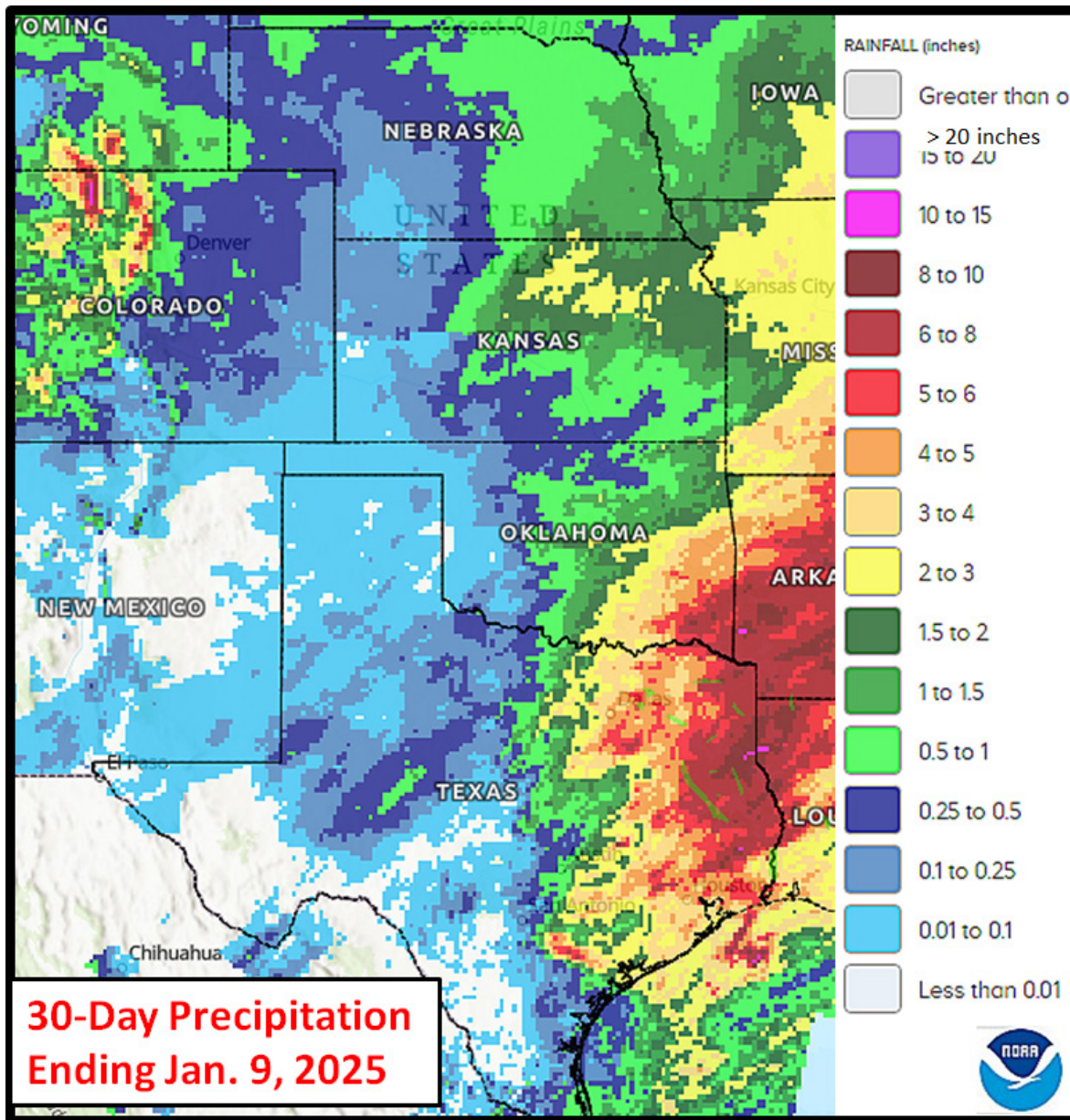


Winter Storm Brings Local Relief To SW U.S. Plains Dryness

By Drew Lerner

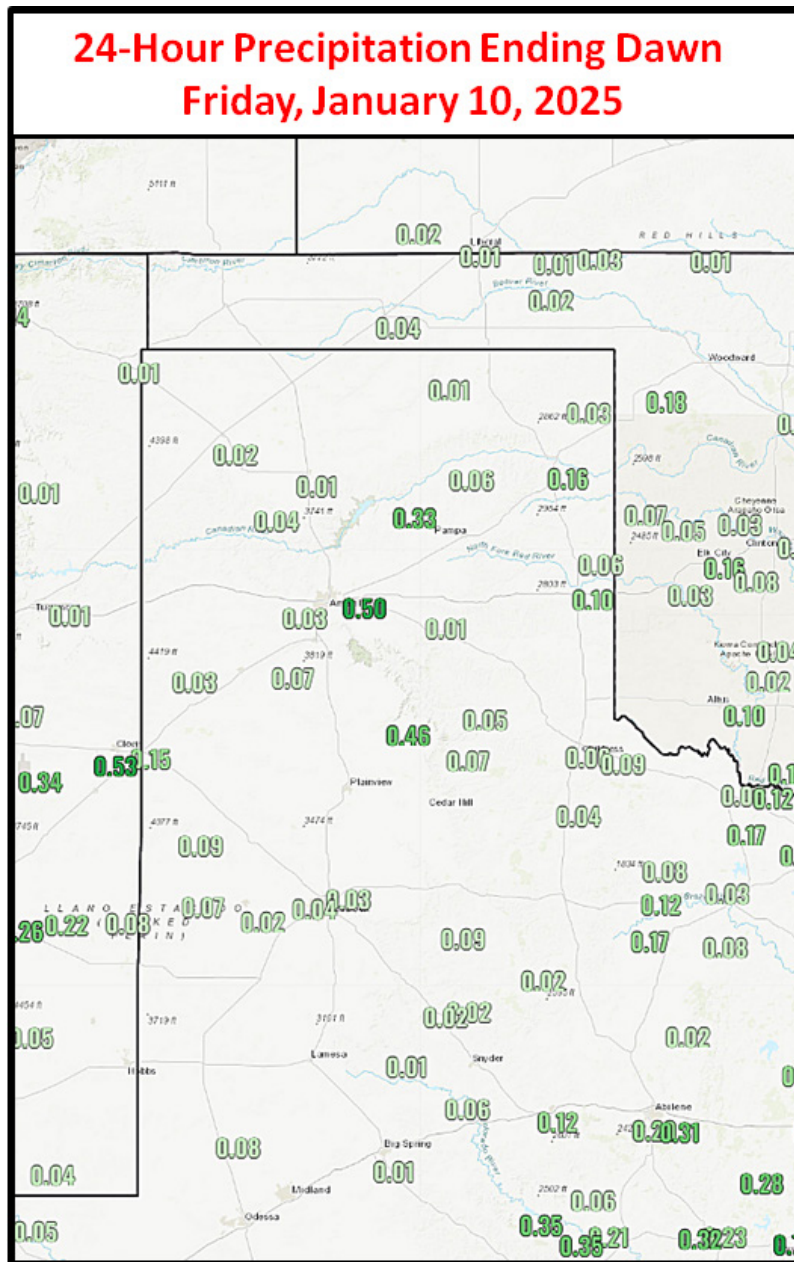
Kansas City, January 10 (World Weather Inc.) – Drought has been prevailing in the U.S. desert southwest for an extended period of time. *Drought has not been declared in the southwestern Plains, but some areas have been quite dry since big November rains impacted the region. A winter storm that began in the southwestern U.S. Plains Thursday brought some moisture to a part of the drier areas in the southwestern Plains, but only local relief resulted and there is still need for more moisture.*



Wheat and winter cover crops benefited from a wetter than usual month of November in the southwestern Plains; however, rainfall since that time has been quite

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limited. Amarillo, Texas received 0.50 inch of moisture Thursday from a freakish



snowstorm that produced 12 inches of snowfall in the area. Other areas from southwest to northeast across the Panhandle reported 1 to 7 inches of snow; however, moisture totals were still disappointing with a trace to 0.20 inch occurring outside the band of significant snow. Nonetheless, the moisture was welcome and more is needed.

Most of West Texas failed to get much moisture of significance and the same was true for southwestern Kansas.

Winter crops are dormant or semi-dormant and have a low need for precipitation or soil moisture for now. Winter crop establishment should have been sufficient to produce well, although timely late winter and spring precipitation is going to be very important. Weather patterns recently have been favoring crop areas from eastern Texas into the lower Midwest, Delta and Tennessee River

Basin leaving the southwestern Plains drier biased.

This weather pattern is expected to continue for another few weeks, but there may eventually be potential for improved precipitation in the region during the spring, April and May in particular, but possibly in March as well. Until then, the limited precipitation bias may continue.

Thursday's precipitation was welcome, but it has only teased some of the crop areas from southwestern Kansas into West Texas where concern remains not only for further wheat development, but the planting of all kinds of spring crops. The influence of weak La Nina conditions will not help the drier bias in the next several weeks, but if the forecast is correct for neutral ENSO conditions to return this spring there will be a little more

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potential for the dryness in the southwestern Plains to be relieved. In the meantime, drought in the desert southwest will get no relief.

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