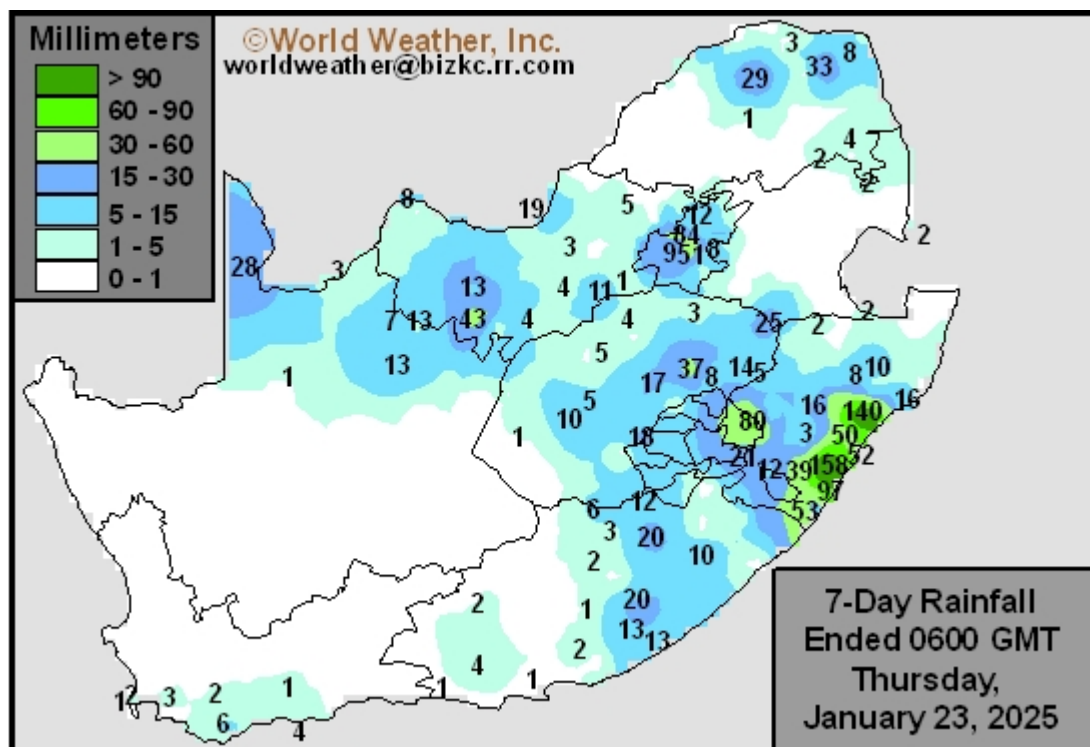


South Africa Crop Conditions Remain Relatively Favorable

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, January 23 (World Weather Inc.) – Periods of spotty rain were noted in the main production areas of South Africa during the past week. Many areas in Free State and North West did not receive enough rain to counter evaporation and the need for significant rain remains very high. The environment in central and eastern crop areas remained favorable for aggressive coarse grain, oilseed, cotton, and other crop growth. Much of crop country will continue to see a mix of spotty rain and sunshine during the coming week with some much-needed timely rain again possible in Free State and North West. Crop development conditions will remain good in the central and east though greater rain must fall in the west to suffice the needs of unirrigated crops.

Central and southern Natal received some of the most significant rain in South Africa during the past week. Moisture totals for the seven-day period ending this morning ranged anywhere from 1.50 to 6.22 inches. Gauteng received 0.47 to 3.31 inches of rain. Several areas in Free State, North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and Eastern Cape received 0.16 to 1.69 inches of rain, though several fields received little or no rain. Northern fringes of Northern Cape received 0.28 to 1.10 inches of moisture while pockets in Western Cape received upwards of 0.24 inch of rain. Most other locations were dry.

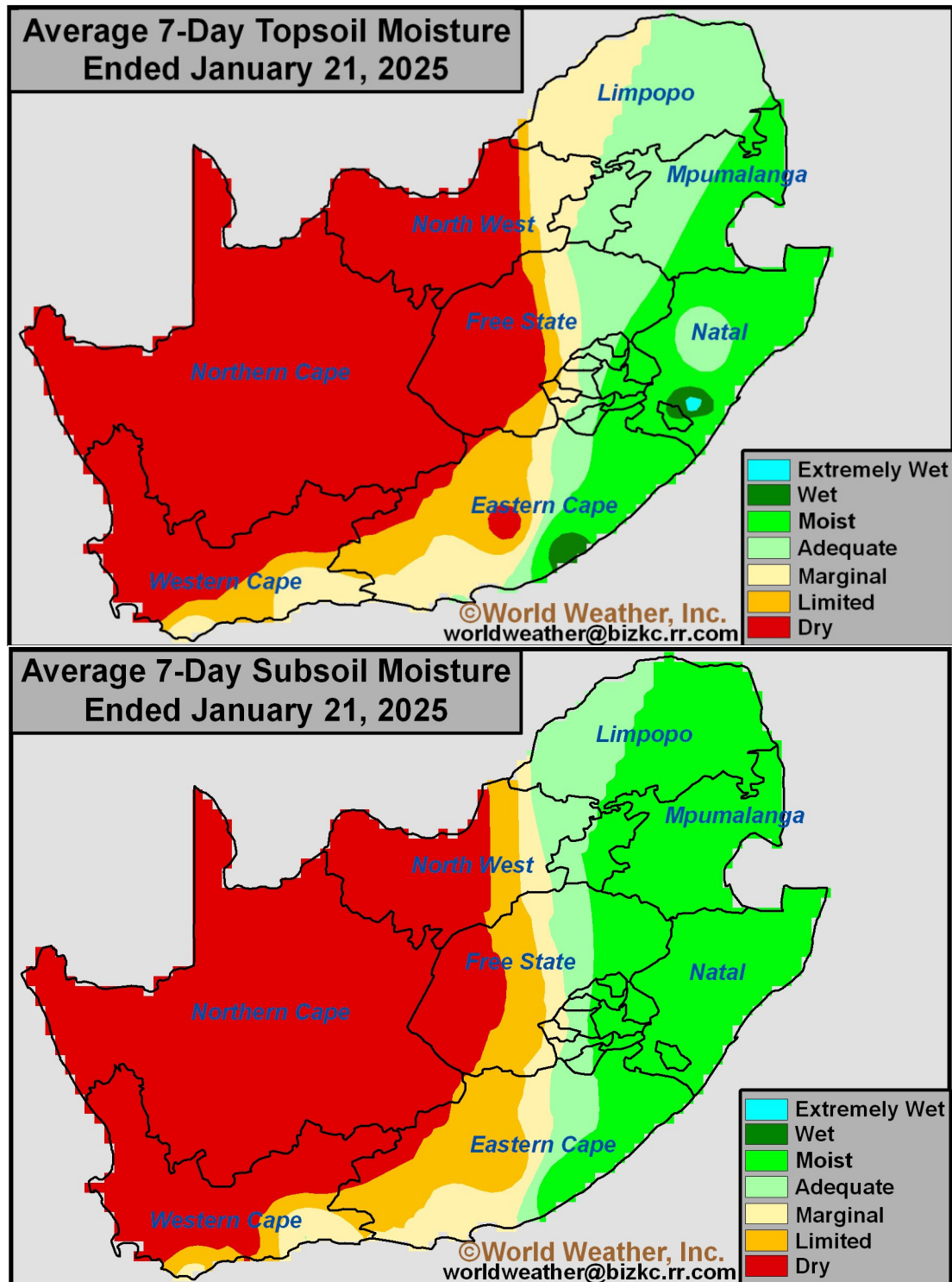


Temperatures this past week were near to above normal with highest readings in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit. Portions of Northern Cape and Eastern Cape also warmed above 100 degrees at times. Lowest temperatures were in the 50s and 60s.

The eastern half of South Africa continues to have adequate to excessive topsoil moisture, even in locations that received minimal rain during the past week. Moisture

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shortages are ongoing in the western half of the country despite some rain in western sections of Free State and North West.

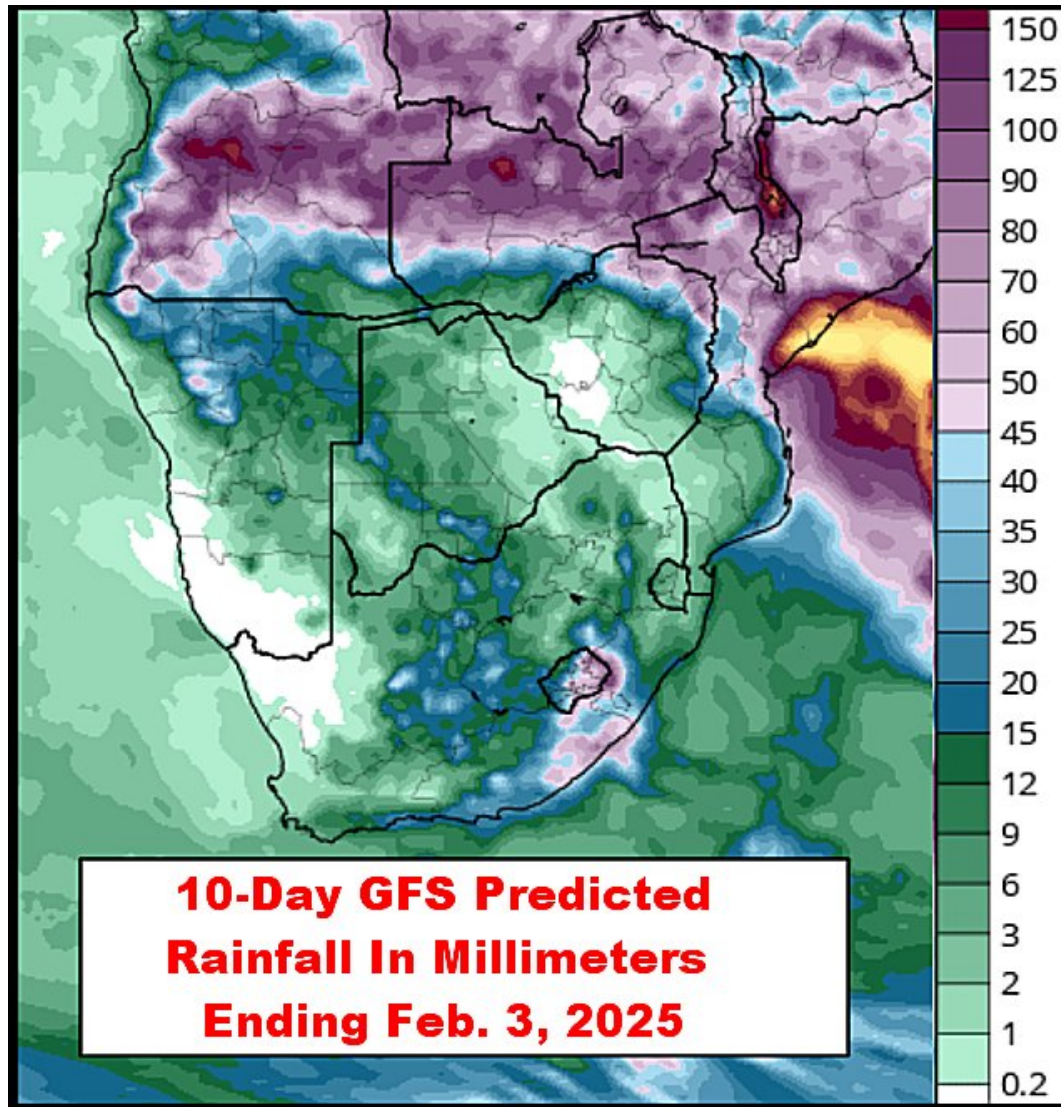


The main production areas in South Africa generally had ample moisture to support aggressive growth during the past week. However, unirrigated portions of western

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Free State and North West remained too dry for ideal conditions and there is still a need for more significant rain. A continuation of poorly distributed rain in the west during February could hurt production potentials especially as reproduction gets under way.

Overall production potentials remain generally good in eastern and southern production areas in the nation, though stress in unirrigated areas of the west should be threatening yields.



WEATHER OUTLOOK

South Africa will see a mix of spotty rain and sunshine during the coming week. Light rain will initially be scattered across eastern South Africa through Saturday. A disturbance will help promote more widespread rain Sunday into Tuesday with some of the most significant rain occurring in central South Africa. Scattered shower activity will persist toward the middle of next week. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.50 to 2.00 inches in much of Natal, Eastern Cape, Free State, and North West with local

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amounts of 3.00 inches or slightly more. Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and eastern sections of Northern Cape and Western Cape will receive 0.10 to 0.75 inch of rain with pockets that are mostly dry. Western fringes of South Africa will be dry as well. The main production areas will again see a mix of spotty rain and sunshine January 31 – February 6.

Temperatures will trend near to slightly above normal in South Africa through next Thursday. Daytime highs will peak to the 80s and 90s with pockets in central and eastern South Africa only warming to the 70s. Portions of Northern Cape will also warm above 100 degrees during the next several days. Low temperatures will be in the 50s and 60s with pockets only cooling to the 70s. The temperature profile will remain near or slightly above normal January 31 – February 6.

South Africa's central and eastern summer production areas will have enough moisture or receive enough rain to maintain relatively good development conditions during the next ten days to two weeks. Some fields in North West and Free State may remain a little dry, though rainfall during the weekend and early next week should improve conditions for at least the short-term. The need for timely rain will continue later in February to support ideal long-term crop prospects.

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