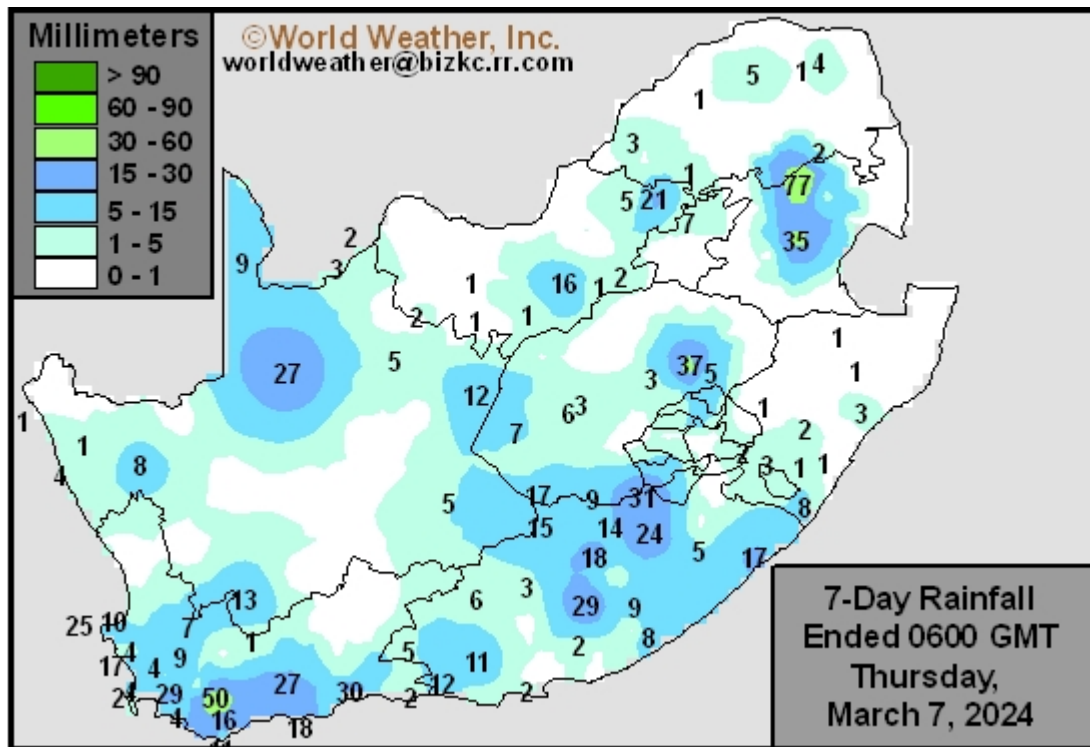


Central South Africa To Dry Down Further; Crop Losses Possible

By Andrew Owen

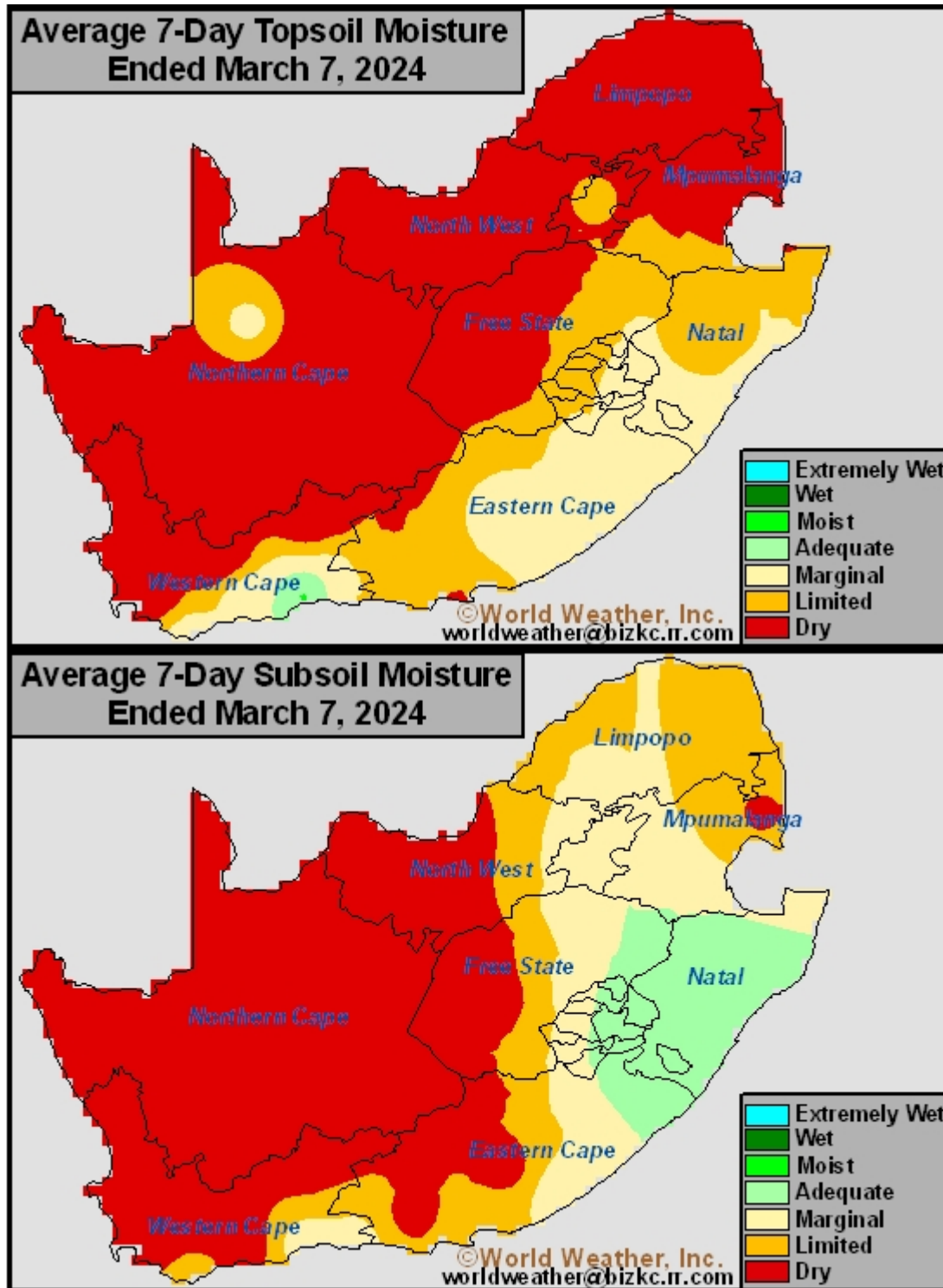
Kansas City, March 7 (World Weather Inc.) – *A relatively warm and dry pattern continued to play out in central South Africa during the past week impacting western portions of the nation’s key summer agricultural region. Spotty rainfall did occur, though not enough to reverse the drying trend that began in February. Ongoing dryness continued to increase the risk for minor corn, oilseed, and other crop losses in Free State, North West, and neighboring areas.* Many areas in eastern South Africa also dried down, but had enough moisture to maintain generally good development. Eastern South Africa will see a mix of spotty rain and sunshine during the coming week that will help maintain late-season growth. Western summer crop areas will miss out on much of the rain with temperatures remaining above normal.

Western Cape and Eastern Cape saw some of the most frequent rainfall in South Africa during the past week. Moisture totals for the seven-day period ending this morning ranged from 0.20 to 1.22 inches with a local total of 1.97 inches in southern Western Cape. Several pockets were also dry or mostly dry. Portions of Mpumalanga received 1.38 to 3.03 inches of rain. Portions of Free State, North West, and Northern Cape received 0.12 to 1.06 inches of rain with a local total of 1.46 inches in eastern Free State. However, several production areas were also dry or mostly dry. A few locations in Natal and Limpopo received trace amounts to 0.32 inch of rain. **Overall coverage of rain great enough to improve soil moisture for more than a day or two in summer crop areas was no more than 15% suggesting most summer crop areas are now drier than they were one week ago.**



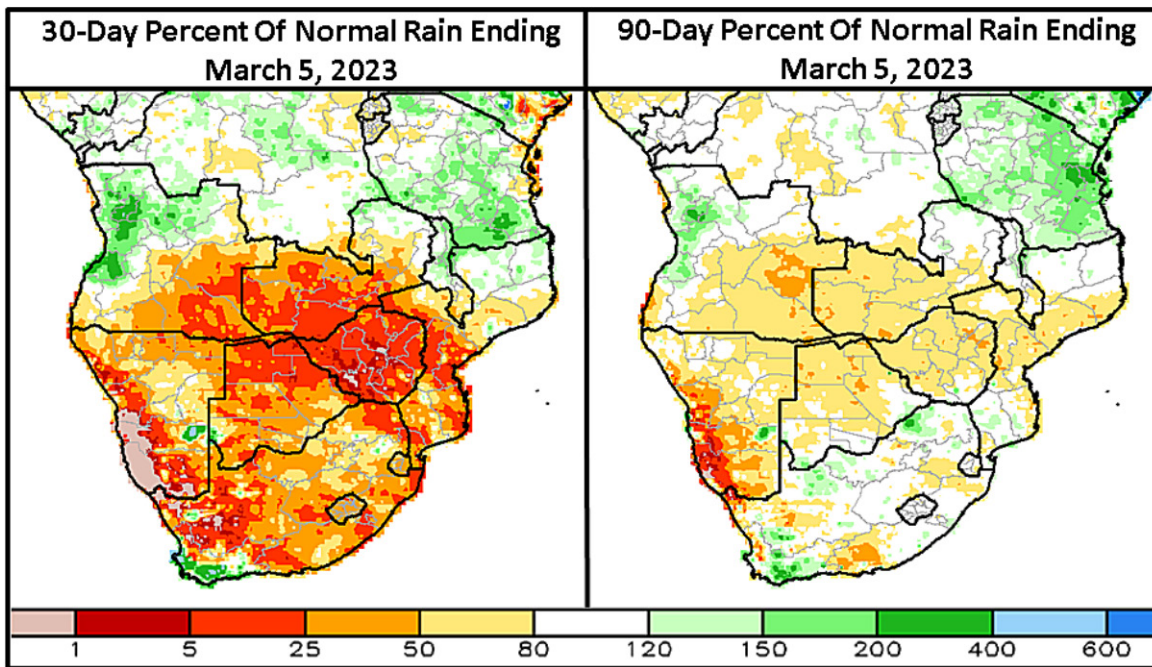
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Temperatures often trended above normal during the past week with highest readings in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit. Several pockets warmed above 100 degrees as well, most notably in the west, north, and east. Lowest readings were in the 50s and 60s with pockets in the 40s.



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Soil moisture remains short to very short in much of western and central South Africa, though improvements were noted in areas that received the greatest amount of rain in Western Cape and Eastern Cape in recent days. Many areas in eastern South Africa also dried down during the past week, but topsoil moisture is still rated marginally adequate to very short outside areas that received the greatest amount of rain in Mpumalanga. Subsoil moisture in eastern South Africa remains marginally adequate to short. *The dry weather is great for early season summer crop maturation and harvesting, but not good for immature unirrigated crops which are likely losing some yield and quality.*



Much of South Africa outside southwestern Western Cape trended drier or much drier than normal during the past month. This dryness is associated with El Nino and in a normal El Nino event these conditions would have dominated the entire summer, but they only started to show up in February after highly favorable weather occurred in December and January. *The drying trend hurt production potentials for late season corn and other coarse grains, oilseeds, cotton, and other crops in Free State, North West, and Northern Cape. Eastern South Africa still had some moisture to support new growth despite the reduction in soil moisture. The impact of recent drying will vary widely depending on what crops are irrigated and when they were planted.*

WEATHER OUTLOOK

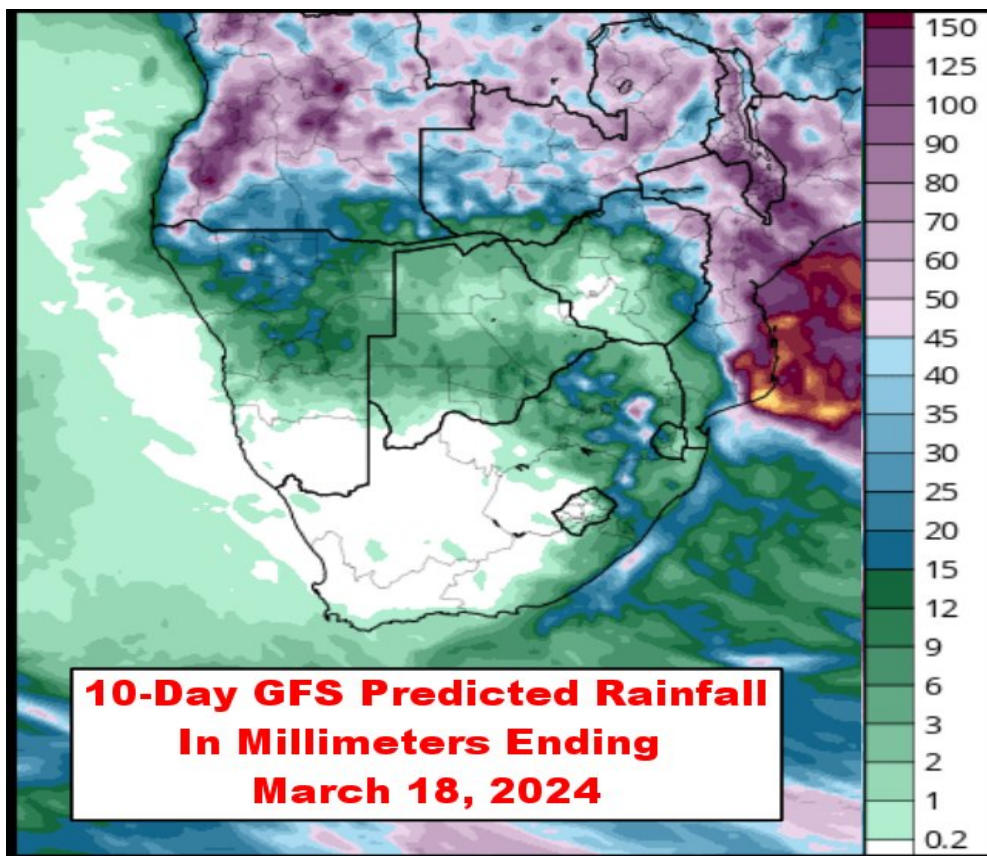
Eastern South Africa will see a mix of erratic rainfall and sunshine during the coming week. A disturbance will promote some of the most widespread and significant rainfall today. Light rain will be scattered across the region most other days. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.50 to 2.00 inches with local amounts of 3.00 inches or slightly more in eastern Limpopo and northeastern Mpumalanga. Central and western South Africa will otherwise receive little to no rain. Temperatures will often trend

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above normal with daytime highs peaking to the 80s and 90s most often, though pockets in eastern and southern South Africa will only warm to the 70s today and Friday. Pockets in western and northern South Africa will also warm above 100 degrees this weekend into next week. Low temperatures will be in the 50s and 60s with pockets in the 70s.

Periodic rain will persist for eastern South Africa March 15 – 21. Central South Africa will have a few opportunities for spotty rainfall as well while western South Africa remains drier than normal. Temperatures will trend near to above normal.

The periods of rain in eastern South Africa will help maintain generally favorable late-season coarse grain, oilseed, sugarcane, and other crop development. Maturation and early-season harvesting will likely advance swiftly around the rain as well. Other production areas will remain too dry to support good late-season development as the ground continues to firm. Concerns for minor production losses will persist. Maturation and harvesting will begin or continue with few disruptions.



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