The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

February 24 – March 2, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

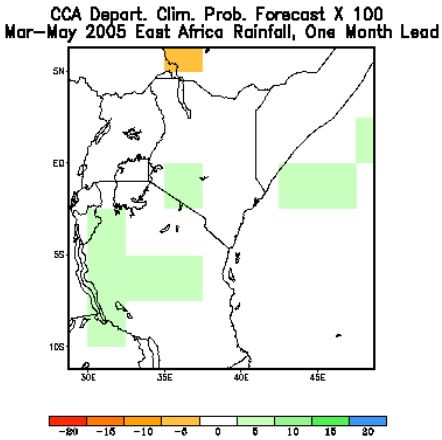
CCA Outlook Updates: March-May 2005 Forecasts

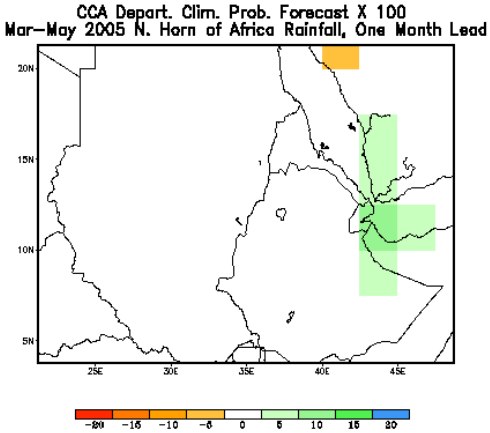
East Africa:

The outlook for March-May 2005 East Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a slight tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall over central and western Tanzania, and locally over southern Kenya. Climatology is expected elsewhere.

Northern Horn of Africa:

Climatology is expected across the region, except locally over northeastern Ethiopia and much of Djibouti, where there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall.



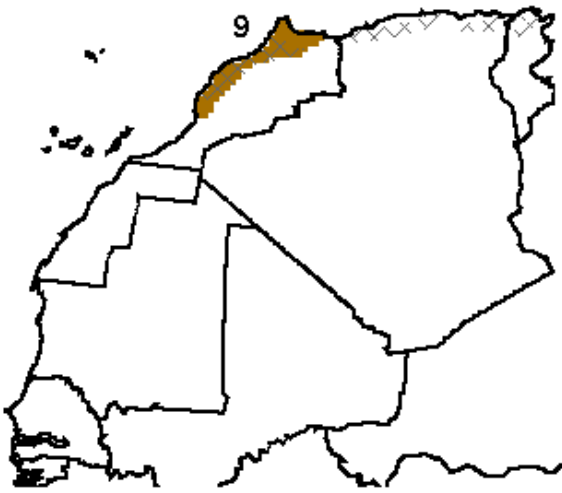


Recent Rainfall in the Sahara:

Rainfall in arid regions of the Sahara has, generally, been heavier than normal since early to mid-December 2004. Continued precipitation during 2005 will increase moisture anomalies locally throughout the region of central and northern Mauritania, northern Mali and central and southern Algeria. This may have impacts on locust populations in the Sahel for the next growing season. We will continue to monitor the meteorological situation. Web sites for actual locust information include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (http://www.fao.org/NEWS/GLOBAL/locusts/Locuhome.htm), the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at http://www.aelga.net and the AGRHYMET site at http://www.agrhymet.ne.

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

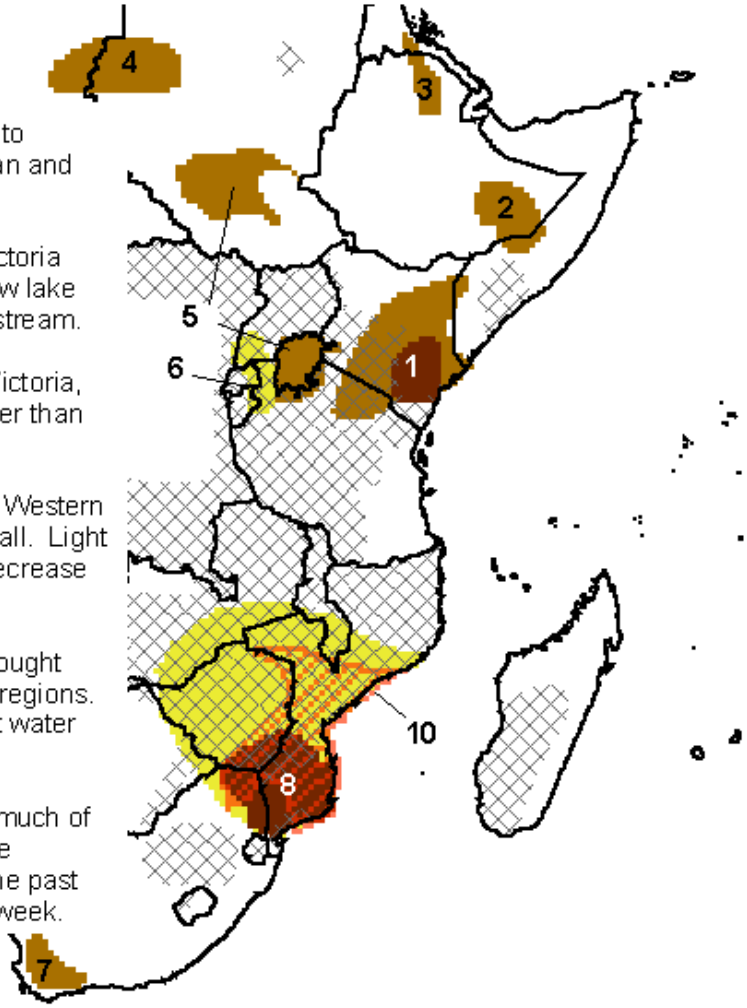
NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1. A two year drought/dryness continues to negatively affect areas of southern and eastern Kenya and problems appear to be expanding into southwestern Kenya. Darker shading indicates the region of most intense dryness.

2. Parts of eastern Ethiopia have received below normal rains for the past two seasons.

3. The Afar region of north central Ethiopia continues to feel the effects of poor seasonal rainfall in 2004. Dry season conditions will continue to decrease aquifers throughout the area. though recent light showers may indicate the beginning of seasonal rains.



4. Erratic and early ending 2004 seasonal rainfall has led to hydrological problems in and around North Darfur in Sudan and adjacent portions of eastern Chad.

5. An erratic pattern of rainfall continues over the Lake Victoria Basin, as little rainfall was seen during the past week. Low lake levels continue to decrease seasonal river flooding downstream.

6. Localized dryness continues in a region west of Lake Victoria, as 04-05 seasonal precipitation has been erratic and lighter than normal.

7. Localized severe dryness continues in areas of interior Western Cape in South Africa due to 3 years of below normal rainfall. Light rains should increase into March, which may regionally decrease moisture deficits.

8. Little to no rainfall was seen during the past week in drought affected areas of southern Mozambique and neighboring regions. Though Limpopo River levels are accordingly low, current water availability is reported to be adequate.

9. Monthly rains continue to run from 5-50% of normal in much of northwestern Morocco. Moisture has increased during the past two month, though dryness was seen again during the past week. The area may receive light rainfall within the next week.

10. The red hatched region in southern Africa has received virtually no rainfall during the past three weeks. Surrounding this, the yellow shaded region has seen dryness during at least 2 out of the past 3 weeks and crop damage may have resulted.

Valid: February 24 - March 2, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. A few light showers occurred over parts of southern Kenya during the past week, though the area continues to feel the affects of a long term drought/severe dryness. Seasonal rainfall totals range from 25-75% throughout the region, with the most severe deficits seen in the darker shaded area. Rains should not begin in earnest until May.

2. Seasonal dryness continues in parts of eastern Ethiopia and west central Somalia that have received below normal precipitation during the last four monsoon periods. Local agriculture, pastures, and drinking water supplies have been negatively affected. The next rainy season should begin around early April and last for around a month and a half.

3. As signs of Belg rains appear to be showing themselves in parts of western Ethiopia, dryness that resulted from erratic 2004 precipitation continues to negatively affect the Afar region. Current concerns are toward low aquifer levels and poor pasture conditions, though the problems will continue to compound unless 2005 seasonal rains fall at normal intensity.

4. 2004 rains in the Darfur region of western Sudan were late to start and early to recede, leaving behind stressed pastures, poor irrigation, and low aquifer levels. Coupled with the stress of the IDP / refugee situation throughout the area, the intensity of the hydrological problem has been enhanced. Rains should generally not begin until around June, though FEWS-NET ITCZ monitoring will begin in early April for the region.

5. A continued pattern of erratic seasonal precipitation is occurring over the Lake Victoria Basin. Lake levels are near 10-year lows, and downstream runoff continues to be decreased compared to normal for the time of year. Food security implications also continue into southern Sudan, as supplementary, flood related food production is meager.

6. Second season crops are being stressed in the area west of Lake Victoria and have likely already been damaged by the erratic seasonal precipitation. Little rainfall were seen during the past week, and generally light amounts are expected during the next period.

7. Late 2004 / early 2005 rainfall in parts of the Western Cape in South Africa have been much lighter than normal locally, and this compounds the fact that a similar situation has occurred during the previous two years in the region. While the current dryness by itself may not have been sufficient cause for the established drought, three years of below normal rainfall have led to severe hydrological and agricultural problems throughout the region.

8. A couple thunderstorms produced very localized precipitation in parts of southern the Mozambique region during the past week as high pressure continues to associate dryness throughout much of the area. Since November 2004, the region has accumulated 200-300 mm of rainfall deficits, and this translates to between 20-50 percent of normal for the season so far. The only bright point at the moment is that basic water supplies from the Limpopo River appear to be adequate. See #10.

9. Moisture has increased slightly in crop producing regions of coastal Morocco, although seasonal precipitation deficits continue to be relatively large. The most intense dryness is seen toward the north near Gibraltar, as precipitation increases toward the southeast over the Atlas Mountains. Dryness is expected during the next week.

10. Little precipitation was observed during the past three weeks in the hatched region of Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa. While temperatures throughout the region have generally been normal to below normal, agriculture may have been harmed due to this dryness. This is also the case, to a lesser degree in the surrounding area (yellow shade), where at least two of the past three weeks have seen little to no rainfall. Forecasts are generally favorable throughout the region, especially near the Zambezi, during the next week, as moisture has pushed into the area and daily showers and thunderstorms are expected.

AUTHOR: Timothy B Love

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Alvin.Miller@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7552

FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity whose purpose is to provide objective information about food security conditions. Its views are not necessarily reflective of those of USAID. The FEWS NET weather hazards assessment process and products include participation by FEWS NET field and home offices, NOAA-CPC, USGS, NASA, and a number of other national and regional organizations in the countries concerned.