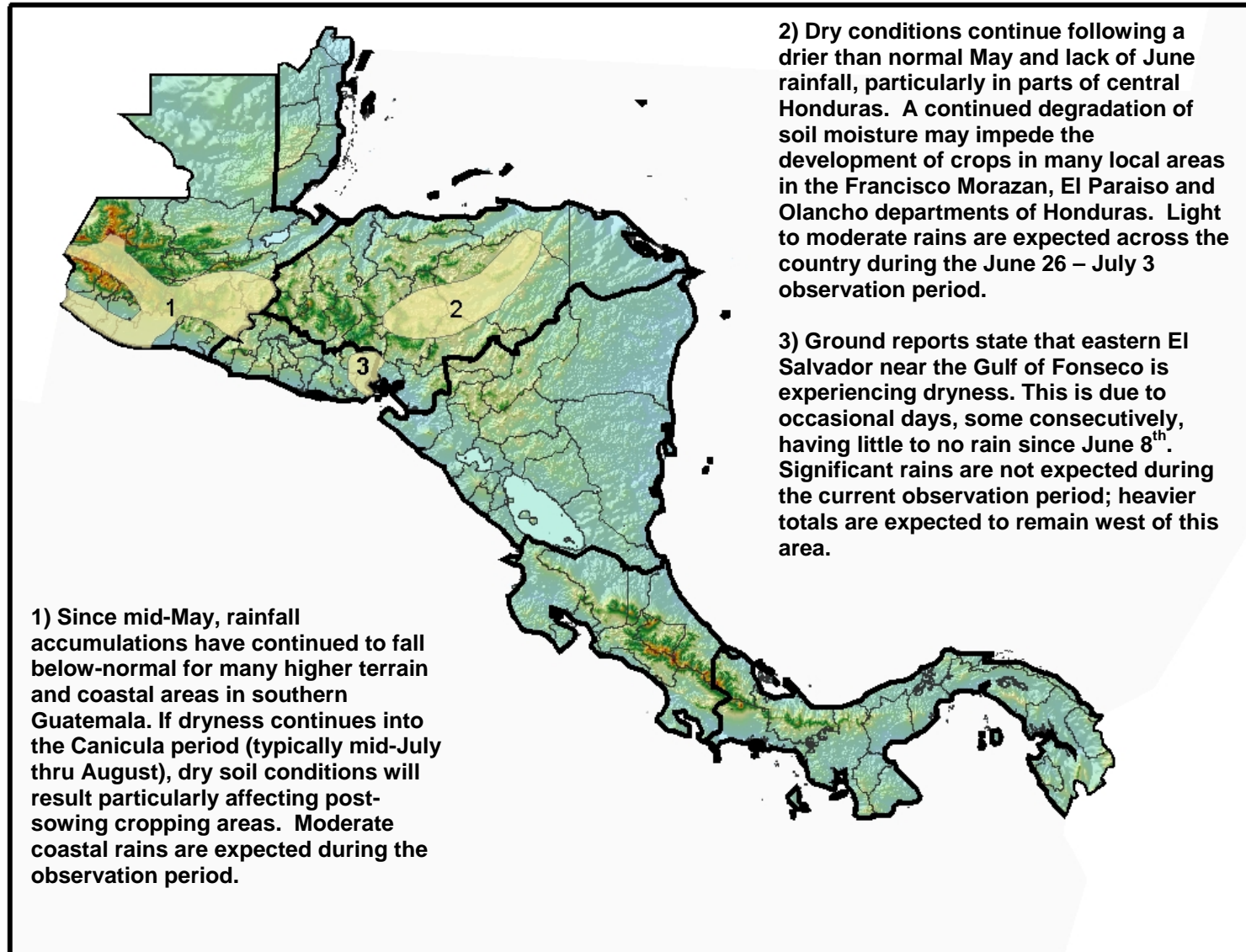


The MFEWS

Central America Weather Hazards and Benefits Assessment

For

June 26 – July 3, 2008

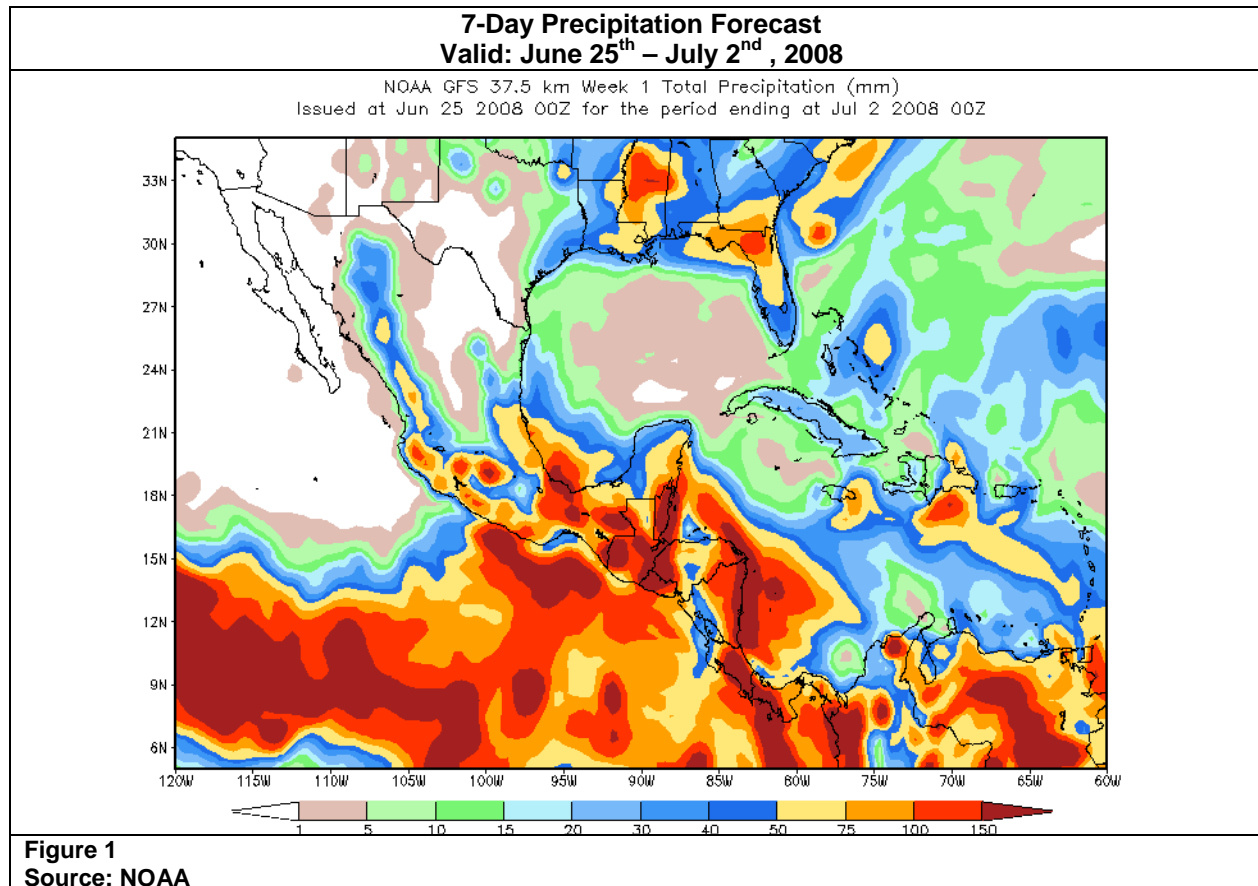


Hazards Assessment Text Explanation:

For the Primera season (May – August), precipitation deficits are becoming increasingly evident for parts of southern Guatemala, central Honduras, and eastern El Salvador. Field reports indicate that there is a small area of stress and that if dryness continues until the Canicula period, this may negatively affect crops that are in vegetative stages along the southern coast of Guatemala. In northern Guatemala, precipitation totals remain above-normal in many parts of the Peten and Alta Verapaz departments, however banana plantations were reportedly lost in the Izabal department due to Tropical Storms Alma and Arthur. In central Honduras, precipitation levels in many local areas are considerably below normal, having received less than 25% of their average rainfall by mid-June. Continued dryness could potentially lead to a decrease in water resources, and impede the development of maize and sorghum crops in the Francisco Morazan, El Paraiso and Olancho departments of Honduras.

The dryness observed in the northern Central America region is largely due to the near stationary high pressure ridge that was located in the Gulf during the month of May followed by another high pressure ridge in Nicaragua during the month of June. High pressure systems are known to cause “fair weather” meaning no clouds or rain. Unfortunately, this high pressure ridge is situated in a manner to prevent rain from reaching the valley areas located along the Motagua River where Guatemala is experiencing dryness, especially in the east. Other moisture sources for the country coming from the north and south are doing well due to orographic lifting in which tall land features, such as mountains, cause quick forming convection. However, these moisture sources are not strong enough to migrate over the Sierra Madre mountain ranges and bring rainfall to the drier lower elevations.

Precipitation forecasts suggest improvement to rainfall deficits in eastern Guatemala and eastern Nicaragua, but not much change is expected for central Honduras except for improved water resources.



The evaluation of climatological threats of MFEWS include the participation of the central and local offices of MFEWS, NOAA-CPC, USGS, NASA, INETER of Nicaragua, Meteorological Service of Honduras, IMN of Costa Rica, INSIVUMEH of Guatemala, ETESA of Panama, NMS of Belize and SNET of El Salvador. Any questions or comments on this product can be directed to Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov