The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

for

March 9, 2006 – March 15, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Locust Update:

The FAO site (http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html) was last updated on March 2. Their report indicates that an increasing number of small infestations of adults have been found in northwest and northern **Mauritania**. Localized breeding is in progress in one place in the northwest near Nouadhibou and **Western Sahara**. Locust numbers are likely to increase slightly in these areas during the coming weeks if breeding occurs. Isolated adults are present in southwest **Libya** and near Lake Nasser in **Egypt**. In the winter breeding areas along the Red Sea coast, only scattered adults are present in the Tokar Delta of **Sudan** and along the coast to Suakin. Scattered adults are also present on the coast in northwest **Somalia**.

Armyworm Update:

The Desert Locust Organization of East Africa **(http://www.dlcoea.org.et/)** has indicated that an Armyworm infestation has continued during February in Southern, Central and Northern regions of Tanzania. The invasion has been termed as very heavy and it has been estimated that the worms have invaded more than 100,000ha of crops.

Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment Graphic:

Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits Assessment

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)

1) Terrible conditions continue across sections of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. The failure of the rainy season has left the area with enormous rainfall deficits.

2) Extending from area #1, is a region not as badly affected by the poor wet season. In Kenya, eastern Uganda, and northeastern Tanzania, dry conditions have greatly reduced the availability of water. Improvement has taken place in Tanzania, and sections of both Uganda and Kenya (See #7).

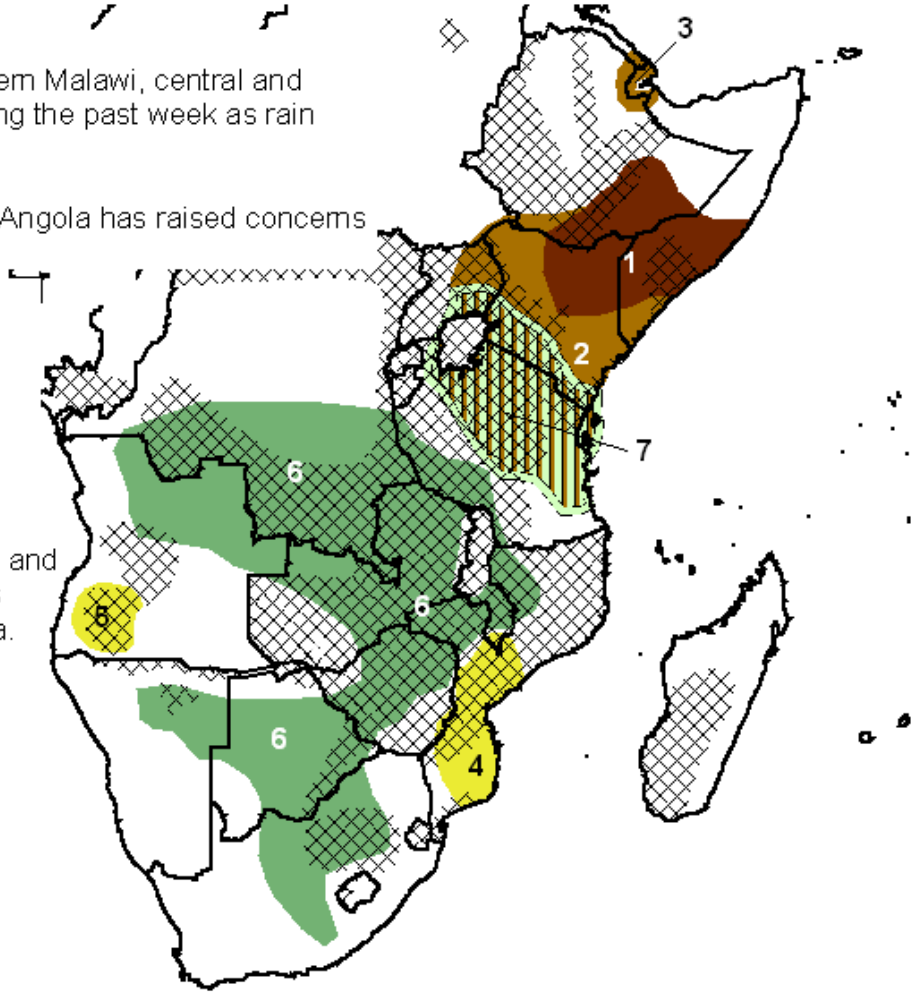
3) Poor pasture conditions and water shortages in the vicinity of Djibouti have been the result of below normal 2005 precipitation.

4) Dry conditions across extreme southern Malawi, central and southern Mozambique were eased during the past week as rain moved through the area.

5) Erractic rainfall across southwestern Angola has raised concerns over dryness in the area.

6) Favorable conditions have been observed across much of southern Africa. These conditions have produced favorable growing conditions and water availability is not a concern.

7) As much as 75 mm of rain fell on Tanzania and nearby sections of Kenya and Uganda during the past week. This has relieved some of the dryness in the area.



Valid: March 9 - 15, 2006

Weather Hazards Benefits Text Explanation:

1. A few light showers were observed along the Kenya-Ethiopia border during the past week, but not nearly enough to offset the drought conditions that are in place in southern Ethiopia, southern Somalia, and the northeastern quadrant of Kenya. The terrible March- May season followed by the complete failure of the October – December short rains have left deficits for 2005 that range from 250 mm to 500 mm. Most areas received half their normal rainfall totals, with isolated locations receiving less than 20 percent of normal rains. These conditions have resulted in crop failures, pasture degradation, and greatly reduced water availability. The coming week may bring some showers to the negatively impacted portions of Ethiopia.

2. In an area stretching from the southern tip of Somalia, across much of Kenya and into eastern sections of Uganda, as well as into coastal and northern Tanzania have been experiencing drought conditions. While rainfall has picked up over the last few weeks across Tanzania and around the Lake Victoria basin (see #7), rainfall totals have been lackluster with precipitation totals since October remaining 200 mm to 400 mm below normal. The 2005 short rains in the bimodal areas of southern Kenya, and adjacent areas of Tanzania have failed. In the Lake Victoria basin, below normal rains have caused both crop losses and reduced available pasture. The past week brought unseasonably heavy rains with most of Tanzania, and the Lake Victoria basin picking up in excess of 75 mm. Much lighter totals are expected during the coming week.

3. Less than half of the normal rainfall in 2005 in Djibouti has left the country with a reduction of pasture, and limited drinking water. During the last month some moisture off the Red Sea has improved conditions slightly, especially around the capital. Further improvement will have to wait until the wet season starts in the next few weeks.

4. Erratic rainfall over southern Malawi and southern and central Mozambique during the past two months has resulted in slightly below normal rainfall in the region. This has placed stress, and possibly caused localized crop losses in Malawi. The past week brought very heavy rains to the area, with reports of flooding in central Mozambique where totals exceeded 250 mm in locations, with the area generally seeing totals above 75 mm. Dryer conditions are anticipated in the region during the next week.

5. Erratic precipitation throughout the season has resulted in slightly dryer than normal conditions. A few isolated regions have not seen rainfall since mid-February. Last week brought little to no rainfall to the area, however improved conditions are anticipated during the coming week.

6. Steady rainfall over this region in southern Africa has been continuous with only brief or minor deviations from normal. This is a region that over the past 2-3 months has generally had conditions that would support agricultural, pastoral and hydrological practices with only localized problems. These good conditions are expected to continue into the next week.

7. Conditions across Tanzania, southern Kenya and around the Lake Victoria basin have seen an improvement to the dry conditions during the past week, and in some areas, during the past several weeks. This area generally saw rainfall totals in excess of 75 mm. Although agriculturally the damage has already been done, the rainfall will still improve pasture conditions and provide additional drinking water. The coming period will likely bring some showers, though not as heavy as last week, to the region.

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