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RISK MANAGEMENT 2025/26

CUMULUS

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Contents

Summary

More showers and thundershowers

Conditions remain favourable for more showers and thundershowers over the interior during the next few days, and large parts of the central to eastern interior should receive above-average rainfall in total. Showers and thundershowers will initially occur over the eastern parts but shift towards the central and western areas on Friday and Saturday. By Sunday and Monday, showers and thundershowers will move to the eastern parts of the country and are expected to clear further east by Tuesday, according to current forecasts. Extended periods of cloudy, mild to cool conditions will occur over the central, eastern and northeastern areas until early next week.

Looking further ahead, current forecasts do not indicate widespread wet conditions following the rainfall event, which should end early next week. Forecasts suggest drier conditions developing by next week and continuing into the following weekend. Sunny to partly cloudy, warm and dry weather is expected over most of the interior by the middle of next week, with another cold front bringing cooler conditions to the southern parts and a chance of light showers over the southern winter rainfall region and along the Garden Route. Given the strong ridging high-pressure system expected by next weekend, conditions will be closely monitored, and an update will be provided early next week should forecasts shift towards a wetter outlook.

The expected late October and early November wetter period is now in full swing, with more rain expected over the next few days. Some forecast models, however, suggest a possible eastward shift of cloud bands over the subcontinent during the second week of November. There are also indications of increased convection along the equator over the Indian Ocean later in the month, which may support generally drier conditions over southern Africa.

Given the expected development of La Niña, seasonal forecasts continue to indicate a relatively wet summer over the interior. However, while still leaning towards normal to wetter-than-normal conditions, the latest forecasts issued in October are somewhat less indicative of wet conditions during the mid- to late-summer period than those issued in September.

The following is a summary of weather conditions during the next few days (until middle next week):

- On average, temperatures will be near- to below-normal over most parts, but above normal on average over the southern to western parts, including the winter rainfall regio
- Total rainfall will be above normal over the central to eastern interior on average, including the summer grain-production region.
- Total rainfall will be below normal over most of the southern to south-western parts as well as the Limpopo River Valley in the northeast.
- Scattered thundershowers will occur over the central to western parts on Friday.
- Showers and thundershowers will concentrate more on the western to central parts on Saturday.

- The area of thundershowers will progress eastwards during the weekend so that showers and thundershowers should be confined to the central to eastern parts by Monday, and only the eastern areas by Tuesday.
- It will be mild with extensive cloud cover over the northern to central and eastern parts through Friday, the weekend and Monday, clearing from the west and gradually becoming warmer and sunny from the west by Tuesday.
- It should be sunny to partly cloudy and dry by the middle of next week gradually becoming warmer.
- A cold front will result in cooler conditions with showers over the southern parts of the winter rainfall region possibly by the middle of next week, and introduce cooler, dry air over the southern to south-western interior.
- It will be hot at times over the western to southern parts, but it may become cooler over these areas by the middle of next week.
- Thundershowers during this early part of the summer rainy season usually have an enhanced tendency to become severe. While certain areas may experience severe storms over the next few days, this will not be significantly different from what is typical for this time of year during thundershowers. On average, temperatures will be near- to below-normal, and it will be cooler than the previous week over most of the interior.
- **The summer-grain production region** will receive more rain during the next few days, mostly in the form showers and thundershowers. There will be cloudy and cooler periods, especially until Monday. The highest concentration of rainfall is expected by Sunday and Monday, after which it should clear from the west and become warmer. Some areas may receive more than 50 mm during the period.
- **The winter rainfall region** will experience summer-like conditions initially, with strong south-easterlies in the southwest, hot days over the northern to western parts, and isolated thundershowers, especially over the northern to eastern parts of the region. It will become cooler next week with southerly to south-westerly winds and possibly a cold front brushing the region by the middle of the week.

Overview of expected conditions over the main agricultural production areas

An upper-air trough, supported by a surface ridging high and tropical moisture from the north, will bring widespread showers and thundershowers over the interior until Monday. As the system moves east by Tuesday, conditions will clear and warm from the west. By Tuesday or Wednesday, a cold front may enter the southwest, bringing cool, dry south-westerly winds and possible showers over the winter rainfall region, Garden Route, and later along the East Coast.

Maize production region:

Thundershowers are expected during this period, and there may also be periods of more widespread showers and thundershowers. It will be cooler than normal on average for the period. It will become warmer and drier from the west by Tuesday, clearing over the entire region with warmer weather by the middle of next week.

- Maximum temperatures over the eastern grain-production areas will range between 21°C and 29°C. Minimum temperatures will range between 18°C to 14°C.
- Maximum temperatures over the western grain-production areas will range between 22°C and 32°C, with the warmer conditions expected next week. Minimum temperatures will be in the order of 12°C to 18°C.

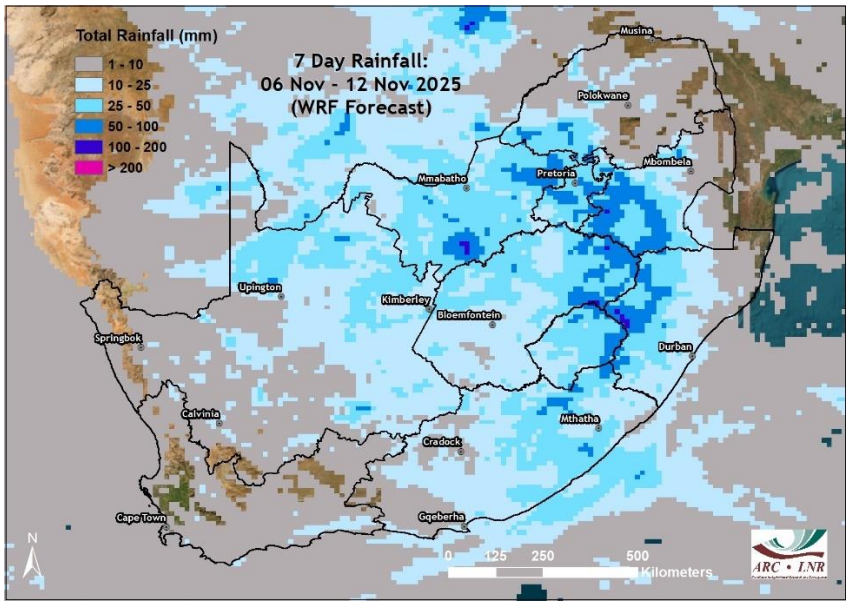
- **Thursday (6th):** Partly cloudy and warm over the southern parts, but cloudy and mild over the rest of the region with widespread showers and thundershowers.
- **Friday (7th):** Partly cloudy to cloudy and mild with moderate to fresh north-easterly to northerly winds. Widespread showers and thundershowers are possible by the afternoon but only isolated over the northern to north-eastern parts. It will be cool in the east.
- **Saturday (8th):** Partly cloudy to cloudy and mild. Moderate to fresh northerly winds are expected in the west. Isolated thundershowers are possible except over the northern to north-eastern parts. Scattered thundershowers are expected later over the western parts.
- **Sunday to Monday (9th – 10th):** Cloudy and mild with widespread showers and thundershowers but isolated in the north. Moderate to fresh north-westerly winds are possible over the western parts, spreading eastwards. The cloud band and rainfall are expected to clear over the western parts according to current forecasts.
- **Tuesday to Thursday (11th – 13th):** While showers and thundershowers may still occur in the east on Tuesday, dry air spreading from the west will bring warmer, sunny conditions to most areas, with little to no rain expected until Thursday (apart from isolated thundershowers in the east).

Cape Wine Lands and Rûens:

Summer-like conditions will persist until Sunday, with hot weather over the western to northern areas and strong to gale-force south-easterly winds in the southwest, while isolated thundershowers may occur over the interior. From Monday, cooler southerly to south-westerly winds will bring lower temperatures and possible light showers over the southern parts by Tuesday or Wednesday.

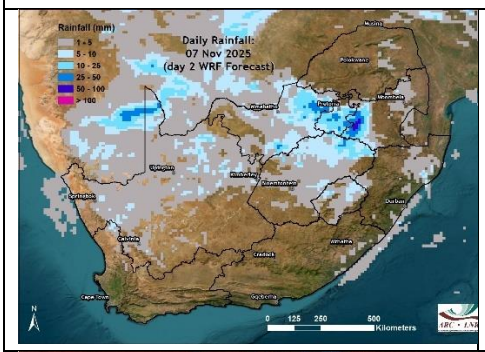
Daily summary of expected conditions (7 – 12 Nov)

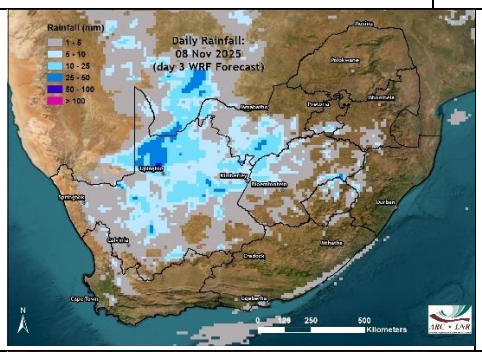
(GFS forecast downscaled using WRF)

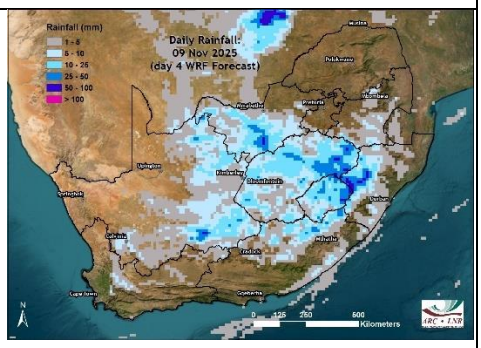


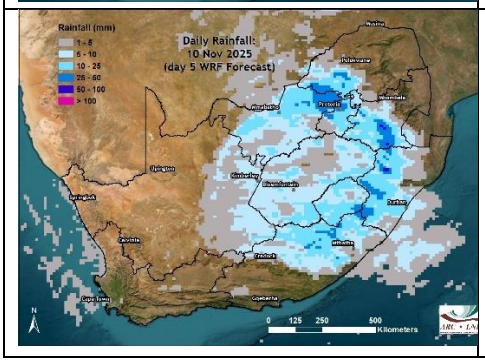
Rainfall

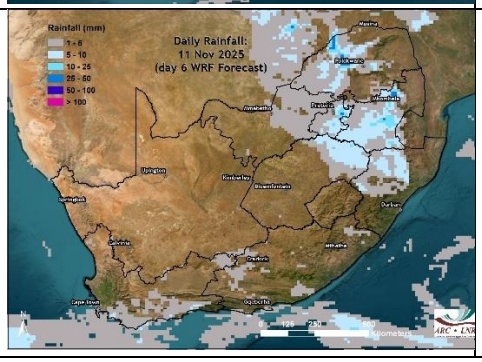
- Most of the country will receive rain during the next few days.
- Totals over the western interior are expected to be relatively low in most places.
- Parts of the central to eastern interior, including the summer grain-production region, may receive more than 50 mm in total during the period.

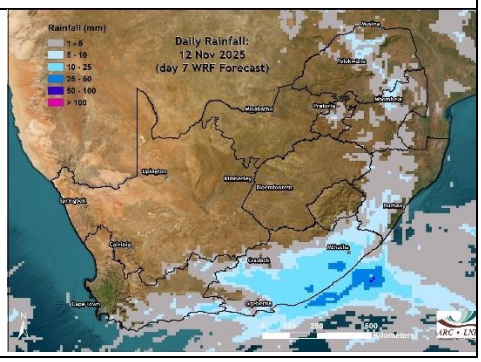




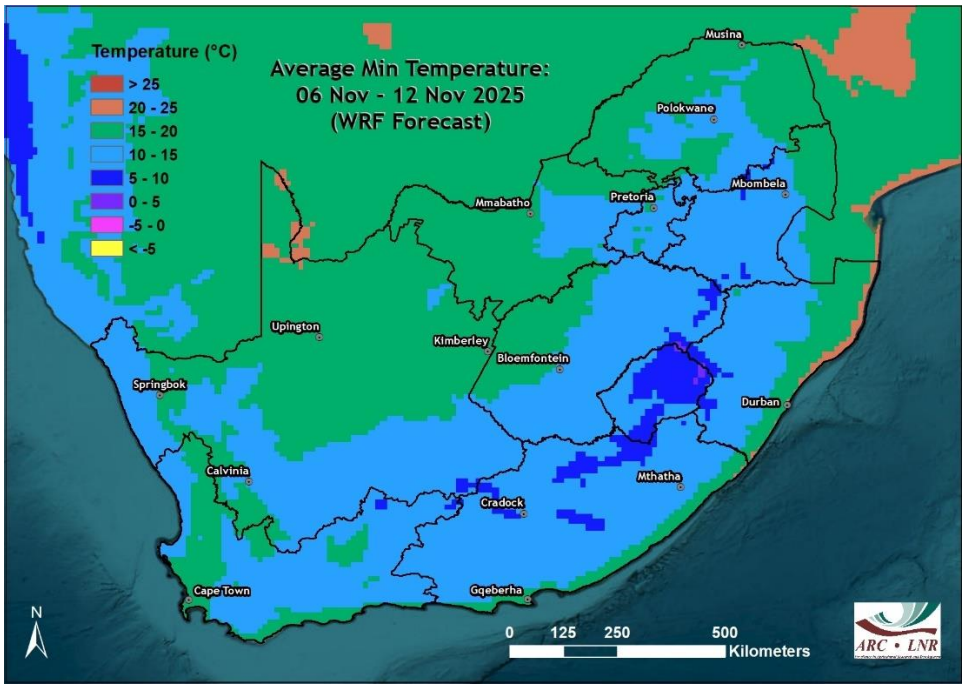






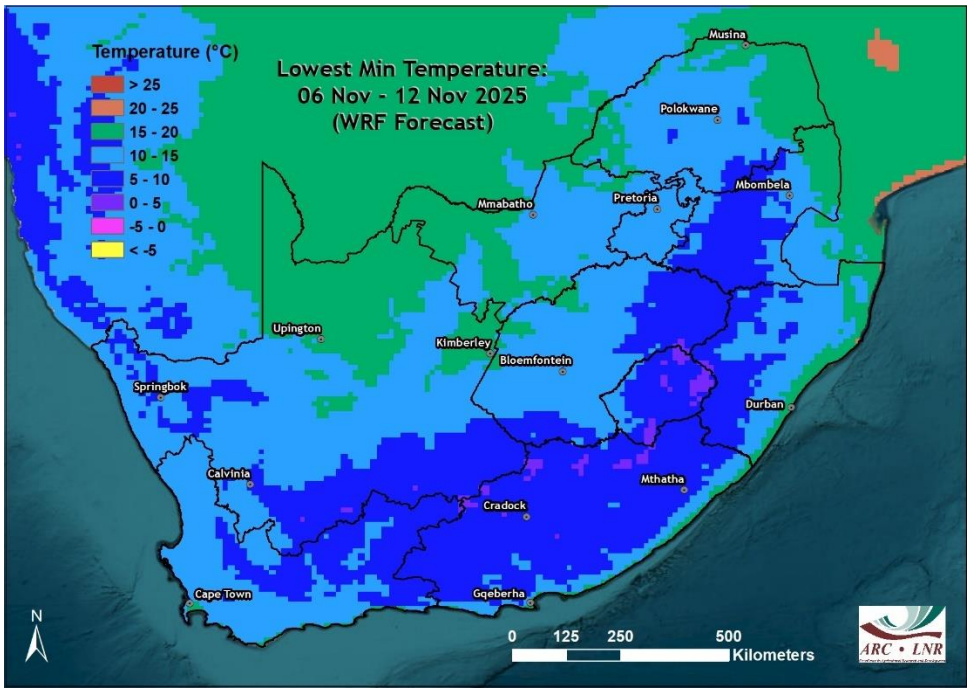


- Scattered showers and thundershowers are expected over large parts of the interior until Sunday, gradually shifting eastwards.
- Thundershowers will be mostly confined to the northeastern parts by Tuesday.
- Most of the interior should be dry by Wednesday.
- Light showers are expected over the winter rainfall region and Garden Route by Tuesday/Wednesday, spreading eastwards up the south-eastern to eastern coast and adjacent interior.



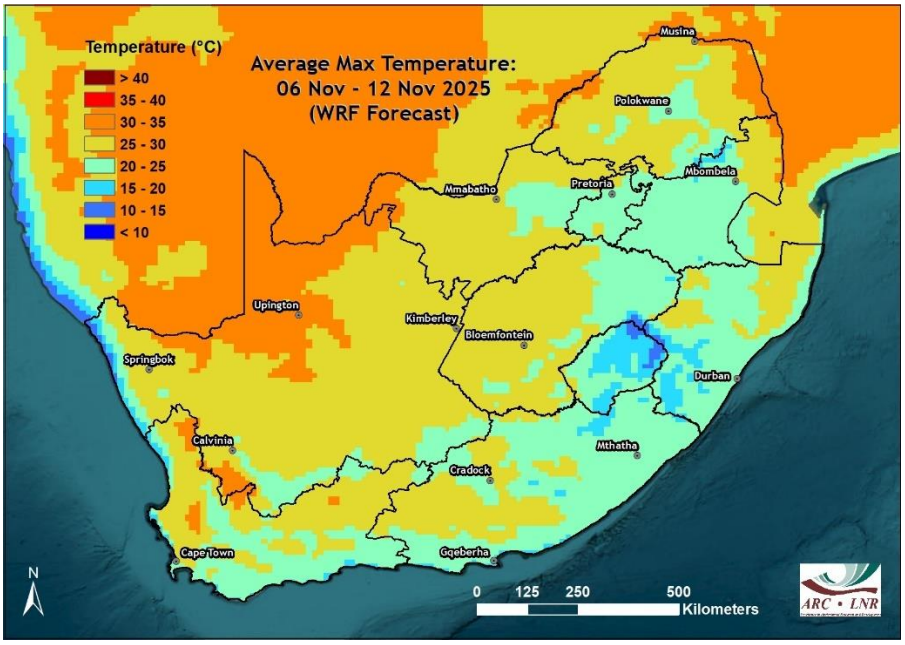
Average minimum temperatures

- Average minimum temperatures will range between 10 and 20°C over most of the country.



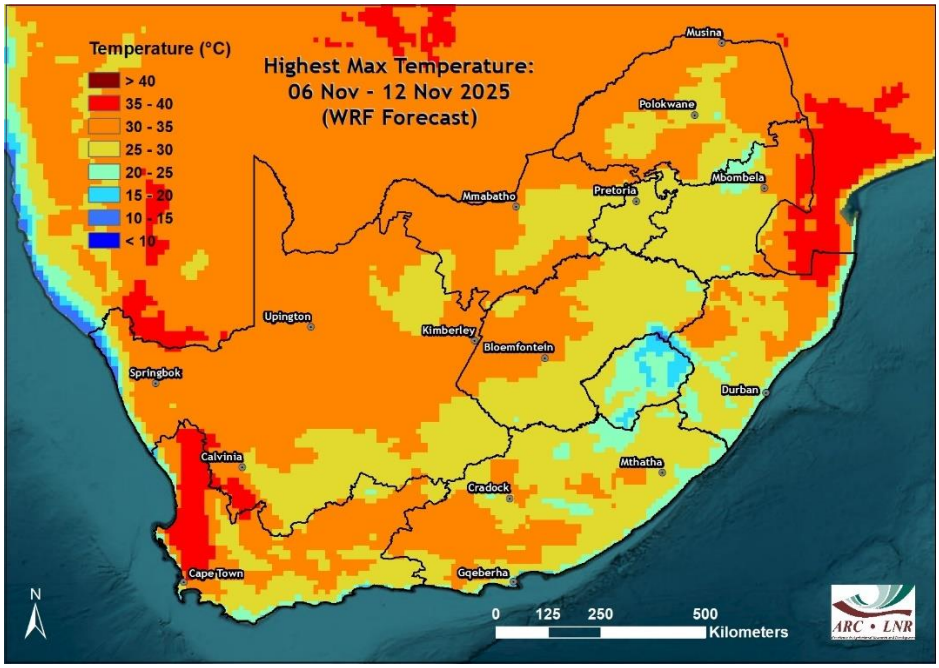
Lowest minimum temperatures

- Lowest minimum temperatures will remain above 5°C over most of the summer grain production region.



Average maximum temperatures

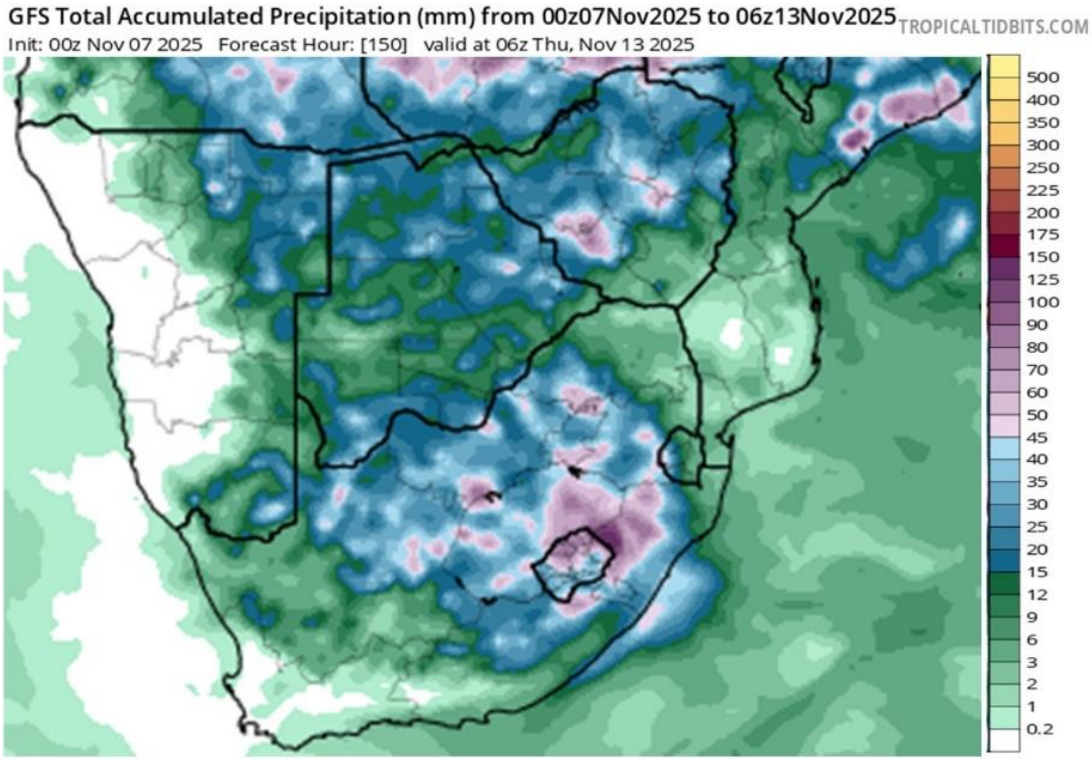
- Average maximum temperatures will range between 20 and 30°C over most of the interior.

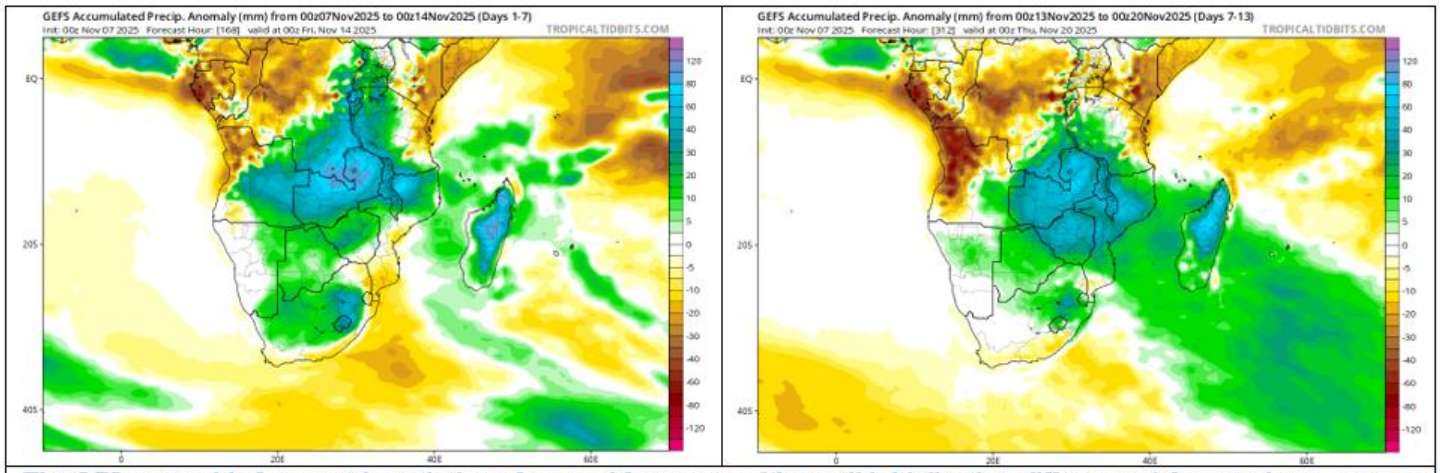


Highest maximum temperatures

- **Highest temperatures, exceeding 35°C, are expected:** Over the western parts of the Northern Cape and western to north-western parts of the Western Cape by Friday to Sunday and over the Lowveld by Tuesday and Wednesday next week.

Medium term rainfall summary





The GFS ensemble forecast (consisting of several forecasts with small initialization differences) favors above-average rainfall over the interior until the 14th (left), including the summer grain-production region. This anomaly is associated with expected showers or thundershowers until Tuesday. From then until the 20th (right), most of the rainfall in the region shifts eastwards, according to current forecasts, with increased convective activity indicated over the Mozambique Channel and northeast of South Africa.

Possible extreme conditions - relevant to agriculture

The South African Weather Service issues warnings for any severe weather that may develop, based on much more information (and in near-real time) than the output of only 2 weather models (GFS and the ECMWF model) considered here in the beginning of a week-long period (6 – 12 November). It is therefore advised to keep track of warnings that may be issued by the SAWS (www.weathersa.co.za) as the week progresses.

According to current model projections (GFS / ECMWF models) of weather conditions during the coming week, the following may negatively affect agricultural activities and production:

Some thundershowers may become severe and produce strong wind gusts and hail:

- Drakensberg and adjacent areas of the Free State: **Friday (7th).**
- Interior of the Northern Cape: **Friday (7th).**
- Interior of the Northern Cape, northern parts of the Western Cape and northern parts of the Eastern Cape: **Saturday (8th).**
- Eastern parts of the Northern Cape, northern parts of the Eastern Cape, Free State, southern North West, western KZN: **Sunday (9th).**
- Eastern North West, eastern to northern Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, western to central Limpopo, western to northern KZN: **Monday (10th).**

Cool, wet conditions may be conducive to fungal diseases:

- Northern to central parts of the country, including the summer grain-production region: **Thursday to Monday (6th – 10th).**
- North-eastern to eastern parts of the country, including the eastern summer grain-production region: **Thursday to Tuesday (6th – 11th).**

It will be hot, with maximum temperatures exceeding 35°C:

- Western part of the Northern Cape, north-western to western interior of the Western Cape, including the Swartland: **Friday to Sunday (7th – 9th).**
- Central to northern part of the Northern Cape: **Tuesday and Wednesday (11th, 12th).**
- Lowveld: **Tuesday and Wednesday (11th, 12th).**

Warm to hot conditions with isolated thunderstorms and strong winds will increase the fire hazard where vegetation is dry:

- Western to central and southern parts of the Northern Cape, Western Cape interior: **Friday and Saturday (7th, 8th).**

Strong to gale-force south-easterly winds are possible:

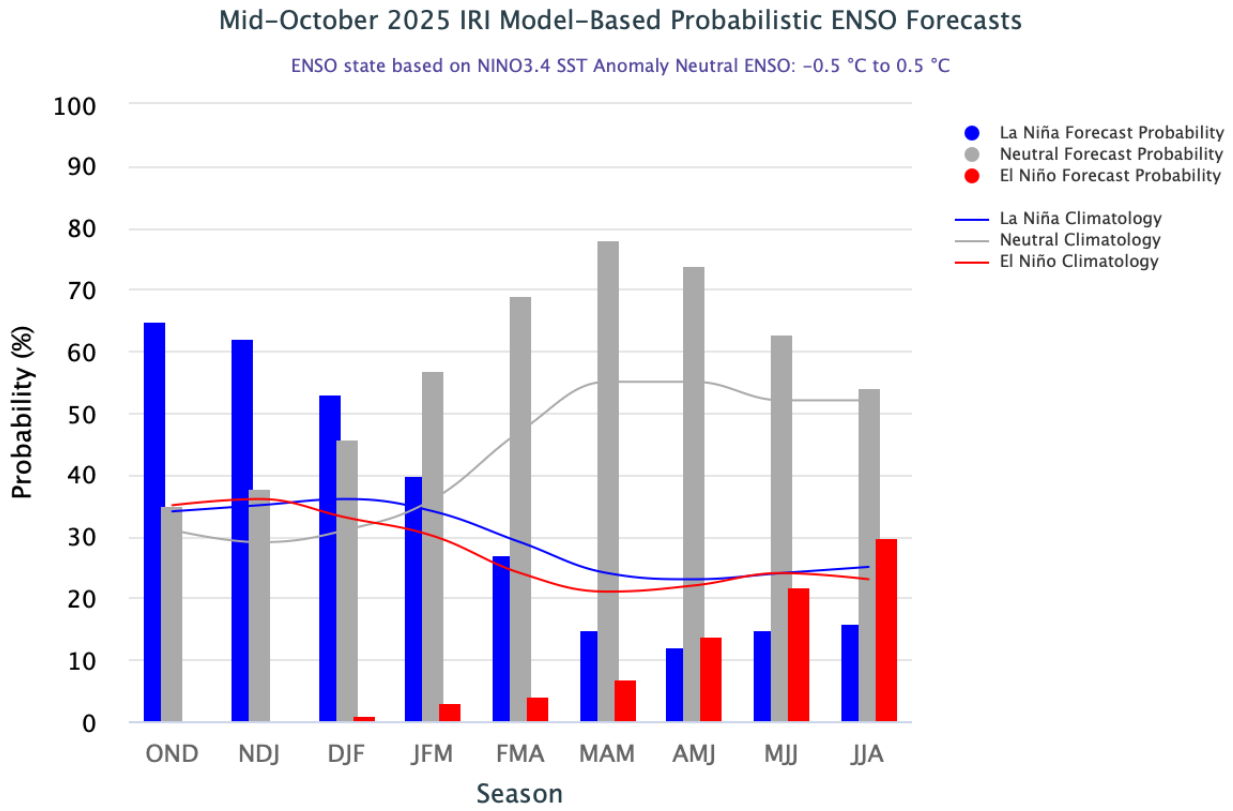
- South-western parts of the Western Cape: **Thursday to Sunday (6th – 9th).**

Seasonal forecast

Current ENSO conditions:

While only some institutions classify the climate state as a La Niña currently, La Niña conditions, both in the ocean and atmosphere, are strengthening.

The graph below shows the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) ENSO forecast.



***International Research Institute for Climate and Society*- http://iri.columbia.edu/**

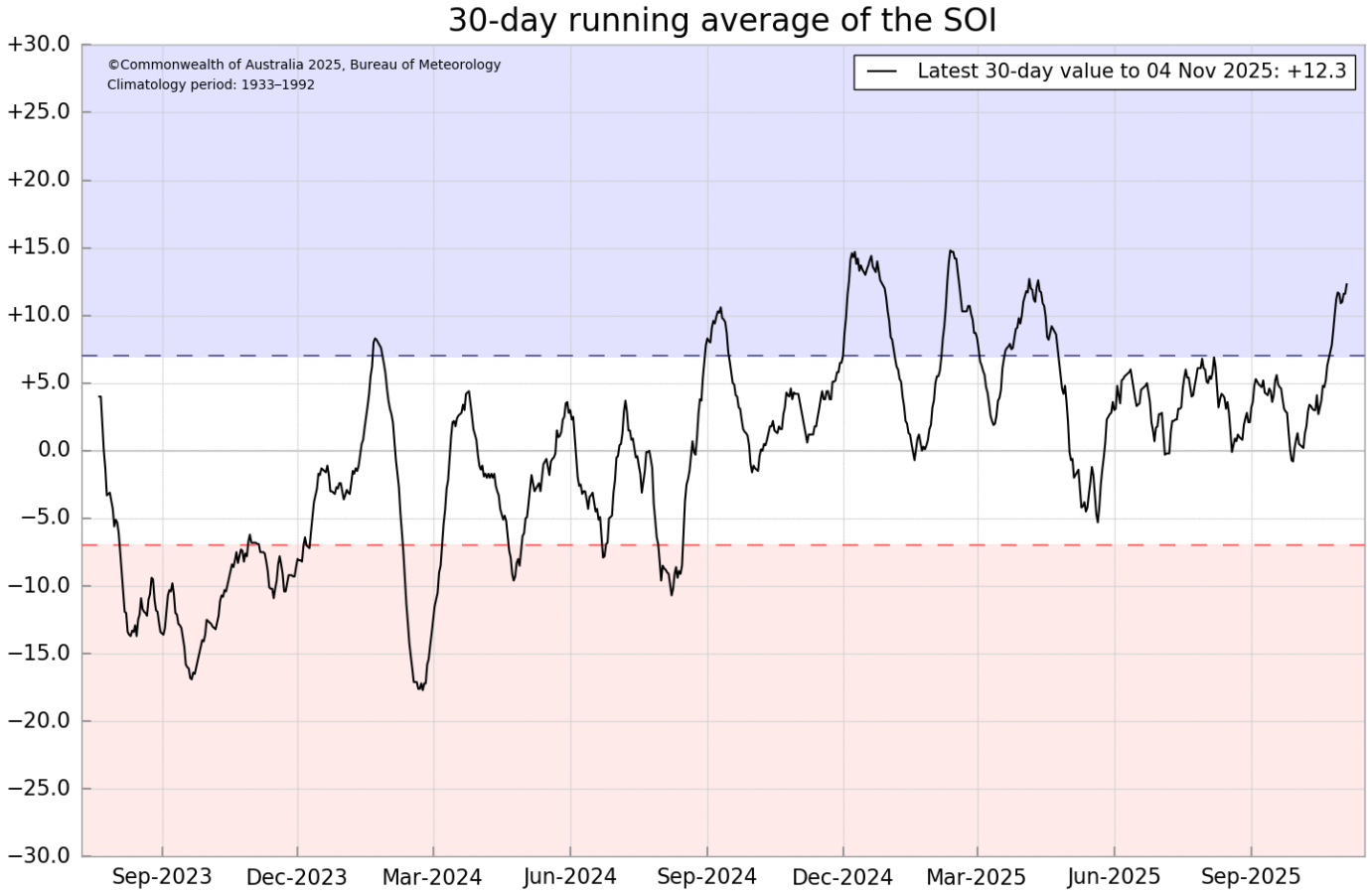
In their most recent update (issued 20 October), the IRI states that" As of mid-October 2025, the equatorial Pacific remains in an ENSO-neutral state, with sea surface temperatures in the Niño 3.4 region close to average but exhibiting a gradual cooling trend. The IRI ENSO plume forecast indicates a moderate probability (65%) of La Niña conditions developing during October–December 2025. These La Niña conditions are expected to persist through the boreal winter of 2025/2026 (53%). However, beginning in January–March, ENSO-neutral conditions are forecasted to return with probabilities of 57%. The chances of El Niño development remain very low—below 10%—through March–May 2026, but increases to 14%, 22%, and 30% during April–June, May–July, and Jun-Aug 2026 respectively."

In their most recent update (28 October), the **Australian Bureau of Meteorology** states that "The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) in the tropical Pacific remains neutral:

- The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) remains neutral. While there are signs of possible La Niña development in the tropical Pacific Ocean and atmosphere, these signals have not yet been sustained at a sufficient strength or duration to meet Bureau criteria for an active event.
- The latest relative Niño3.4 SST index value for the week ending 26 October 2025 is −0.86 °C. The weekly values of the relative Niño3.4 index have been fluctuating around the La Niña threshold since mid-to-late September. Index values between –0.8 °C and +0.8 °C are considered ENSO-neutral while sustained values below –0.8 °C (for at least 3 months) are considered indicative of La Niña.
- Some atmospheric indicators, such as trade winds, pressure and cloud patterns over the equatorial central Pacific, show some signs of La Niña development. The 30-day Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) has just recently exceeded +7, although the 90-day SOI remains neutral. The Madden–Julian Oscillation is currently, as at 26 October 2025, enhancing trade winds over the western Pacific, which may provide a short-term boost towards La Niña conditions.
- Under Bureau criteria, La Niña is considered established when sustained cool waters in the central tropical Pacific (relative Niño3.4 index values below –0.8 °C for at least 3 months) are accompanied by a consistent atmospheric response.
- The Bureau's model currently predicts that tropical Pacific Ocean temperatures are likely to just meet La Niña levels during November and December, before returning to neutral. This timing aligns with most international models assessed, although they generally show slightly more cooling, compared to the Bureau's model.....…….. ***http://www.bom.gov.au***

The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) is currently increasing towards neutral levels, but expected to trend back further into negative territory next week. Negative values in the index are associated with more frontal activity influencing South Africa and frequently with drier westerlies and less rain over the interior.

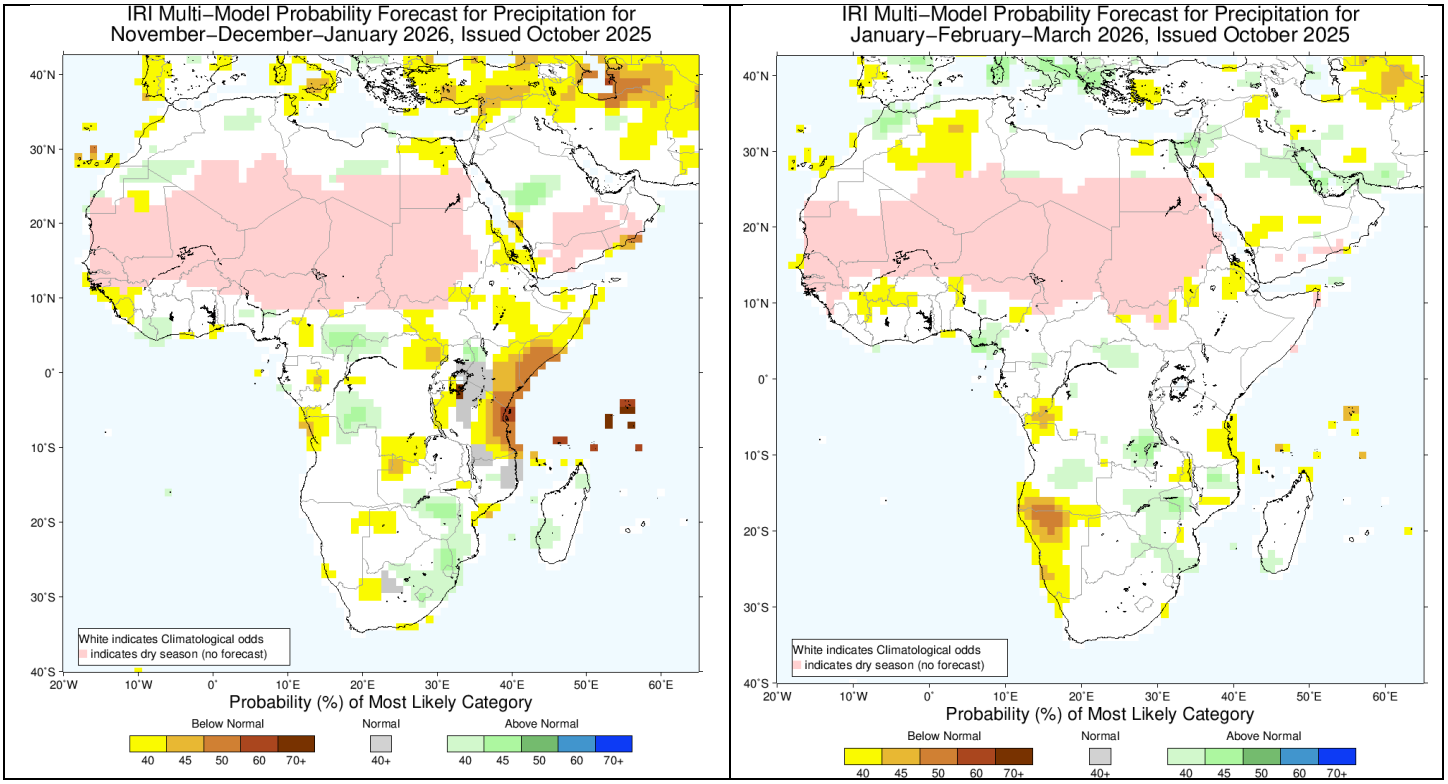
The 30-day Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) have increased further +12.3 and therefore representing atmospheric pressure patterns in the Australia – Pacific region indicative of Neutral to La Niña conditions.



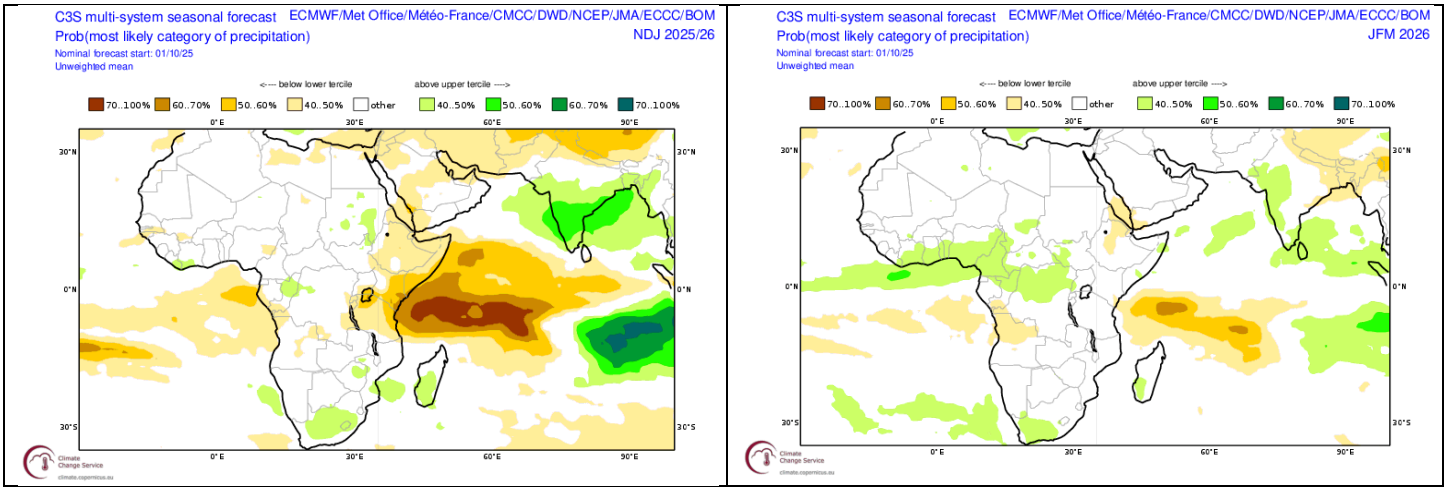
Australian Bureau of Meteorology **-** **http://www.bom.gov.au**

Seasonal forecasts issued by various international institutions

Seasonal forecasts (updated in October 2025) still favor normal to above-normal rainfall over the summer rainfall region, associated with an expectation of the intensification of the La Niña event in the Pacific Ocean. The wet signal for mid- and late-summer period has weakened between the September and October versions of forecasts.



Probabilistic forecasts by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) for rainfall for early summer (November 2025 to January 2026, left – Forecast issued in 2025-10) and mid- to late summer (January to March 2026, right – Forecast issued in 2025-10).



Probabilistic multi-model forecasts by the multi-system COPERNICUS Programme for rainfall for early summer (November 2025 to January 2026, left – Forecast issued in 2025-10) and mid- to late summer (January to March 2026, right – Forecast issued in 2025-10).

CUMULUS seasonal outlook

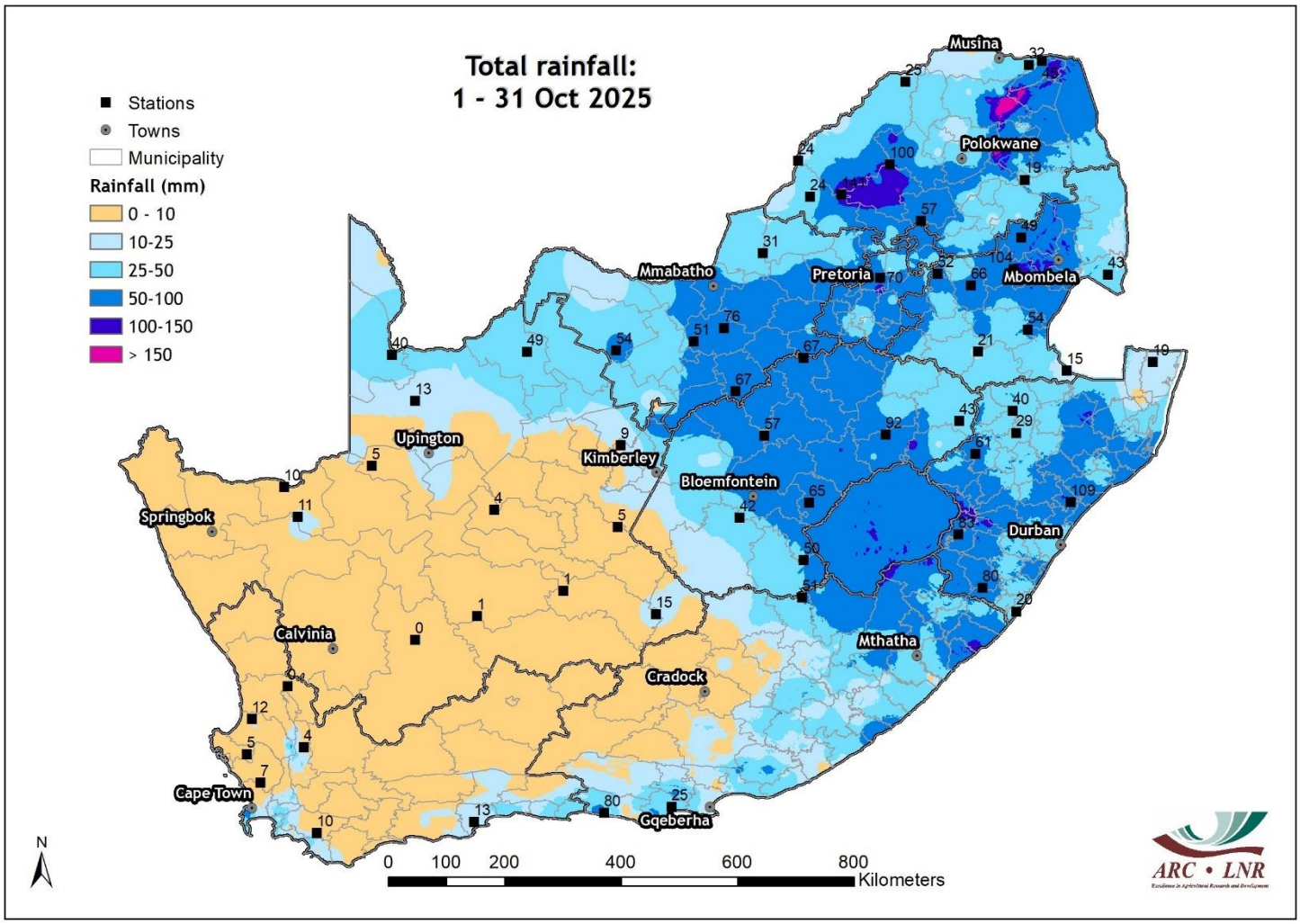
This outlook is based on the typical observed rainfall patterns over the north-eastern half of the country (including most of the summer grain-production region), which are associated with the cyclic variability of the global climate system. Summers similar to 2025/26 usually experience near-normal rainfall totals over the north-eastern parts of the country. There is a tendency for above-normal rainfall during January, while relatively dry conditions are usually observed during February and early March.

Typical patterns during similar summers, over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region, are:

- **October**: Near-normal to above-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **November**: Near-normal to below-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **December**: Somewhat wetter earlier in the month but usually trending drier into early January over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **January**: Relatively dry early in the month, but above-normal rainfall is possible during the second half over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **February-early March**: Near-normal to below-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **Mid- to late March**: Above-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region

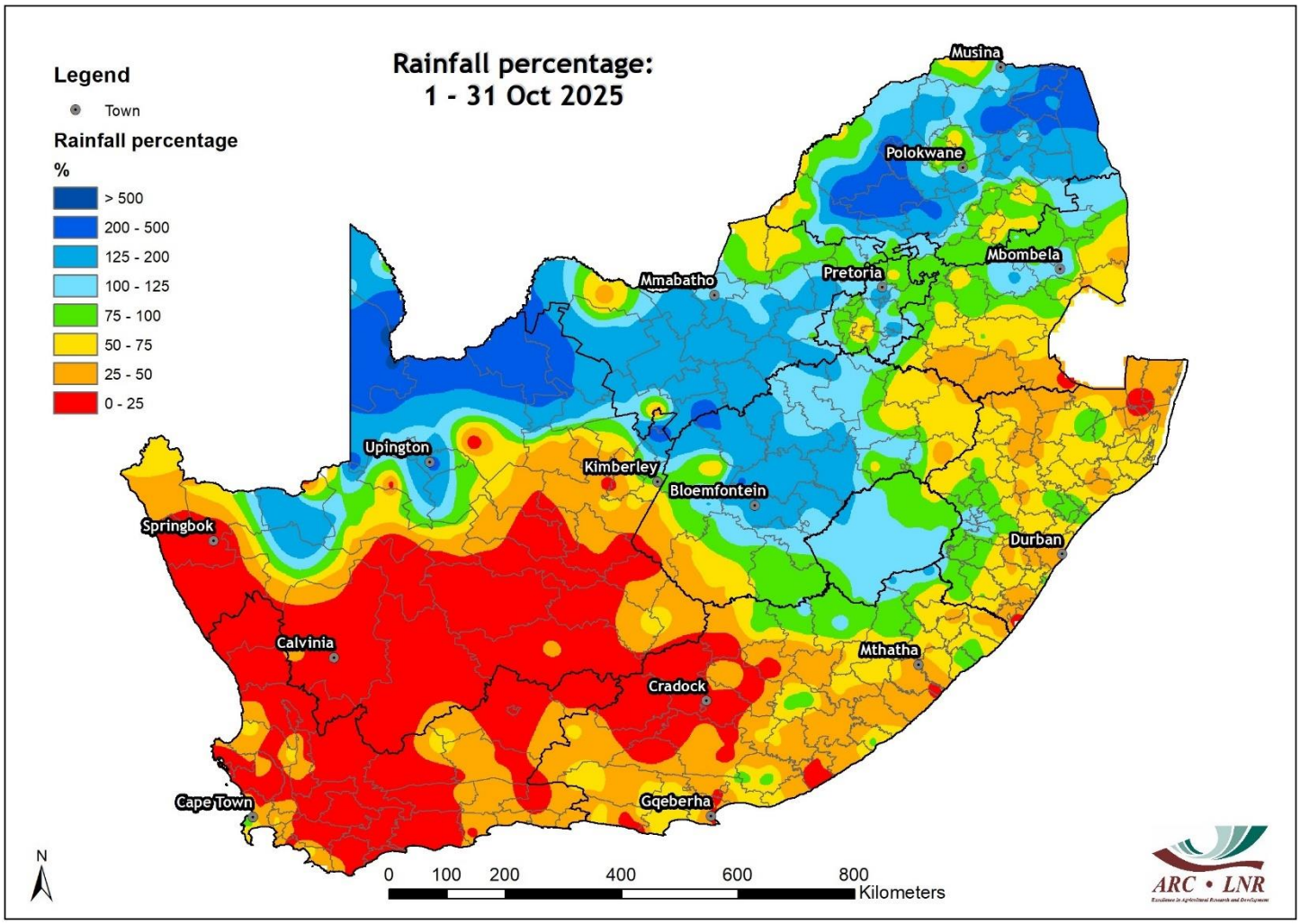
Observed conditions

Rainfall (% of long-term mean): 1 – 31 October 2025



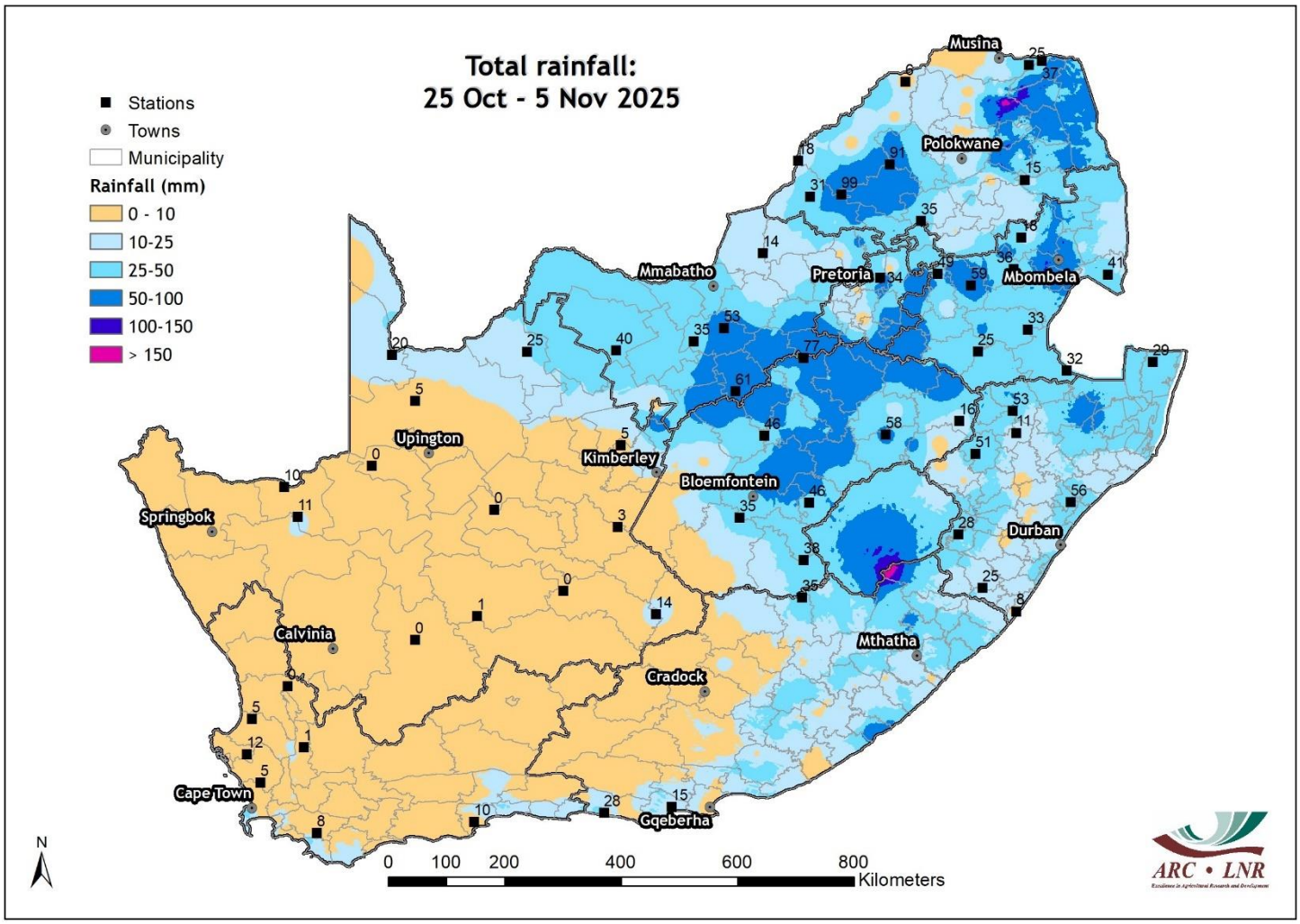
Most of the central interior and areas eastwards towards the eastern parts received above-average rainfall during the September to late-October period. Conditions were relatively dry over the southwestern parts, including the winter rainfall region, as well as over the northern parts of the Free State and the western to central parts of Mpumalanga.

Rainfall (% of long-term mean): 1 –31 October 2025



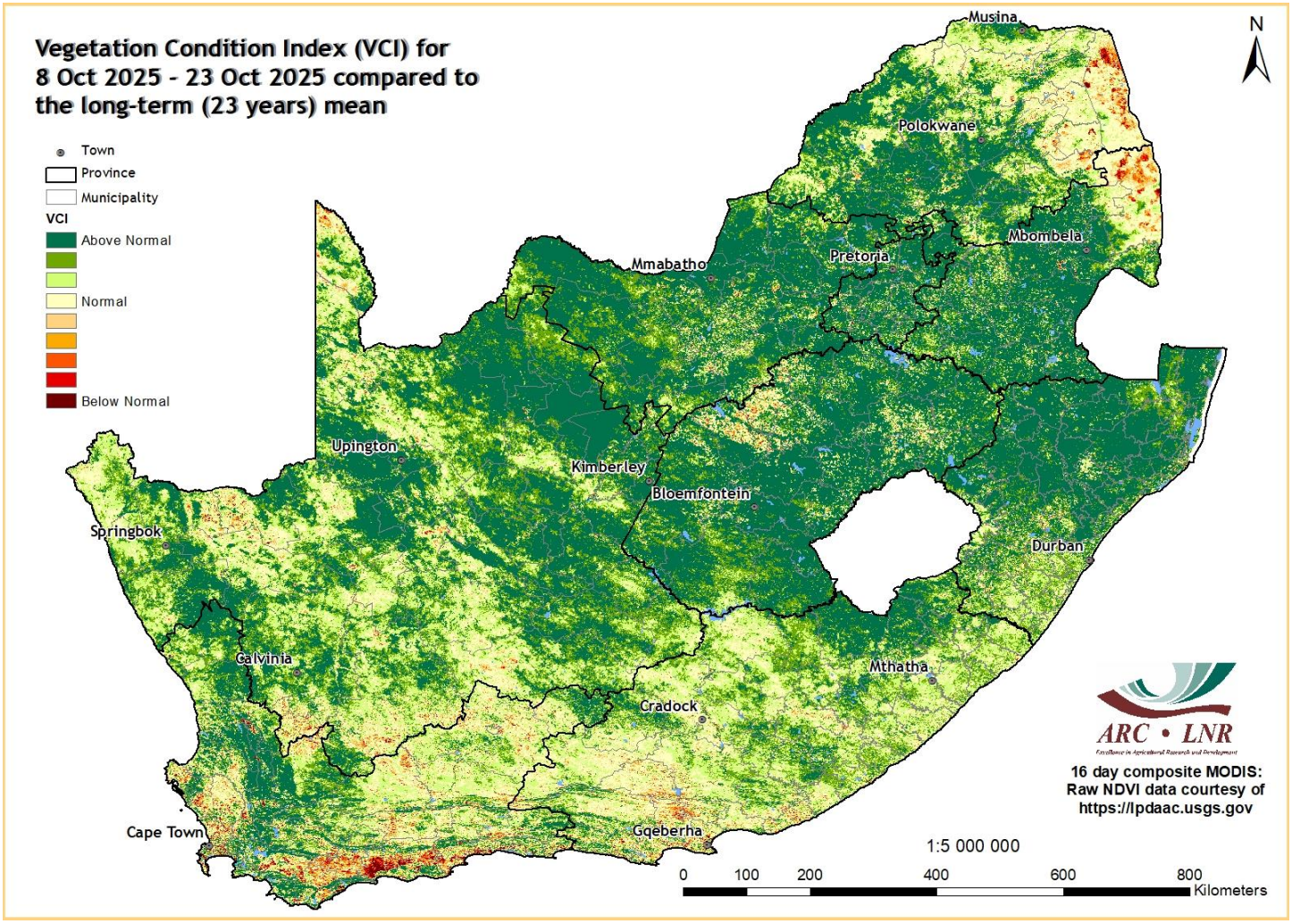
Above-average rainfall has occurred over some of the northern parts of the country in October, but most of the southern and western parts, as well as large areas of the northern Free State, Mpumalanga, and KwaZulu-Natal, experienced below-average rainfall.

Rainfall (mm): 25 October to 5 November 2025



Large areas in the east, including much of the Free State, received more than 50 mm of rain from 25 October to 5 November. Areas receiving significant totals include the northern parts of the Free State, the southern parts of North West, and the western parts of Mpumalanga, which were relatively dry for most of October.

Vegetation Condition Index: October 2025



Vegetation activity by October was above normal over most areas, following widespread rain above-normal rainfall until April and again by August-October over large parts of the interior. The Lowveld is an exception, where it has been relatively dry since February. Over the winter rainfall region, especially the eastern parts of the region, and further east along the Garden Route, below normal rainfall is having a negative impact on vegetation activity.

Sources of information

Seasonal forecasts: Published by the COPERNICUS Programme (***https://climate.copernicus.eu/seasonal-forecasts***)

Rainfall, temperature and wind maps over South Africa for the past week:
Agricultural Research Council - Institute for Soil, Climate and Water (ISCW) – Climate Data Bank. Data recorded by the automatic weather station network of the ARC-ISCW.

Vegetation condition maps: Copernicus Global Land service, distributed by VITO.

Information related to: ENSO, IOD and SOI:
Australian Bureau of Meteorology - ***http://www.bom.gov.au***
Climate Prediction Center - ***http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov***
International Research Institute for Climate and Society- ***http://iri.columbia.edu/***

Information related to the SAM:
The Annular Mode Website - ***http://www.atmos.colostate.edu/ao/index.html***

SST map:
NOAA Climate Prediction Center - ***http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov***

Daily conditions over South Africa:
WRF model downscaling of GFS forecasts.

Fires:
MODIS data, distributed by the Land Processes Distributed Active Data Center (LP DAAC), located at the US Geological Survey's EROS Data Center

Soil moisture:
https://nasagrace.unl.edu/

Precipitation and temperature outlooks for the coming week:
Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Studies (COLA) and Institute of Global Environment and Society (IGES) – ***http://Wxmaps.org***