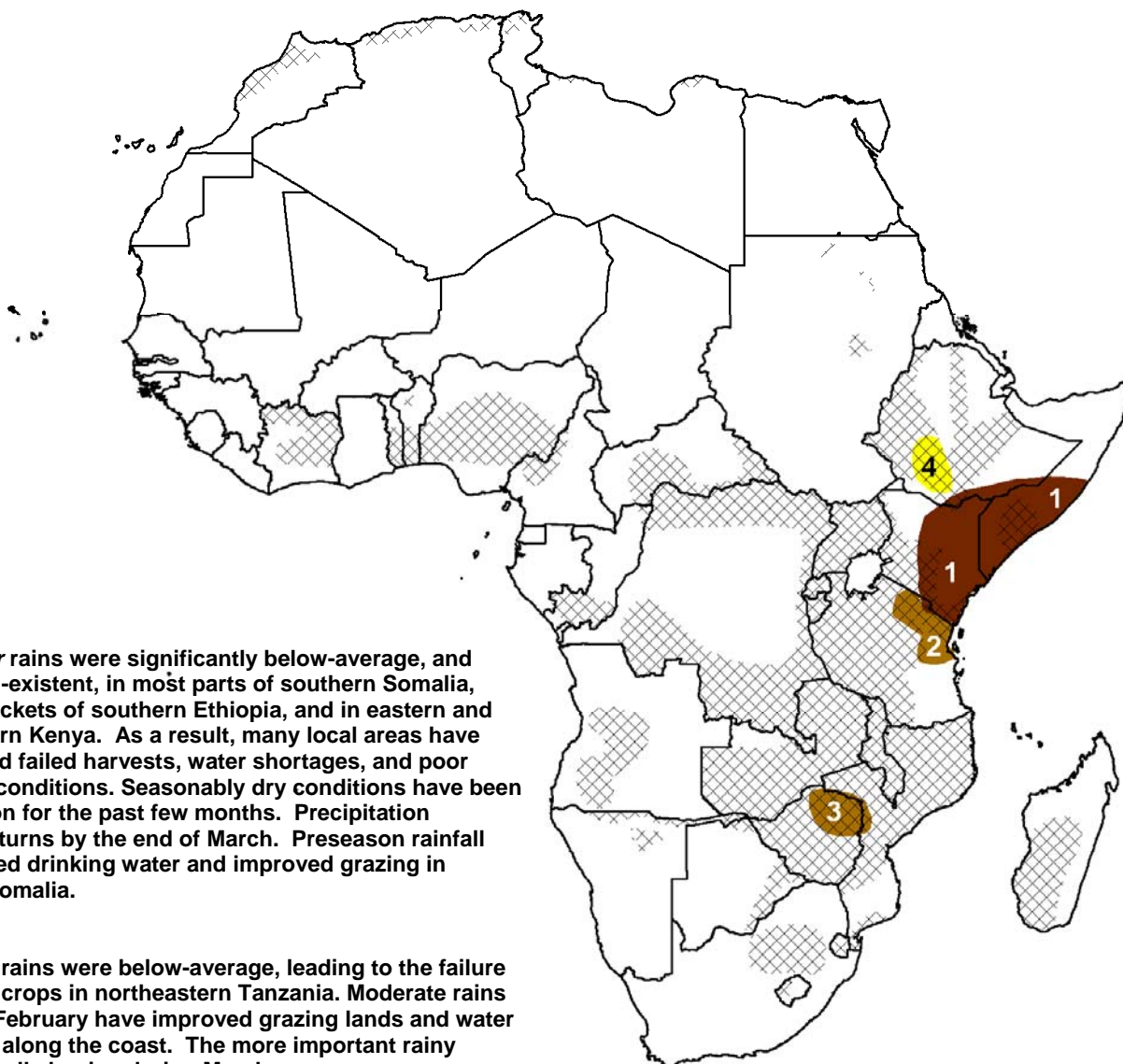


- Most of southern Africa has received normal to above normal rainfall during the current growing season. Other than small pockets in various locations, the only area of concern at the current time is northeastern Zimbabwe.
- Preseason rainfall has been below normal in the main belg producing areas of Wollo and Shewa, Ethiopia. This may impact the growing season if rainfall does not return to normal by the start of the season.



1) The *Deyr* rains were significantly below-average, and almost non-existent, in most parts of southern Somalia, isolated pockets of southern Ethiopia, and in eastern and southeastern Kenya. As a result, many local areas have experienced failed harvests, water shortages, and poor rangeland conditions. Seasonably dry conditions have been in the region for the past few months. Precipitation typically returns by the end of March. Preseason rainfall has provided drinking water and improved grazing in southern Somalia.

2) The *Vuli* rains were below-average, leading to the failure of bimodal crops in northeastern Tanzania. Moderate rains since mid-February have improved grazing lands and water availability along the coast. The more important rainy season usually begins during March.

3) Since late January, rainfall has eased, bringing precipitation deficits to northeastern Zimbabwe. More recently, dryness has spread to most of the country. The dryness has impacted some cropping activities, especially late planted crops.

4) Early season dryness has impacted crops and pasture in southwestern Ethiopia. Rainfall in some areas is one month late. Dryness was a problem in this area during the last growing season. Additional dryness stretches up towards the Belg-producing areas as well as into Afar

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.



Dryness continues across northeastern Zimbabwe

Starting in late January, due to a ridge building in across the region, much of central and southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe experienced dry conditions. The ridge partially broke down, bringing needed rain to the affected parts of Mozambique, and to a much lesser extent, Zimbabwe. As Mozambique continued to improve, Zimbabwe has not and precipitation is not falling at the same rate that it typically does this time of year.

The last week has been typical of what has been occurring around Zimbabwe for the last month. Precipitation has been blocked from moving into the country, while nearby countries record higher totals. Rainfall totals, as estimated by satellite in the country, ranged between 15 and 20 mm. Meanwhile to the west, in the Caprivi Strip, rainfall exceeded 75 mm. Similar rainfall totals fell in Zambia, and northern Botswana. Rainfall in 30 to 50 mm range also fell just over the border in Mozambique.

The coming week also looks to offer no improvement as the same atmospheric pattern remains firmly in place. Time is also running out. Precipitation typically begins withdrawing from Zimbabwe in early March, with only the occasional light shower remaining in April.

Preseason precipitation mixed around the Horn

An early, unseasonable three day rainfall event in southern Somalia provided an unusual short-term relief to dwindling drinking water resources. Meanwhile concerns continue over the lack of early rainfall around Wollo and Shewa, Ethiopia.

Although rainfall typically doesn't return to southern Somalia until early April, it is not out of the ordinary for a few light showers to move through the area before then. It is unusual, however for a three day rain event to provide 20 – 30 mm of precipitation, as measured by satellite, to Baardhere, Baidoa, and Buulobarde. The precipitation, which fell during the last week of February, will help replenish drinking water supplies, which have been particularly depleted due to the ongoing multiseasonal drought. Precipitation also provided a slight improvement to pastures. Despite the unusual break from typically drier conditions in the region, the rainfall will not relieve the drought and will have no bearing on how the coming Gu rains will behave.

Early season rainfall, typically used to break up the soil for the Belg-producing areas of Wollo and Shewa, has not been sufficient. Although this will not necessarily preclude the season, there are concerns that any delay in planting may have significant impacts later in the season.

**Satellite Estimated Precipitation Anomaly
February 6th – March 7th, 2009**

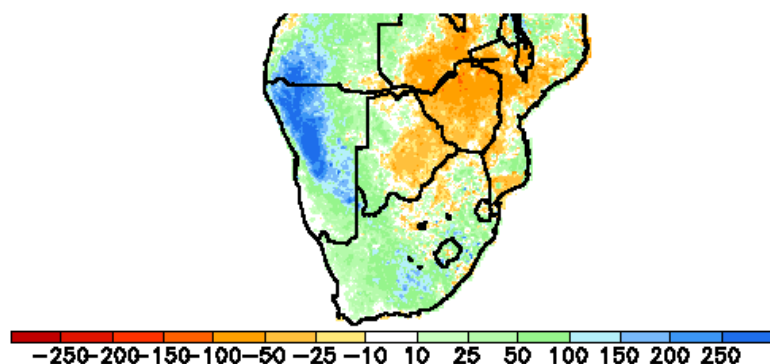


Figure 1: Rainfall during the last month has been suppressed in an area centered on Zimbabwe. Many of the surrounding areas have improved, but deficits continue to rise in Zimbabwe.

Source: FEWS-NET / NOAA

**Satellite Estimated Precipitation Anomaly
February 1st – March 7th, 2009**

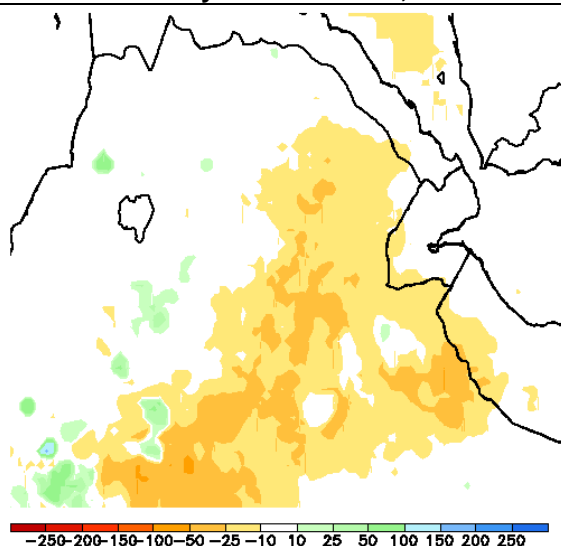


Figure 2: Preseason dryness in the Belg-producing parts of the country have hampered land preparation in Wollo and Shewa, Ethiopia.

Source: FEWS-NET / NOAA

**Water Requirements Satisfaction Index for Rangelands
As of February 28, 2009**

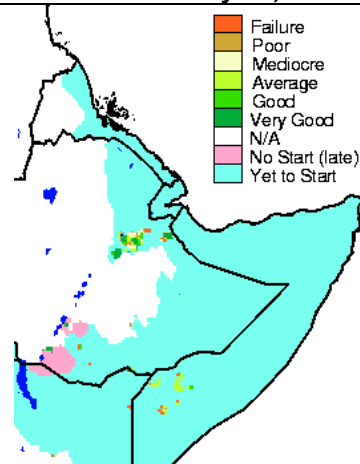


Figure 3: Light, unseasonable, rainfall in southern Somalia has provided drinking water, and a little improvement to pastures.

Source: FEWS-NET/USGS