

The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

October 13 - 19, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of El Nino:

ENSO-neutral conditions are expected during the next 3-6 months.

By the end of September, equatorial SST anomalies greater than +0.5°C were found between 160°E and 170°E, while negative anomalies less than -0.5°C were observed at most locations between 130°W and the South American coast. The SST departures in the Niño 3,and Niño 1+2 regions were negative, while weak positive departures were observed in the Niño 4 and Niño 3.4 regions. During the last three months surface and subsurface temperature anomalies decreased, especially in the eastern equatorial Pacific, while atmospheric conditions (low-level winds, convection and sea level pressure) remained near average over most of the tropical Pacific.

The large spread of the most recent statistical and coupled model forecasts (weak La Niña to weak El Niño) indicates considerable uncertainty. However, current conditions and recent observed trends support a continuation of ENSO-neutral conditions for the next 3-6 months.

This discussion is a consolidated effort of NOAA and its funded institutions.

Locust Update:

The FAO (<u>http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html</u>) on September 30 indicated that the locust situation is generally calm in the summer breeding areas in the Sahel in West Africa. Nevertheless, locust numbers are increasing slightly as a result of small-scale breeding that is in progress in northwest **Mauritania** and in the western Air Mountains in **Niger**. However, the FAO states that hopper and adult numbers remain below threatening levels in both countries. Surveys will continue in order to detect any signs of increasing locust numbers.

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. March - May 2005 & 2004 rainfall was much less than normal in parts of southern Somalia and eastern Kenya. 2005 rainfall has been above normal, though, in areas of northern coastal Kenya and southern coastal Somalia.

2. Seasonal rainfall has been heavier than normal along the southern border region of Nigeria / Cameroon. Localized heavy rainfall may lead to areas of localized river flooding during the next week.

3. The 2004 - 2005 rainy season in Mozambique, southern Malawi and eastern Zimbabwe was drier than normal. This has degraded pastures, reduced the seasons harvest, and placed a strain on water resources.

4. End of season rains in and around the area of extreme southeastern Mauritania were less than normal, leading to local areas of low water availability and stressed pastures.

5. West of Afar, Ethiopia in the adjacent Highlands, in the Denakil province of Eritrea, and throughout Djibouti, seasonal rains have been lighter than normal, leading to areas of poor pasture conditions, stressed crops, and low drinking water levels.

6. Recent weekly rains on the order of 25-50 mm have helped to reduce localized dryness in areas of the Ahmar Mountains in Ethiopia. Additional precipitation is expected during the period.

7. Unlike much of southern Niger, a few localized regions in the Sahel area are experiencing short term dryness due to a lack or end-of-season rainfall. Continued dryness is expected.

8. Localized heavy rainfall is liikely during the first half of the forecast period in northern coastal Algeria and northern Tunisia. Areas of local flooding may result.

9. Thunderstorms, primarily during the first half of the next week, may produce locally intense rainfall in parts of southern Somalia, and river flooding along the Shebelle may result.

Valid: October 13 - 19, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. March through May 2005 precipitation in parts of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and extreme northeastern Tanzania was far below normal, and thus drought conditions exist in these areas. May through September rainfall along southern coastal Kenya continued to be lighter than normal, while moisture increased to the north toward the Somalia border. The end result is low drinking water levels, poor pasture conditions, and poor crop performance.

2. Locally intense rainfall may occur along the southern portion of the Nigeria / Cameroon border region during the next week, with the probable result of river flooding and a few mudslides in the area. Weekly precipitation totals may exceed 200 mm locally in the area.

3. Long term hydrological drought continues to affect much of southern Malawi, central and southern Mozambique, eastern Zimbabwe, and northeastern South Africa due to the past two seasons of poor performing rains. The primary negative factor at the moment that is affecting livelihoods in the region is lower than normal well water levels and generally poor water availability. Seasonal rains should normally begin in earnest in November.

4. Rainfall in parts of extreme southeastern Mauritania ended earlier than normal in September, leading to areas of low water availability and poor pasture conditions. A few light showers are possible during the next couple weeks, though any substantial precipitation is not likely, and conditions should remain poor throughout the dry season.

5. Recent seasonal rains in parts of north central Ethiopia, eastern Eritrea, and Djibouti have been lighter than normal, leading to areas of short term dryness, poor pasture conditions, and stressed agriculture. Though much of the Afar region is also experiencing this lack of moisture, effects on livelihoods are not as noticeable due to the recent evacuation of many of its inhabitants.

6. Though September rainfall in parts of the Ahmar Mountains in Ethiopia was less than normal, recent precipitation is helping to increase moisture throughout the area. Short term dryness is thus diminishing in the region.

7. Pockets of dryness due to erratic and slightly lighter than normal seasonal rainfall are evident in portions of southern Niger. Major implications at the moment are pastoral dryness, and little change is foreseen given the proximity to the end of the monsoon.

8. A strong frontal system is currently passing through northern Africa and will affect portions of northern Algeria and northern Tunisia during the initial part of the forecast period. Heavy rain and locally severe weather may result from the most intense storms.

9. Early seasonal rains are beginning to fall over parts of Somalia, and the focus will likely be toward the Shebelle River Basin during the next week, as heavy rainfall may lead to localized areas of flooding in the region. Weekly rainfall may exceed 100 mm locally.

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.