

The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

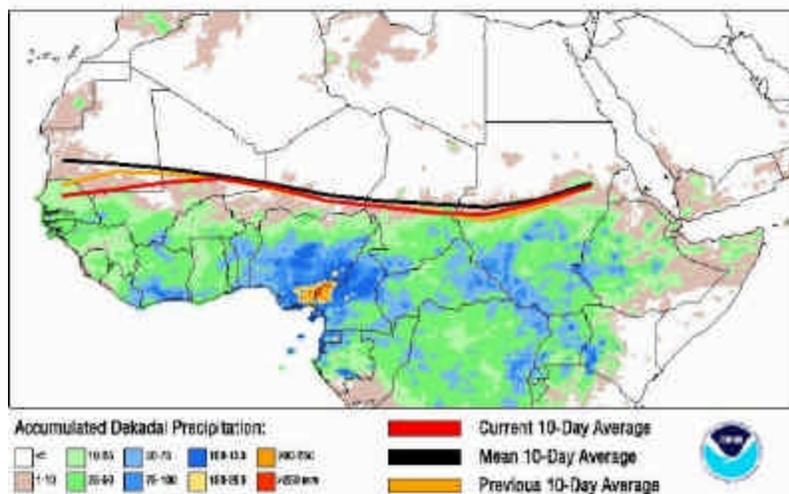
October 7 - 13, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

Update of ITCZ

During the final dekad of September 2004, the African portion of the Intertropical Convergence Zone was located near 15.0 degrees north latitude, compared with the 1988-2003 long term mean of 16.0N and last dekad's position near 15.2N. Rains were generally near normal during the period, though some extreme amounts were seen near the southern Nigeria / Cameroon border region. The western portion of the ITCZ is located near 15.8N compared with the long term mean position of 16.7N. The eastern region is closer to normal and is currently located near 14.2N.

Position of the Africa ITCZ
September 2004 Dekad 3

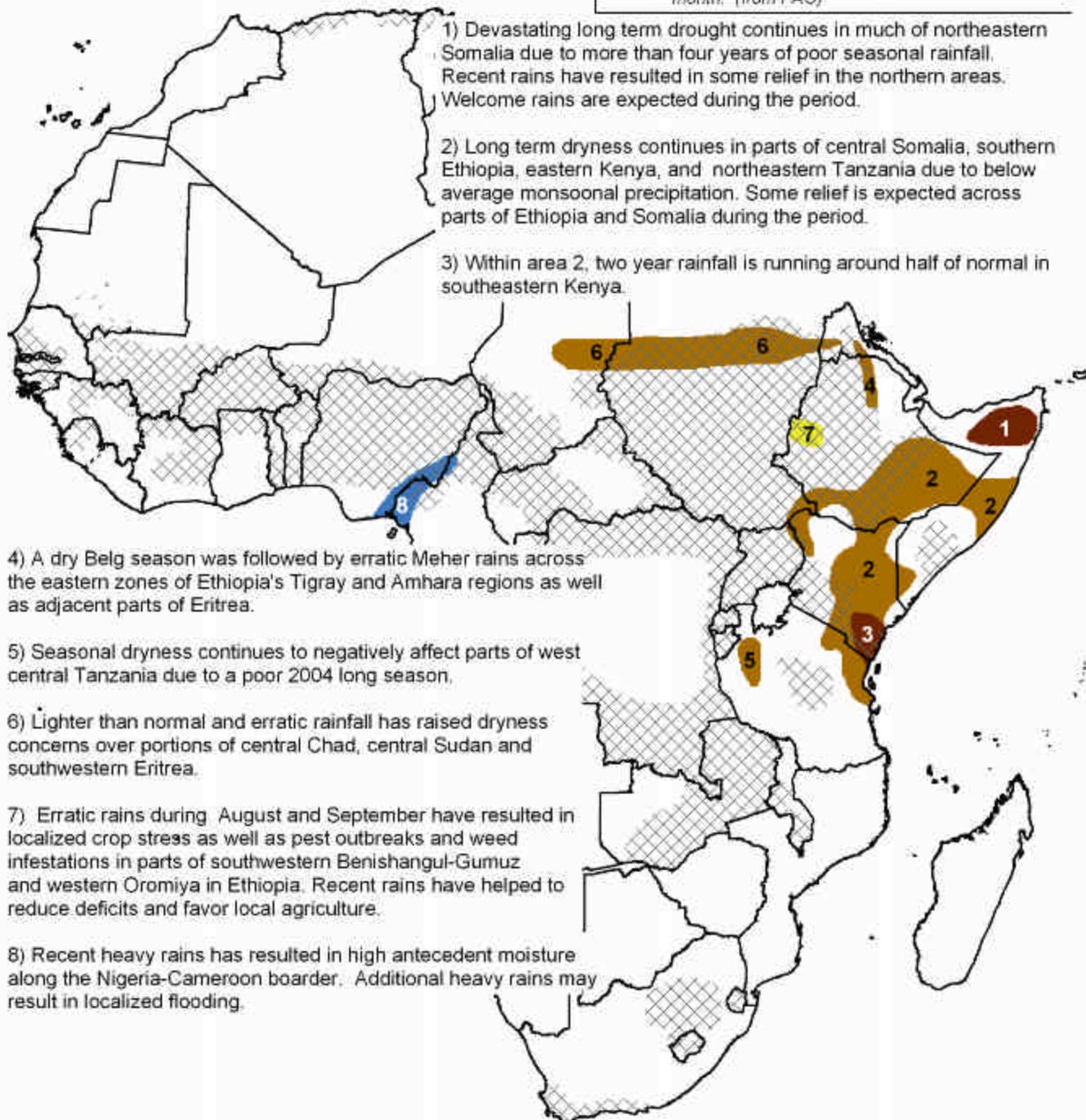


Locust Update

The report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations on the locust situation in western Africa was last updated on October 5. Several immature Desert Locust swarms invaded southwest Libya near Ghat and the Algerian border this past week. Numerous immature swarms continue to form in southern Mauritania, northern Senegal, Mali, Niger and northern Burkina Faso. Additional details can be found at the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at <http://www.aelga.net> and the Agrhymet site at <http://ww.agrhymet.ne>.

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NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



Valid: October 7 - 13, 2004

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Poor performance of seasonal rains over the past several years has resulted in a devastating long term, multi-year drought across the Sanaag, Sool, Togdheer, Bari and Nugal Provinces of northern Somalia. The 2004 season, however, saw an overall good performance of the long rains. Furthermore, showers dropped 10 to 60+ mm of beneficial rains during the first few days of October. Additional rains are expected during the period, indicating a good start to the short rains. Favorable south and southeasterly winds are expected to produce an additional 5 to 50 mm of rainfall. The recent rains, along with additional rainfall will lead to an improvement in pasture conditions and an increase in water supplies. However, several seasons of good rainfall will be required to ease the long term impacts of the drought. Therefore, any improvement will come slowly.
2. The long rains this year were much below normal across central and eastern Kenya, the Somali region of Ethiopia, southern portions of Ethiopia's SNNPR and Oromiya regions as well as the Galguduud and Mudug regions of central Somalia. The season started late and ended early, as little rain fell during March or May. Totals were less than half of normal for the season, with deficits of 100 to 150 mm. Some areas in the higher elevations have deficits exceeding 250 mm. Further west, dry conditions have also been reported across northwestern Kenya and adjacent parts of Uganda and Sudan. Showers produced significant amounts of rain across some of the northern zones of Ethiopia's Somali region last week, with showers also observed over northwestern Kenya and southeastern Sudan. Additional rains are expected across the Somali region and southern portions of Oromiya during the period. Showers are also expected across northeastern Tanzania, however conditions will remain dry across northeastern Kenya during the period.
3. Multi-year drought has resulted in large long term moisture deficits across southeastern Kenya. Poor performance of the March-May rains has exacerbated long term drought conditions across the area. The long term drought will reduce water supplies and reservoir levels, degrade pastures and may result in reduced sub-soil moisture availability for the upcoming second cropping season. Showers are expected during the period, indicating that the short rains may be about to start.
4. The 2004 Belg season (February-May) was drier than normal across the South Tigray zone as well as North Wello and South Wello zones in the Ahmara region. Rainfall was about half of normal for the season. Furthermore, rains during the Meher season have been erratic and lighter than normal. Erratic seasonal rains have been observed in parts of central Eritrea as well. This may have a negative effect on Meher and long cycle crops in the area.
5. Rainfall during the 2003-04 rainy season was about 70 percent of normal across west-central portions of Tanzania. Locally heavy pre-season rains in early September, along with scattered showers last week, helped to boost moisture in the area and improve vegetation and pasture conditions. However, satellite imagery still shows vegetation stress. Conditions are expected to be dry during the period. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs into April.
6. Rainfall during July and August has been erratic and lighter than normal across east-central Chad, central Sudan into the northern highlands of Eritrea. This includes Biltine in Chad, portions of Darfur and Kurdufan in Sudan as well as Gash Barka in Eritrea. Some areas have seen an increase in shower activity during September into early October, which has improved vegetation conditions and increased water supplies. Occasional showers are possible over the southern portions of the highlighted area, however northern areas will remain dry.
7. Seasonal rains have been erratic across parts of southwestern Benishangul-Gumuz and western Oromiya in Ethiopia during August and September. This has resulted in localized crop stress, pest outbreaks and weed infestations. However, it appears that these conditions are localized and that there are areas within the highlighted zone that are reporting an overall good growing season. Recent rains across the area have increased moisture, and additional rains are expected during the period.
8. Heavy rains have fallen over the past week along the Nigeria-Cameroon boarder. This has raised river levels and resulted in saturated soils. Additional heavy rains are expected during the period which may result in some flooding problems. However, widespread flooding is not expected.

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