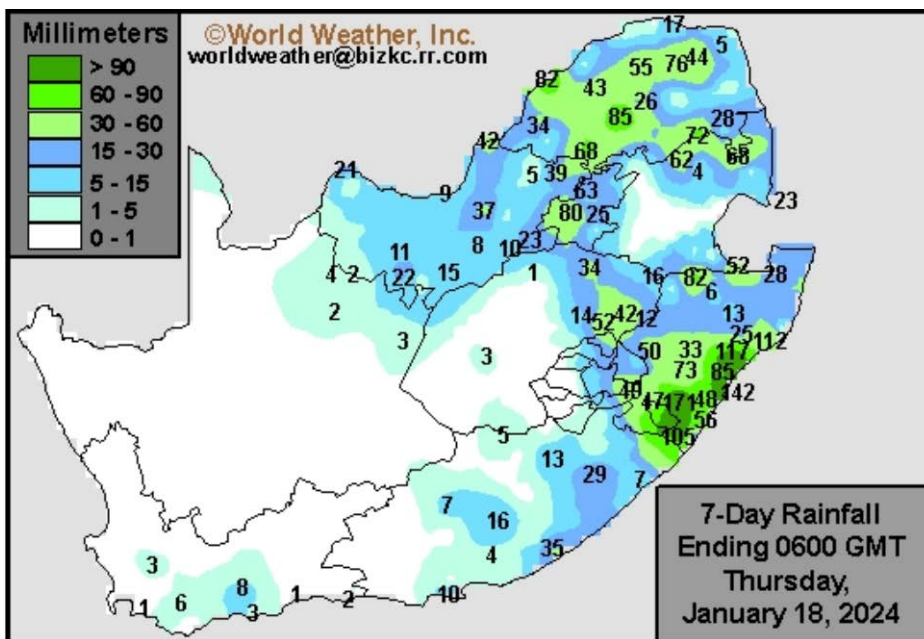


South Africa Will Dry Down Marginally; Crop Prospects Good

By Andrew Owen

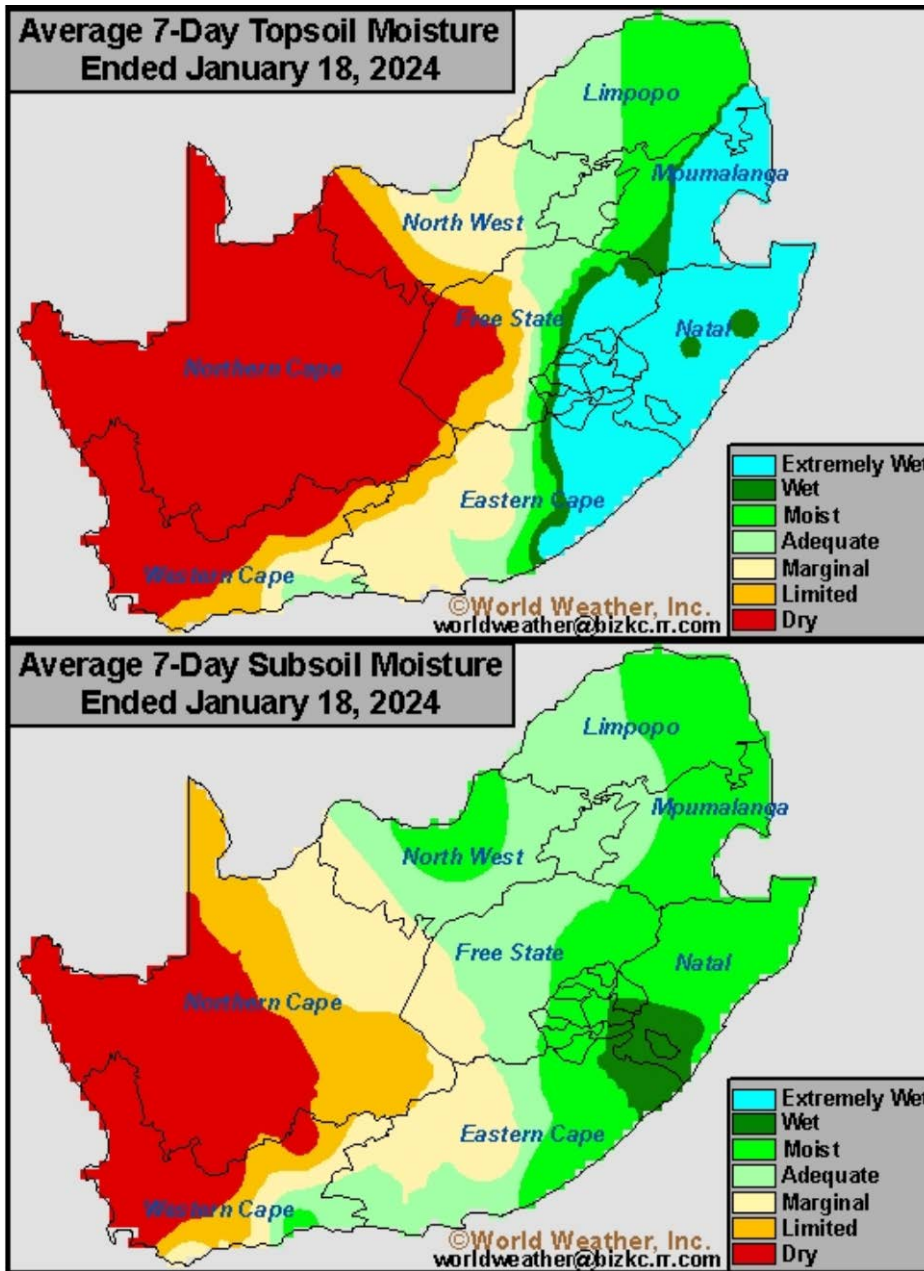
Kansas City, January 18 (World Weather Inc.) – Timely rain was again noted for much of South Africa’s main production areas during the past week. Only western Free State received limited to no rain and started to dry down while the moisture profile was rated favorably elsewhere. The country will experience a mix of spotty rain and sunshine during the coming week. Rain amounts will be lower compared to recent weeks in part due to the development of a strong tropical cyclone near Madagascar in the coming days. The moisture profile will either remain near current levels by this time next week or decrease marginally. Crop development conditions will remain favorable despite the potential for some reductions in soil moisture.

Central and southern Natal reported some of the most significant rain in South Africa during the past week. Moisture totals for the seven-day period ending this morning ranged from 1.30 to 6.73 inches. Other areas in Natal into Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng, and eastern Free State received 0.47 3.35 inches of rain. North West and portions of Eastern Cape received 0.20 to 1.46 inches of moisture. A few locations in Western Cape received up to 0.32 inch of rain while pockets in northeastern Northern Cape received up to 0.16 inch of moisture. Little to no rain was noted elsewhere. Temperatures were relatively normal with highest readings in the 80s and 90s Fahrenheit. Lowest temperatures were in the 50s and 60s.



Moisture shortages persist in a large section of Western Cape and Northern Cape. Western Free State lost a significant amount of topsoil moisture during the past week due to the lack of rain and warm weather. However, subsoil moisture is generally adequate or marginally adequate. The remaining production areas in South Africa have adequate to excessive soil moisture. Flooding was noted in the wettest locations of Natal during the past week. Crop and structural damage was likely minimal.

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The environment remained generally favorable for coarse grains, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton, and other crops in the main production areas of eastern and central South Africa. Western Free State still had enough moisture in the subsoil to support aggressive growth despite the reduction in topsoil moisture. Production potentials remain favorable across the country due to the ample rainfall so far during the growing season.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

South Africa's production areas will continue to experience a mixture of erratic rain and sunshine during the coming week. Light rain will initially be scattered across a few

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locations of eastern and central South Africa today. A disturbance will promote more widespread rain Friday through Monday with a few light showers expected Tuesday and Wednesday as well. Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.75 to 3.00 inches and locally greater amounts in southern Natal and portions of Eastern Cape. Other production areas in eastern and central South Africa will receive 0.25 to 1.00 inch of rain with drier pockets. Rain amounts will be lower compared to previous weeks in part due to Tropical Cyclone Belal and the formation of another tropical disturbance over the southwestern Indian Ocean. Eastern and central South Africa will again see a mix of spotty rain and sunshine January 26 – February 1.

Temperatures through next Thursday will trend near normal for South Africa. Daytime highs will peak to the 70s and 80s Fahrenheit with portions of western and northern South Africa often warming to the 90s. Low temperatures will be in the 50s and 60s with pockets in eastern South Africa only cooling to the 70s. Seasonable to seasonably warm weather is slated for the country January 26 – February 1.

Soil moisture will either remain near current levels or decrease marginally across South Africa during the coming week. Flood potentials may decrease marginally in Natal, though periods of rain may still cause localized flooding. The main production areas will have enough moisture to support aggressive growth through the last few days of January with exceptions in the driest areas of western Free State. Production potentials remain favorable across the country, though the need for timely rain will likely increase in February.

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