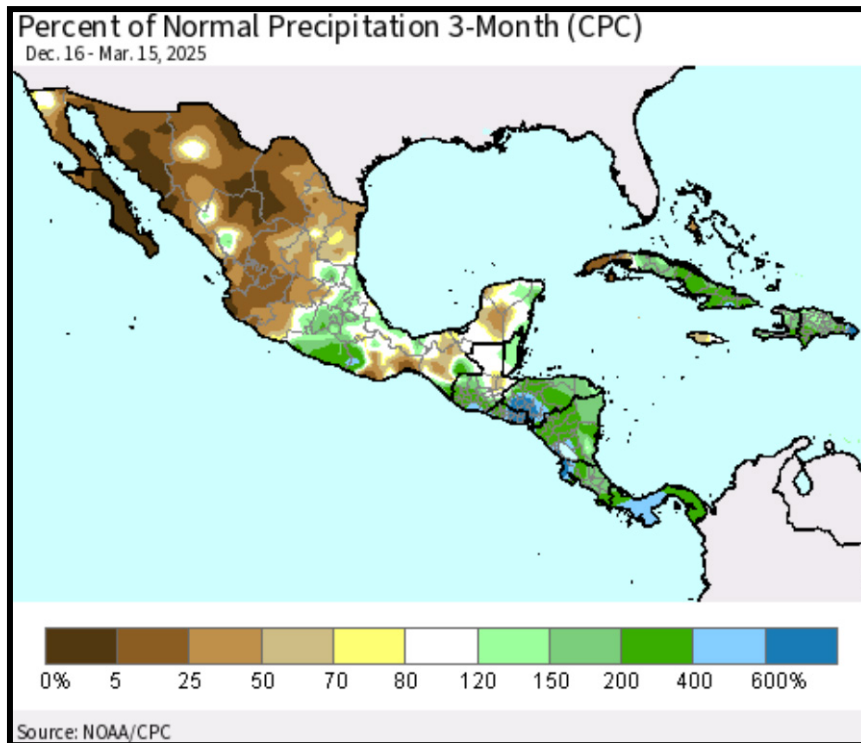


Mexico Drought To Prevail In West, North

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, March 20 (World Weather Inc.) – A serious drought remains over the northwest half of Mexico. This drought evolved last summer as the summer monsoon failed to perform normally. Summer rainfall was never great enough to improve soil moisture and water supply has been steadily drawn down since that time. La Nina like conditions then evolved in late autumn and prevailed into February preventing rain from falling across the drought impacted region keeping the region extremely dry. Winter wheat, oats and some minor production areas of sorghum and other crops have been impacted, although only the unirrigated crops have suffered from this drought. In the meantime, other areas in Mexico have more favorable soil moisture due to timely rain over the winter. Several areas in the eastern half of the country will see a mix of spotty rain and sunshine during the coming week that will be beneficial for winter crops that are still developing. Flowering citrus will welcome the rain as well.

Rainfall varied significantly across Mexico in recent months. Northern and west-



central Mexico was generally drier or much drier than normal, receiving 5-50% of normal precipitation for the 90-day period ending March 15. Many areas in southeastern Mexico into the eastern half of Oaxaca also received near or below normal rainfall. The remaining locations received near to above normal precipitation.

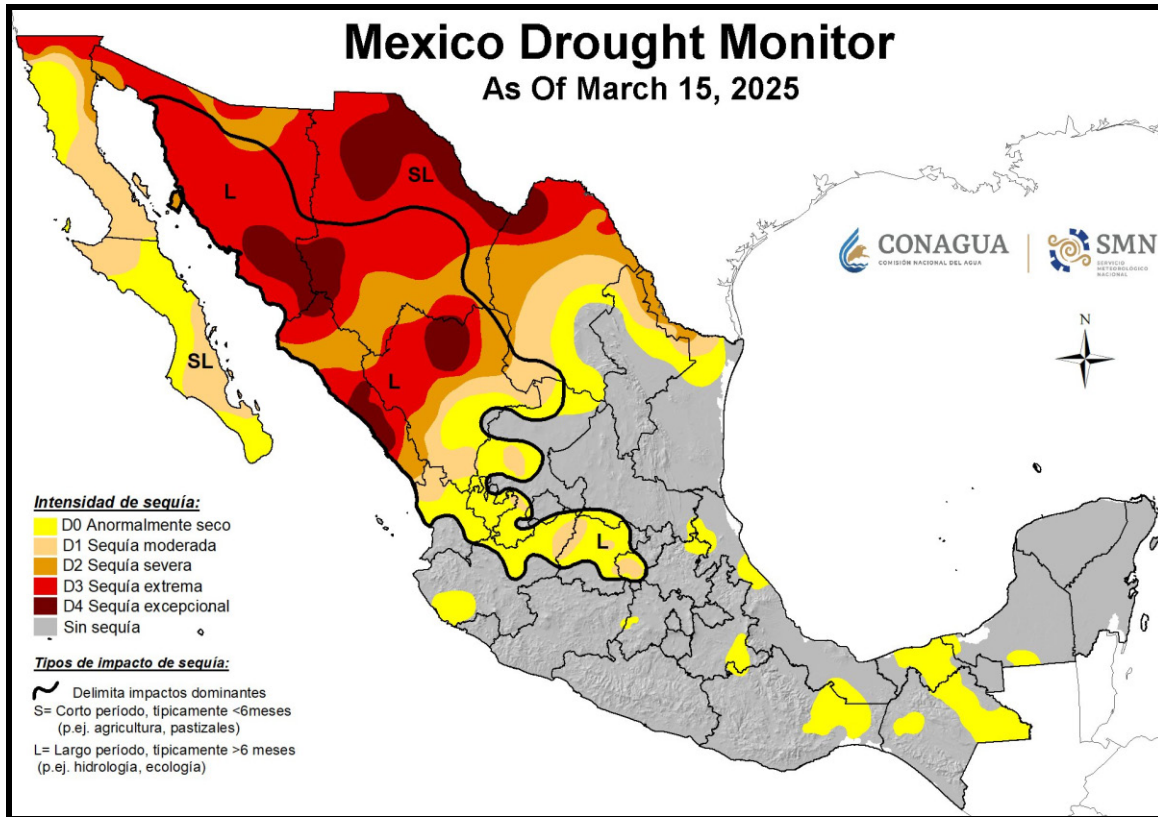
As of March 15, severe to exceptional drought (D2 to D4) was noted from Sinaloa and

northern Durango into much of Sonora, Chihuahua, and northern Coahuila. Baja California, northern sections of Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, and portions of southern Durango, southern Coahuila, Nayarit, Guanajuato, and neighboring locations were abnormally dry or in a moderate drought (D1). Other locations in Mexico were generally drought-free, though pockets in east-central and southeastern Mexico were abnormally dry.

The driest areas in west-central and northern Mexico are some of the largest producers of winter wheat and oats. Winter sorghum and other crops are also produced this time of year. The lack of moisture likely caused uneven or poor crop development at times

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over the winter. Yields may trend lower than usual, especially in areas that rely on rain for normal growth and development



The environment for winter crops was generally favorable in the remaining production areas of Mexico in recent months. Timely rain and a lack of excessive heat promoted generally favorable development conditions for winter crops in southern, central, and eastern Mexico. Portions of east-central and northeastern Mexico also saw periods of rain in February and earlier this month that may have promoted some citrus flowering.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

Southeastern, east-central, and northeastern Mexico will see a mix of erratic rain and sunshine during the coming week. A frontal boundary will initially help promote rain today and Friday for east-central and southeastern Mexico. Some spotty rain will occur over the weekend before the next front promotes more widespread rain at the beginning and middle of next week. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.25 to 1.50 inches with local amounts over 2.00 inches, generally in east-central Mexico. Light rain will also occur in north-central Mexico, though resulting rainfall will be lost to evaporation. The remaining locations in Mexico will be mostly dry. Southeastern, east-central, and northeastern Mexico will again have a few opportunities for spotty rain March 28 – April 3 while the remaining locations remain mostly dry.

Drought will prevail and intensify for much of west-central, northwestern, and north-central Mexico in the coming weeks. ***World Weather, Inc. does not anticipate a good***

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opportunity for drought to break before the monsoon season arrives in May and June.

Drought or abnormally dry conditions may intensify in portions of central and south-central Mexico as well due to the lack of rain and warm daytime temperatures. Other production areas in Mexico will receive enough rain to limit drying. Maturation and early-season harvesting of the winter crops should advance with few disruptions in much of the country in the coming weeks. The rain that does fall will not severely delay the harvest and general fieldwork. Periods of rain in east-central and northeastern Mexico will also be welcome for citrus flowering and early fruit setting as well as for sorghum, corn and cotton planting.

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