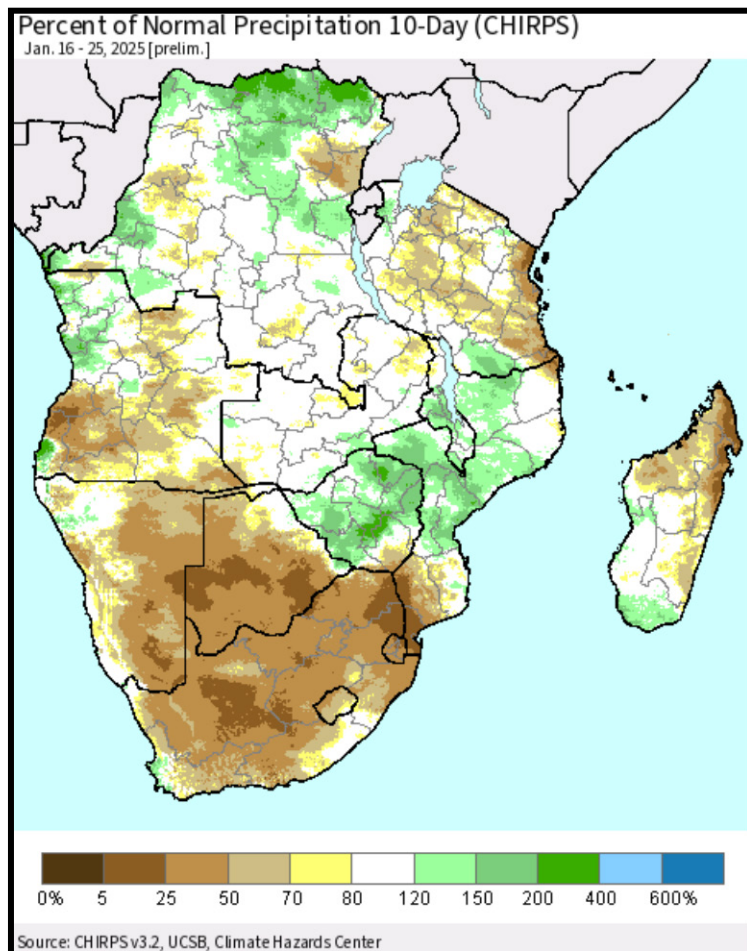


Eastern South Africa To See Rain Return In Coming Days

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, January 30 (World Weather Inc.) – A period of drier-than-usual weather was noted for much of South Africa earlier this month. Net drying was noted in a large section of crop country, though most locations still had enough moisture to support new growth. The only areas that were too dry for ideal crop conditions were in unirrigated western sections of Free State and North West as well as eastern portions of Northern Cape. Production potentials remain generally good for South Africa as a whole despite recent dryness, although unirrigated areas in the west continue to suffer from poor rainfall and low soil moisture. Eastern South Africa will see frequent rainfall return during the coming week. The rain will restore soil moisture and maintain a good outlook for the crops. Free State and North West will remain drier than normal and will continue too dry down.



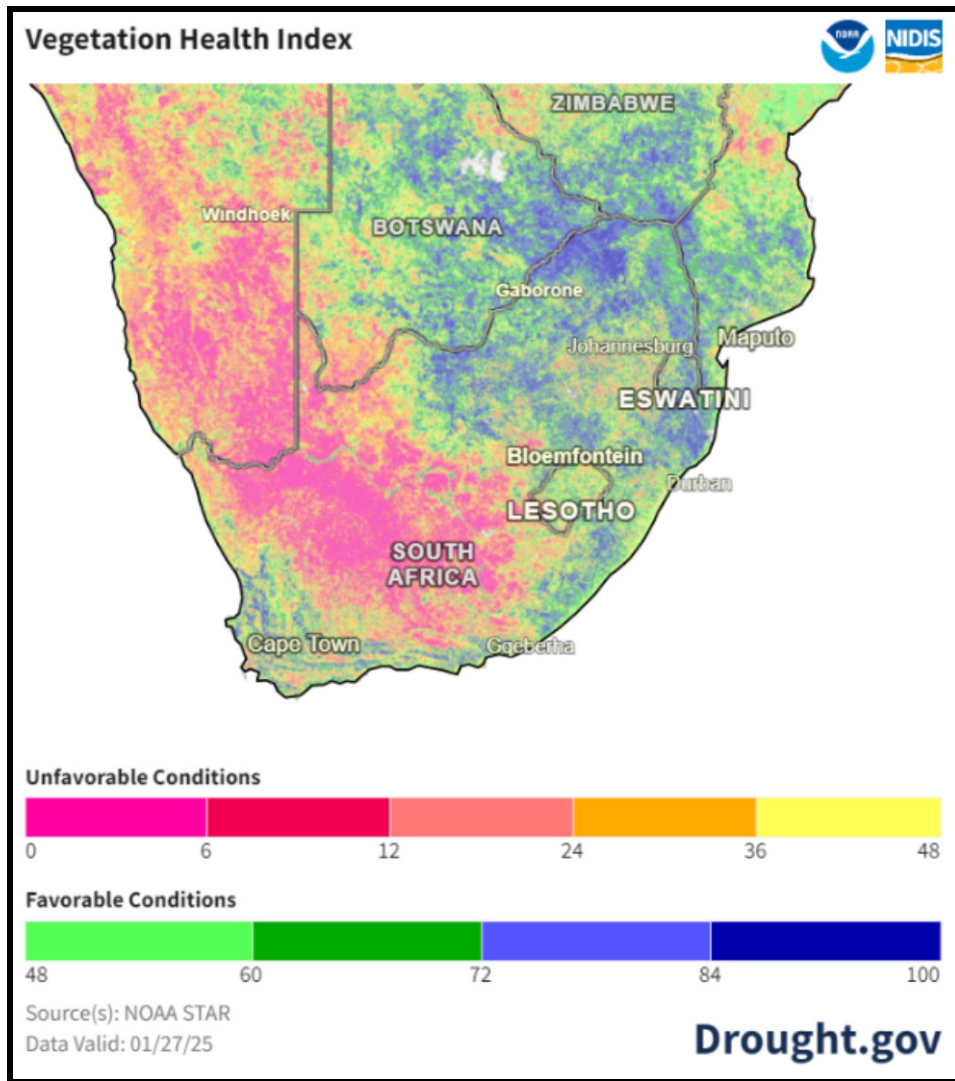
From January 16 – 25, a large section of South Africa was drier than usual. Rainfall was 25-70% of normal in much of crop country with pockets that only received 5-25% of normal moisture. Rainfall was limited in much of the country in recent days as well. Temperatures were also near to above normal with daytime highs often reaching the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit.

The lack of rain and warm weather promoted net drying recently and the firmer soil was provided a good opportunity for routine farming activity after previous frequent rain. The western half of the country has a shortage of moisture and needs rain for unirrigated crops. Most areas in eastern South Africa still have sufficient soil moisture to support ongoing crop

development, despite the lack of abundant rainfall.

Vegetative health is still generally favorable in the main production areas of eastern and central South Africa. Only a few locations in Free State, Mpumalanga, and western North West were showing unfavorable conditions as of January 27.

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WEATHER OUTLOOK

The outlook for the corn and other coarse grain, oilseeds, cotton, and other crops produced this time of year remain relatively favorable for South Africa despite the lack of rain since mid-January. Most locations had some moisture to support new growth outside western fringes of the production region in Free State and North West. As long as timely rain returns in the coming weeks, development conditions will remain favorable across the country.

An active weather pattern is slated for eastern South Africa during the coming week. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms will evolve on a near daily basis. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.75 to 4.00 inches and locally greater amounts for much of Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and eastern fringes of Eastern Cape. Central South Africa will have a few opportunities for spotty rain as well. However, Free State, North West, and the remaining portions of Eastern Cape will only receive 0.10 to 0.75

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inch of moisture with locally greater amounts. Western South Africa will receive little to no rain.

Central and eastern portions of South Africa's summer crop areas will again have several opportunities for rain February 7-13 while unirrigated areas of far western summer crop areas will continue drier biased.

The temperature profile will remain near to above normal through next Thursday. Daytime highs will peak in the 80s and 90s with pockets in eastern South Africa only warming to the 70s during periods of more significant rain. Pockets in Northern Cape will also warm above 100 degrees at times. Low temperatures will be in the 50s and 60s with pockets only cooling to the 70s. Seasonable to seasonably warm weather will persist February 7 – 13.

The waves of rain for eastern South Africa will help bolster soil moisture to adequate or excessive levels in the coming weeks. Crop development conditions will improve or remain favorable. Free State and North West will be too dry to support ideal crop conditions during the coming week, though the spotty rain will limit drying at times. As long as the rain during the second week of the outlook verifies, crop conditions should improve. Overall production potentials should remain mostly unchanged.

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