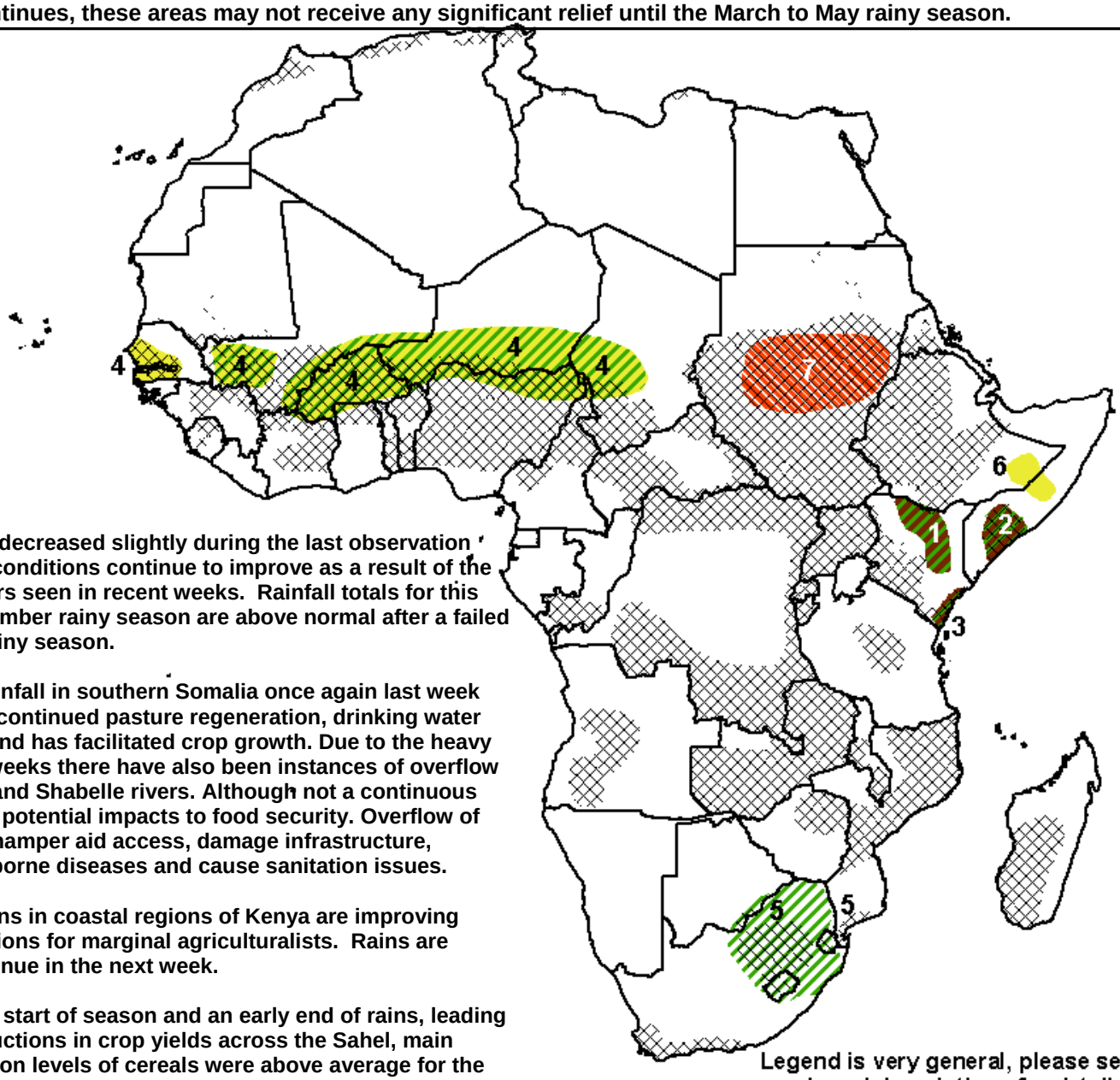
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa November 22 - 28, 2007

- **Rainfall has increased significantly across southern Somalia and most of Kenya bringing significant improvement to rangeland and water availability for livestock.**

- **The Somali region of Ethiopia and parts of central Somalia continue to experience below-normal rainfall totals during the ongoing October to December rainy season. While light rains are expected to continue into the next observation period, they are not likely to significantly improve rainfall totals. If this trend continues, these areas may not receive any significant relief until the March to May rainy season.**



1) While rainfall decreased slightly during the last observation period, ground conditions continue to improve as a result of the heavy downpours seen in recent weeks. Rainfall totals for this October to December rainy season are above normal after a failed March to May rainy season.

2) Significant rainfall in southern Somalia once again last week has allowed for continued pasture regeneration, drinking water replenishment and has facilitated crop growth. Due to the heavy rains in recent weeks there have also been instances of overflow along the Juba and Shabelle rivers. Although not a continuous threat, there are potential impacts to food security. Overflow of riverbanks can hamper aid access, damage infrastructure, increase water-borne diseases and cause sanitation issues.

3) Continued rains in coastal regions of Kenya are improving cropping conditions for marginal agriculturalists. Rains are forecast to continue in the next week.

4) Despite a late start of season and an early end of rains, leading to localized reductions in crop yields across the Sahel, main season production levels of cereals were above average for the region.

5) Rains in southern Africa have benefited early season cropping activities.

6) October to December rains continue to be below normal in parts of the Somali Region of Ethiopia and near the border with Somalia. Increased rainfall is needed for pasture regeneration and water source replenishment in these areas. Unfortunately, significant rains are not expected in the area for the coming observation period.

7) Due to excessive rainfall earlier this year, there is the potential for localized outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever in central Sudan.

Rift Valley Fever takes a toll on Sudan

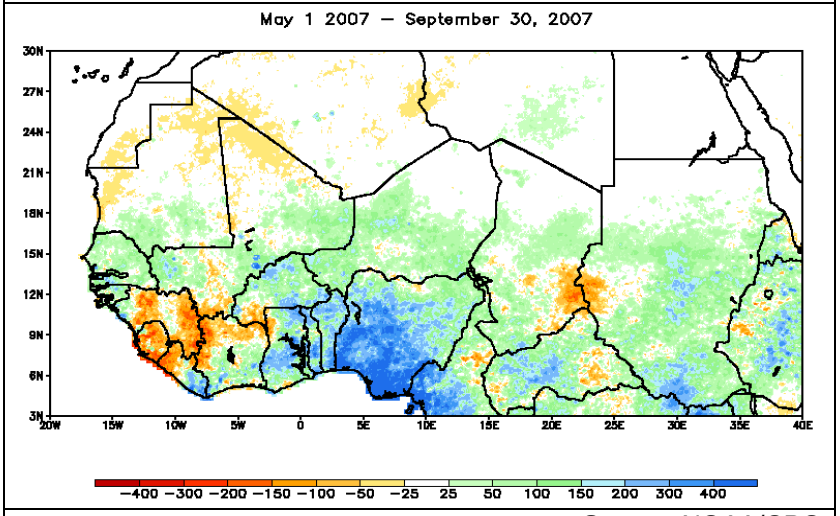
An unusually wet rainy season in 2007 has led to an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in Sudan. During the mid July to mid September temporal period the area from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa received well above normal rainfall accumulation. Although the rain proved beneficial for water resource availability, vegetation regeneration and crop production it also came with some very negative side effects.

During the first week of November reports of an outbreak of RVF surfaced and the sickness has been spreading since. According to the World Health Organization there have been over 300 cases of RVF in Sudan leading to ~100 deaths thus far. These cases have been reported in the eastern central region of Sudan near the borders of Eritrea and northern Ethiopia in the states of White Nile, Sennar, Gazeera and Khartoum. More than half of all human cases are from Gazeera state in locations close to irrigation canals and are linked to naturally occurring cycles in livestock and animals. The cases reported in Khartoum have migrated from other states and are not indigenous.

RVF primarily affects animals, but can infect humans that have close contact with infected animals. Therefore farmers, herders and veterinarians are most at risk for contracting RVF. Humans may also contract RVF through mosquito bites. The sickness can cause severe disease in both animals and humans leading to high death rates and economic losses.

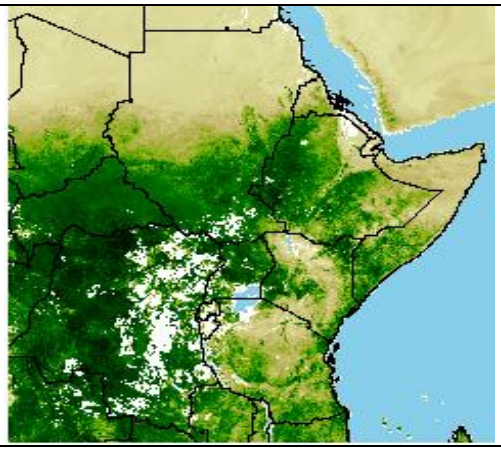
In addition to concerns of RVF desert locusts have now migrated to Sudan.

2007 Rainy Season
Above normal rainfall in Sudan



Source: NOAA/CPC

Vegetation Coverage
November Dekad 1



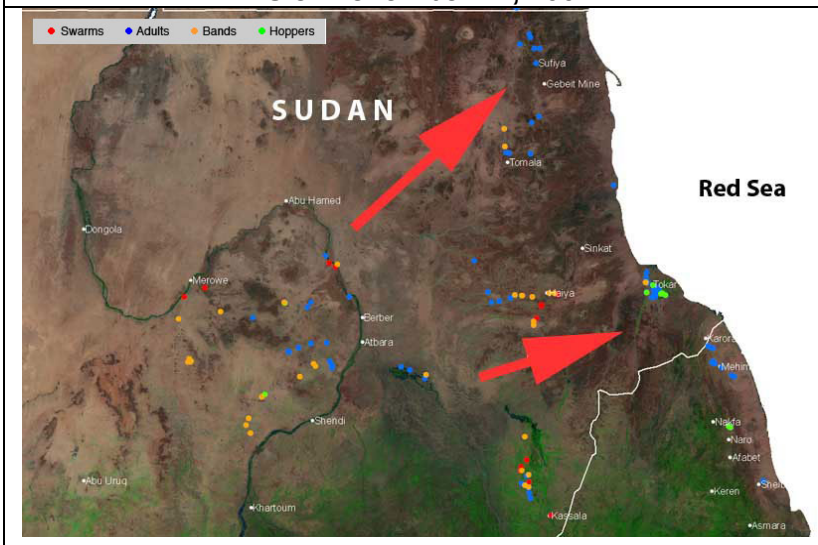
Darker greens depict abundant vegetation.

Source: USGS/FEWS-NET

Locusts outbreak grows in east Africa

Since September desert locusts have been posing a threat to the Greater Horn region of Africa. In September, swarms migrated from Yemen to the moist conducive climate of the GHA for their traditional summer breeding in much of northern Somalia and Ethiopia. According to NASA's Earth Observatory a combination of wet, sandy soil and significantly above normal rainfall created conditions favorable to the hatching of locusts. Locust Watch of the Food and Agriculture Organization is now reporting swarms in Sudan. There have been reports of swarms along the Nile River and Gash River where vegetation is abundant. As the number of locusts grows the impacts they can have increase proportionally. They are capable of migrating long distances and completing destroying plants and crops along the way.

Infestation of Desert Locusts in Sudan
As of November 21, 2007



Desert locusts in Sudan will migrate toward the Red Sea.

Source: FAO