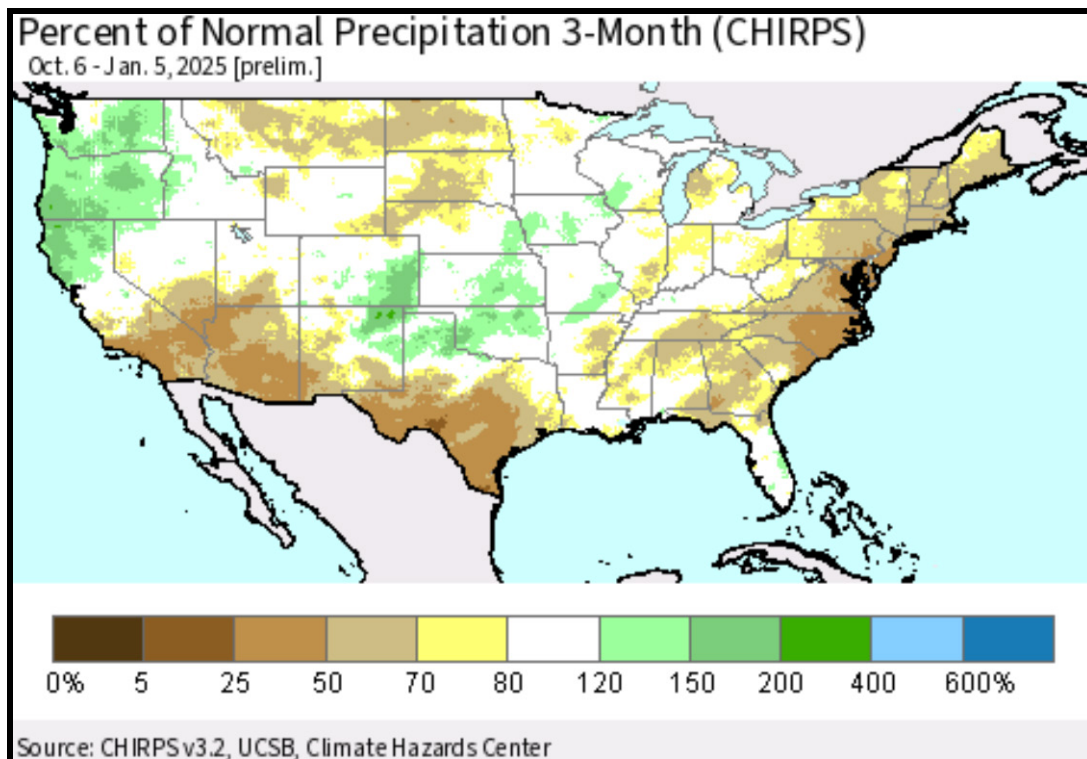


U.S. Northern Plains Will Not See Much Relief From Drought

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, January 10 (World Weather Inc.) – A large section of the U.S. northern Plains trended drier than normal during the past three months. *Drought or abnormally dry conditions evolved as a result of the drier biased environment and the need for timely precipitation is high across the region. Much of the region is covered in snow. Some of the snow will eventually seep down into the soil once seasonal warming begins this spring, though current snow totals are too light to offer much relief from the dryness. The region will have a few opportunities for precipitation in the coming days that will bolster snowpack. However, resulting precipitation will remain too light to significantly improve long-term conditions for the moisture profile. The need for significant precipitation will remain high later this winter and early this spring to improve planting prospects for the region.*

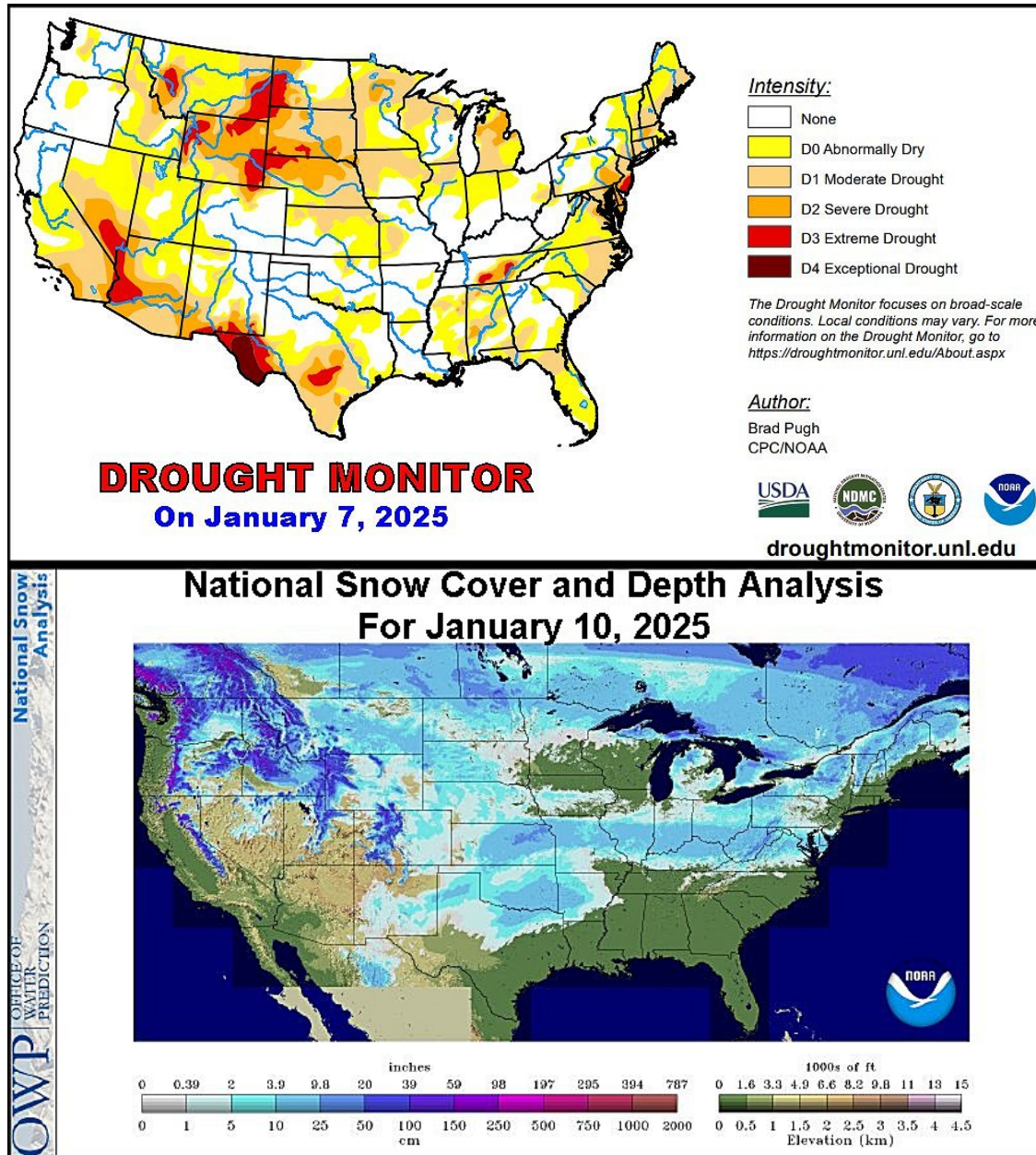
Montana and a large section of crop country in the Dakotas received less than usual precipitation during the past three months. Precipitation as a percent of normal ranged from 50% to 80% in most locations with pockets that saw precipitation trend closer to normal, most notably in eastern South Dakota. Precipitation was otherwise near normal in much of Minnesota.



As of January 7, a large section of the northern Plains was under drought or abnormally dry conditions. Several areas in eastern Montana and western North Dakota were enduring extreme drought (D3) conditions due to the lack of precipitation in recent

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months. Several locations in central and eastern North Dakota and southeastern Minnesota were also drought-free despite the lack of significant precipitation.



Much of the northern Plains was blanketed by snow this morning with the exception of southern Minnesota. Snow totals ranged anywhere from a dusting to 8 inches with locally greater amounts.

The main concern for the upcoming season is the drought impacting planting rates across the northern Plains. Current snow depths will not be enough to completely fix the moisture deficits once the snow melts in the spring. Significant precipitation will be needed later this winter and early this spring to support ideal early-season planting prospects.

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WEATHER OUTLOOK

The northern Plains will see a mix of precipitation and sunshine through the end of next week. Much of the precipitation will occur later today into this weekend as a disturbance plunges from the Canadian Prairies into the region. Light snow flurries will linger in Montana Monday. High pressure will otherwise limit precipitation later next week. Moisture totals by next Friday morning will range from 0.10 to 0.75 inch with local amounts of 1.00 inch or slightly more in Montana. Snowfall will range from 1 to 7 inches with local amounts of 12 inches or slightly more. Moisture totals in the Dakotas and Minnesota will range from a dusting to 0.50 inch while snowfall ranges from a dusting to 5 inches. The region will again have a few opportunities for mostly light precipitation January 18 – 24.

Snowfall in the coming days will likely slow travel and may even stress livestock. No major crop impacts are expected. Snowpack will increase and will eventually be welcome once seasonal warming increases melting rates. Even with the snow in the coming weeks, snowpack will be too low to completely fix the moisture deficits. Additional precipitation will be needed in the coming weeks to improve the outlook for early-season planting this spring. Delayed planting will remain a concern across the region.

World Weather, Inc. believes there is a relatively good chance for drought easing rain this spring and/or early summer. If the trend is accurately being presented by our Trend Model there will be some potential for planting delays in a part of the region. The situation will need to be closely monitored.

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