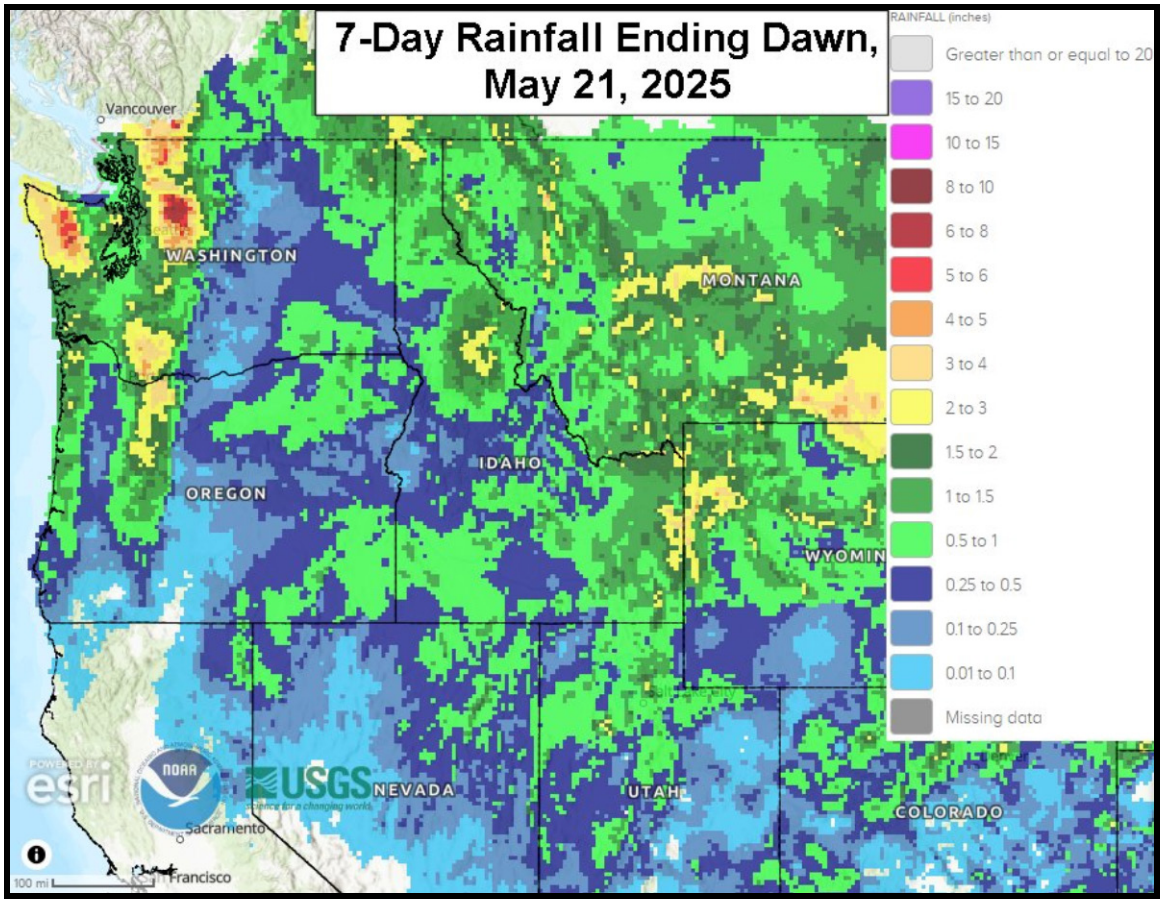
U.S. Pacific Northwest Warming To Enhance Crop Stress

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, May 21 (World Weather Inc.) – ***Limited precipitation in recent weeks promoted a gradual drying trend for the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Unirrigated fields are short to very short of moisture resulting in stress for winter wheat and barley that are approaching and entering reproduction. Recent temperatures have been mild to cool, but a warming trend will soon add to plant moisture stress by raising its moisture demand. Crop stress is likely to increase greatly as the temperatures trend warmer due to the lack of moisture in the soil and the rapid advancement of winter crops into reproduction.*** Irrigated winter, spring and summer crops will remain in favorable condition.

Although areas near and west of the Cascade Mountains saw several waves of precipitation during the past week, the main production areas in the U.S. Pacific Northwest received limited precipitation. Interior Washington and Oregon into southern Idaho received 0.25 to 1.00 inch of moisture for the seven-day period ending this morning. However, pockets in central Washington and south-central Oregon only received trace amounts to 0.25 inch of moisture. ***Precipitation for the 30-day period ending May 15 was also below or well below normal for most locations. Portions of central and eastern Washington into Oregon and pockets of southern Idaho only received 25-70% of normal precipitation during this time.***



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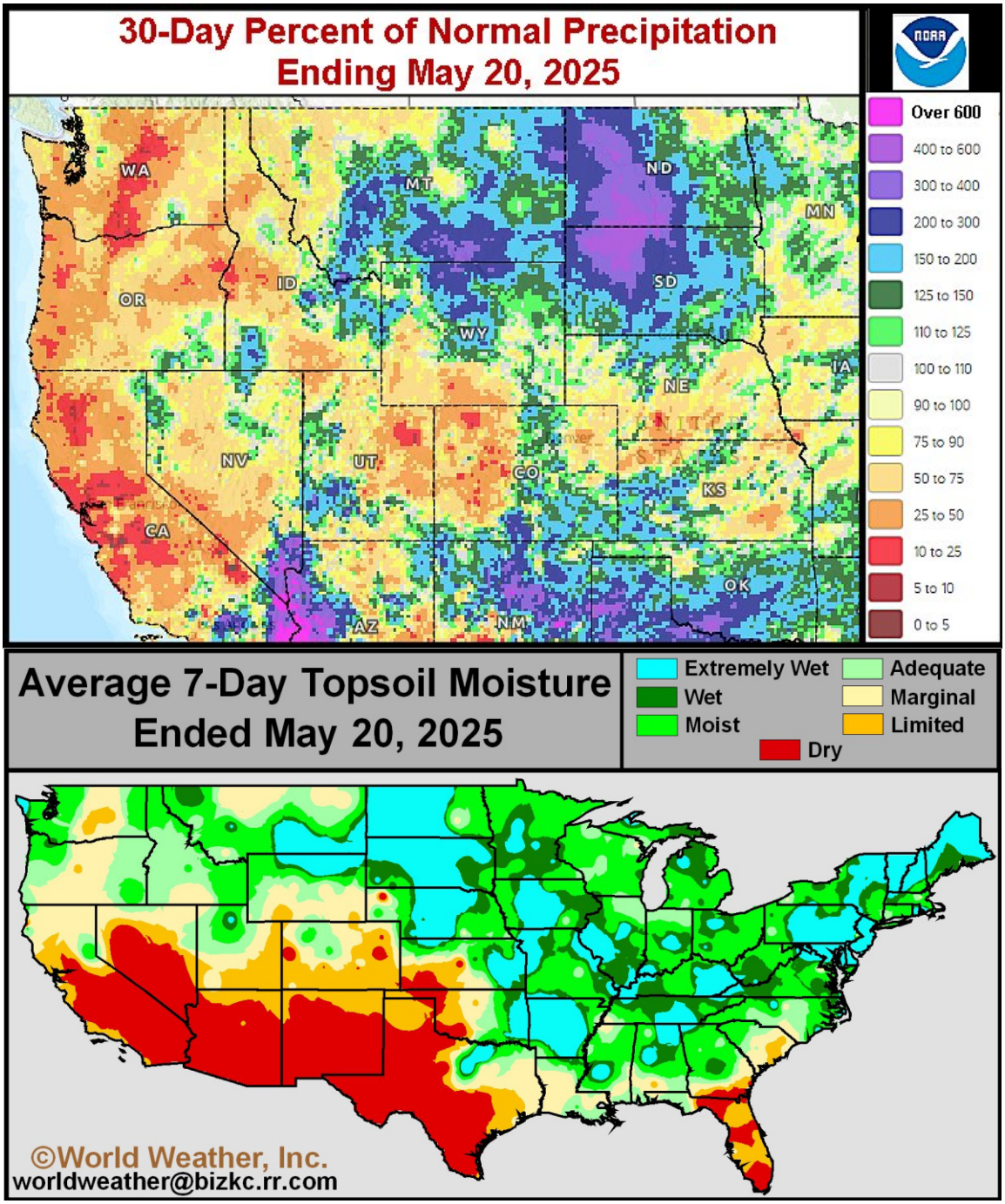

Soil moisture is still rated marginally adequate to adequate in southeastern Oregon portions of the Snake River Basin and eastern Washington State. However, the Yakima River Basin in central Washington and portions of northern Oregon have short to very short soil moisture raising stress for any and all unirrigated crops in the region.

Winter wheat and other crop conditions were rated relatively well by the USDA earlier this week in the Pacific Northwest, despite the recent drying trend. ***Irrigated crops have ample moisture to support new growth and that includes much of central Washington where 78% of the crop was rated good to excellent. Most of the dryland winter crops are produced in Oregon and this week's USDA crop progress reports***

suggested 12% of the crop was rated poor to very poor and about 61% of the crop was rated good to excellent. Spring wheat and barley planting was nearing completion.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

Drier-than-normal weather is slated for much of the Pacific Northwest through the middle of next week. Light rain will still be scattered across the region today and Thursday as a disturbance passes across western North America. A high-pressure ridge will restrict precipitation Friday and this weekend before another wave of light rain occurs early next week. Moisture totals by next Wednesday morning will range from trace amounts to 0.40 inch and locally more. Precipitation will remain limited May 29-June 4.

Periods of warmer than normal weather will also evolve in the Pacific Northwest through the middle of next week. Daytime highs will peak to the 50s and 60s Fahrenheit with pockets in the 70s today and Thursday. Highs will increase to the 60s and 70s with pockets in the lower 80s Friday and Saturday before increasing further to the 70s and 80s with pockets in the 90s later this weekend and early next week. Seasonable to seasonably warm weather will prevail May 29-June 4.

Aggressive drying is slated for unirrigated areas in the Pacific Northwest for at least the next week to ten days as drier- and warmer-than-normal weather evolves. The periods of rain will be unable to impact long-term soil conditions in most fields. The environment will gradually deteriorate for winter wheat development, mainly in the dryland areas. Conditions for the spring wheat and barley will also deteriorate in the dryland locations as well. Irrigated crops will still have enough moisture to support relatively good crop conditions.
