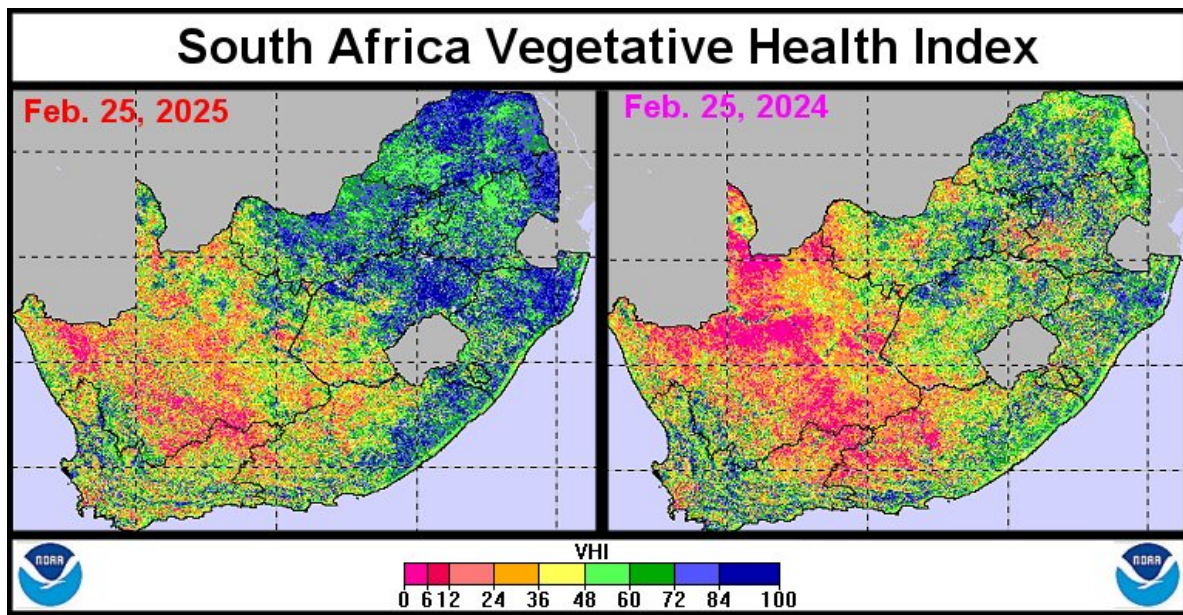


Bulk of South Africa Soil Moisture Supports Summer Crops

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, February 27 (World Weather Inc.) – Central and Eastern portions of South Africa continue to experience a very good summer crop growing season with timely rainfall and favorable soil moisture along with seasonable temperatures during much of the growing season. Areas in the far west, though, are still lacking soil moisture and rainfall has been more infrequent and light at times resulting in some crop stress in unirrigated areas of eastern Northern Cape, western North West and western Free State. Production of coarse grain, oilseeds and cotton is expected to be favorable from much of the nation, although there are still concerns that recent rain was a little too late to support the best yields in the drier areas of the west. Most of South Africa will see a favorable mix of rain and sunshine during the coming week, although western areas still have need for greater rain.



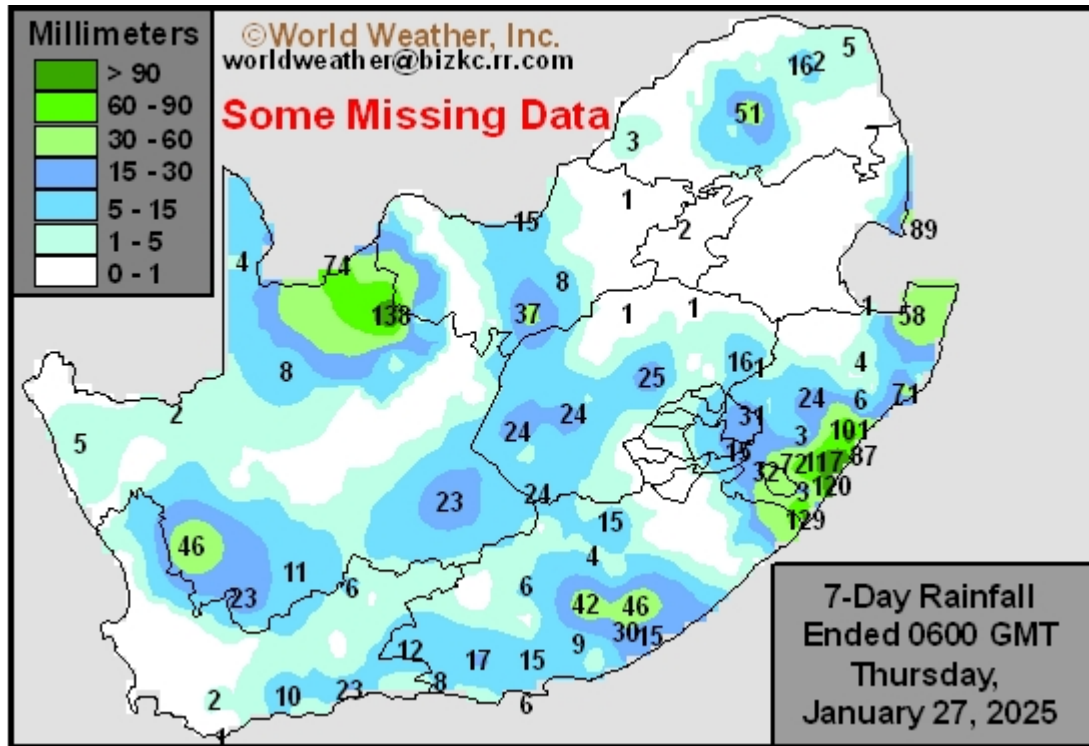
Rain was scattered across a large section of South Africa during the past week. Southern Natal and northeastern Northern Cape received some of the most significant rain with totals ranging from 2.83 to 5.43 inches for the seven-day period ending this morning. Other locations received 0.43 to 1.81 inches of rain, though several areas in Western Cape, Gauteng, western Mpumalanga, and neighboring locations may have missed out on much of the precipitation.

Temperatures were warm with highest readings in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit. However, portions of eastern and southern South Africa only warmed to the 70s during periods of more significant rain. Lowest temperatures were in the 50s and 60s with pockets in eastern South Africa and Northern Cape only cooling to the 70s.

Soil moisture is suspected of being adequate to excessive in the main production areas of South Africa. However, portions of Free State and North West may have a shortage of moisture in areas that received the least amount of rain in recent weeks.

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Vegetative health is generally favorable in South Africa's production region due to the waves of rain in recent weeks. Aggressive crop growth was suspected outside the driest fields in North West and Free State. Production potentials are expected to be greater than last year's crop due to timely rain for much of the growing season. This improved production potential is reflected in the big improvement in the Vegetative Health Index this year over that of last year.



WEATHER OUTLOOK

Alternating periods of erratic rainfall and dry weather are slated for the main production areas in South Africa during the coming week. Disturbances will generate some of the most widespread and significant rain through the end of the weekend. Light and erratic rainfall will persist for a few locations at the beginning and middle of next week. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.50 to 3.00 inches, though portions of northern Limpopo and western Free State will only receive 0.10 to 0.50 inch of rain. Other locations in South Africa will either be dry or not receive enough rain to impact long-term soil conditions. The main production areas will continue to see a mix of rain and dry weather March 7 – 13 as well.

Seasonable to seasonably warm weather is slated for much of South Africa through next Thursday. The eastern half of the country will warm to the 70s and 80s most often while western South Africa warms to the 80s and 90s. Low temperatures for much of the country will be in the 50s and 60s with pockets in eastern South Africa and Northern Cape only cooling to the 70s. The temperature profile will remain near to slightly above normal March 7 – 13.

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Additional rain in the coming weeks will keep soil moisture at adequate or excessive levels in much of South Africa's crop country. The environment will remain favorable for aggressive growth. Production potentials will remain favorable across the country.

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