1 - UNITED STATES
Soaking April rainfall maintained a slow fieldwork pace from the western and central Gulf Coast into the Tennessee and Ohio Valleys. Monthly precipitation totals were more than twice the normal in the wettest locations. Planting delays extended into the eastern Corn Belt, particularly across Indiana and Ohio. In stark contrast, very dry weather prevailed across the upper Midwest. With soils already dry and warm weather arriving late in the month, more than 40 percent of the intended corn acreage was planted in a single week (from April 27 – May 3) in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and North Dakota. The April dryness also extended westward across the northern Plains and encompassed much of the West. In drought-ravaged California and the Great Basin, a mostly dry April locked in a fourth consecutive year of drought. Meanwhile, showery weather stabilized winter wheat conditions on the central and southern Plains. Most of the nation experienced near-normal April temperatures, as periods of warmth were interspersed with cool conditions. A notable exception was the lower Southeast, where consistently warm weather led to the warmest April on record in numerous Florida locations.

2 - CANADA
Dry weather, combined with a lack of snow cover, supported a rapid early pace of spring grain and oilseed planting across the Prairies. Warm weather spurred vegetative growth of winter wheat and pastures in Ontario and Quebec, but moisture was limited for germination of early-planted corn.

3 - SOUTH AMERICA
In April and early May, rain sustained favorable yield prospects for second-crop corn in major production areas of central Brazil. In Argentina, extended periods of dryness improved conditions for harvesting of corn and soybeans.

4 - EUROPE
A dry start to April promoted spring grain and summer crop planting over much of the continent. However, showers increased over most major growing areas during the latter half of the month, improving prospects for vegetative winter grains and oilseeds across central and northern Europe. Meanwhile, timely showers in Spain benefited reproductive winter wheat and barley. Locally heavy rain in the southern Balkans curtailed fieldwork but maintained excellent conditions for reproductive winter wheat and rapeseed, while dry conditions lingered in Hungary before showers arrived in early May. Corn planting in Italy progressed without significant delay.

5 - FSU
During April, wetter-than-normal weather over eastern Ukraine and central Russia improved soil moisture for vegetative winter grains recovering from autumn drought. Meanwhile, conditions remained favorable for reproductive winter grains in southern growing areas. Spring grain planting commenced in the east, where soil moisture was plentiful for crop establishment, while sowing of cotton proceeded without major delay in the south.

6 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA
Dry, warm weather during April accelerated winter grains toward maturity. Conditions for wheat and barley remained mostly favorable across Morocco and Tunisia, while autumn drought and excessive early-May heat adversely impacted late-developing winter crops in Algeria.

7 - MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY
In April, additional late-season rain maintained good to excellent yield prospects for vegetative to reproductive winter grains over much of the region. The wet weather slowed cotton and corn planting, though sufficient breaks in the rain facilitated fieldwork.

8 - SOUTH ASIA
Above-normal April rainfall prevailed throughout India, causing some delays in rabi (dry-season) crop harvesting. In particular, the wetness continued to lower prospects for wheat in the north where harvesting was winding down. The rainfall, however, increased irrigation reserves for wheat being planted throughout the north. Meanwhile, seasonal heat began to build in far western areas, where little rain fell during the month.

9 - EASTERN ASIA
April rainfall was above normal across the North China Plain and throughout most of the Yangtze Valley. The moisture benefited reproductive winter wheat and rapeseed in the latter stages of development. In contrast, rainfall was below normal for the month in southern China, extending short-term spring dryness for vegetative early-crop rice. Meanwhile, corn planting began in portions of northeastern China.

10 - SOUTHEAST ASIA
Rainfall continued into April across Java, Indonesia, when drier conditions typically prevail, particularly in the east. The wetness maintained favorable paddy moisture for late-developing rice in the west but slowed harvesting elsewhere. In the Philippines, spring dryness continued with below-normal monthly rainfall. The dryness aided lingering winter rice and corn harvesting but lowered water reserves for off-season crops. Meanwhile, seasonal heat began to build in Indochina.

11 - AUSTRALIA
In April, above-normal rainfall in eastern Australia slowed cotton and sorghum harvesting but helped conditions topsoils for winter wheat planting. Similarly, near- to above-normal rainfall in Western Australia and South Australia provided a welcome boost in topsoil moisture, triggering earlier-than-normal wheat, barley, and canola planting. In Victoria, below-normal April rainfall was unfavorable for early growth; however, farmers likely had begun to dust in winter crops in anticipation of rains eventually arriving in May.

Produced by: USDA Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB)


Next Release: June 10, 2015