The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

August 26 – September 1, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

Latest Locust Update From FAO

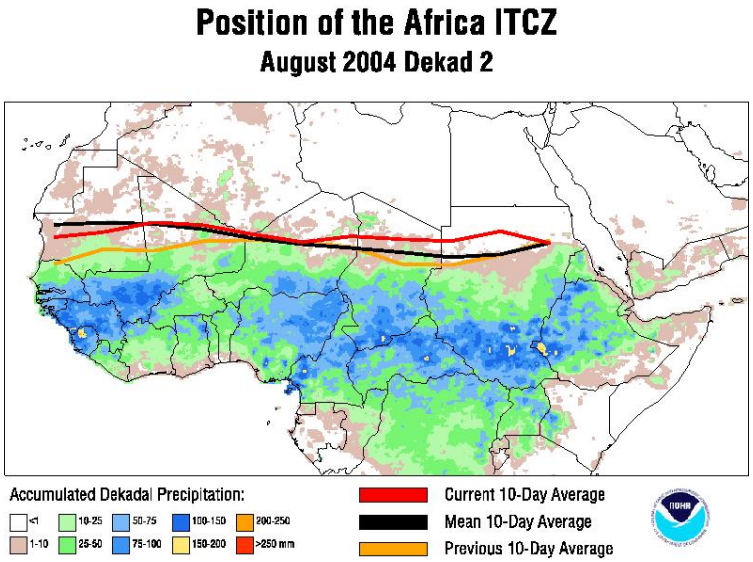
First adult locusts could appear by end of the month

In Mauritania, swarms of locusts moving from the north towards the south were reported in Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, Inchiri and the capital Nouakchott. According to FAO, the first adult locusts of the summer generation could start to appear by the end of August. Locust control operations treated 6 029 hectares in Mauritania during the first 10 days of August. In Senegal, FAO reports that swarms and hopper bands, newly hatched wingless locusts, were present along the Senegal River Valley and were also in the Ferlo Valley at Linguere. More than 16 000 hectares of infestations have been treated by Senegal from 8 July up to 13 August.

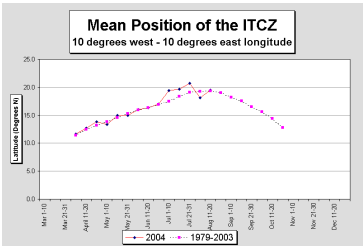
Good rains create excellent conditions for locusts to breed

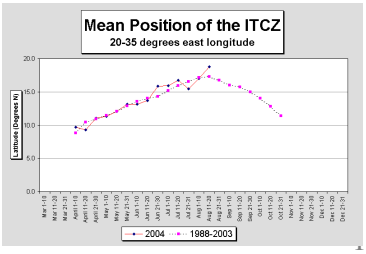
According to FAO, the main reason for the enormous numbers of locusts is that a series of good rains have fallen, first in the Sahel during the summer of 2003, and then in northwest Africa during winter/spring. This created favorable ecological conditions for locust development in the region and allowed at least four generations of locusts to breed one after the other. Locusts are also reaching unusual places. On 5 August a few swarms reached, for the second time, the Cape Verde Islands of Boa Vista, Santiago, Fogo and Maio during a brief period of northeasterly winds. The swarms contained up to 50 adult locusts per square meter. Numerous dead locusts were sighted on the beaches.

ITCZ Update



During the recent ten-day period, the eastern region of the ITCZ rebounded to the north from its position during the first dekad of August and moderated fears that it had reached its 2004 northward peak 20 days earlier than normal. Daily, strongly oscillating winds over Chad and Sudan played a role in the latest ITCZ position





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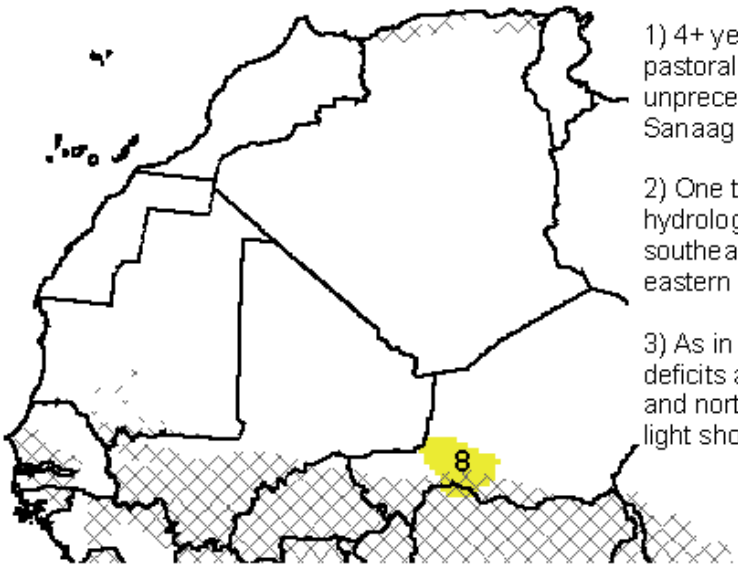
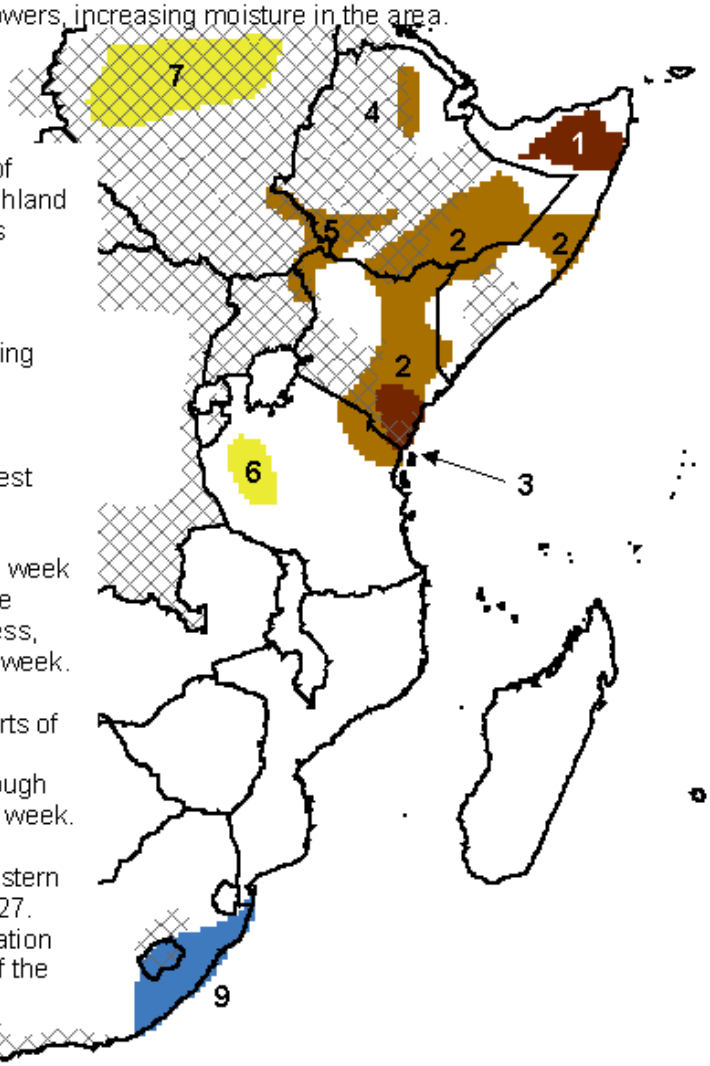
NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1) 4+ years of drought in northern Somalia have decimated pastoral livelihoods in the region. Livestock deaths are at an unprecedented level. Light showers were observed in the Sanaag Province during the last week.

2) One to two years of extreme dryness has negatively impacted hydrological and agricultural conditions throughout parts of southeastern Ethiopia, central and southwestern Somalia, and eastern Kenya.

3) As in region 2, though water shortages and two-year rainfall deficits are generally much greater in extreme southern Kenya and northeastern Tanzania. Coastal regions continue to receive light showers, increasing moisture in the area.



4) Long season rainfall deficits have been observed in parts of north central Ethiopia during the past few months, though Highland agriculture is likely most affected. Seasonable precipitation is expected during the next week.

5) Heavy rains during the last week locally in southwestern Ethiopia have mitigated dryness in the area, though surrounding regiions continue to feel the effects of erratic and late starting seasonal rainfall.

6) Seasonal dryness continues to negatively affect parts of west central Tanzania due to a poor 2004 long season.

7) While locally moderate rains were observed during the last week in parts of West and South Darfur, a noticable lack of moisture continues further to the east in central Sudan. Unusual dryness, extending through Khartoum,should continue during the next week.

8) Spotty seasonal dryness and local drought continues in parts of Niger within the Tahoua Department. 2004 rains have been around half of normal in the most severely affected areas, though seasonable showers should fall over the area during the next week.

9) A strong cold front will push through Lesotho as well as Eastern Cape, and Natal Provinces of South Africa during August 25-27. The possibility for strong winds, heavy rains, heavy high elevation snowfall, and cold temperatures exists during the early part of the period.

Valid: August 26 - September 1, 2004

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1) 2004 precipitation was near normal in parts of northern Somalia, including the western areas of Sanaag, Sool and Togdheer Provinces, and thus long-term dryness did not substantially increase in these areas. Further to the east, however, in southeastern Sanaag, northeastern Sool, southern Bari, and northern Nugal Provinces, a near failure of the Gu rains only exacerbated the dire situation. Entire herds of livestock have been lost and people's livelihoods are severely threatened. Substantial rainfall is not forecast in the near future, though light showers were observed in the Sanaag Province during the past week.

2) 2003-04 seasonal rainfall was much less than normal throughout areas of central and southwestern Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, and eastern Kenya, as yearly precipitation ran from 50-75% of normal in the regions with locally more intense dryness. Currently in the dry season, these areas are not expected to receive beneficial rainfall until October, as hydrological reserves will continue to decrease throughout the next 2+ months. Negative impacts include poor pastoral conditions, meager irrigation, and low drinking water levels. Local pasture moisture availability, especially in areas of southern Ethiopia, is severely affected according to remote sensing techniques.

3) Associated with area #2, much of southern Kenya and extreme northeastern Tanzania are feeling the effects of very poor performing rainfall during the past four seasons. Yearly precipitation deficits in the area exceed 300 mm locally as only half of normal seasonal precipitation was observed. Coastal rains have brought a little relief to areas such of Mombassa and Malindi, though more severe dryness exists further inland. Substantial rains are not expected until October.

4) Agricultural stress and other dryness-related problems may be occurring in parts of north central Ethiopia near the town of Weldiya along the western Afar Regional State due to early long-season erratic precipitation. Though recent monsoonal showers have pushed into the region, areas of local dryness continue to negatively affect livelihoods. Forecast rainfall is expected to be lighter than normal during the next week, though pastoral areas may receive beneficial moisture.

5) Strong showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rainfall locally in the southwestern corner of Ethiopia during the past week, and thus dryness has been substantially reduced in this localized area. Further to the west in extreme southeastern Sudan, and to the south into NW Kenya and NE Uganda, light showers were evident, though seasonal moisture deficits remain. Rains should be generally light during the next week, though localized thunderstorms may produce heavier precipitation.

6) Pastoral and agricultural conditions are stressed in parts of west central Tanzania, as 2003-04 monsoonal precipitation was slightly more than half of normal for the season. Mid-October should bring rains back into the region.

7) Another week of lighter than normal seasonal rainfall has led to expanded dryness throughout much of central Sudan, including areas of North and South Darfur, Kurdofan, and eastward into the Khartoum region. Rains have generally been more favorable for local agricultural activities from the Darfur Highlands westward to the border, though areas to the east are feeling the effects of inadequate rainfall to properly irrigate sustenance crops. There is a good chance for rains to increase moderately during the next week.

8) Increased precipitation along agricultural areas in south central Niger has led to improved hydrological conditions in the region, though conditions are deteriorating to the west and north due to continued erratic monsoonal precipitation. The most severely impact region is in and around the Tahoua Department, which is tallying substantial rainfall deficits due to the erratic monsoonal pattern. Likely impacts include degraded pasture conditions and lower than normal reservoir levels.

9) A moderately intense cold front is currently (as of 14GMT Aug 25) moving through the Eastern Cape of South Africa and moderate showers are falling throughout the southern area. This system will move eastward during the next few days and may bring locally heavy rains and high elevation snows to parts of Lesotho, Natal in South Africa, and extreme southern Mozambique.

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