WORLD AGRICULTURAL WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS
March 10, 2020

1 - UNITED STATES
Significant precipitation deficits persisted through a second consecutive month in California and the Great Basin. In fact, parts of California received no precipitation during the month, setting February records for dryness. In addition, the average water equivalency of the Sierra Nevada snowpack stood at less than one-half of the end-of-February average. Farther east, most areas from the Plains to the Atlantic Seaboard experienced another wet month. In some cases, Southern rivers that had flooded in mid- to late January surged to even higher levels during the second half of February. Conversely, drier-than-normal February weather affected a few areas, including southern Texas and parts of the upper Midwest. Elsewhere, relatively benign weather prevailed on the Great Plains, as generally mild conditions accompanied frequent precipitation events. Despite brief cold waves, above-normal February temperatures dominated the country. The warmest weather, relative to normal, covered areas east of the Mississippi River.

2 - SOUTH AMERICA
In Argentina, extended periods of warm, sunny weather during February fostered rapid development of summer crops but by March, later-planted corn was in need of moisture. Conditions remained overall favorable for second-crop corn and cotton in major production areas in central and northeastern Brazil; farther south, drier conditions favored seasonal fieldwork, including soybean harvesting, but moisture was becoming limited for emerging second-crop corn.

3 - EUROPE
Very warm, wet conditions prevailed over most of Europe during February, though dry weather was observed in southernmost portions of the continent. Much-above-normal temperatures during the month concluded one of the warmest — if not the warmest — winters on record. Winter crops broke dormancy 3 to 6 weeks ahead of average, though wheat and rapeseed remained dormant until early March in northeastern-most growing areas. A parade of strong Atlantic storm systems netted much of northern and central Europe above-normal precipitation, resulting in adequate to abundant moisture supplies for spring growth. However, drought crept into parts of Italy and the Balkans, while a dry start to the new year depleted topsoil moisture in Spain following a wet December. However, the return of rain to many of these same southern croplands in early March eased or eliminated dryness concerns.

4 - FSU-WESTERN
A very warm, wet February was overall beneficial for winter wheat. The unseasonable warmth kept the region mostly devoid of snow cover and began to ease wheat out of dormancy well ahead of average in southern growing areas. Periods of moderate to heavy rain and snow eased long-term precipitation deficits following protracted autumn and early winter drought; the improved soil moisture was especially timely given the unusually early winter wheat green up.

5 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA
Drought intensified across the region during February. In Morocco, where a dry autumn limited wheat and barley establishment in western and southern portions of the country, the resumption of dryness quickly lowered yield prospects as crops approached or entered reproduction. In contrast, winter grains were able to withstand the dryness in eastern growing areas following a wet autumn.

6 - MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY
In February, wet weather continued across the region. The rain and snow maintained abundant to locally excessive moisture reserves for dormant (north) to vegetative (south) winter grains. Above-normal temperatures minimized the risk of winterkill and encouraged faster-than-normal crop development.

7 - SOUTH ASIA
Above-average rainfall prevailed in eastern sections of India during February, providing a late-season moisture boost to immature rabi rice and spring-sown crops. Meanwhile, occasionally heavy showers in northern India and Pakistan benefited late-planted wheat, but most wheat was already maturing and the wet weather was less favorable. Elsewhere, consistent rainfall during the month in Sri Lanka maintained generally good moisture conditions for rice.

8 - EASTERN ASIA
In February, near- to above-average rainfall was reported across eastern and southern China, boosting soil moisture for overwintering wheat and rapeseed. At the same time, temperatures were well above normal, easing crops out of dormancy by month’s end.

9 - SOUTHEAST ASIA
Showers continued across Java, Indonesia, during February, extending the period of above-average rainfall following poor moisture conditions in the first half of the season. The showers benefited late-planted first-crop rice as well as boosting moisture supplies for rice sown in the spring and summer. In contrast, key oil palm areas in Indonesia and Malaysia continued to experience unseasonably light rainfall, reducing yield potential. Meanwhile in the Philippines, rainfall was mainly confined to seasonally wetter eastern-most districts and was particularly favorable for rice and corn in major growing areas of the northeast.

10 - AUSTRALIA
During February, soaking rain brought much-needed drought relief to eastern Australia. The rain came too late in the growing season to significantly improve the production potential of many summer crops, but the wet weather helped increase soil moisture in advance of autumn winter crop sowing. Although the rain was helpful, much more rain is needed to end the severe, long-term drought gripping much of eastern Australia.

11 – SOUTH AFRICA
In February, timely showers maintained generally favorable prospects for corn and other rain-fed summer crops, particularly in western sections of the corn belt where later-planted crops advanced through reproduction.

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