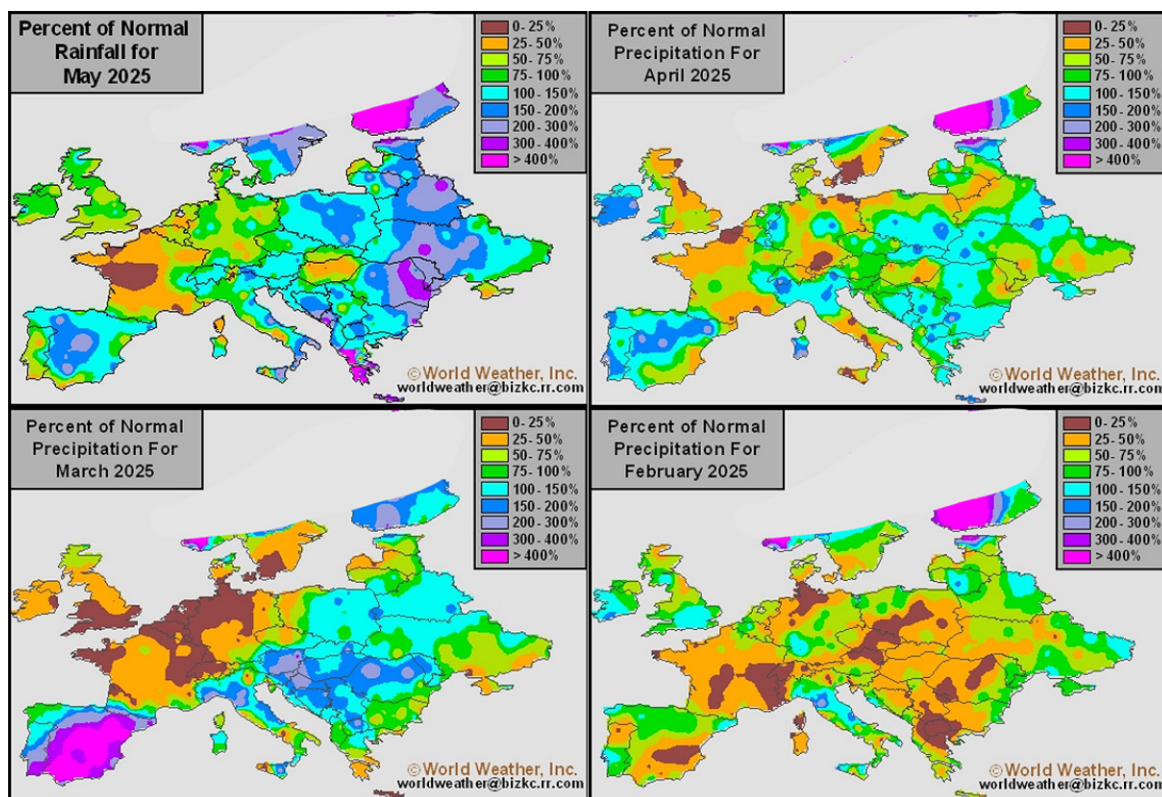


Europe Drought Expanding, Crop Stress Rising On Greater Heat

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, June 18 (World Weather Inc.) – European crops have been enduring less than usual rainfall during much of the growing season this year. So far, the impact on production has been somewhat limited, although Germany reported some notable losses from dryness that occurred earlier this spring and France has reported some similar concerns. Other areas in the continent have experienced some unusual dryness at times as well, but the impact has been kept relatively low up until now. A ridge of high pressure is expected frequently over the next couple of weeks suppressing rainfall and inducing greater heat which should translate into greater crop and livestock stress.



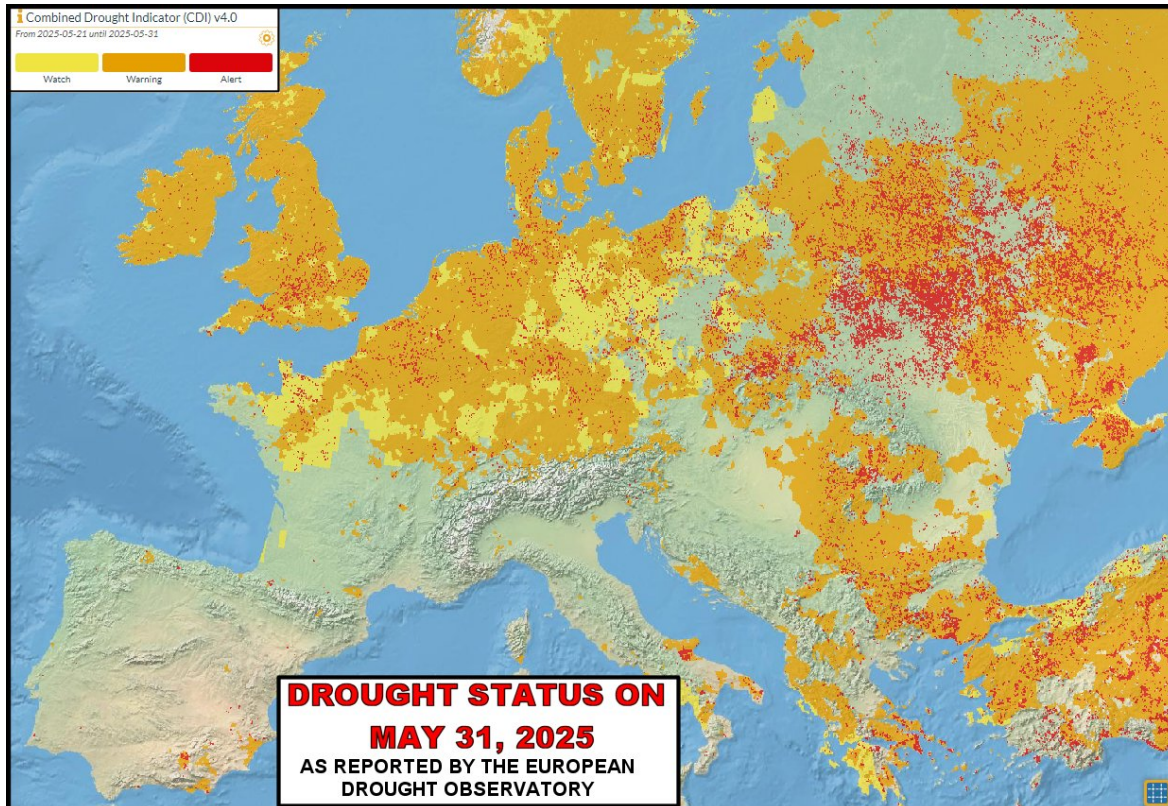
France and Germany have been among the driest nations in the continent relative to normal this year and the situation in France has become more threatening in recent weeks. Soil moisture is not only limited in France and parts of Germany, but it is also low in many areas from Spain and Portugal through Italy to the Balkan Countries and Ukraine. Drying in southern Europe during the summer is not unusual, but concern is rising over water supply, soil moisture and crop conditions in western parts of the continent because of a ridge of high pressure that is expected to dominate the balance of June and possibly in a part of July as well.

France and Germany have been at the heart of dryness this year with both countries reporting below normal precipitation every month since January. June has been different for Germany with some much needed rain bolstering topsoil moisture and improving crop

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conditions during the first half of the month. Much more rain is needed in Germany to restore river and stream flows as well as water reservoir levels.

France was not relieved of dryness earlier this month when rain fell across Germany and the North Sea region. That precipitation event was extremely important and it brought timely relief to most grain, oilseed and sugarbeet production areas at just about the right time to reverse crop stress and improve production potentials. It is becoming apparent that the relief may have been temporary.



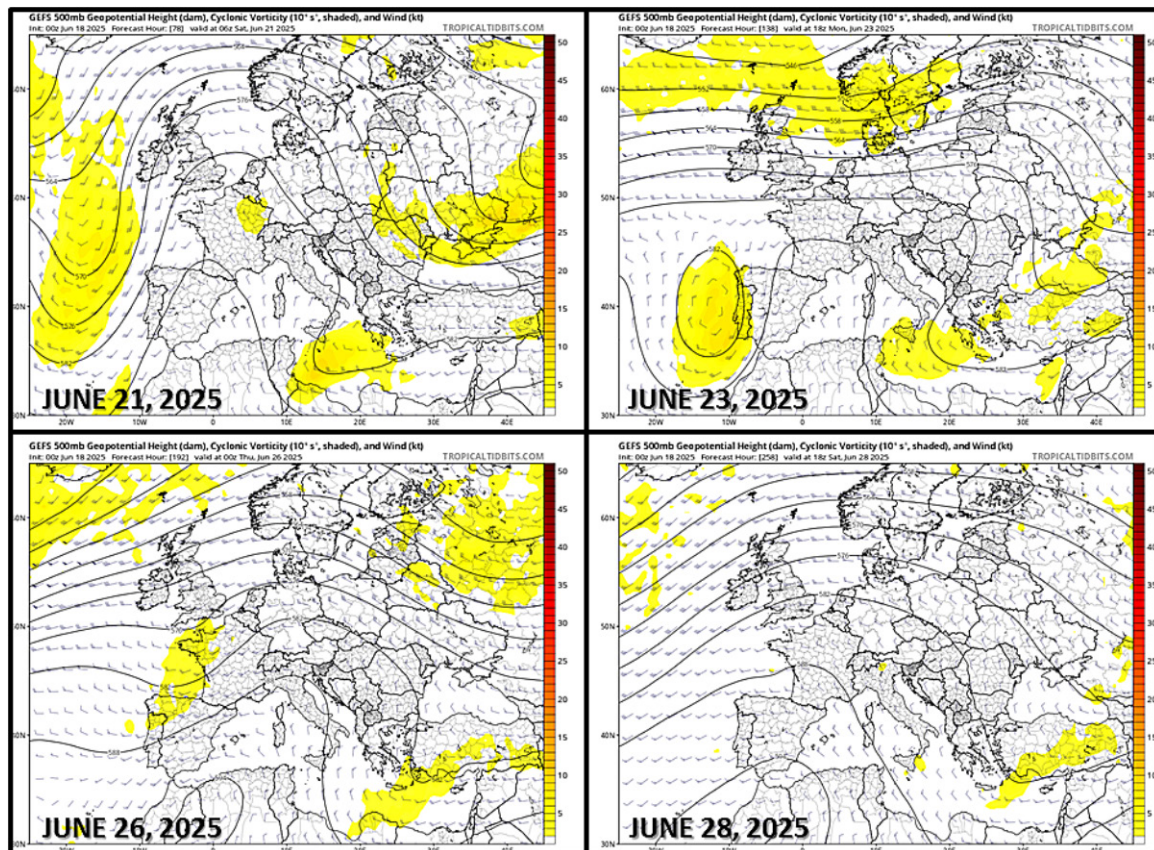
A ridge of high pressure has been building over Western Europe recently and it is predicted to continue a frequent presence in the region through much of the next few weeks. The high pressure ridge will perpetuate the below normal precipitation bias that has been prevailing since January and it will also induce warmer than usual temperatures.

Crops have managed the drier bias in Europe relatively well so far this year because of a general lack of hot weather. Temperatures have been warmer than usual at times, but most of the warmer days were countered by short term bouts of cooling and some shower activity to help mitigate the drought. Now that temperatures have a good chance of being in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit (upper 20s to middle 30s Celsius) frequently during the balance of June and early July, the potential for crop moisture stress is going to be much higher. Dryness is always a concern, but when heat is added it does not take long for the concern to turn into a crisis with more serious moisture shortages and a higher level of stress to crops and livestock

Early indications do not suggest a super strong ridge of high pressure because of a relatively strong jet stream in the Northern Hemisphere; however, warmer than usual

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conditions will still enhance drying rates and accelerate the decline in water supply and crop conditions.

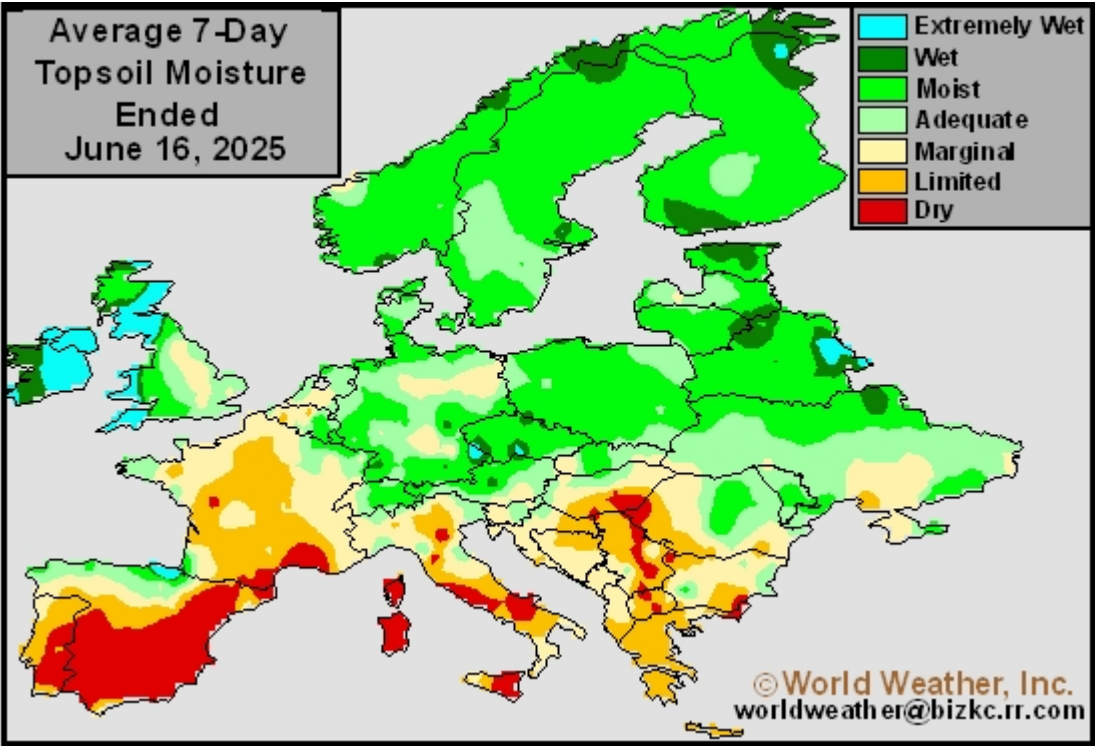
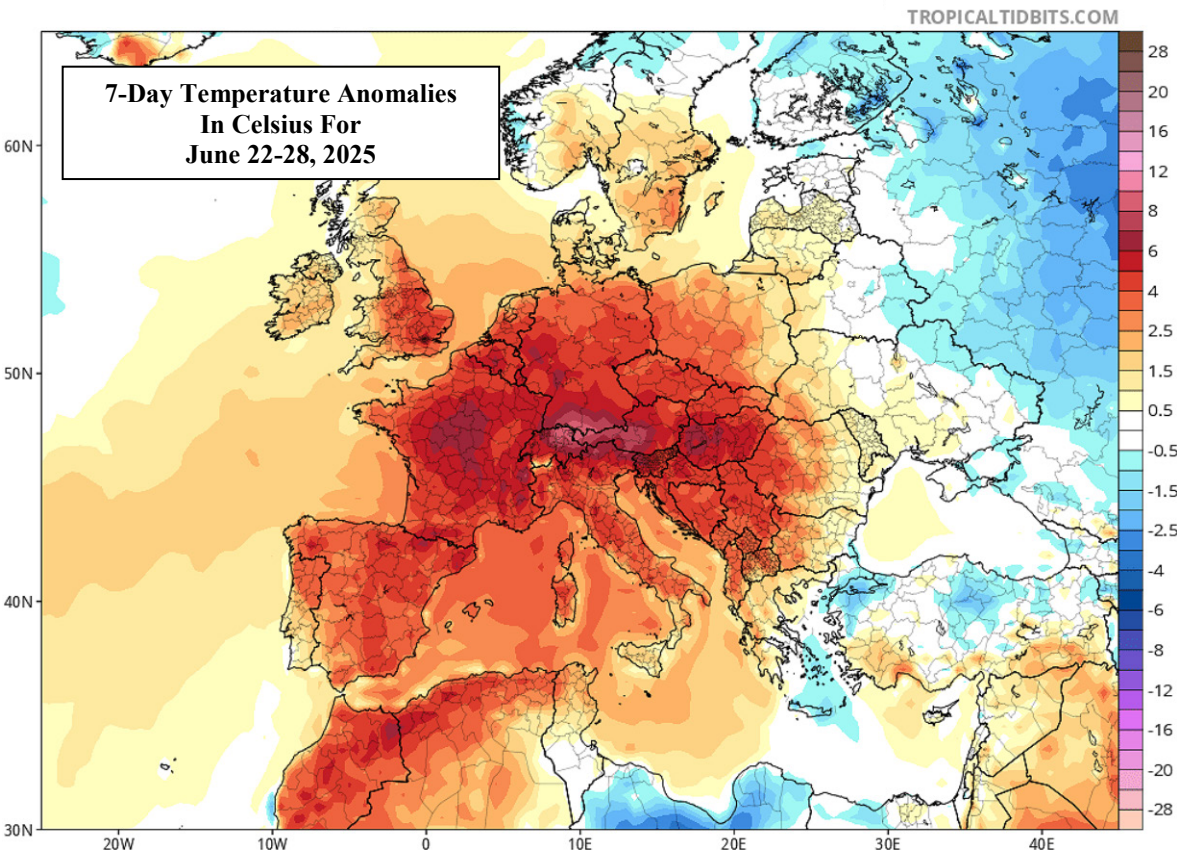


France has been at the center of the driest conditions in recent weeks. Germany got a little break with the early June rain that fell, but the entire region from the U.K. through France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg to Spain, Portugal and a part of Italy will be subjected to restricted rain and daily warm to hot weather. This pattern will last through the end of June and into at least the first week to ten days of July. Some short term relief is possible infrequently with periodic rain and slightly cooler temperatures. However, the ridge of high pressure will persevere. Frequent resurges of heat and dryness will see to it that more drying occurs than there is benefit from rain.

All of Western Europe will be involved with the drier and warmer bias for a while; however, Spain and Portugal irrigate most of their spring and summer crops and winter precipitation was abundant enough to raise water reservoir levels in support of summer irrigation. Italy is also in a little better position to handle the drier days coming up, but Germany, like France, has low water reserves and significant rain is needed to ensure sufficient water for drinking, irrigation and shipping.

Drier biased conditions are also a concern in a part of the Balkan Countries in particular the lower Danube River Basin. Unirrigated crop areas in the basin do need rain and not much is expected for a while. Dryness in southeastern Europe is not nearly as chronic as it may be in parts of France and Germany leaving those areas at the top of the list of places in the world that could be facing a more notable decline in spring and summer crop production potential. The region must be closely monitored.

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