

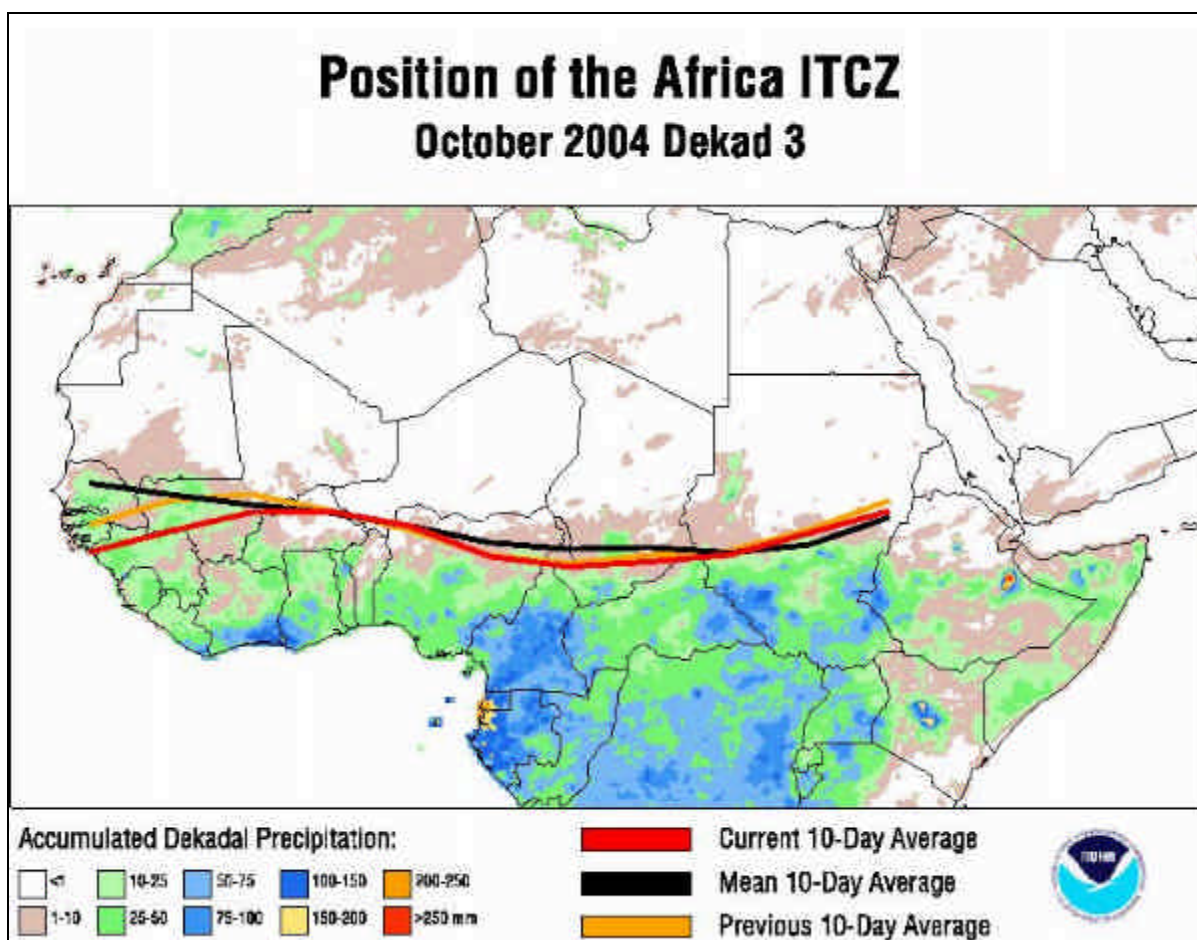
The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

November 11 - 17, 2004

Weekly Introduction:



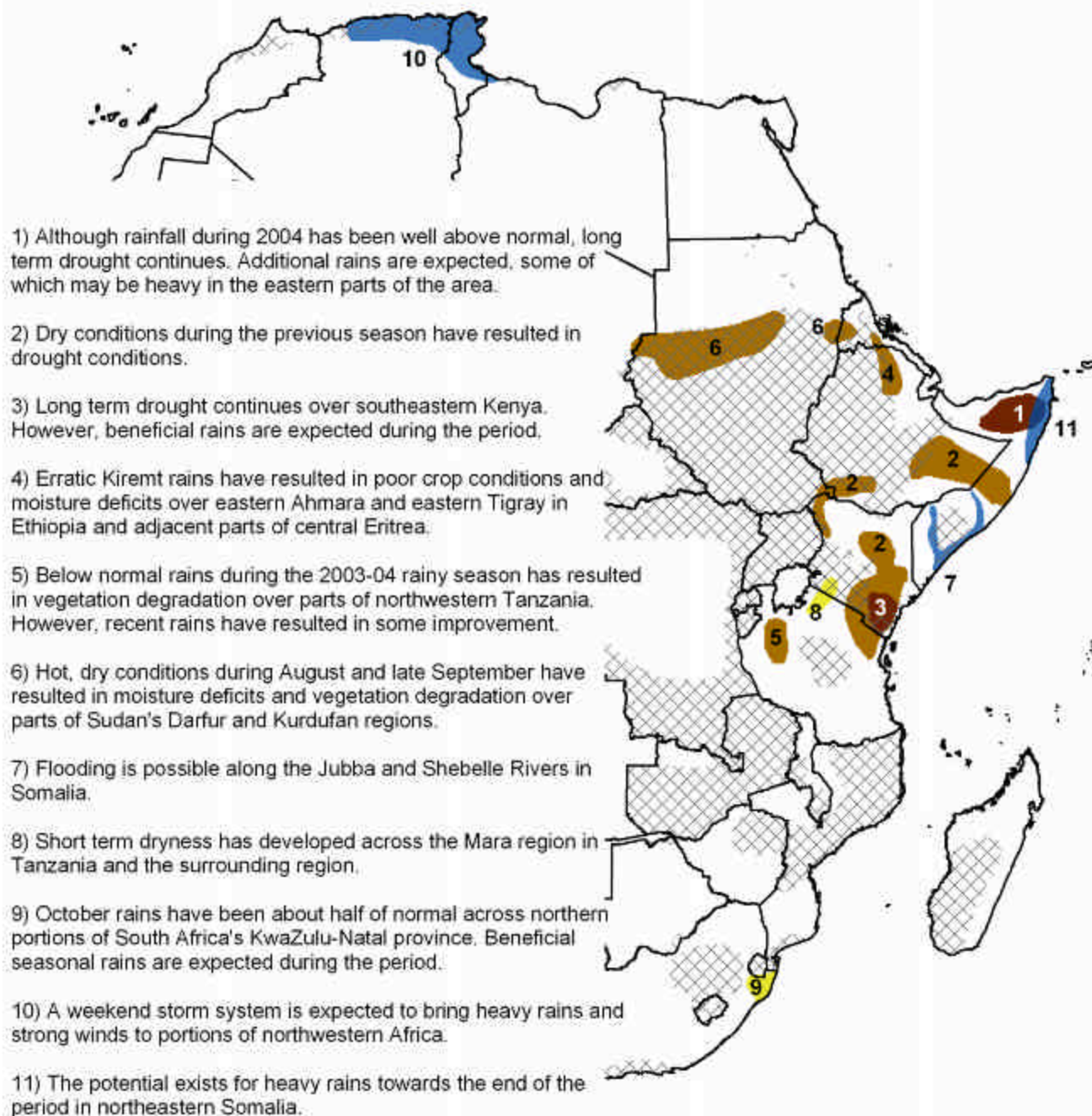
October 21-31, 2004 marks the last period in the Climate Prediction Center's use of the ITCZ long term mean position in its analysis. Routine monitoring will continue as long as possible without this information. During the current period, the overall dekadal, longitude averaged ITCZ was located near 11.8 degrees north latitude compared to the long term mean of 12.6N and a previous location of near 12.4N. This marks another consecutive period that the overall position has exhibited a southward bias compared to normal. Overall, the largest southward bias continues to be seen near the Senegal/Mali border region, though continued light showers have been seen throughout the area during the past month.

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 November 8. They stipulate that the situation should continue to improve in West Africa but it is likely to deteriorate further in Northwest Africa as more swarms arrive during this month. 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://www.agrhymet.ne>.

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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)



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Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Poor performance of seasonal rains for several years leading up to and including 2003 has resulted in a devastating multi-year drought across the Sanaag, Sool, Togdheer, Bari and Nugal Provinces of northern Somalia. Calendar year 2004, however, saw good performance of the rains, with well above normal rains that were well distributed. These recent trends have regionally benefited pastures and have helped to boost water supplies. However, heavy rains during the end of October resulted in localized flooding and livestock loss. During the period, additional rainfall is expected which will be of continued benefit to pastures and water supplies. However, some of these rains may be heavy and result in additional flooding and livestock losses. Despite the abundance of rainfall during 2004, the severity of the multi-year drought during the first years of the 21st Century has caused the region to remain in long term drought.
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. Totals were less than half of normal for the season, with deficits of 100 to 150 mm. The short season rains have begun in many areas, with normal to above normal rainfall being observed. These rains have helped to ease moisture deficits and have raised prospects for the October-December season. Additional rains are expected across the Somali region of Ethiopia, central Somalia and eastern Kenya. This will continue the trend of improvement across the pastoral areas of Africa's Greater Horn.
3. Multi-year drought has resulted in large long term moisture deficits across southeastern Kenya. The long term drought has reduced water supplies and reservoir levels, degraded pastures and resulted in reduced sub-soil moisture availability for the second cropping season. Scattered showers last week did little to ease the long term drought across the area. Beneficial showers are expected across the area during the period, however improvement will be gradual.
4. The Kiremt rains have been erratic and lighter than normal across eastern Ahmara region and eastern Tigray region in Ethiopia, as well as adjacent portions of the Afar region and central Eritrea. This has resulted in poor crop conditions and reduced moisture levels in and around these areas.
5. Rainfall during the 2003-04 rainy season was about 70 percent of normal across west-central portions of Tanzania. Recent showers have resulted in some improvement, however major improvement is not expected until the rainy season sets in. Scattered showers are possible during the period, however seasonal rains are not expected to begin during the period.
6. The 2004 rainy season was characterized by erratic seasonal rains, lighter than normal rainfall totals and periodic interruptions of seasonal rains by hot, dry Sahara winds over portions of Sudan's Darfur and Kurdufan regions. This has resulted in degraded pastures, reduced water supplies and crop losses across these areas. Similar conditions have been observed across Kassala and adjacent portions of western Eritrea. As the dry season has set in, no improvement is expected across these areas.
7. Heavy seasonal rains during October has swollen the Jubba and Shebelle rivers in Somalia. Seasonal rains relaxed over the region during the first week of November, allowing river levels to subside. However, rainfall is expected to increase once again during the period. This may result in high river levels and flooding along the Jubba and Shebelle. However, the net effect of the abundant rainfall across southern Somalia has been positive due to increased crop prospects, good pasture and water supplies.
8. Rainfall amounts for the month of October were about half of normal across the Mara and region of Tanzania and the surrounding area. This has resulted in short term dryness and possible moisture stress to second season crops. Recently, showers have been on the increase, and as a result the moisture stress is expected to begin to ease during the period.
9. October rainfall was about half of normal across northern portions of KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. This may reduce moisture for recently sown crops and irrigation reserves. However, this is not a great concern since it is still quite early in the season and there is the potential for some beneficial showers during the period.
10. A strong storm system, fueled by the warm waters of the Mediterranean Sea, is expected to produce heavy rain and strong winds across northern Algeria and Tunisia during the weekend. As a result, the potential for flooding, landslides and wind damage exists.
11. There are indications that a weak tropical disturbance in the Arabian Sea could produce heavy rain fall towards the end of the period across northeastern Somalia. This could result in flooding and possible livestock losses in areas where herds are already stressed. However, at the time of writing there was considerable uncertainty as to the evolution of the disturbance. As a result, the chances for torrential rainfall in northeastern Somalia are slight. At any rate, the potential does exist for heavy rain and the situation needs to be monitored.

AUTHOR: Chester V Schmitt

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

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