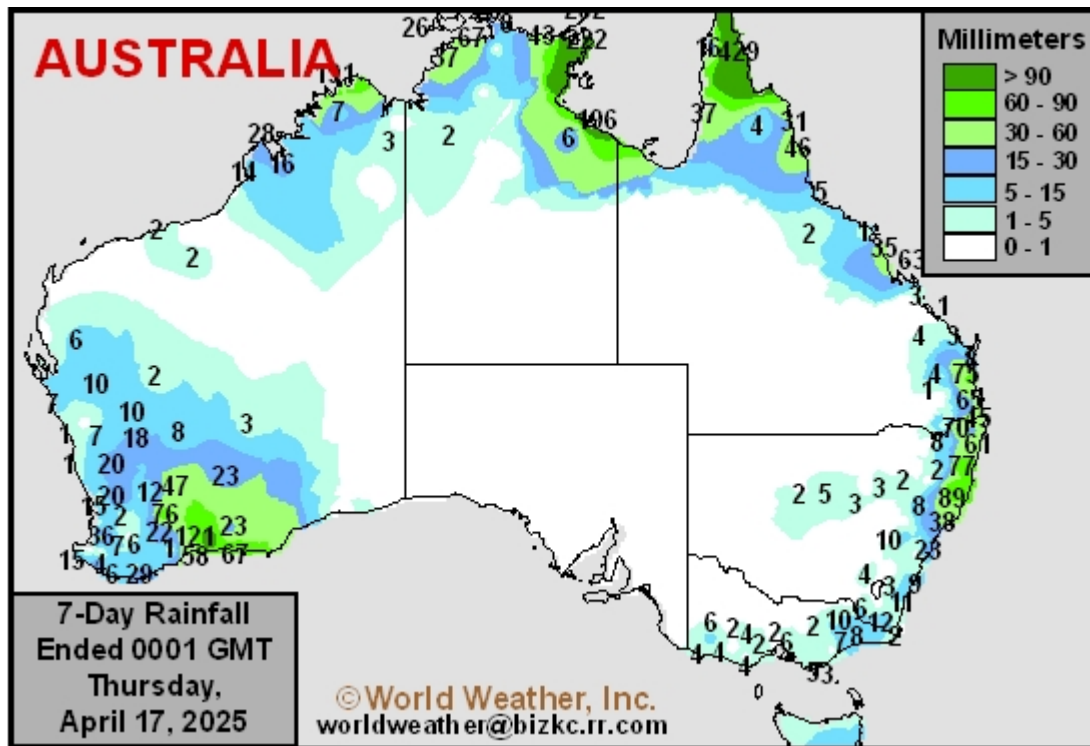


Australia Planting Moisture Should Improve During May

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, April 17 (World Weather Inc.) – Warm ocean water surrounding Australia (especially in the west and south) will help contribute to an active autumn planting pattern that should bring needed moisture to wheat, barley and canola production areas this autumn. Some rain has already occurred in Western Australia the past week, although it was not enough to bolster soil moisture in a serious manner. The precipitation was evidence that the environment will be ripe for additional moisture later this season when air temperatures begin to cool more significantly.

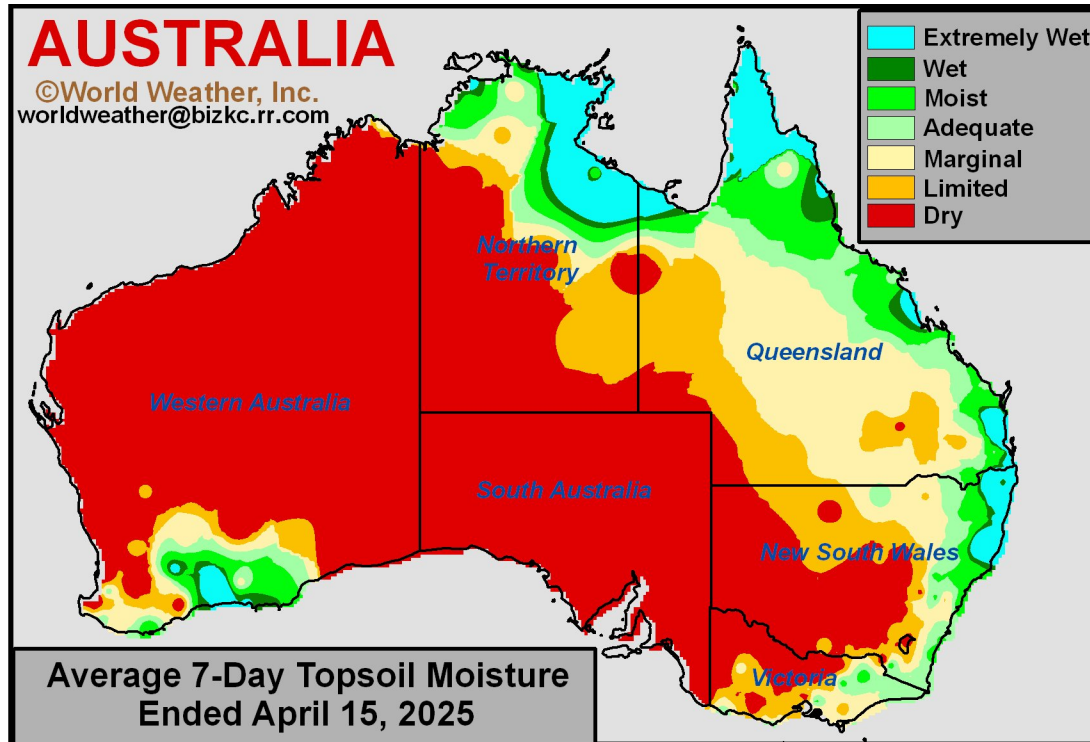


Some early season, beneficial, rainfall occurred this past week in Western Australia. Most of the state's winter wheat, barley and canola area received rain, although the primary production area only received light amounts of moisture. Totals for the week ending this morning varied from 0.08 to 0.79 inch which was enough to moisten the topsoil briefly, but a more general soaking of rain is needed to more seriously bolster the moisture profile for autumn planting, emergence and establishment. Greater Rainfall occurred to the southeast of the primary production region where rainfall of 0.92 to 2.28 inches resulted with one location reporting 4.75 inches. The planting season in southern Australia usually begins no sooner than late April which makes this past week's rain very timely, although more is needed.

A few other showers and thunderstorms were noted in southern Victoria and in a few random areas of interior northern New South Wales, though this precipitation was not enough to counter evaporation or change the moisture profile. The only other rain of significance in the past week was along the Pacific Coast where a few areas reported 2.00 to 3.50 inches occurred along the upper New South Wales and lower Queensland coast.

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Ocean temperatures play a huge role on southern Australia rainfall potentials. The latest data from the Indian Ocean has suggested warmer than usual ocean surface temperatures are prevalent in most of the open water to the west and south of Australia. If this prevails during the autumn season there should be some enhanced rain events as cold air masses come and go across the region. This past week's weather was a good indicator of the atmosphere's ability to make it rain and the moisture was encouragement for producers hoping for another good planting season.



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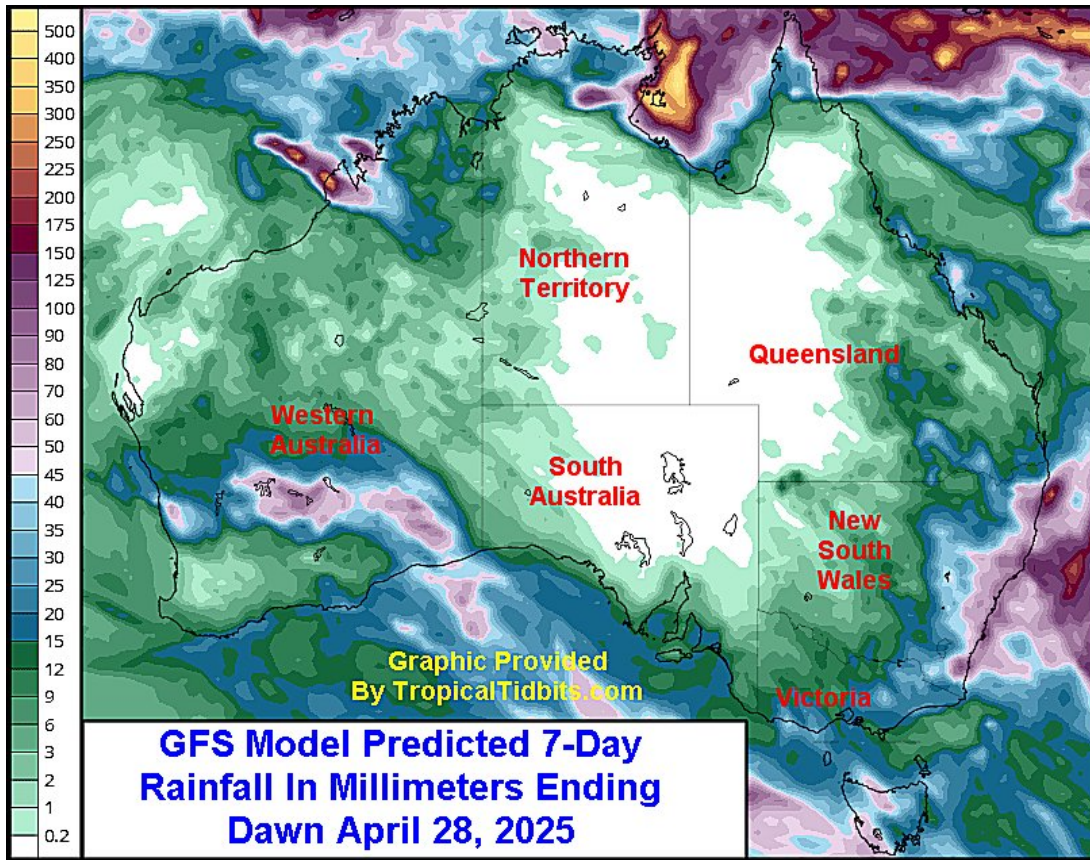
Weather in the coming week to ten days will generate a little more rain in Western Australia's wheat, barley and canola area. Rainfall may range from 0.10 to 0.50 inch with a few locally greater totals. The moisture will not be enough on its own to seriously change planting moisture conditions, but any precipitation would be welcome. A more general soaking of rain is still needed.

Showers will also occur in Victoria and southeastern South Australia during the next ten days proving a start to seasonal moistening of the topsoil for future planting of winter crops.

In the meantime, summer crop harvesting in Queensland and New South Wales will proceed with no weather-related delay until the last days of April when rain is expected to evolve causing some disruption to cotton and sorghum maturation and harvesting.

Southern Australia temperatures are expected to be warmer than usual over the next few days, but a cooling trend is likely during the weekend and early part of next week that may lead to near and below normal readings for the last week to ten days of April.

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