

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Favorable Spring Conditions Promise a Sizeable Grain Crop in Spain

Country: Spain

Post: Madrid

Report Category: Grain and Feed, Oilseeds and Products

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Report Highlights:

Following three consecutive seasons of tight supply, favorable fall and winter conditions have been followed by abundant spring precipitation across Spain, with the notable exception of the eastern part of the country. The combination of farmers' decisions to maximize their more drought-resilient winter grains plantings, improved soil moisture, and mild spring temperatures are expected to result in an upward revision of the Spanish total grain crop, currently estimated at 21 million MT.

Area

According to the latest official statistical release by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), MY 2024/25 winter grains area is expected to amount to 5.2 million Hectares. Area planted to winter grains slightly exceeds previous drought-hit season levels, although this figure confirms the long-term reduction of arable crops in favor of more profitable tree crops, namely olives, almonds, and pistachios.

After three consecutive years of tight water supply and a negative outlook regarding water availability at the beginning of the hydrological year, farmers opted to maximize their more drought-resilient winter grains plantings. The EU's elimination of the fallow land requirement came in too late to alter planting plans in place.

Weather Conditions

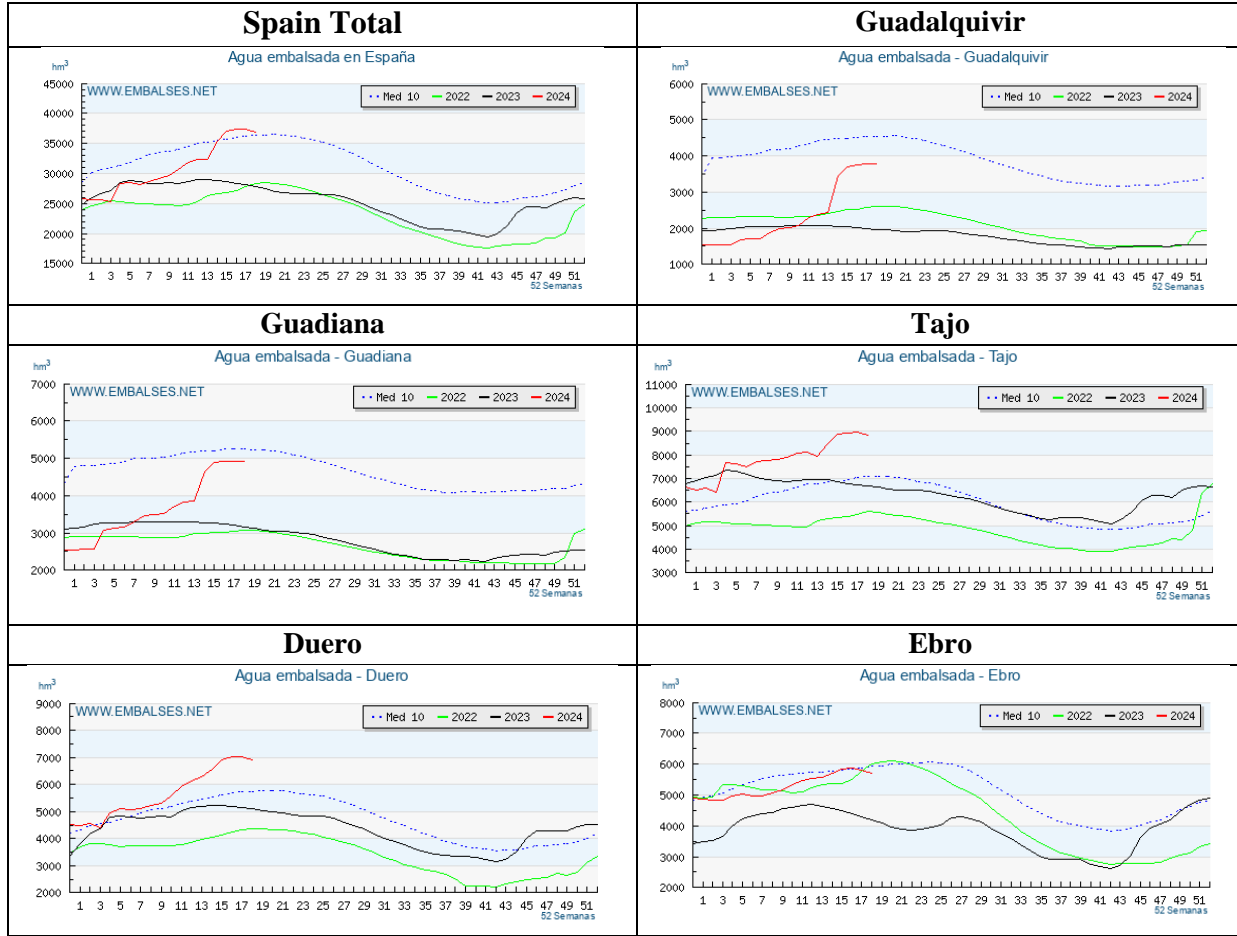
Weather conditions have been favorable for winter crop growth in Spain, as the winter crop growing season started off with good soil moisture levels. Fall precipitations contributed to improve soil moisture and allowed farmers to carry out timely soil preparation and planting operations. Likewise, Spanish farmers adequately fertilized their winter grains, driven by the improved affordability of fertilizers and the promising mid-winter precipitations, even though the decline registered in grain prices was relatively steeper than in fertilizer prices.

Spring 2024 has been marked by abundant rainfall (**Figure 3**), which restored soil moisture across the country, with the notable exception of the grain growing regions to the country's east, and significantly improved water storage levels (**Figure 1**), exceeding in some instances (Duero and Tajo River Basins) historical levels.

At the national level, water reserves are currently at 63.3 percent of total storage capacity. The presence of snow in the mountains represents an additional supply of water that will contribute to maintain water reservoirs towards the end of the spring and early summer.

The current water storage levels should allow for a recovery in rice and corn plantings. According to Post projections, Spain's grain corn plantings could potentially amount to nearly 300 thousand Hectares in MY 2024/25.

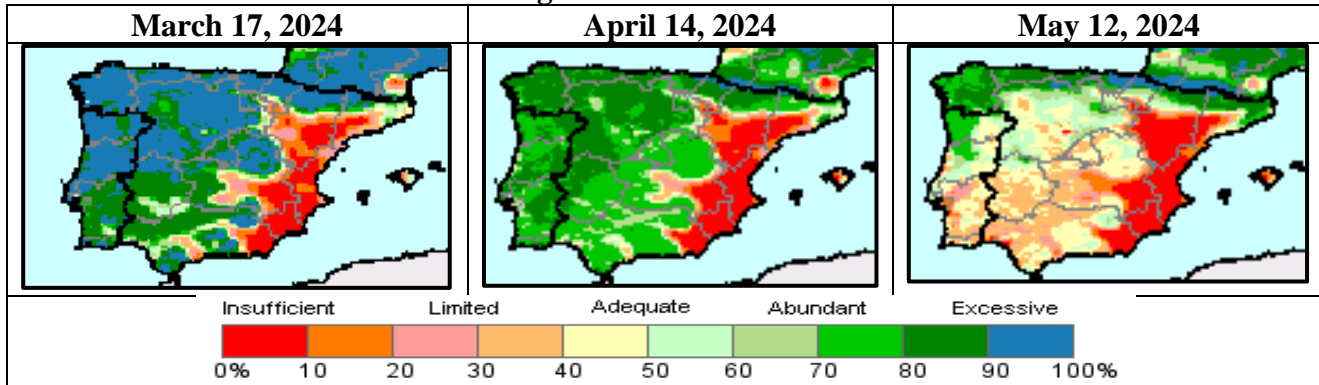
Figure 1. Spain Total and River Basin Water Reservoir Levels



Source: Embalses.net

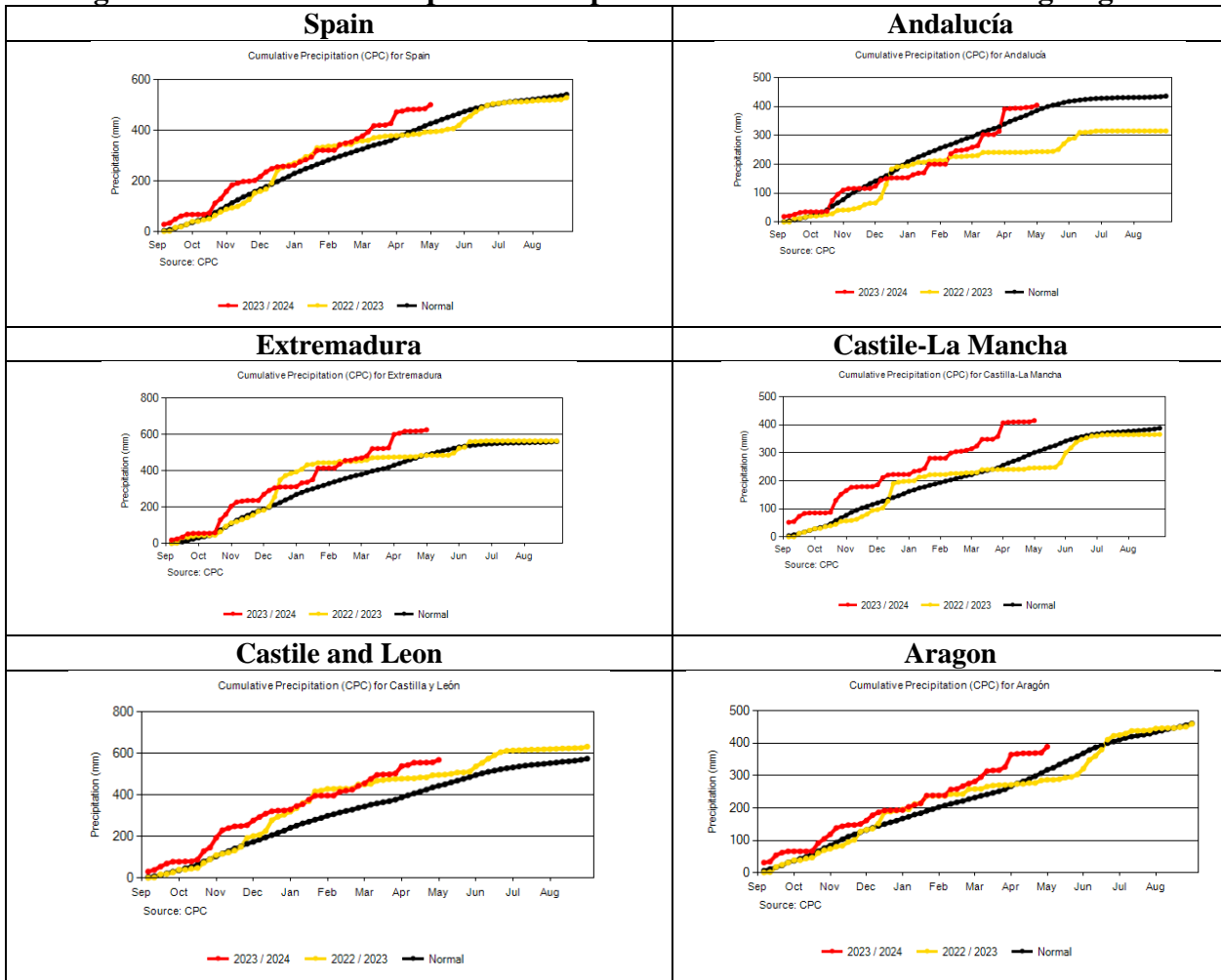
Precipitations in spring have been key to improving soil moisture (**Figure 2**) and ensuring proper plant development of the rain-fed winter grains. The growing regions to the country’s east are the exception, as soil moisture remains low and prevents a yield recovery in that area.

Figure 2. Soil Moisture



Source: IPAD/Foreign Agricultural Service/USDA.

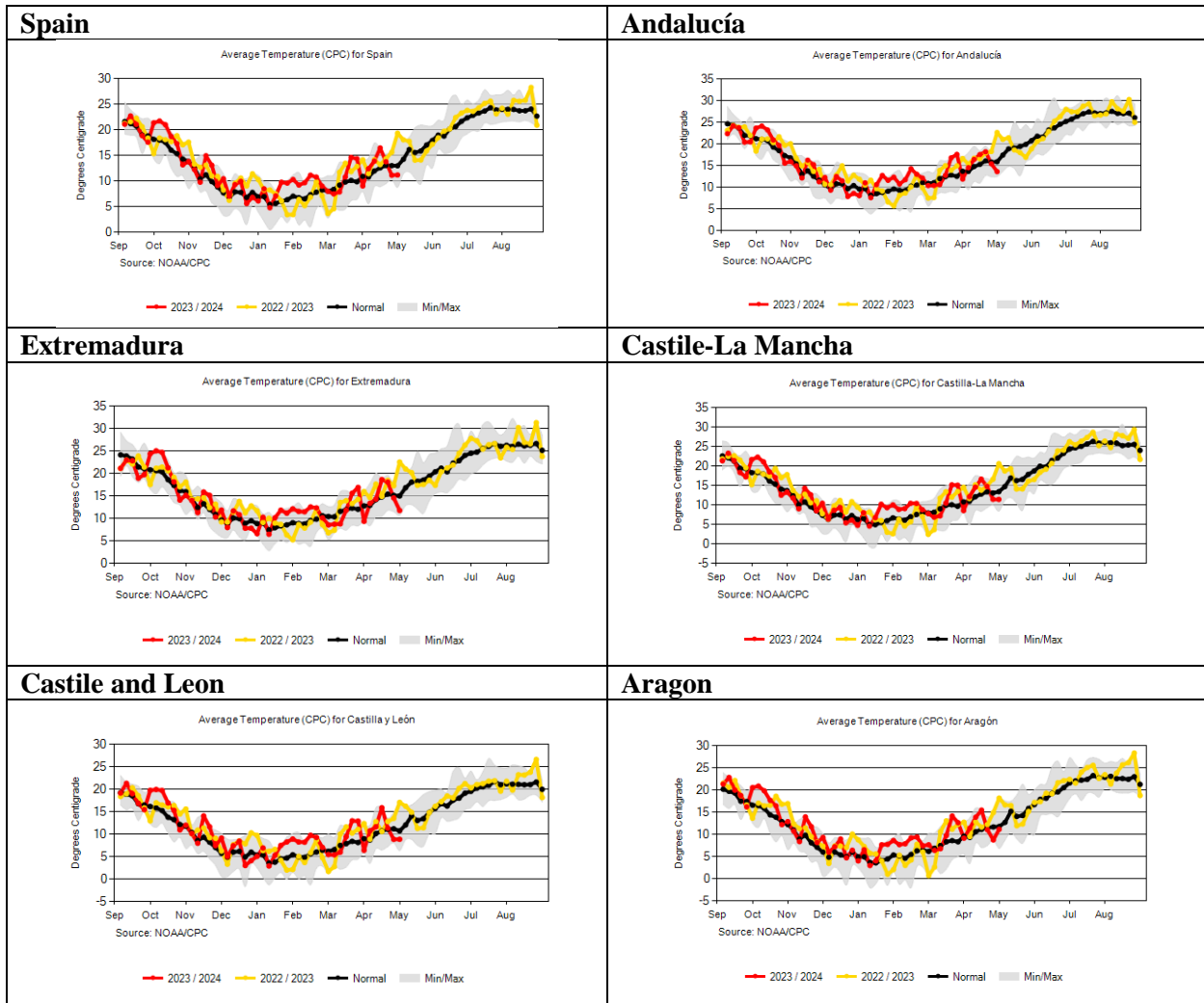
Figure 3. Cumulative Precipitation in Spain and in Main Grain Producing Regions



Source: IPAD/Foreign Agricultural Service/USDA.

Fall and winter temperatures were mild, although mid-March and mid-April registered well above average heat levels for short periods of time, triggering concerns over moisture stress. However, the cooler temperatures that followed (**Figure 4**) delayed winter grains development and protected grains from shriveling, preventing productivity losses. Damage caused by spring frosts are limited to small areas in the country’s northern half. The size of the rainfed grain crop is largely determined by the temperature pattern and precipitations in the months of April and May.

Figure 4. Average Temperatures in Main Grain Producing Regions



Source: IPAD/Foreign Agricultural Service/USDA.

Production

Given the negative outlook on water availability at the beginning of the hydrological year, farmers in **Andalucía** increased their more drought-resilient winter grains plantings and early spring-planted sunflower, at the expense of planting intentions for more water-demanding spring crops. However, after three consecutive years of tight water supply, abundant early spring precipitations improved soil moisture and water storage levels in the Guadalquivir River basin allowing for a sizeable grain crop that is ready for harvest.

In **Extremadura**, similarly to Andalucía, the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index NDVI (**Figure 5**) is exceptional, as it virtually coincides with the largest NDVI recorded within the 2001-2021 historical series. Hence, the grain production outlook in this region remains very positive. Moreover, the increased water storage volumes put an end to past years’ water limitation-driven low area levels, and a recovery in both corn and rice plantings is anticipated.

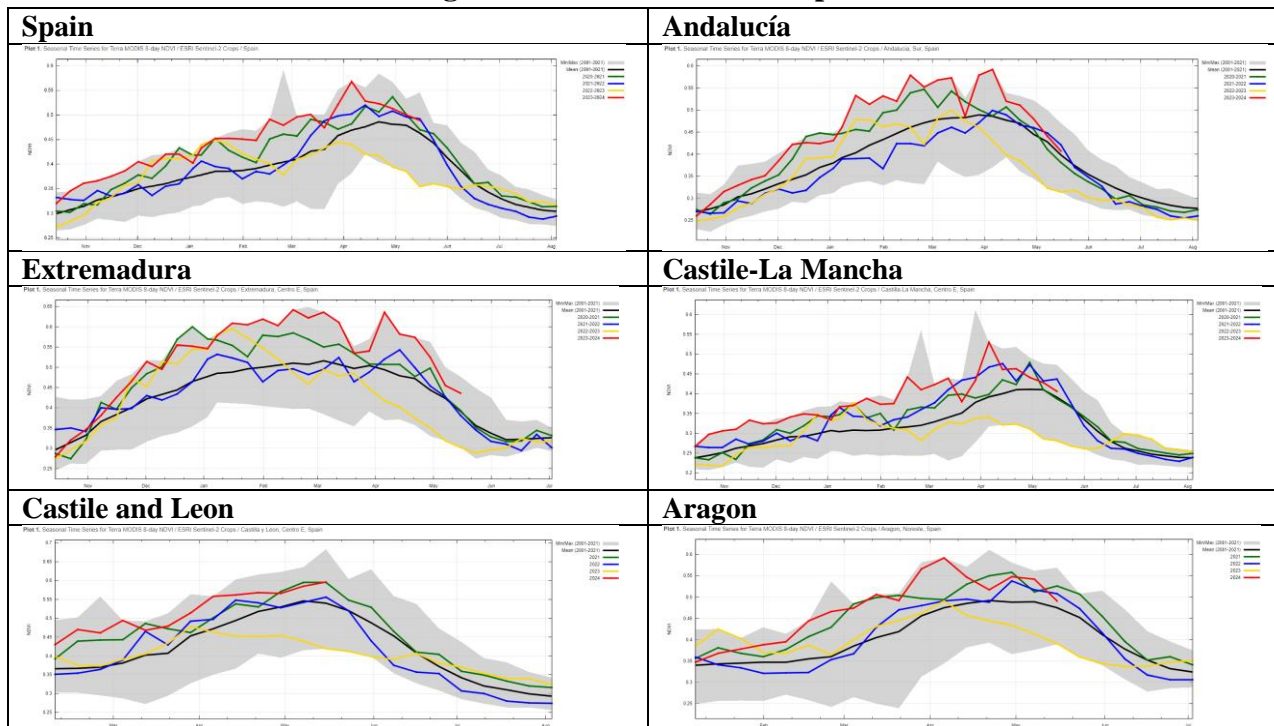
In **Castile-La Mancha**, weather conditions during fall and winter were favorable for crop establishment. Likewise, timely early spring precipitations, accompanied by mild temperatures, contributed to a good, although somewhat delayed, crop development. Nevertheless, some hydric stress concerns persist in the region's southeast, where precipitation levels have been comparatively lower, and grains are currently facing the end of the filling stage.

The overall grain production outlook in **Castile and León**, Spain's largest grain-producing region, is positive. In the region's northeast, bordering Aragon, additional precipitations are needed to secure an average crop.

Aragon may witness relatively poorer results than the other main grain growing regions as precipitation levels were insufficient to fully restore soil moisture or refill water storage in dams.

The combination of abundant precipitation and mild temperatures prevailing in spring are expected to result in a rebound of Spain's winter crop production 2024. If the recovery in area planted to corn is confirmed, the country's total grain production could exceed the 21 million metric tons (MT), out of which, nearly 7 million would correspond to wheat, over 8 million to barley, nearly 3.5 million to corn, and the remainder to minor grains (namely oats, triticale, rye, and sorghum)

Figure 5. Seasonal NVDI in Spain



Source: USDA/NASA GLAM.

Attachments:

No Attachments.