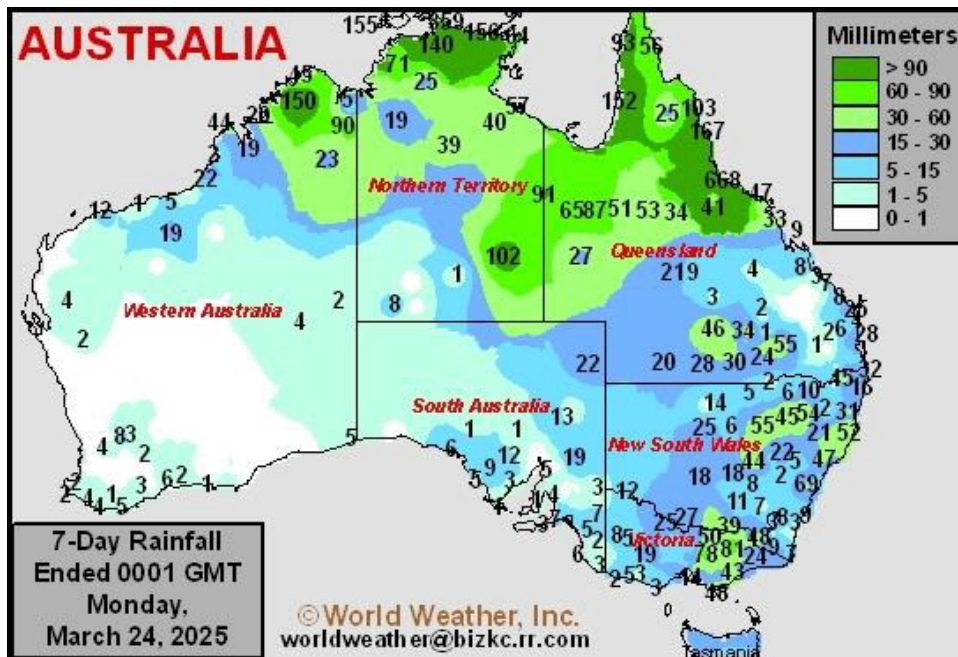


Queensland, Australia Expecting Heavy Rain; Flooding Likely

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, March 24 (World Weather Inc.) – With harvesting either underway or beginning in the coming weeks, the need for drier weather is increasing for eastern Australia. Yield potentials are expected to be slightly above the previous ten-year average, despite periods of dryness over the growing season. **The main concern going forward will be waves of heavy rain for Queensland and northern New South Wales this week. Portions of central Queensland could receive more than 10.00 inches of rain by this time next week. The rain may delay the harvest and could lower crop quality in the wettest locations. Open boll cotton could experience some of the most significant impacts with boll rot, quality declines, and even production losses possible.** Rainfall will not be as severe in New South Wales and crop impacts should be minimal.

Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria saw a mix of rain and dry weather during the past week. Moisture totals for the seven-day period ending this morning ranged from 0.43 to 2.17 inches in most production areas. South Australia's winter crop areas also receive 0.12 to 0.28 inch of rain. Pockets in Western Australia received up to 0.32 inch of rain, though a large section of the production region received little or no precipitation.



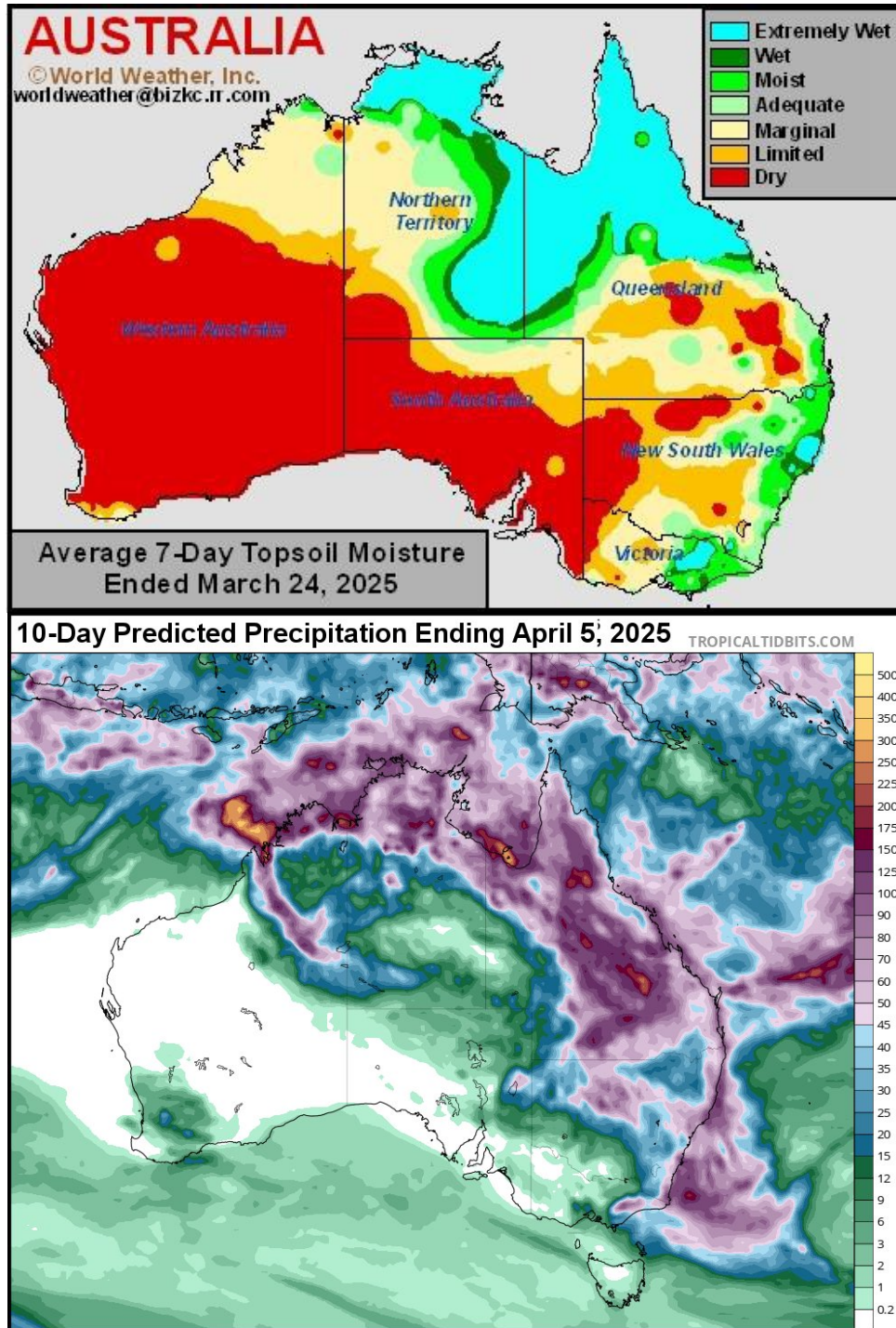
Recent rainfall helped bolster soil moisture in portions of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. However, a large section of eastern Australia still has a shortage of moisture. South Australia and Western Australia remain seasonably dry as well.

Harvesting of early season cotton usually begins in Queensland during late March before expanding in April and May across eastern Australia. Early planted sorghum harvesting has already been under way for a while. Recent rain may have slowed some of that early season harvesting and general fieldwork. No major delays or quality declines were suspected, although with more rain coming that may change especially for cotton. Precipitation was otherwise beneficial for any crops that are still developing.

Potential yields for summer crops are expected to trend a little above the previous

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ten-year average due to timely rain over the growing season.



WEATHER OUTLOOK

An unusually wet weather pattern is slated for portions of eastern Australia this week. A slow-moving disturbance will generate waves of rain, some of which will be heavy at times, for Queensland through Thursday. Erratic rainfall will persist Friday and this weekend as well as the disturbance shifts away from the region. Moisture totals by next Monday morning will range from 2.00 to 6.00 inches in the main production areas with portions of central Queensland potentially receiving 10.00 inches or more of moisture.

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The waves of rain for Queensland in the coming days will likely promote flash flooding and potentially standing water. Some damage to a few crops and personal property is anticipated. Cotton is at the open boll stage in portions of Queensland. Boll rot and other quality impacts will be a significant concern in the coming days. Maturation, harvesting, and general fieldwork will likely be sluggish or come to a standstill as well. Overall, production losses will be possible if significant drying does not resume quickly after this period of rain passes. In the meantime, fiber quality will certainly slip lower for early season crop maturation.

New South Wales and Victoria will also see periods of rain this week due to the slow-moving disturbance. Some of the most widespread rain will likely occur later this week and weekend. Northern and east-central New South Wales will receive 0.75 to 3.00 inches of rain with locally greater amounts by next Monday morning. Victoria and the remaining portions of New South Wales will receive 0.10 to 0.75 inch of rain with local amounts of 1.50 inches or slightly more.

Although rainfall in northern and east-central New South Wales may slow early-season harvesting and general fieldwork this week, no major delays are expected. Quality declines should be minimal as well. Other locations in New South Wales and much of Victoria will see more favorable weather for maturation and harvesting. Production impacts should be minimal for much of New South Wales and Victoria.

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