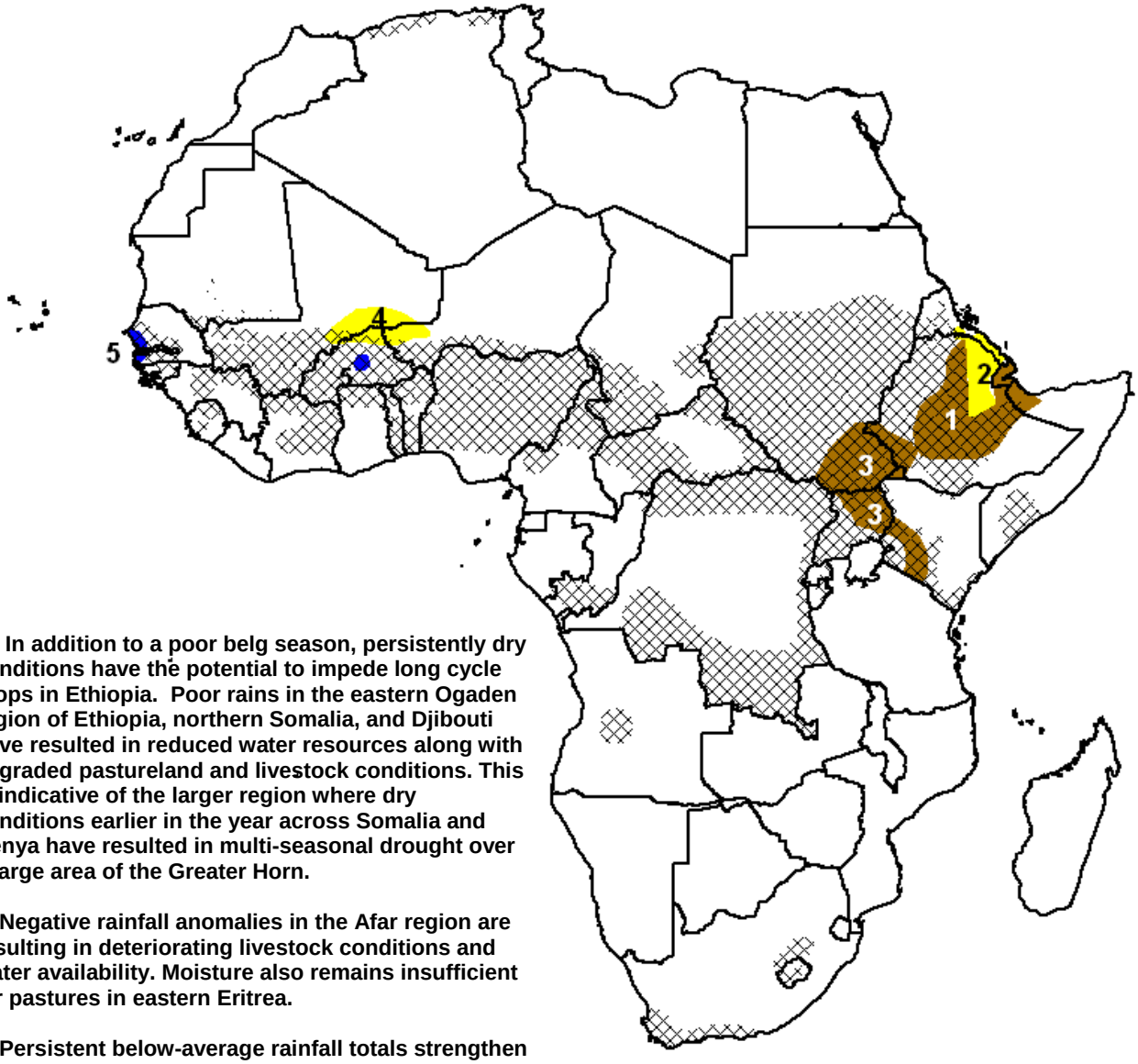
The USAID FEWS NET Weather Hazards Impacts Assessment for Africa September 3 - 9, 2009

- As rainfall continues to increase across West Africa, short-cycle crops have been planted. There have also been isolated reports of flooding in Burkina Faso, Senegal and Guinea-Conakry.
- Precipitation has increased during the last week in Ethiopia, although not enough to significantly reduce the ongoing moisture deficits.



1) In addition to a poor belg season, persistently dry conditions have the potential to impede long cycle crops in Ethiopia. Poor rains in the eastern Ogaden region of Ethiopia, northern Somalia, and Djibouti have resulted in reduced water resources along with degraded pastureland and livestock conditions. This is indicative of the larger region where dry conditions earlier in the year across Somalia and Kenya have resulted in multi-seasonal drought over a large area of the Greater Horn.

2) Negative rainfall anomalies in the Afar region are resulting in deteriorating livestock conditions and water availability. Moisture also remains insufficient for pastures in eastern Eritrea.

3) Persistent below-average rainfall totals strengthen seasonal rain and moisture deficits in southeastern Sudan, northern Uganda and into parts of Ethiopia and southwestern Kenya. Many areas throughout central and eastern Kenya, as well as northern Tanzania ended their respective seasons with substantial moisture deficits, resulting in degraded crop and pasture conditions.

4) Short-term rainfall deficits have had local impacts on mixed cropping and pastoral areas. Livestock deaths have been reported in Gao, Mali.

5) Heavy rainfall near in Ouagadougou and in western Senegal caused localized flooding.

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

- August Cropped Areas
- Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Flooding
- Short-term Dryness
- Drought
- Severe Drought

Precipitation continues to increase across most of West Africa

West Africa has had a highly variable wet season thus far. Some locations experienced an early start to the rains in May. However, in the first dekad of June, precipitation virtually stopped, and dry conditions spread from Niger to Nigeria and into much of southern Chad. By early July, many local areas in Niger suffered from significant seasonal rainfall deficits. Although much of western Niger experienced a normal start of season, this dryness resulted in deteriorated crop conditions and acute failure of millet crops in some local areas along the Nigeria / Niger border. After failure of the first sowing, farmers re-sowed shorter-cycle crops in mid-July with the revival of the rains that subsequently reduced moisture deficits in most areas. Some areas, such as Ouallam Department, did not replant until mid-August.

Not all areas, however, have improved. Ground reports state that low seasonal precipitation totals still remain in the mixed cropping and pastoral areas of Gao, Mali, the northern tip of Burkina Faso and into nearby portions of Niger (**Figure 1**). Livestock deaths have been reported in Gao, Mali. Parts of northwestern Nigeria remain moderately below average as well, having rainfall totals falling between 50 and 80 percent of average (**Figure 2**) in some isolated pockets in the northern half of the country.

A recent field assessment has confirmed that the resurgence of rain across Niger has produced moderate conditions for millet and cowpea along the Nigeria border, but concerns remain for pastures which are located north of the current extent of the rains (**Figure 3**). In order to end the season with a better than mediocre millet harvest, consistent rains are needed through the end of September. The rains must last through mid-September for a good cowpea harvest. More precipitation and ground moisture are needed over the region as a whole to compensate for seasonal rainfall deficits accrued earlier in the season and to revive pastures. Early season deficits however have lower expectations of annual production.

In cropping areas further to the west, rainfall totals are above normal, near 120 percent of average. In the far western areas, some locations have even higher surpluses, mainly in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Senegal and The Gambia. As a result of the heavier than average rainfall there have been some reports of isolated flooding events in these areas.

Water Requirement Satisfaction Index: Millet
August 20

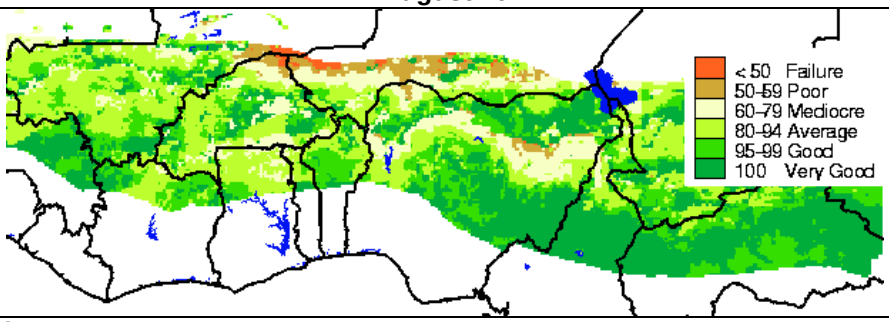


Figure 1:
Source: USGS

Satellite Estimated Precipitation Percent of Average
May 1 – August 29, 2009

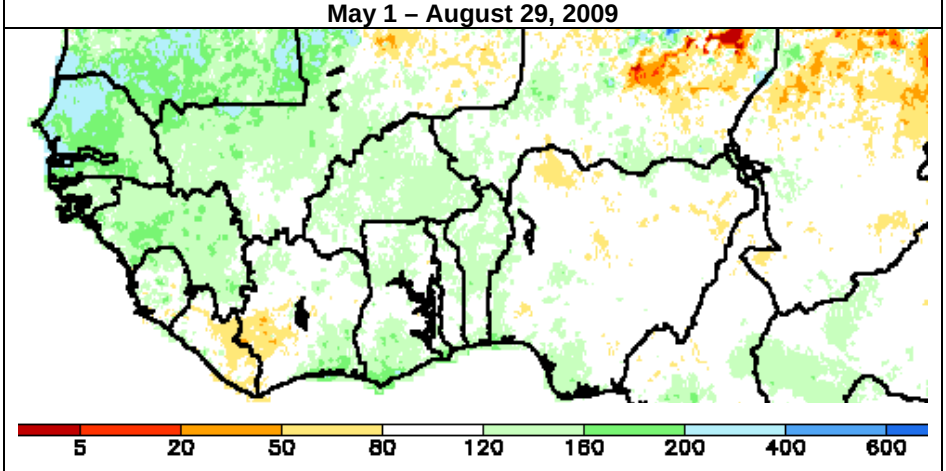


Figure 2:
Source: NOAA/CPC

Inter-tropical Front Analysis
August Dekad 2, 2009

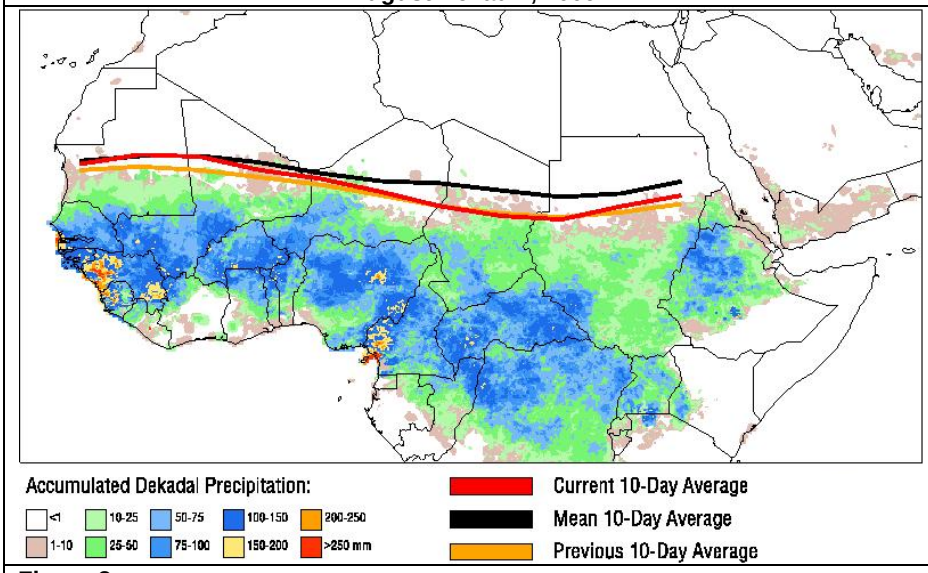


Figure 3:
Source: NOAA/CPC