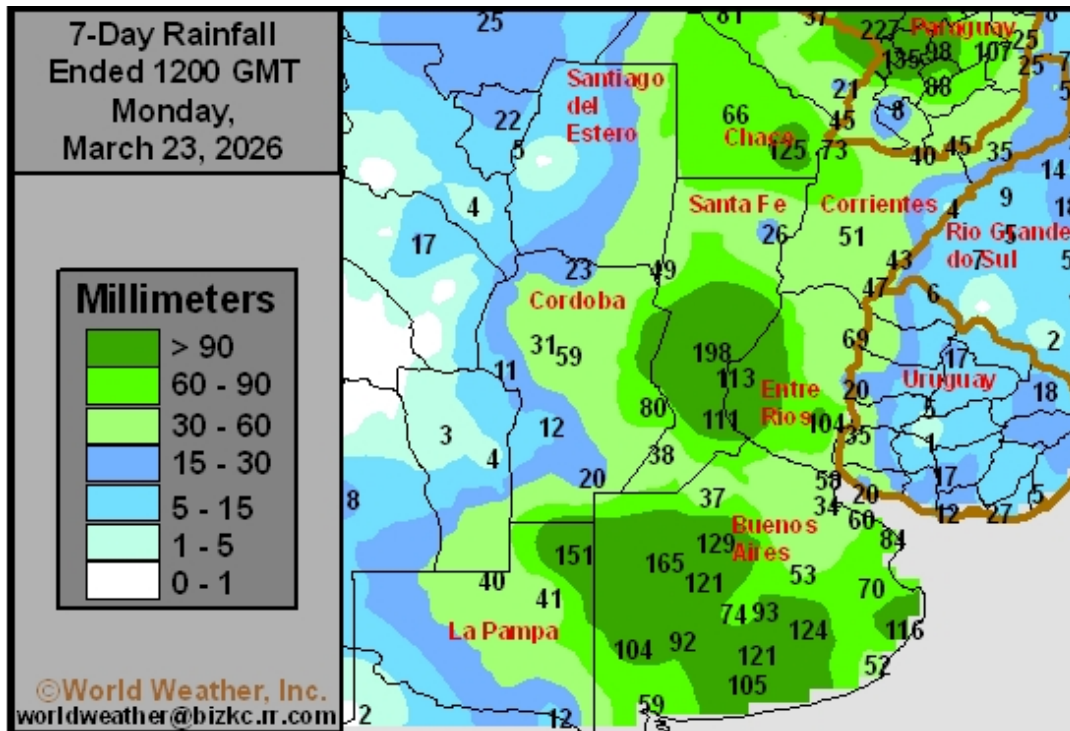


Argentina Rain May Briefly Disrupt Early-Harvest

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, March 23 (World Weather Inc.) – Heavy rain lashed at a large section of Argentina's main production areas during the past week. Local flooding was suspected and at least a minor amount of crop and property damage may have occurred. The rain was welcome for late-planted, immature, coarse grain, oilseed, and cotton crops in areas that did not receive excessive rain. In the meantime, the moisture boost was disruptive to the maturation and harvest of early season crops. Somewhat improved weather is expected during the coming week to ten days with only one rain event expected and that occurs Friday into Monday. A more prolonged period of dry and warm weather may be needed after that to promote fieldwork and better crop development conditions.

Waves of rain were noted in Argentina during the past week. Buenos Aires, Entre Rios, La Pampa. Eastern Cordoba, Santa Fe, Corrientes, Chaco, and Formosa received 1.50 to 5.00 inches with local amounts up to 7.80 inches in Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and La Pampa for the seven-day period ending this morning. Other areas in Cordoba and portions of Santiago del Estero received 0.43 to 2.32 inches of rain. Light rain was noted in portions of San Luis.



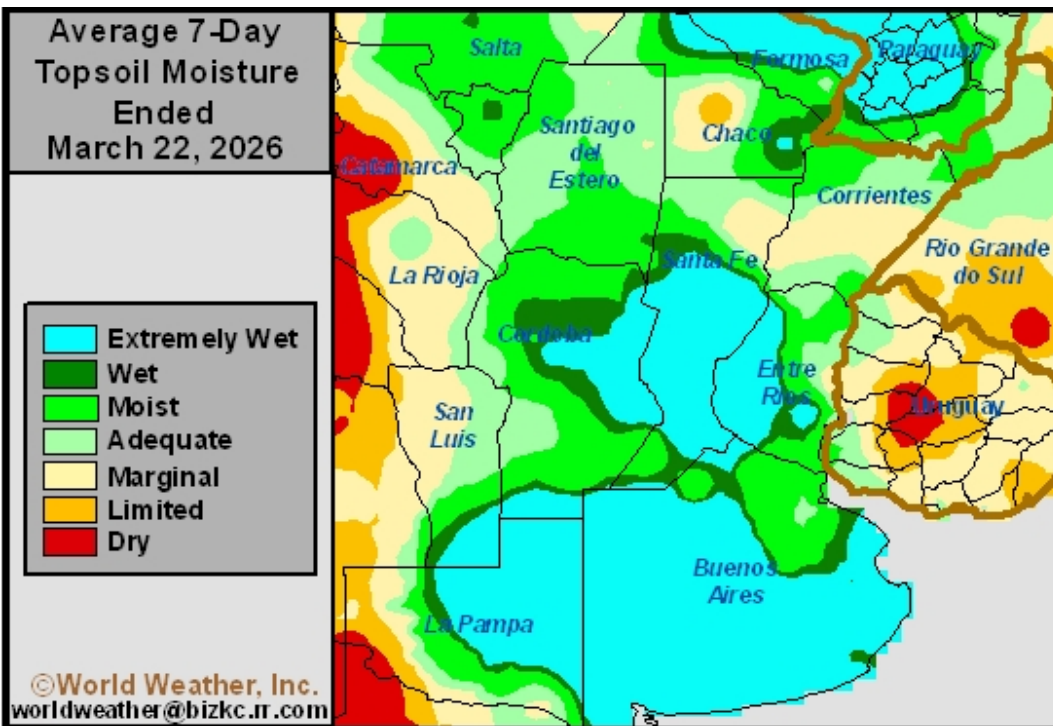
Topsoil moisture is rated adequate to excessive due to the waves of rain during the past couple of weeks. Many areas in Entre Rios, Buenos Aires, and Corrientes still have a shortage of moisture in the subsoil due to prolonged dryness earlier this month and in February.

Harvesting continues for some of the early-planted crops in Argentina. As of March 19, corn harvesting was 14% complete, up from 8% this time last year according to

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Argentina's Ministry of Economy. Sunseed harvesting was 51% complete compared to 39% last year. Rice harvesting was 46% complete, down from 63% this time last year. Harvesting of the other crops had not yet begun.

Despite drier weather during the growing season, Argentina's sunseed production is expected to be much larger than usual this season. The USDA has suggested that production may reach 7.0 million tonnes which would be the largest crop in 28 years. The increase was largely attributed to an increase in area planted, but the weather has been somewhat helpful at times as well. Yield potentials for other crops improved as well due to late-season rainfall in recent weeks. *The main concern from last week's rain was the potential for quality declines for some of the oilseeds and cotton in areas that received the greatest amount of rain. Drier and warmer weather would be welcome in the near future to improve maturation and harvesting.*



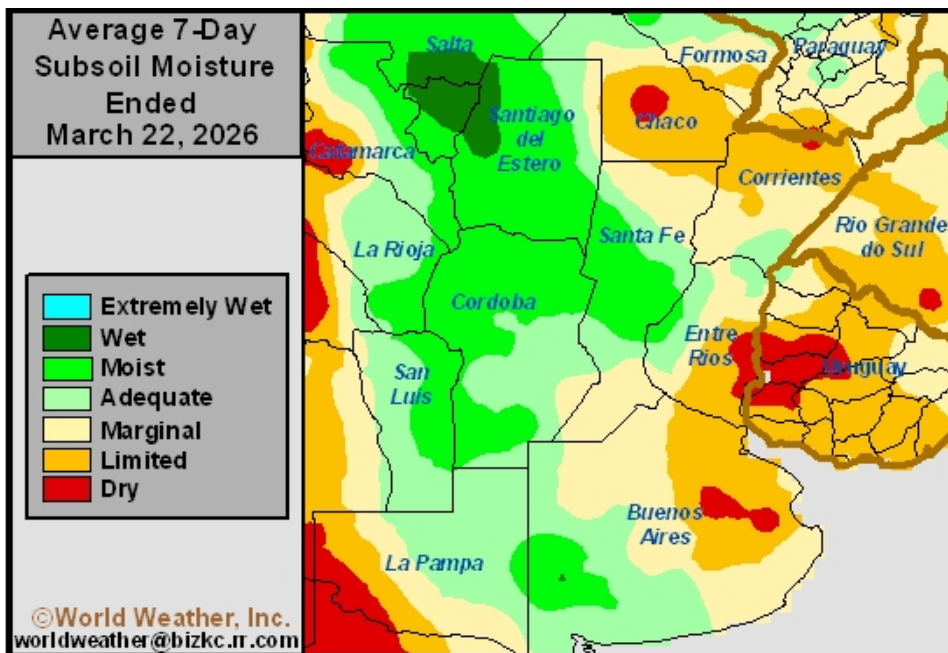
The main production areas in Argentina will see a mix of erratic rain and sunshine this week. A frontal boundary will generate rain for northern Argentina today. Outside a few spotty showers in the extreme northern and southern production areas, drier weather will evolve Tuesday and Wednesday. A slow-moving disturbance will then generate rain from north to south Thursday into this weekend. Moisture totals by next Monday morning will range from 0.50 to 3.00 inches with a few exceptions. Pockets in Entre Rios will receive 4.00 inches or more of rain. Southern Buenos Aires and a few locations in La Pampa, San Luis, Cordoba, and Santiago del Estero will also only receive 0.10 to 0.50 inch of rain. Argentina will then see brief periods of spotty rain March 31 – April 6.

Temperatures will trend near to slightly below normal for Argentina this week. Daytime highs will peak to the 60s and 70s Fahrenheit with pockets in the 80s through Thursday. Highs will increase to the upper 70s and 80s for the remainder of the week with portions of northern Argentina warming to the 90s. Low temperatures will be in the 40s and

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50s through Wednesday with portions of northern Argentina only cooling to the 60s. Lows for the remainder of the week will be in the 50s and 60s with many areas in the north only cooling to the lower 70s. Pockets in southern Argentina will still cool to the 40s as well. Seasonable to seasonably warm weather will be most common March 31 – April 6.

Harvesting and general fieldwork may again be sluggish in the wettest fields this week. However, some drying is expected during the next few days and may slowly improve the harvest for areas that are excessively wet. Additional rain should not be enough to significantly impact quality for the maturing crops; though, drier weather must occur next week to get harvesting back on track without inducing a quality issue. Late-season development conditions will remain relatively favorable.



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