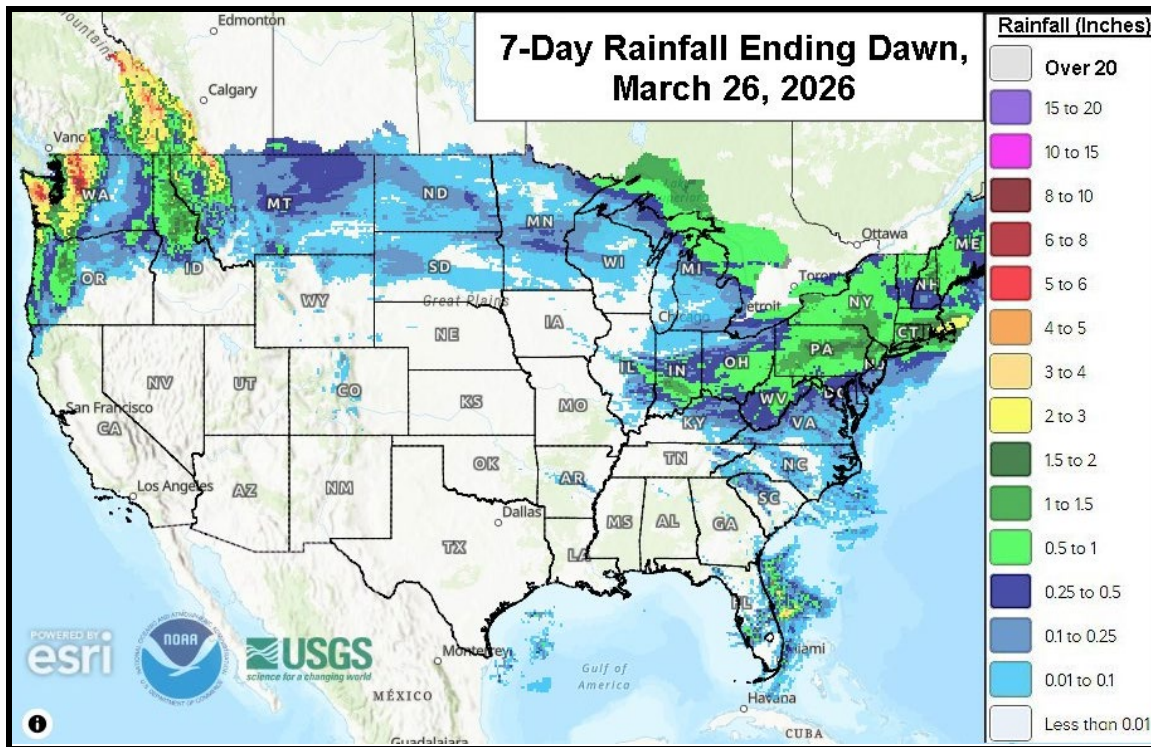


U.S. Delta, Midwest Will See Rain Potentials Increase

By Andrew Owen

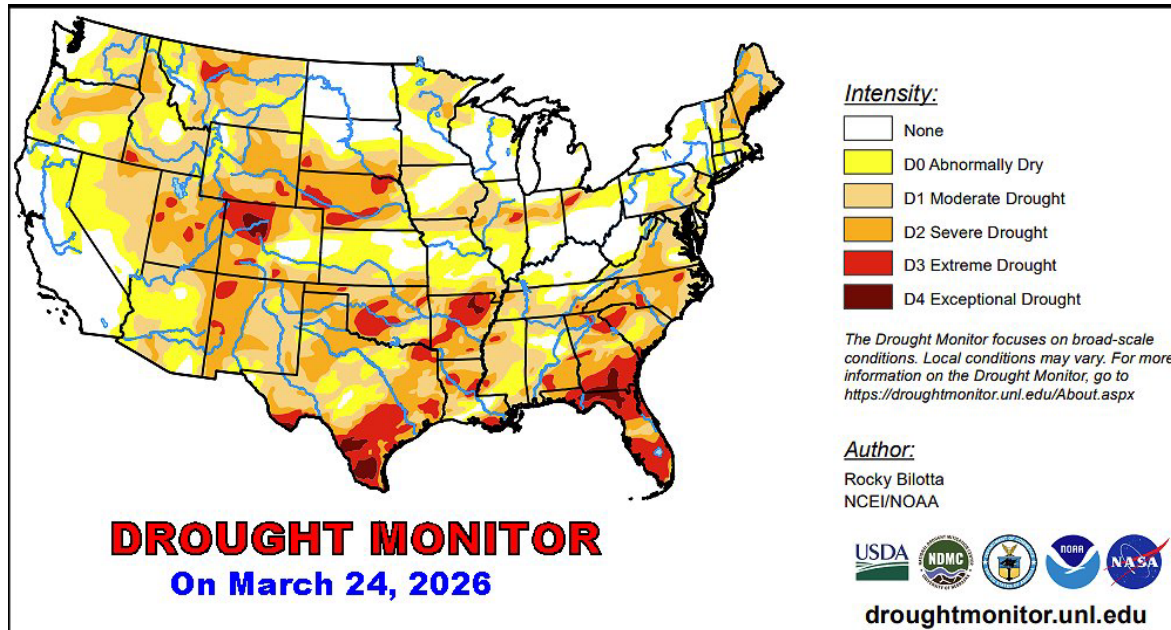
Kansas City, March 27 (World Weather Inc.) – **Drought continues to expand and intensify across a large section of the United States. Precipitation during the past week favored the Pacific Northwest and portions of the eastern Midwest while a high-pressure ridge promoted dry or mostly dry weather in the remaining agricultural areas. With planting season rapidly approaching, the need for significant rain is high for a large section of the country. Winter grain areas are also in need of rain to improve development conditions.** The ridge will continue to restrict precipitation through the end of the weekend before a series of disturbances advances across central and eastern North America next week. Rain will impact the U.S. Delta and portions of the eastern Midwest and southeastern states with some improved soil moisture. The Plains and western Midwest will receive limited precipitation and will continue to dry down. **Rainfall will be too light to completely erase the drought, even in areas that receive the greatest amount of precipitation.** The need for abundant rainfall will remain high heading into mid-April.

Western Washington received some of the most significant precipitation in the United States during the past week. Moisture totals for the seven-day period ending March 26 ranged from 1.50 to 6.00 inches in most locations. Western Oregon, northern Idaho, northwestern Montana, and portions of Ohio, southern Indiana, and east-central Illinois received 0.25 to 1.50 inches of moisture with locally greater amounts. The northern Plains and Upper Midwest, along with pockets in the Carolinas, received trace amounts to 0.50 inch of moisture. Other production areas in the United States were dry or mostly dry.



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As of March 24, several areas in the Dakotas and Upper Midwest into portions of the Ohio River Valley and Iowa, and California remained mostly drought-free. Drought or abnormally dry conditions were noted in a large swath of the central and southern Plains, southeastern states, Delta, and Pacific Northwest. Several areas in Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and neighboring areas were under an extreme or exceptional drought due to a lack of rain and periods of warmer or much warmer than normal weather in recent weeks.



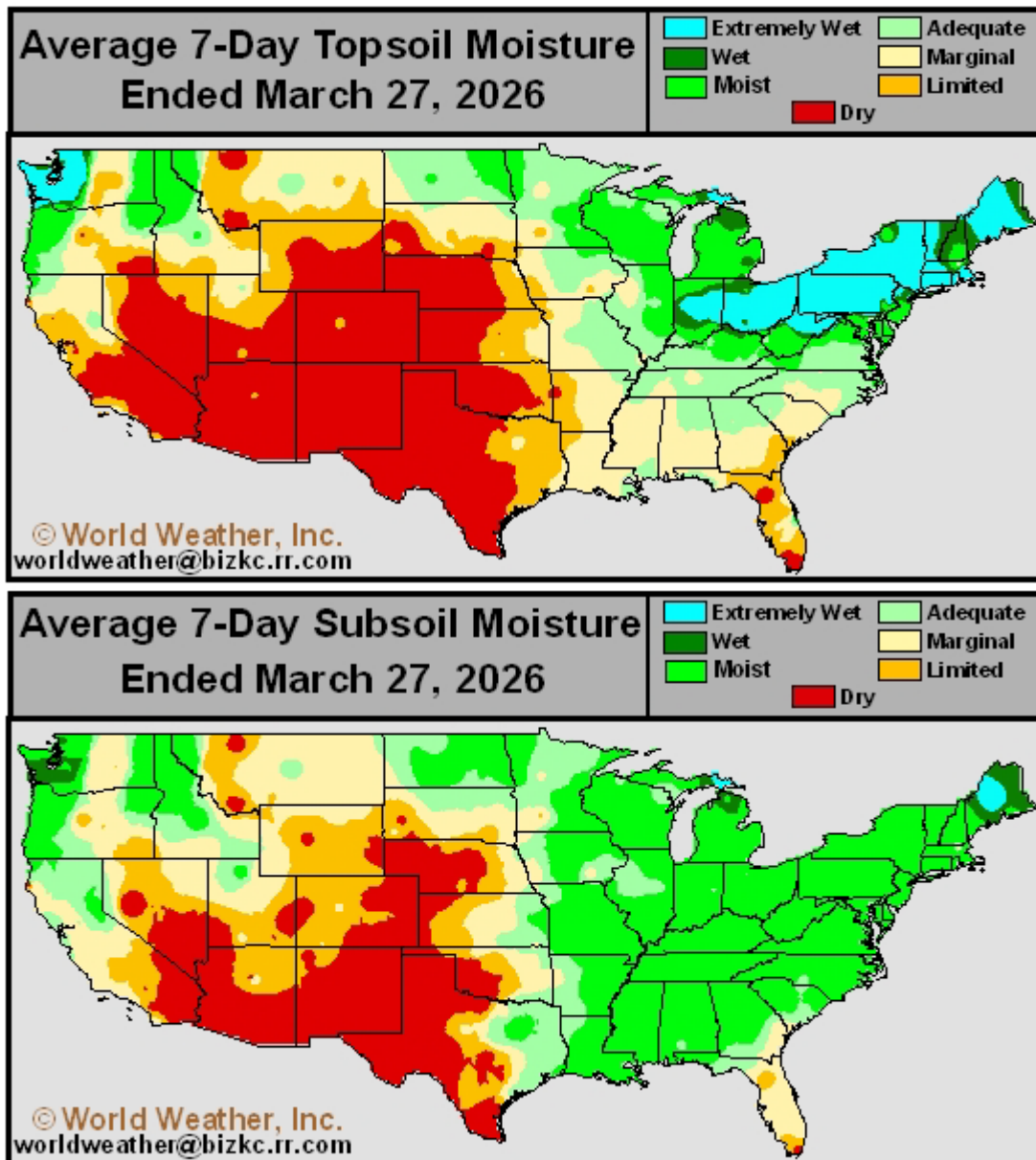
Concern is rising over adverse growing conditions in hard red winter wheat country in the central and southern Plains. Drought continued to expand and intensify across the region and may cause uneven or poor growth later this spring and summer. More importantly is the wild swing in temperatures that have injured the wheat crop. Bitter cold in late January and again March 14-16 likely induced some crop damage and the best environment for crops to recover is a wet and cool period of weather over a few weeks. Recent excessive heat and the lack of rain is actually the worst possible environment for crop recovery and further raises the urgency in getting significant rain to the region.

Soft red winter wheat conditions are more favorable in the Midwest, though several areas are trending too dry for ideal conditions as well. Winter wheat prospects are also variable in the Pacific Northwest due to the drought, though irrigated crops may have enough moisture to support growth for a little while.

Early-season planting prospects remain poor for much of the **Delta and southeastern states** due to ongoing drought. These areas need abundant rainfall in the near future to support better planting and establishment. Producers may wait until the moisture profile improves better planting a significant amount of crop.

In the meantime, **early season corn that was planted in the lower Delta was damaged by unusual cold and hard freezes March 15-16. Some of that crop needs to be replanted and that process is beginning now. No future freezes are likely in that part of the nation this spring.**

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In the Midwest and Plains, planting prospects are highly variable due to the distribution and intensity of drought. Several areas in the Ohio River Valley, northern Plains, and Upper Midwest may be able to begin planting at normal times while others may need to wait for better rainfall.

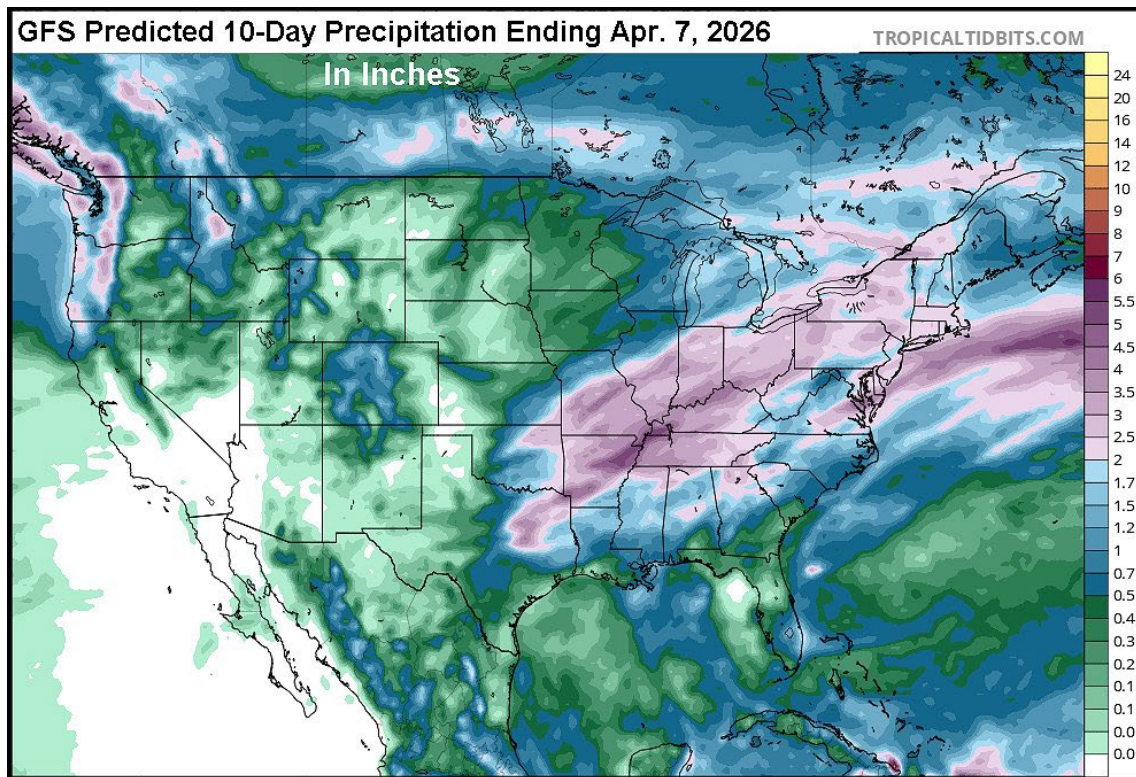
WEATHER OUTLOOK

The high-pressure ridge that helped promote drier and warmer than usual weather for much of the United States will remain in place through the end of the weekend. A weak frontal boundary will still generate light rain in the Ohio River Valley and neighboring areas today. The Pacific Northwest will also see spotty precipitation through the end of the weekend, especially Sunday as a disturbance passes over the ridge. This disturbance will

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help weaken the ridge and generate erratic precipitation and spotty thunderstorms for the Plains, Midwest, and eventually the Delta and southeastern states at the beginning and middle of next week. Another storm system will make its way from western into central North America toward the middle and latter part of next week as well.

Rainfall by next Friday morning will range from 0.50 to 3.00 inches with locally greater amounts from much of the Delta through the central and eastern Midwest and into northern sections of Alabama and Georgia and western sections of the Carolinas. Other areas in the Plains, western Midwest, and the southeastern states will receive 0.10 to 0.50 inch of rain, though several locations in the High Plains region will be mostly dry. The Cascade Mountains in Washington and Oregon, the northern and central Dakotas, and northern California will also receive 0.50 to 3.00 inches of moisture with locally greater amounts. Other locations in the Pacific Northwest will receive 0.10 to 0.75 inch of moisture.



The high-pressure ridge will slowly shift into eastern North America April 4-10. Another high-pressure ridge will likely build over the Gulf of Alaska while an upper-level low-pressure trough builds near the Hudson Bay. This upper-air pattern could help send disturbances across central and eastern North America on a frequent basis. Much of the main production areas near and east of the Rocky Mountains could experience wetter than usual conditions during this time, though resulting rainfall will be too light to fix the drought.

The temperature profile will fluctuate between near and above normal for much of the main agricultural areas in the United States through the end of next week. Several areas in the southeastern states and lower Delta will warm to the upper 70s and 80s Fahrenheit today while colder air expands across other areas east of the Rocky Mountains. Warmer air associated with the high-pressure ridge will shift from the Plains into eastern North America

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later this weekend and early next week with 70s and 80s again expected during the warmest periods. Another round of warmer weather will be possible in the Plains later next week. Seasonably warm weather is expected over eastern North America April 4 – 10 as the high-pressure ridge likely settles over the region. Areas farther west will see temperatures trend near or slightly above normal.

Rainfall next week and into the second week of the outlook will help improve the moisture profile for portions of the Midwest, Delta, and southeastern states. Planting prospects will improve greatly, although more rain will be needed to end drought. Winter wheat conditions in the Midwest will remain relatively good outside the driest pockets.

Western portions of hard red winter wheat country will see drought intensify through the end of next week despite the periods of spotty rain. Much of the rain that does occur will be lost to evaporation. The potential for increased rainfall during the second week of the outlook will be important and may improve development conditions for the short-term, though much more will be needed soon to protect production. *World Weather, Inc. believes relief in the western high Plains will come no sooner than late April and probably in May.*

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