The USAID FEWS-NET

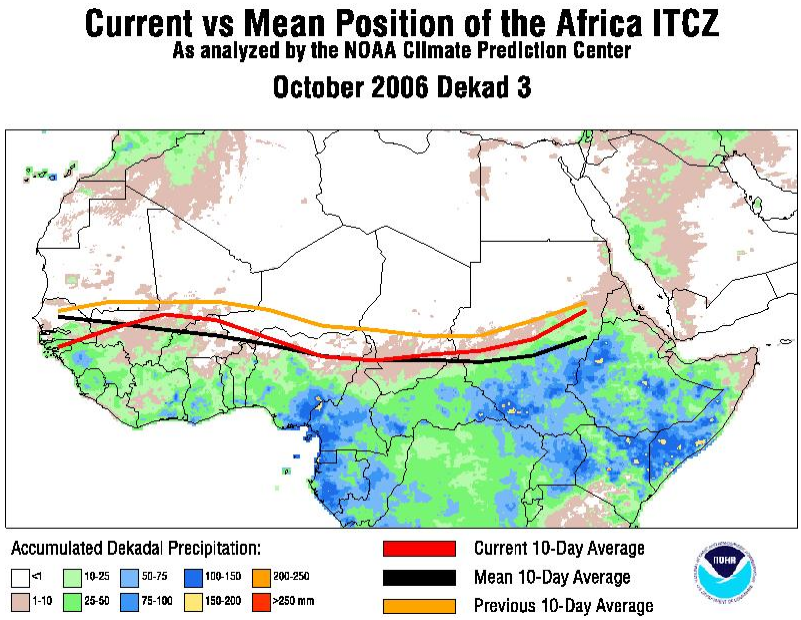
Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

November 9 - 15, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

ITCZ Update:



During the period from October 21 - 31, 2006, the African portion of the ITCZ was located near 12.8 degrees north latitude, when averaged from 15W-35E. This position was around 0.5 degrees north of the climatological mean, and nearly two degrees south from its position during the second dekad of October (See Figure 1). In the west (from 10W-10E), the ITCZ was located near 13.5N, compared with the mean location of around 12.9N, and a position last year of 12.0N (Figure 2). In the east (20E-35E), the ITCZ was located near 12.8N, compared with a climatological mean of 11.4N, and a position last year of near 10.7N. The latest movement of the convergence zone typifies the southward retreat during the final stages of October. One can expect the ITCZ to continue a rapid progression to the south in the weeks to come. Note that this is the final analysis of the year; monitoring will resume during the first dekad of April 2007. Additional information can be found at the web site: http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/ITCZ/itcz.shtml.

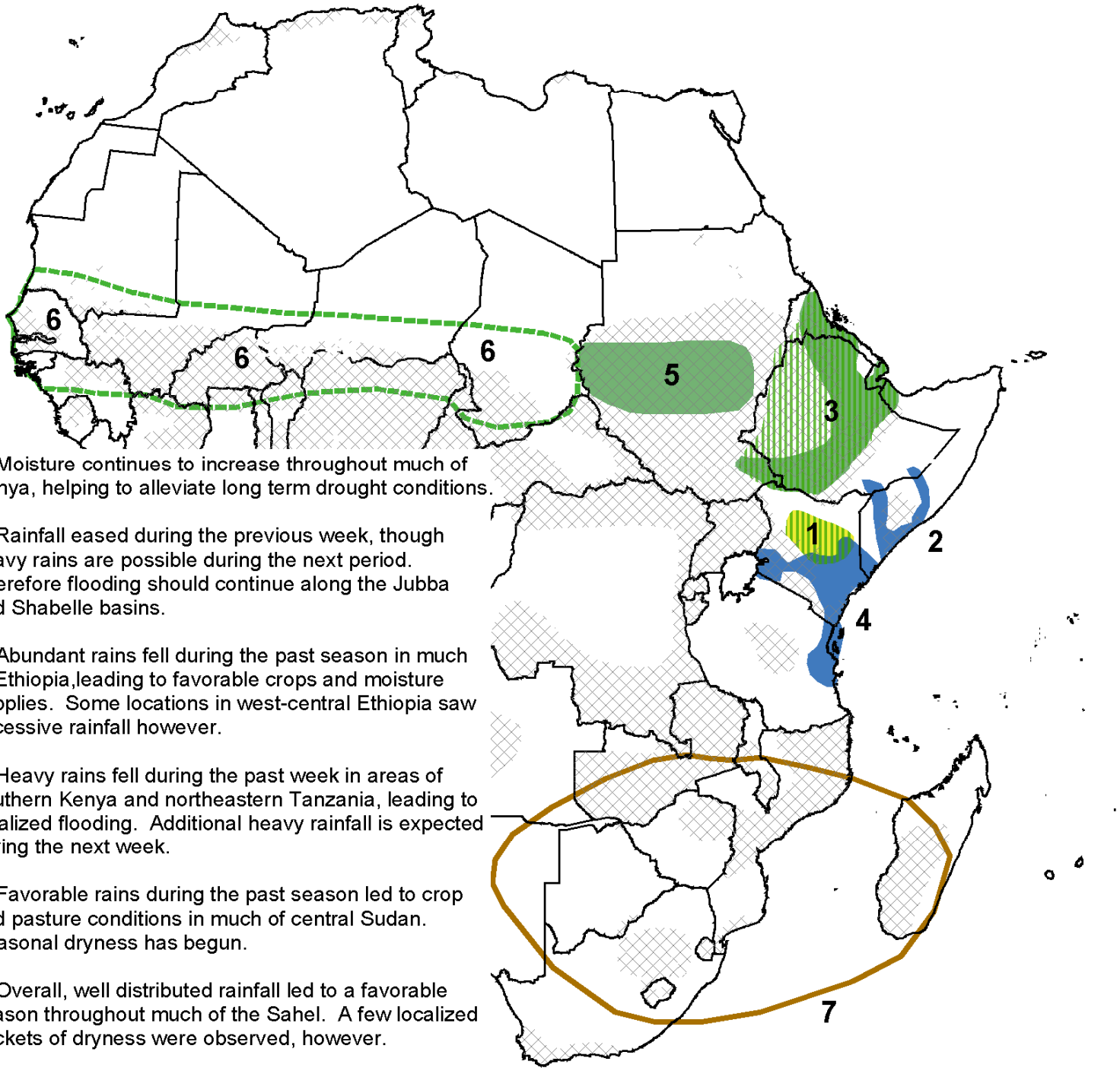
Locust Update:

The FAO site (http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html) was last updated on November 2.

Small hopper groups and bands are forming in northwest **Mauritania** where an outbreak developed last month. Ground control teams have treated nearly 1,500 ha so far. A field trial using a biological control agent (Metarhizium) and helicopter surveys are in progress. So far, the outbreak is limited to **Mauritania** but there is a slight risk of adults moving north into northern **Mauritania** and **Western Sahara** where so far only low numbers of locusts are present. A few adults are present near Tombouctou, **Mali**. Small-scale breeding continues in Tamesna, **Niger** where a few small hopper groups are forming. Low numbers of adults are present along the Atbara River in northeast **Sudan**. Good rains fell along the Red Sea coastal plains in the past few days from **Eritrea** to **Egypt** and in **Saudi Arabia**.

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) Moisture continues to increase throughout much of Kenya, helping to alleviate long term drought conditions.

2) Rainfall eased during the previous week, though heavy rains are possible during the next period. Therefore flooding should continue along the Jubba and Shabelle basins.

3) Abundant rains fell during the past season in much of Ethiopia,leading to favorable crops and moisture supplies. Some locations in west-central Ethiopia saw excessive rainfall however.

4) Heavy rains fell during the past week in areas of southern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania, leading to localized flooding. Additional heavy rainfall is expected during the next week.

5) Favorable rains during the past season led to crop and pasture conditions in much of central Sudan. Seasonal dryness has begun.

6) Overall, well distributed rainfall led to a favorable season throughout much of the Sahel. A few localized pockets of dryness were observed, however.

7) ENSO-positive (El Nino) conditions may lead to drier than normal conditions in early 2007.

Valid: November 9 - 15, 2006

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Long term drought continues in much of central Kenya due to a failed long rainy season in 2005 and poor performing rains thereafter, though recent precipitation has significantly increased moisture throughout the region. The area is experiencing drinking water shortages and poor pasture conditions, and is generally affecting livelihoods in a negative manner. Conditions should continue to improve during the next week, as significant rainfall is again expected throughout the region.

2. Rainfall was generally light throughout much of southern Somalia and southeastern Ethiopia during the past week, helping to reduce flooding concerns in the Shabelle and Jubba River Basins. River levels remain very high though, and moderate to heavy rainfall will be possible during the next week. Therefore flooding will be likely in the region.

3. Rainfall during the past season in much of central and western Ethiopia was sufficient to ensure adequate water resources for activities in the region. Generally, crops and pastures have benefited from the above normal precipitation, though some higher elevations in the west experienced periods of excessive rains and localized flooding. Dry conditions should prevail during the next week.

4. Seasonal rains in parts of southern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania have been heavier than normal during the past few weeks, and precipitation is likely to be widespread during the next week. Coastal flooding has resulted from the heavy rainfall. Precipitation totals during the next week may reach 125 mm or higher in some locations, and localized flooding will continue.

5. Ample precipitation fell in much of central Sudan during the period from July through September 2006, resulting in favorable conditions throughout the region. Benefits include acceptable drinking water levels, healthy pasture conditions, and adequate water availability for crops. The wet season has concluded, and little rainfall is expected until May 2007.

6. Widespread, continuous rainfall was observed over much of The Sahel during the past season. While a few dry pockets were noted, overall favorable conditions resulted in adequate moisture for many agricultural and pastoral applications. Seasonal rains have moved south of the area and will not resume until mid-2007.

7. Positive ENSO conditions are occurring and are expected to continue through at least early 2007. Current sea surface temperatures in the Nino3.4 region are running around 1.0 degrees Celsius warmer than normal, and SST temperatures in the Pacific Ocean are greater than 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than normal in some locations. Therefore, a moderate El Nino is occurring. Based on climatological patterns relating ENSO conditions to precipitation trends in southern Africa, El Nino patterns are generally linked to negative rainfall totals in parts of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, and Madagascar during December through February. Furthermore, positive rainfall anomalies in regions of southern Africa during the month of October are usually followed by drier than normal conditions during January through March. So what does this all mean in terms of food security forecasts for southern Africa? Generally, agriculturalists must be careful that they are not fooled by favorable rainfall early in the season (October-early December), only to have the rainfall subside early in 2007. Of course there is no guarantee that this will be the case. For example, we are currently observing negative season-to-date rainfall accumulations in parts of eastern Zambia and in much of Mozambique. This certainly does not adhere to the wetter than normal early-season scenario. Furthermore, ENSO-southern Africa linkages do not fully take into account other phenomena such as Indian and Atlantic Ocean temperatures and their effect on rainfall throughout the area.

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