The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

September 23 - 29, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

CCA Outlooks for October-December at One Month Lead

East Africa

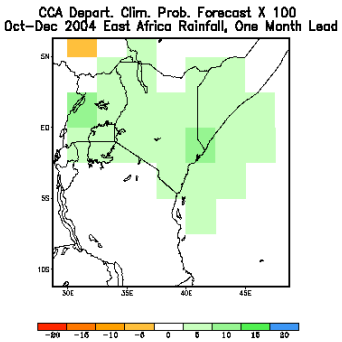
The outlook for Oct-Dec 2004 East Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall across southern Somalia, most of Kenya and Uganda, western Rwanda, and extreme northern Tanzania. Climatology is expected in all other areas.

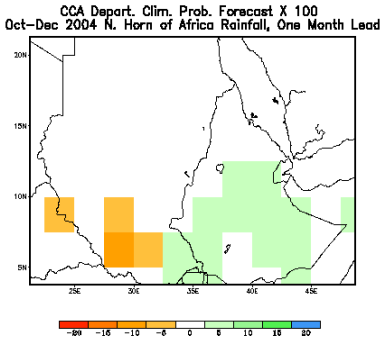
Northern Horn of Africa

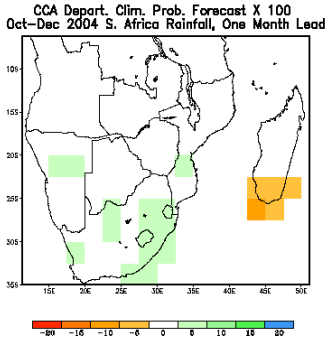
As indicated, there is a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall over most of central Ethiopia. There is a tilt in the odds favoring below average rainfall locally over southern Sudan. Climatology is expected elsewhere.

Southern Africa

The outlook for Oct-Dec 2004 southern Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall over portions of South Africa, and locally over central Namibia and southern Mozambique. There is a tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall over southern Madagascar. Climatology is expected elsewhere.







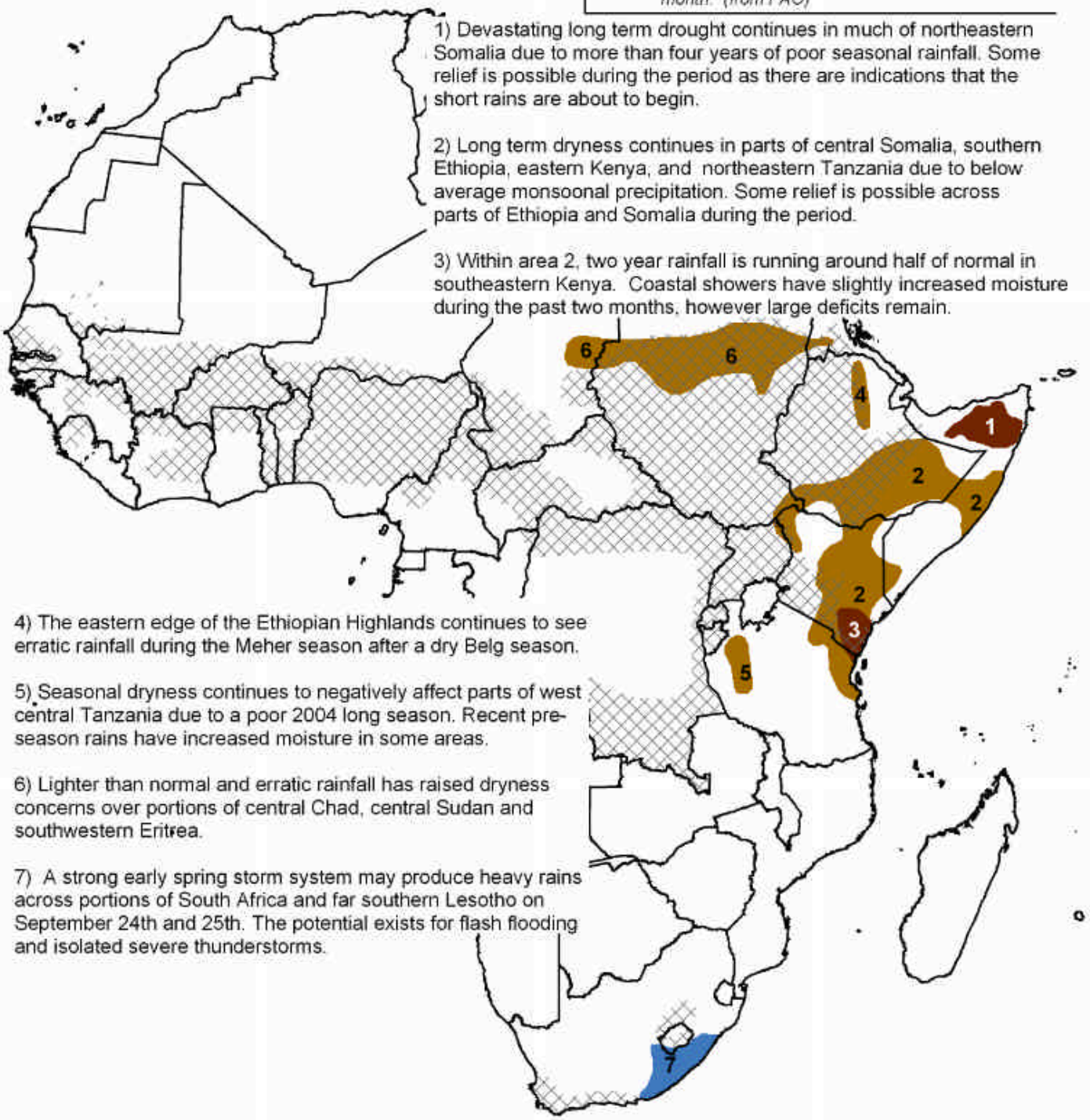
Locust Update

The report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations on the locust situation in western Africa was last updated on September 17 (http://www.fao.org/NEWS/GLOBAL/locusts/Locuhome.htm). They indicate that despite control operations, the situation is deteriorating in West Africa. Additional details can be found at the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at http://www.aelga.net and the Agrhymet site at http://ww.agrhymet.ne.

Weather Hazards Assessment Graphic:

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) Devastating long term drought continues in much of northeastern Somalia due to more than four years of poor seasonal rainfall. Some relief is possible during the period as there are indications that the short rains are about to begin.

2) Long term dryness continues in parts of central Somalia, southern Ethiopia, eastern Kenya, and northeastern Tanzania due to below average monsoonal precipitation. Some relief is possible across parts of Ethiopia and Somalia during the period.

3) Within area 2, two year rainfall is running around half of normal in southeastern Kenya. Coastal showers have slightly increased moisture during the past two months, however large deficits remain.

4) The eastern edge of the Ethiopian Highlands continues to see erratic rainfall during the Meher season after a dry Belg season.

5) Seasonal dryness continues to negatively affect parts of west central Tanzania due to a poor 2004 long season. Recent pre-season rains have increased moisture in some areas.

6) Lighter than normal and erratic rainfall has raised dryness concerns over portions of central Chad, central Sudan and southwestern Eritrea.

7) A strong early spring storm system may produce heavy rains across portions of South Africa and far southern Lesotho on September 24th and 25th. The potential exists for flash flooding and isolated severe thunderstorms.

Valid: September 23 - 29, 2004

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Poor performance of seasonal rains over the past several years has resulted in a devastating long term, multi-year drought across the Sanaag, Sool, Togdheer, Bari and Nugal Provinces of northern Somalia. The 2004 season, however, saw an overall good performance of the rains. Despite these rains, large long term moisture deficits and severe drought remain. Recent showers have resulted in some token improvement, and additional showers are expected during the period as it appears the short rains are starting. However, several consecutive seasons of abundant rainfall will be needed to ease the drought and its impacts.
2. The long rains this year were much below normal across central and eastern Kenya, the Somali region of Ethiopia, southern portions of Ethiopia's SNNPR and Oromiya regions as well as the Galguduud and Mudug regions of central Somalia. The season started late and ended early, as little rain fell during March or May. Totals were less than half of normal for the season, with deficits of 100 to 150 mm. Some areas in the higher elevations have deficits of 250+ mm. In some areas, this was in addition to below normal rainfall during 2003. Further west, dry conditions have also been reported across northwestern Kenya and adjacent parts of Uganda and Sudan. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs through December. Conditions are expected to be dry over Kenya and Tanzania, however showers are possible over central Somalia and southern Ethiopia during the period.

3. Multi-year drought has resulted in large long term moisture deficits across southeastern Kenya. Poor performance of the March-May rains has exacerbated long term drought conditions across the area. The long term drought will reduce water supplies and reservoir levels, degrade pastures and may result in reduced sub-soil moisture availability for the upcoming second cropping season. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs through December.

4. The 2004 Belg season (February-May) was drier than normal across the South Tigray zone as well as North Wello and South Wello zones in the Ahmara region. Rainfall was about half of normal for the season. The season also started late and ended early, with most of the season's rainfall occurring during the month of April. The typical length of the Belg rains is about 10 weeks. The 2004 Belg season lasted only 4 to 5 weeks. Furthermore, rains during the Meher season have been erratic and lighter than normal. This may have a negative effect on Meher and long cycle crops in the area.

5. Rainfall during the 2003-04 rainy season was about 70 percent of normal across west-central portions of Tanzania. Locally heavy pre-season rains on September 3rd and 4th helped to boost moisture in the area and improve vegetation and pasture conditions. However, satellite imagery still shows vegetation stress. Conditions are expected to be seasonably dry during the period. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs into April.

6. Rainfall during July and August has been erratic and lighter than normal across east-central Chad, central Sudan into the northern highlands of Eritrea. This includes Biltine in Chad, portions of Darfur and Kurdufan in Sudan as well as Gash Barka in Eritrea. Some areas have seen an increase in shower activity during early September, however deficits remain in many areas. The dry conditions may degrade vegetation and pasture conditions, reduce water supplies and negatively affect seasonal crops. Occasional showers are possible over the southern most portions of the area, however most areas will remain dry as seasonal rains retreat southward.

7. A strong early spring storm system is expected to develop off the South African coast during the period. Heavy rain is possible over Eastern Cape and southern portions of KwaZulu-Natal provinces on the 24th and 25th. Heavy rains and high elevation snow is also possible over southern Lesotho. Flash flooding and severe thunderstorms are possible across these areas during the 24th and 25th. Drier conditions are expected for the rest of the period.

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