WORLD AGRICULTURAL WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS
March 10, 2015

1 - UNITED STATES
During February, record-setting temperatures—high in the West; low in the East—prevailed on both sides of the country. In between warm and cold regions, the Plains were the battleground for competing air masses and saw wildly fluctuating temperatures. In areas of the northern and central Plains with patchy, shallow, or non-existent snow cover, weather extremes were detrimental to the health of winter wheat. Like the previous month, February was relatively dry across the majority of the U.S. However, there were notable exceptions, including an early-month snow storm from the Midwest into the Northeast; periods of heavy snow on the High Plains; and several Southern storms. During the second half of the month, some of the Southern storms produced disruptive amounts of snow, sleet, and freezing rain. Meanwhile, California headed toward an almost certain fourth consecutive year of drought, despite a brief period of heavy precipitation early in the month. Complicating drought concerns in California and the Great Basin was the fact that meager snowpack in the Sierra Nevada will not provide much runoff into drought-shrunk reservoirs.

2 - SOUTH AMERICA
Inundating rain flooded parts of central Argentina, raising concern for potential damage to summer grains and oilseeds in low-lying farming areas. In contrast, previously wet locations in Argentina’s Parana River Valley were drier, reducing moisture for later-planted crops. Meanwhile, beneficial rain returned to Brazil’s eastern summer crop areas, helping to stabilize soybeans and main-season corn after an extended period of warmth and dryness. Conditions remained overall favorable for second-crop corn in the main production areas of southern and west-central Brazil.

3 - EUROPE
A wet, mild February benefited dormant winter crops from the United Kingdom southeastward into France, Italy, and the Balkans. In addition, locally heavy mountain snow boosted irrigation reserves and spring runoff prospects in northern Italy. Showers on the Iberian Peninsula sustained the favorable soil moisture for vegetative wheat and barley. In contrast, generally dry weather settled over Germany and Poland, though moisture reserves remained favorable for spring growth. Despite a lack of snow cover over Europe’s primary growing areas, the mild weather during February minimized the risk of winterkill or burnback.

4 - FSU-WESTERN
Unseasonably warm, wet weather encouraged winter crop greening in southern-most growing areas and maintained overall favorable conditions for dormant winter crops elsewhere. By mid-month, the region’s southern crop districts were devoid of snow, and snow had begun to recede in the more northerly winter grain and oilseed areas by the end of February.

5 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA
In February, occasional rainfall maintained good to excellent prospects for vegetative winter wheat and barley from northern Morocco into Algeria and Tunisia. In contrast, drier-than-normal conditions lingered over southern Morocco, though subsoil moisture remained sufficient following an excessively wet autumn.

6 - MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY
Wet weather during February sustained the favorable growing season for winter crops. Unseasonably warm conditions accelerated winter wheat out of dormancy up to a month ahead of normal from Turkey into central Iran. In addition, the warmth kept the region devoid of snow cover but eliminated the risk of winterkill.

7 - SOUTH ASIA
Seasonably dry weather prevailed across India during February, benefiting maturing rabi crops. Parts of the northern wheat areas, however, received unwelcomed rainfall that slowed maturation and raised local concerns for grain quality.

8 - EASTERN ASIA
Unseasonably warm weather in February forced winter wheat in southern portions of the Yellow River Basin and rapeseed across the Yangtze Valley out of dormancy earlier than usual. Overall, though, the warmth was deemed beneficial by preventing freeze injury to overwintering crops. However, with crops becoming vegetative during the dry season, supplemental irrigation was necessary to maintain current crop prospects.

9 - SOUTHEAST ASIA
February rainfall was near to above normal for rice in Java, Indonesia, maintaining favorable moisture supplies for the crop. In the Philippines, drier-than-normal weather during the month reduced overall moisture reserves but benefited maturation of the earliest planted portion of the rice and corn crop. In other parts of the region, harvesting was underway for dry-season rice in Thailand and winter-spring rice in southern Vietnam.

10 - AUSTRALIA
In the wake of January’s beneficial rain, drier weather overspread southern Queensland and northern New South Wales in early February. The combination of sunny skies and adequate moisture supplies favored immature summer crops, maintaining good yield prospects. Intermittent showers during the latter half of the month continued to benefit immature cotton and sorghum, while periods of dry weather aided maturation of the earliest sown crops.

11 - SOUTH AFRICA
In February and early March, warmer- and drier-than-normal weather reduced soil moisture across the corn belt for rain-fed summer crops advancing through reproduction. The highest temperatures were recorded in western and northern production areas. Periodic dryness was also unimially for rain-fed sugarcane in southern production areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

Next Release: April 9, 2015