

International Weather and Crop Summary

NOAA/USDA Joint Agricultural Weather Facility

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HIGHLIGHTS

EUROPE: A hard freeze threatened exposed winter crops from northern France into northwestern Poland.

FSU-WESTERN: Most winter crops remained adequately insulated from bitter cold weather.

MIDDLE EAST: Additional rain and snow maintained excellent prospects for winter grains from Turkey into northern Iran.

NORTHWEST AFRICA: Locally heavy showers maintained favorable prospects for vegetative wheat and barley.

SOUTH ASIA: Cool weather favored reproductive winter wheat and rapeseed in northern India.

EAST ASIA: Winter crops continued to overwinter well despite repeated brief occurrences of colder-than-normal weather.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Persistent rainfall maintained beneficial moisture conditions for rice in the Philippines and Java, Indonesia.

AUSTRALIA: Widespread, locally heavy rain caused some additional flooding but overall maintained excellent summer crop prospects.

SOUTH AFRICA: Warm, dry weather reduced moisture for corn and other rain-fed summer crops.

ARGENTINA: Showers ended another brief period of stressful heat and dryness.

BRAZIL: Dry, occasionally hot weather stressed southern corn and soybeans.

EUROPE: A hard freeze expanded westward over the continent, threatening winter grains and oilseeds in snow-free areas. The coldest air of the season surged west across Europe, accompanied by little if any additional snowfall. Consequently, areas which entered the week devoid of snow cover were afforded little if any additional protection prior to the cold air's arrival. Areas at greatest risk for burnback or winterkill included: northeastern France (durum wheat exposed to -20 to -10°C); northeastern Germany (wheat and rapeseed exposed to -20 to -15°C); and northwestern Poland (wheat and rapeseed exposed to -24 to -18°C). Elsewhere in northern Europe, temperatures in snow-free locales (mostly western and southern Germany and northern France) did not reach the threshold for widespread freeze damage. Bitter cold (as low as -26°C) also surged into the lower Balkans, although an existing snowpack - topped off by another round of fresh snowfall - insulated winter wheat and rapeseed. Crops remained exposed, however, in Hungary, where nighttime readings as low as -15°C were just above the winterkill threshold of -17°C . Meanwhile, unfavorably dry conditions for winter wheat and barley persisted over Spain and northern Italy, although rain and snow (5 mm liquid equivalent or less) were reported at week's end on the Iberian Peninsula. More widespread, consistent rainfall will be needed soon, especially in Spain, to ensure uniform winter crop establishment and growth.

FSU-WESTERN: An arctic air mass remained entrenched over the region, with additional snow falling in southern and western crop districts. Temperatures averaged 10 to 18°C below normal from Belarus and Ukraine into Russia, with the largest departures noted from western Ukraine into Russia's Southern District. Nighttime readings dropped below -30°C for the first time this winter in portions of Belarus and Ukraine, with most crop areas reporting temperatures of -25°C or lower. Russia's primary winter crop areas also reported nighttime temperatures between -30 and -25°C. Snow depths ranged from 5 to 10 cm in southeastern Ukraine and western portions of the Southern District to 20 cm or more from northern Ukraine and Belarus into central and northern Russia; consequently, most winter crops were adequately protected from winterkill. However, southern-most portions of Ukraine began the week with shallow snow cover (2 cm or less), raising concerns over localized winterkill prior to the arrival of this week's snow. Precipitation - which fell as snow - tallied 2 to 20 mm (liquid equivalent) in central and southern Russia as well as southern and western Ukraine into eastern Belarus.

MIDDLE EAST: A strong, slow-moving Mediterranean storm continued to bring a variety of unsettled weather to the region. From Turkey into northern Iran, widespread snow (2-60 mm liquid equivalent) provided dormant winter grains additional insulation against increasingly cold weather. Temperatures on Turkey's Anatolia Plateau dropped as low as -21°C , although a moderate to deep snowpack (locally more than 25 cm) protected crops from freeze damage. Farther south, moderate to heavy rain - in some cases unseasonably heavy - was recorded from the eastern Mediterranean Coast (10-60 mm) into northern Iraq (10-40 mm) and southwestern Iran (25-100 mm), boosting irrigation reserves and soil moisture for wheat and barley. Overall, winter crop prospects remained excellent due to timely autumn planting moisture and abundant winter rain and snow. In addition, another Mediterranean storm was approaching at week's end, promising to bring more moisture to the region.

NORTHWEST AFRICA: Heavy rain overspread central and eastern growing areas, while light showers persisted in the west. A strengthening Mediterranean storm produced moderate to heavy rain (25-120 mm, locally more) across northern Algeria and Tunisia, boosting soil moisture reserves for winter grains but likely causing lowland flooding. Rain changed to snow in the higher terrain of the Atlas Mountains, with snow reported at lower elevations after week's end. Meanwhile, light showers (10 mm or less) in Morocco kept topsoils sufficiently moist for vegetative winter wheat. Temperatures averaged up to 4°C below normal, with subfreezing nighttime readings (-5 to -2°C) in Algeria above the threshold for freeze damage to vegetative winter crops.

SOUTH ASIA: An area of low pressure passed through central India early in the period bringing unseasonable rainfall of 10 mm or more. The moisture added to favorable irrigation supplies for rabi grains and oilseeds in Madhya Pradesh and eastern Maharashtra. Meanwhile, seasonably cool weather continued in northern India, where temperatures averaging 15°C benefited reproductive winter wheat and rapeseed. Similar cool weather aided winter wheat in northern Pakistan along with 10 to 25 mm of rain.

EAST ASIA: A brief spell of frigid air (minimum temperatures approaching -10°C) occurred on the North China Plain late in the week, with warmer weather returning by the end of the period. The brief occurrence of colder-than-normal weather did little harm to well-hardened overwintering wheat. Additionally, dry weather prevailed across wheat areas and more moisture would be welcome prior to the crop greening early next month. Early week showers (1-10 mm) maintained favorable moisture reserves for dormant rapeseed in the Yangtze Valley, and while temperatures were consistently 1 to 3°C below normal during the period, the crop was overwintering well. Rainfall continued to be unseasonably light in southern China, with 1 to 25 mm for the week. However, cooler-than-normal weather lessened moisture demands of sugarcane and winter vegetables in the area. As with wheat farther north, a boost in moisture supplies would be welcome prior to rice transplanting activities early next month.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Unseasonably high amounts of rainfall continued in the eastern Philippines and throughout Mindanao, albeit much less than in previous weeks, with weekly totals below 100 mm. The abundant moisture supplies maintained favorable corn and rice prospects for the first quarter of the growing season. In Vietnam, moisture conditions were generally favorable for spring rice transplanting in the south. However, very cool conditions – temperatures averaging below 15°C – in the north likely prevented widespread rice transplanting. In Malaysia and Indonesia, oil palm benefited from a return to near-normal rainfall after excessively wet conditions over the last several weeks slowed harvesting and disrupted normal crop development. In contrast, consistent rainfall (40-100 mm) across Java, Indonesia, maintained favorable moisture conditions for rice beginning to fill.

AUSTRALIA: In southern Queensland and northern New South Wales, widespread, locally heavy rain (25-100 mm, locally near 200 mm) maintained abundant moisture supplies for reproductive summer crops. The rain caused some additional flooding, submerging crops in isolated locations. The rainfall was overall beneficial, however, maintaining excellent crop prospects for cotton and sorghum. Temperatures in eastern Australia averaged 1 to 3°C below normal.

SOUTH AFRICA: Warm, dry weather dominated the corn belt, reducing moisture for reproductive to filling summer crops. Weekly average temperatures were 1 to 3°C above normal, with daytime highs ranging from the lower 30s (degrees C) in the east to the middle 30s in the traditionally warmer western farming areas. Little, if any, rain fell in the heart of the main commercial production area, with rainfall in excess of 10 mm generally confined to outlying cropping areas in the far west (western production areas of North West and Free State) and isolated locations in Gauteng, eastern Free State, and northwestern KwaZulu-Natal. Mostly dry, generally warm conditions also prevailed in the rain-fed sugarcane areas of southern KwaZulu-Natal. Meanwhile, heavier rain (25-50 mm or more) fell throughout Eastern Cape, and in eastern agricultural areas in Northern and Western Cape Provinces, as part of an overall pattern of unseasonable wetness that covered some of the more arid western parts of the country. Warm, dry weather maintained high crop moisture demands in the orchards and vineyards of Western Cape, with highs briefly reaching 38 to 40°C early in the week.

ARGENTINA: Rain ended a brief period of unseasonable warmth and dryness, helping to stabilize summer crops that have been plagued nearly the entire season by periods of stressful growing conditions. Rainfall totaled 10 to 25 mm or more in most areas, with several locations recording amounts in excess of 50 mm. Pockets of dryness lingered for a second week, however, in southern Cordoba and southern-most production areas of Buenos Aires. In the north, the rain was beneficial for summer row crops and pastures; it was the heaviest rain in the past several weeks in some cotton production areas of northern Santa Fe and southeastern Chaco. Although heavy rain (locally greater than 50 mm) spanned the northwest (in and around Salta) and outlying farming areas of northwestern Paraguay, dry pockets lingered in key agricultural production areas of southeastern Paraguay, where moisture remained limited for soybeans, cotton, and other summer row crops. Before the mid-week onset of wetter conditions, daytime highs in excess of 35°C were recorded over a large section of both central and northern Argentina, with some of the more northerly production areas recording temperatures of 40°C or higher. As a result, weekly average temperatures were 2 to 3°C above normal throughout the region. According to Argentina's Ministry of Agriculture, corn and soybeans were both 98 percent planted as of February 2. Sunflowers were 22 percent harvested, compared with 15 percent last year, with fieldwork occurring in the more northerly production areas.

BRAZIL: Unseasonably warm, dry weather dominated a large section of southern Brazil, reducing moisture for summer row crops and locally causing stress to immature soybeans and corn. Rainfall totaled less than 10 mm over a large area extending from Rio Grande do Sul northward to southern Mato Grosso, with a large portion of the region, centered on Parana, recording no rain at all. For some areas (Rio Grande do Sul to southwestern Parana), it was the third consecutive week of below-normal rainfall. Weekly average temperatures in this region were at least 2°C above normal, with daytime highs at or above 35°C posing additional stress on immature soybeans and corn while accelerating development of all crops. A return to a more reasonable pattern of rainfall and temperatures is critically needed throughout this area to prevent additional declines in the yield potential of soybeans and corn. This is particularly true for Rio Grande do Sul, where soybeans and corn are planted later than in other states, and a portion of the crops are likely advancing through reproduction. In contrast, the dry weather in southern Mato Grosso and Sao Paulo likely had limited impact on soybeans and sugarcane, due to recent weeks of beneficial rainfall and a continuation of reasonable temperatures (daytime highs in the lower 30s degrees C) during the dryness. In fact, the dryness in southern Mato Grosso promoted harvesting of early maturing soybeans and the subsequent planting of second-season (safrinha) corn. Farther north, reasonably wetter conditions

prevailed from northern Mato Grosso to western Bahia, maintaining overall favorable conditions for main-season soybeans and cotton and increasing moisture reserves for secondary row crops. Along the northeastern coast, isolated showers (10-25 mm or more) boosted local irrigation reserves for sugarcane and cocoa but had limited impact on seasonal fieldwork.