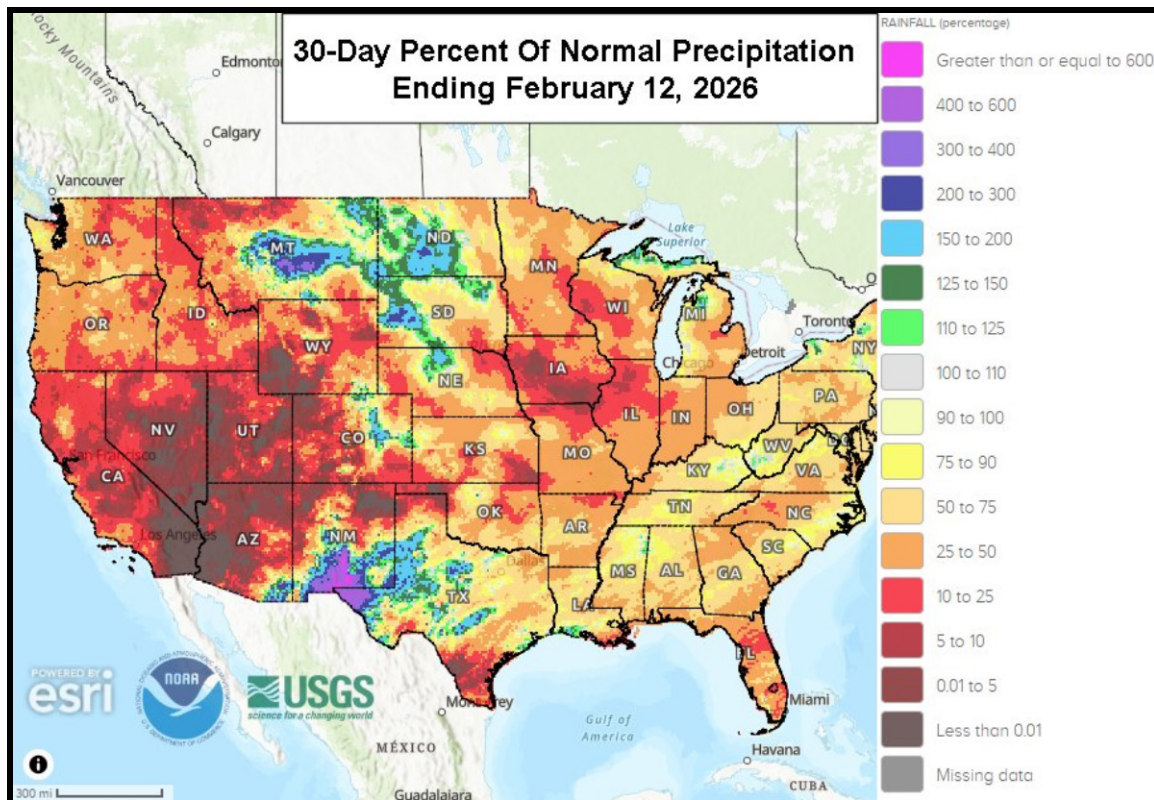


U.S. Weather To Become Active: Central, NW Plains Stay Dry

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, February 13 (World Weather Inc.) – ***Drought or abnormally dry conditions are an ongoing concern for several crop regions around the United States. Some of the most significant drought was noted from portions of the southern Plains and Delta into the central Midwest as well as in the southeastern states. Several other areas in the Plains and Midwest are also struggling with dryness.*** While there are still several weeks before planting kicks off in the main agricultural areas, the driest locations will need significant precipitation for better early-season planting and winter grain development. ***An active weather pattern is slated for North America through the end of next week. Several areas outside of the High Plains region will receive enough precipitation to alleviate “some” of the dryness by this time next week.*** There will still be a need for precipitation late this month into March to further improve spring crop planting prospects and winter crop development.

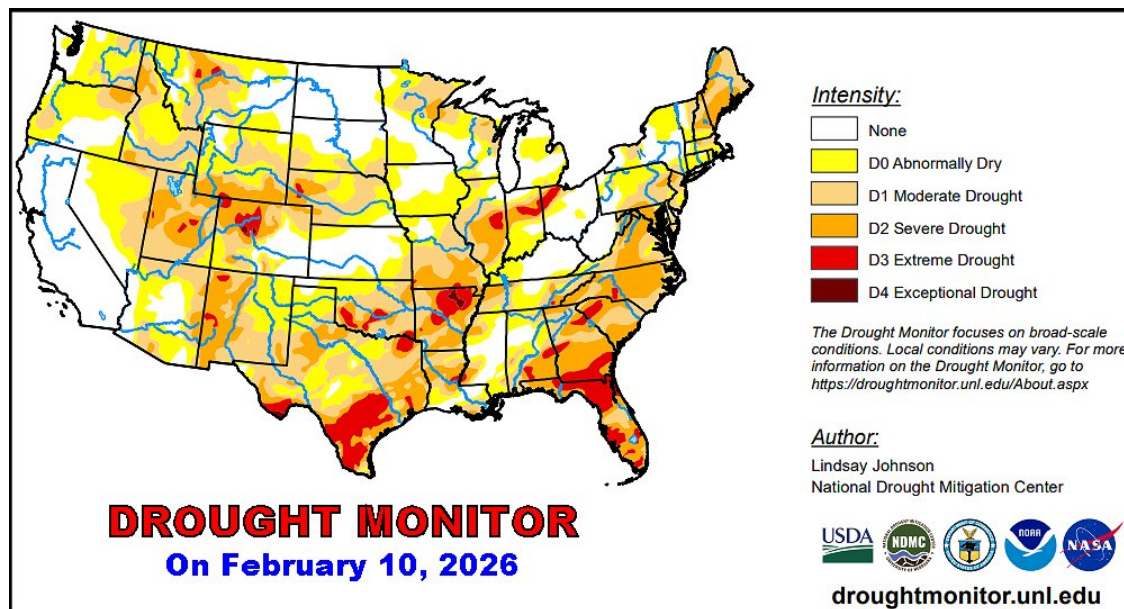
A large section of the United States experienced drier than usual conditions during the past month. Several areas in West Texas and portions of North Dakota and Montana were the only agricultural areas that received near to above normal precipitation with some receiving 125% to over 200% of normal precipitation for the 30-day period ending February 12; although, “normal” precipitation at this time of year is not much. In the meantime, several areas in the central Midwest and a few in the High Plains region received less than 25% of normal precipitation. Other agricultural areas received 25-90% of normal moisture.



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The lack of precipitation and recent warming trend helped drought spread and intensify in several production areas of the U.S. Texas and Oklahoma through a large section of the Delta and into the southeastern states, Illinois, and portions of Indiana and northwestern Ohio were abnormally dry or under moderate to extreme drought as of February 10. Several areas in the central and northern Plains and other pockets in the Midwest were also abnormally dry or in the midst of a moderate drought.

The need for significant precipitation is increasing across the main agricultural areas in the U.S. Planting normally begins in April and there is still plenty of time for improvement. However, the driest locations in the southern U.S. and central Midwest need significant amounts of moisture to completely reverse the moisture deficits and support better planting and establishment.



Many areas in the central and southern Plains, along with the central Midwest, are also too dry to support favorable winter wheat growth. Portions of Texas and Oklahoma have already warmed enough at times to bring the crop out of dormancy and root systems may be developing unevenly or poorly. Continued dryness in the coming weeks may continue to promote less than favorable conditions for wheat, especially as seasonal warming brings more crops out of dormancy. *With that said, though, some rain will fall in parts of Oklahoma, Texas, the Delta and Tennessee River Basin this weekend before reaching the southeastern states Sunday into Monday.*

A shift in the upper-air pattern will help promote a more active weather pattern for portions of the United States for at least the next seven days. A cut-off upper-level low-pressure system will initially bring rain and some storms from the southern Plains into the Delta and southeastern states later today and this weekend. At the same time an upper-level low-pressure trough will gradually build over western North America. This trough will help send a disturbance from the northern Plains into the Upper Midwest at the beginning and middle of next week. Another disturbance will likely travel from the Plains into the Midwest later next week as well.

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Much of Oklahoma outside the Panhandle through the Delta and into the southeastern states will receive 0.50 to 3.00 inches of rain with locally greater amounts by next Friday morning. North Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa into the central and eastern Midwest will receive 0.25 to 1.50 inches of moisture with locally greater amounts. Temperatures will be cold enough for accumulating snow from North Dakota and Minnesota into Wisconsin, Michigan, northern Iowa, and immediate neighboring areas. Accumulations will range from 2 to 6 inches with greater amounts likely in southern Minnesota and portions of Wisconsin. Other areas in the Midwest will be warm enough for much of the precipitation to fall as rain. Several areas in Kansas and Montana and a few locations in southern Nebraska and the Texas Panhandle will receive trace amounts to 0.40 inch of moisture. Light snow will accumulate in Montana. Other areas in the Plains will receive little to no precipitation. *The central through northwestern Plains are unlikely to be impacted by much precipitation.*

California and the Pacific Northwest will also see several waves of precipitation through the end of next week. Precipitation totals will be enough to keep reservoir levels at or above historical levels in much of California. Mountain snowpack in the Sierra Nevada remains well below normal for this time of year and the precipitation should help bring totals closer to normal, additional precipitation will be needed. The Cascade Mountains will also see snowpack improve.

The active weather pattern will likely persist for portions of North America February 21-27. The upper-level trough will likely meander around western North America, but may shift slightly to the north over western Canada. Disturbances tracking around the trough will still make their way from the Plains into eastern North America. Precipitation will likely favor the northern Plains and Midwest while the central and southern Plains into the Delta and southeastern states potentially miss out on much of the precipitation.

Precipitation through the end of next week will be enough to bolster soil moisture in several areas east of the Rockies outside portions of the High Plains region. Resulting rainfall will not be enough to end drought in the Delta, southeastern states or Oklahoma and additional rain will be needed late this month into March. The moisture will lead to some improved potential for wheat development in the spring. Many areas in the Midwest and northern Plains will welcome the rain and snow that occurs as well, though the driest areas in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio will also need additional precipitation to completely eliminate the dryness.

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