Southern U.S. Plains Planting Outlook Improves

By Scarlett Waters and Drew Lerner

Kansas City, April 25 (World Weather Inc.) – Changes in weather taking place in North America ending the prolonged drought pattern brought on by the 22-year solar cycle will lead to better precipitation in the southern U.S. Plains this spring. ***That will translate into improved soil moisture and water supply and should also lead to a better outlook for dryland production of corn, sorghum and cotton especially in the southwestern Plains. These changes come a little late for dryland winter wheat and canola, but crop improvements are likely there as well.*** The Southern Plains now have a relatively good potential to be wetter biased in the next few weeks

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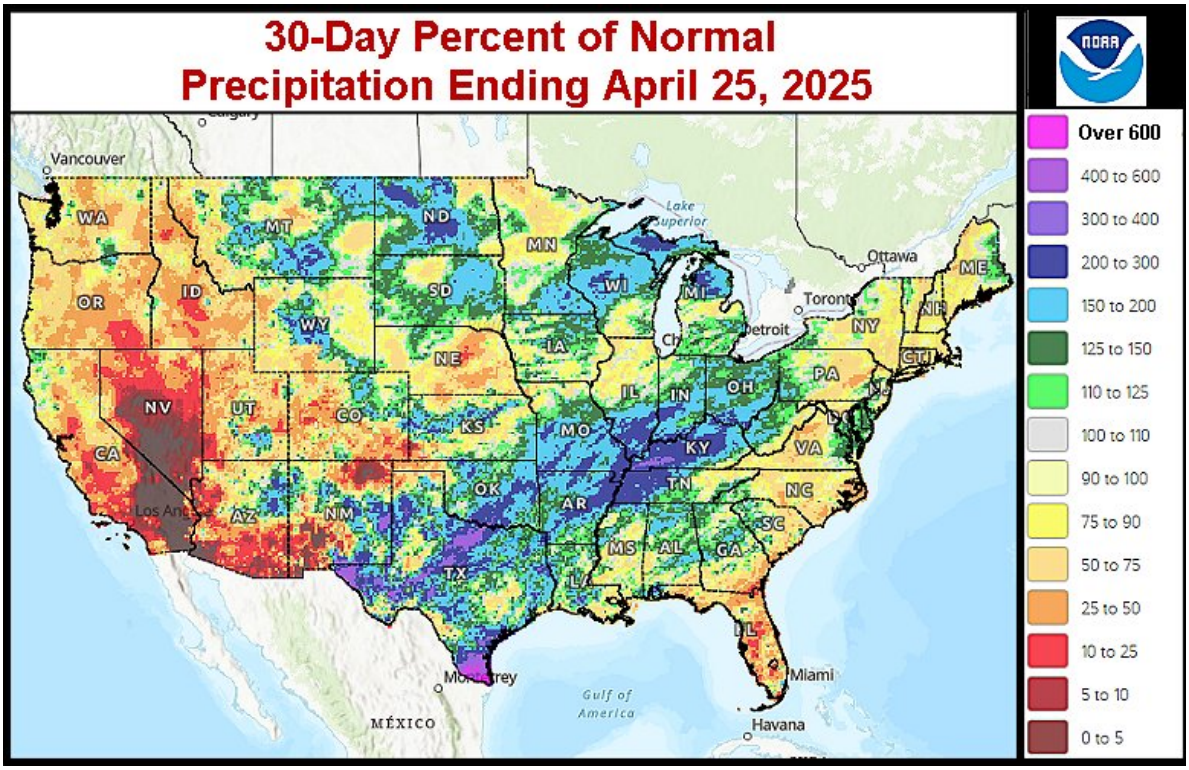

In recent weeks, near to above normal precipitation has occurred in much of Oklahoma and Texas; however, dry conditions continue to contribute to poor soil moisture in western Kansas, eastern Colorado, and portions of West Texas. In the next 7-days, between 1.00 and 3.00 inches of rain is expected across most of the Southern Plains with the exception of southwestern Kansas and eastern Colorado which will see between 0.10 and 0.75 inch. The Texas coast and South Texas will not be involved with the greater rain and neither will Edwards Plateau. A few areas in the eastern Blacklands may also come up a little short on moisture.

Many computer weather forecast model runs have recently suggested an increased chance of wetter-biased conditions going out into mid-May. ***If this forecast verifies and it should, it will be beneficial in raising soil moisture in many areas that have been dry and maintaining moist conditions many other areas. West Texas will see much needed***

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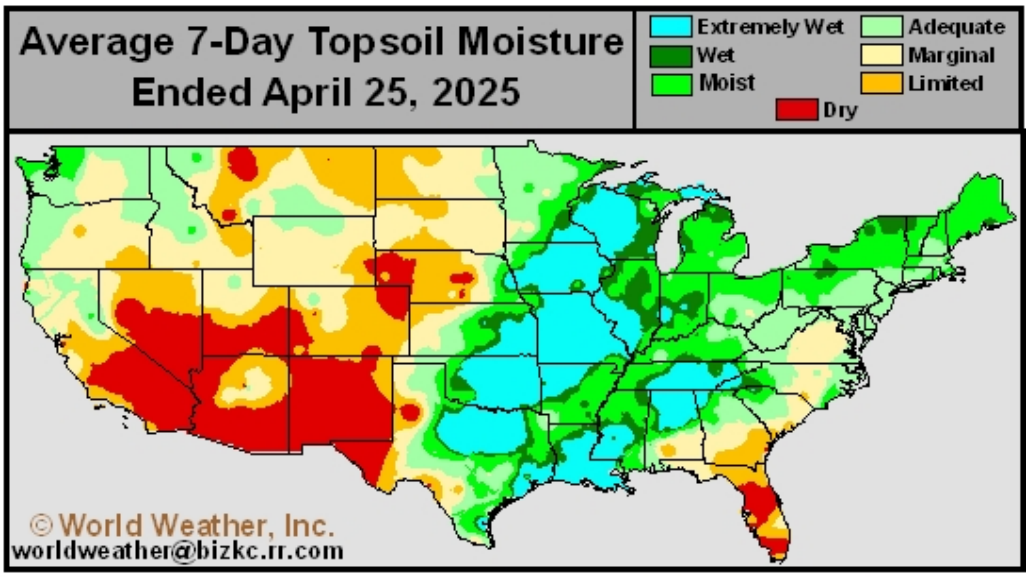
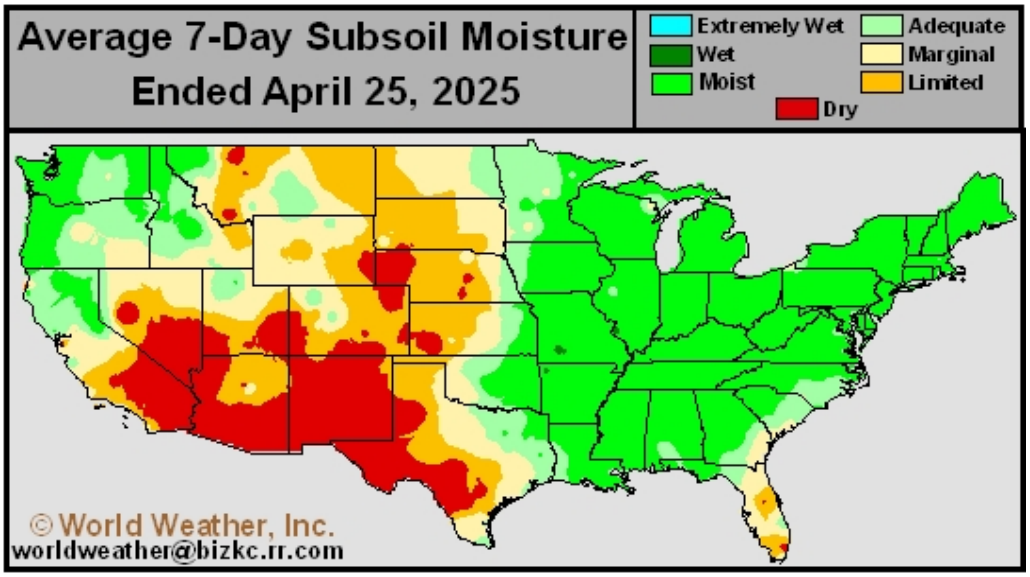
moisture to improve soil conditions with eastern Colorado and western Kansas potentially seeing some relief as well, although greater rain will be needed in those areas.

In the past 30-days, near to above normal rainfall has occurred across much of Oklahoma and Texas crop areas. Pockets of West Texas, western Kansas, the Oklahoma Panhandle and southeastern Colorado remain drier biased. Portions of southeastern Colorado, extreme southwestern Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle as well as a few locations in the far northern Texas Panhandle have received less than half of normal rain with some areas getting little to no precipitation. The number of areas that are critically dry is shrinking however, it is important to note that normal rainfall in this region during late March and April is not that great and the above normal precipitation bias can be a little misleading.

Topsoil moisture has improved greatly in the past couple of weeks from central Kansas to north-central Texas. Improvement has also occurred in a part of West Texas and some areas in South Texas are still benefiting from the excessive rain that fell in the last days of March and first days of April. However, subsoil moisture is still quite poor.





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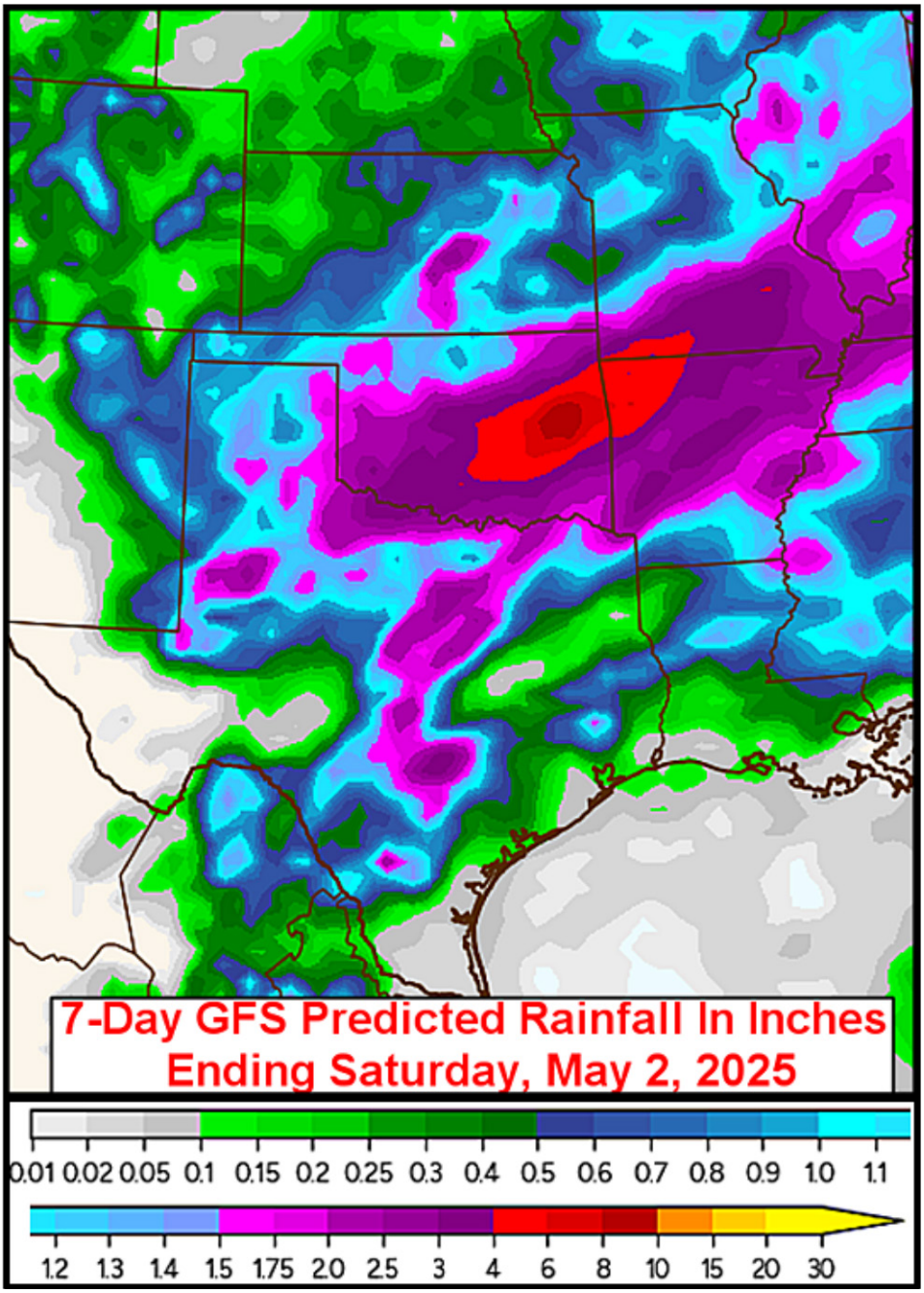
In the next 7-days, scattered showers and thunderstorms bringing between 1.00 and 3.00 inches of rain will occur across much of the Southern Plains. Locally heavier amounts are possible especially in Oklahoma. In contrast, areas of southwestern Kansas and eastern Colorado will see lighter amounts between, 0.10 and 0.80 inch. If this forecast verifies, West Texas will see much needed improvements to the moisture profile, though eastern Colorado and southwestern Kansas will need to see much more rainfall to improve dry soil conditions. Most of the west-central and southwestern Plains will still need additional moisture, despite of the significance of rain in some areas in the coming week.



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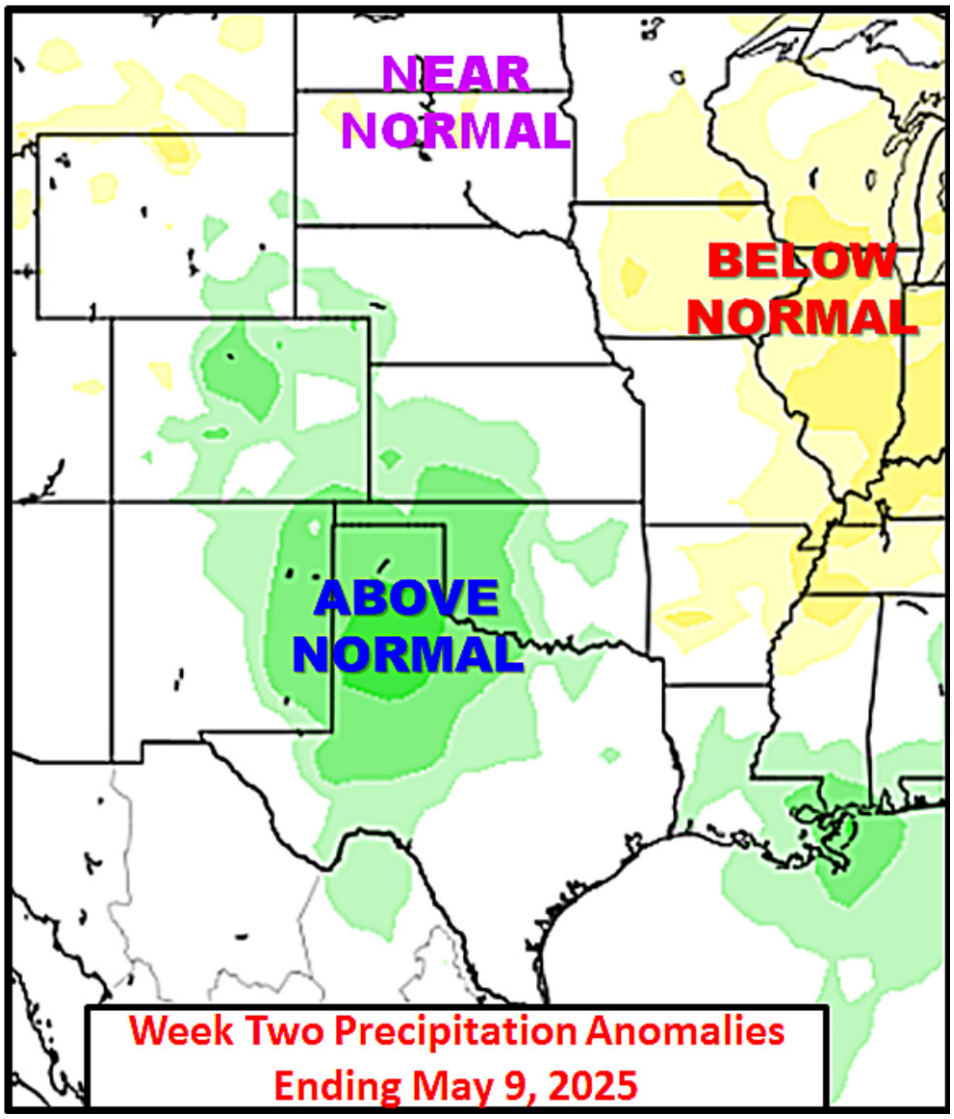

The GFS Ensemble forecast model has suggested the southwestern Plains will have a great opportunity for above normal rainfall May 2-9 and if that occurs there will be some additional improvement in the moisture profile. World Weather, Inc. believes the model is correct in perpetuating the wetter bias and that it would not be surprising to see this trend last through the middle of May.

The precipitation will improve planting conditions for sorghum, corn and cotton, especially in unirrigated fields. The moisture will also stimulate more aggressive wheat and canola development and support much improved grazing conditions for livestock areas. The changes indicated continue to fit well with a parallel to 1968 and that could lead to additional beneficial rain in the southern Plains during the late spring and summer, although some periods of dryness will also occur at times. That should translate into a favorable production year.

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