Crop Prospects Improving

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, January 9 (World Weather Inc.) – Winter grains and oilseeds established unevenly or poorly from eastern Ukraine through Russia's Southern Region to western Kazakhstan due to chronic dryness last autumn. *Recent precipitation has brought a little more moisture to the dry region and with additional precipitation falling erratically in the coming week the potential is rising for possible improvement to crop establishment early in the spring.* Most of the coming week's precipitation will stay west of Kazakhstan. So far this season, temperatures have been warmer than usual keeping the risk of winterkill very low, despite poor crop establishment.

A large section of the western Commonwealth of Independent States received near to above normal precipitation in December. Precipitation as a percent of normal ranged from 100% to 200% with many areas in Kazakhstan and the Ural Mountains region in Russia receiving three times the normal precipitation. Pockets in eastern Ukraine and southwestern Russia were also slightly drier than normal. Soil moisture increased to adequate or excessive levels in much of crop country, though there are still a few locations in Russia's 'Southern Region' that have marginally adequate moisture. Soil temperatures are cold enough to keep winter grains and oilseeds dormant.

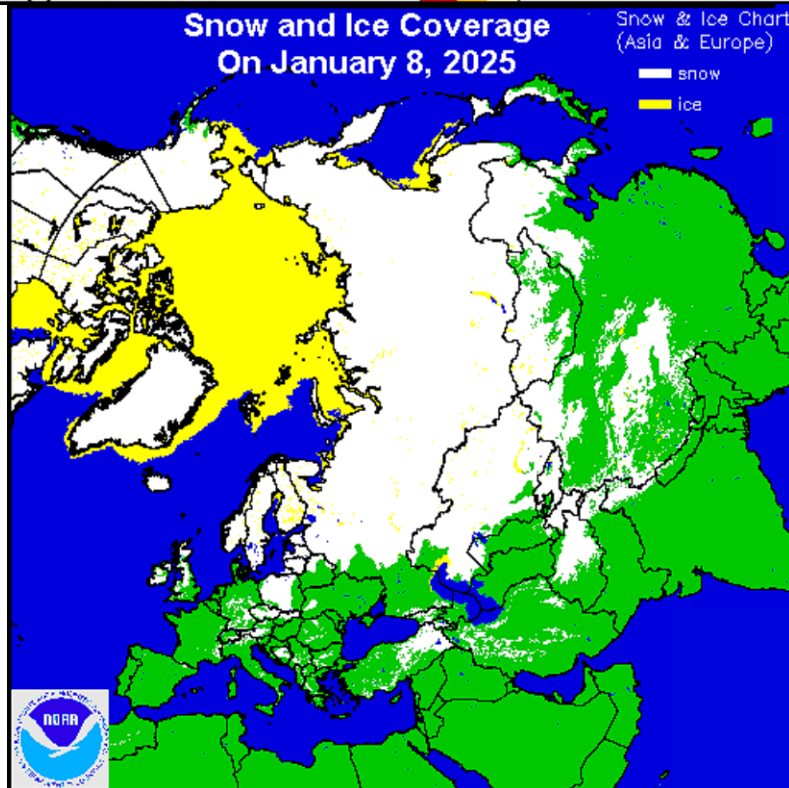
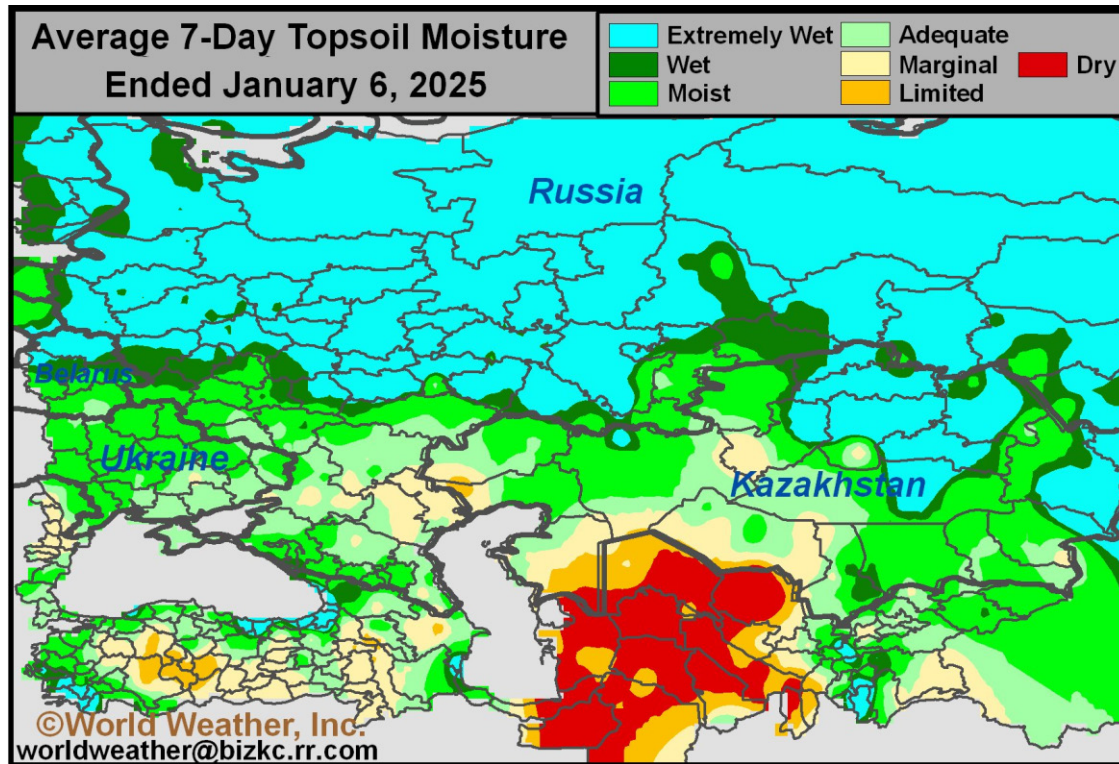


Ukraine and a large section of Russia's 'Southern Region' were snow-free as of January 8. Other locations in Russia and western Kazakhstan had at least a light amount of snow on the ground.

Winter wheat, barley, rye, and rapeseed established poorly in portions of the western CIS this past autumn. Moisture shortages were prevalent for much of planting season before

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the crops went dormant. The boost in precipitation during December was welcome and will likely improve development conditions this spring. While the outlook has improved, production may remain a little lower than usual due to the poor planting conditions.

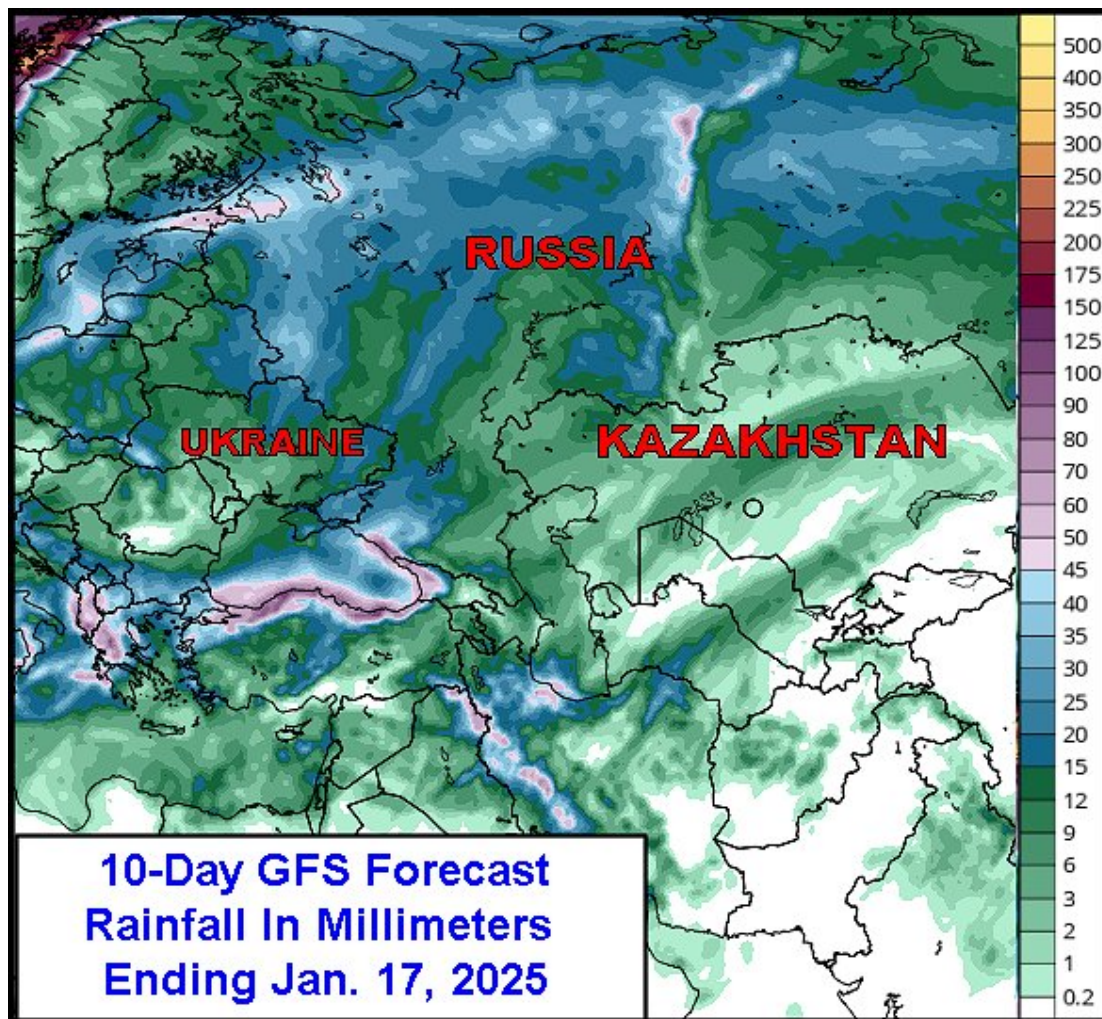


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WEATHER OUTLOOK

A series of disturbances will promote several waves of erratic precipitation for Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus during the coming week. Precipitation will fall as a mixture of rain and snow. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.25 to 1.50 inches with drier pockets. New snowfall will range from 1 to 6 inches with several areas in western Ukraine, Belarus, and pockets in Russia receiving upwards of 12 inches. Kazakhstan will otherwise trend dry or not receive enough precipitation to impact long-term soil conditions. Much of the western CIS will have a few opportunities for light precipitation January 17 – 23.

The moisture profile will either remain near current levels or increase marginally for much of the western CIS in the coming weeks. Snowpack will also increase outside portions of the 'Southern Region'. The adequate moisture combined with snow on the ground will continue to improve the outlook for winter grain and oilseed development this spring.



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