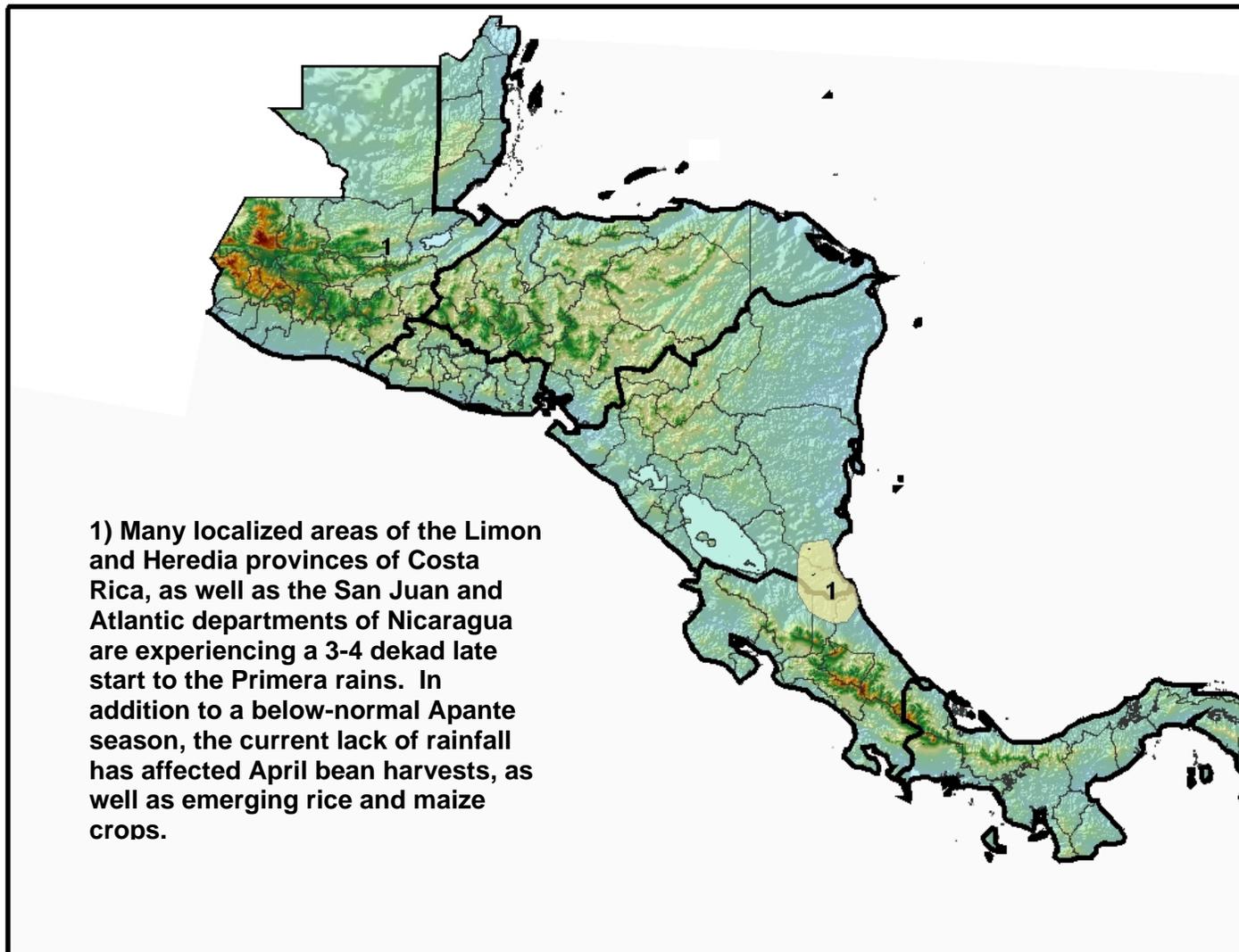


The MFEWS

Central America Weather Hazards and Benefits Assessment

For

May 22 – May 28, 2008

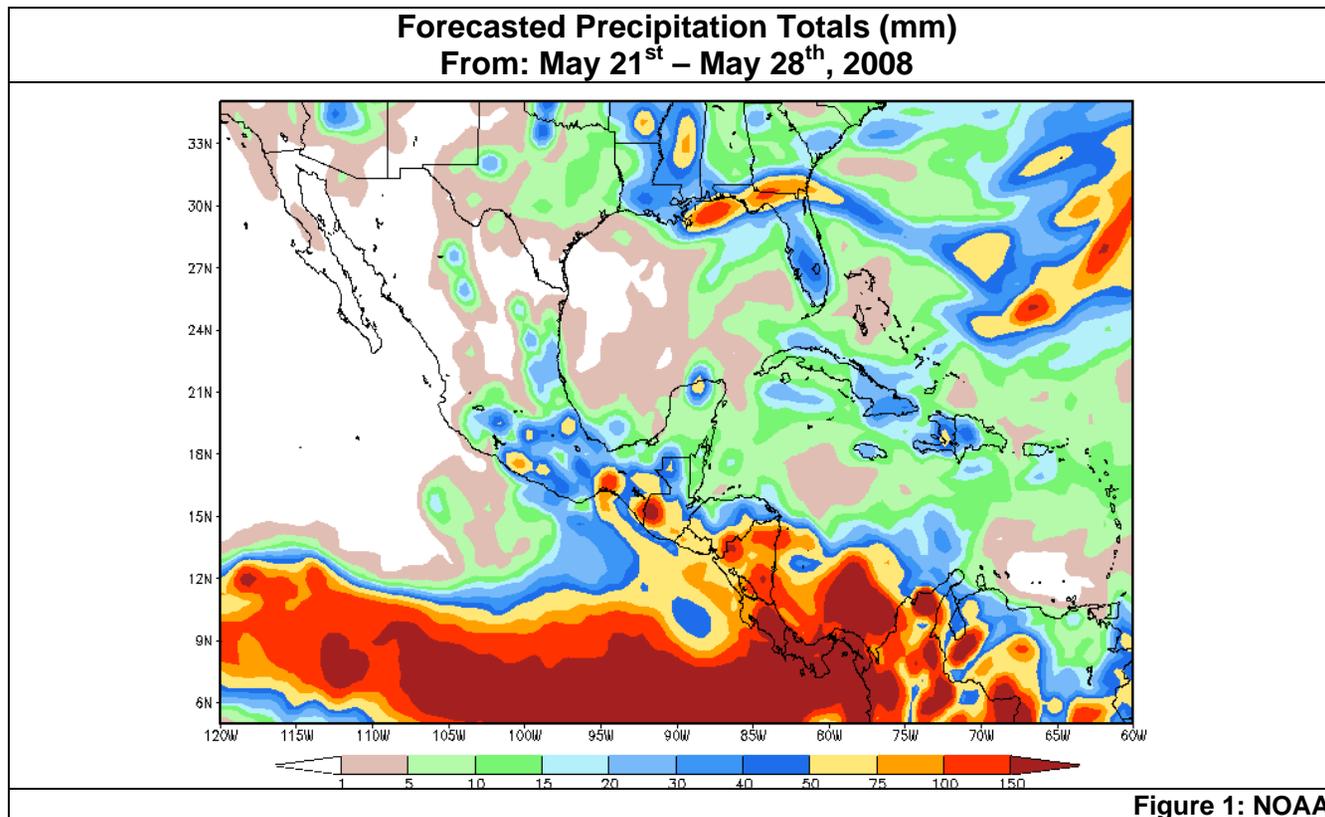


Hazards Assessment Text Explanation:

Large scale ridging and dry air transport have resulted in the suppression of significant rainfall for much of Central America in the last seven days. The heaviest rainfall totals during the last observation period remained along the Pacific side of Central America, with totals ranging from 30 – 50 mm in the southern highlands of Guatemala and coastal areas near the Gulf of Nicoya in Costa Rica. In El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, little to no rainfall accumulation in the last week has resulted in a continued delayed start of the Primera season in many areas, as precipitation totals have continued to drop further below normal. The Limon and Heredia provinces of Costa Rica, as well as, the Atlantic departments of Nicaragua near the San Juan River, have experienced the worst of the dryness as decreased soil water along the Costa Rica / Nicaragua border may impede the development of bean, rice, and sorghum crops over the next several weeks. Soil moisture deficits have also been felt in localized areas of the Chiriqui province in Panama due to the weak Primera rains. Precipitation forecasts for the next seven days, however, appear to provide significant relief for many areas in Central America that are currently below-normal. Widespread precipitation in excess of 100 mm may be expected for much of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama (**Figure 1**), as well as rainfall totals exceeding 50 mm for local areas in southern and central Guatemala. Given the significant rainfall forecast estimates, there is a potential for localized flooding in areas with very dry soil conditions across Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Presently, most of Belize and other departments of Guatemala are off to a relatively normal start of season. In Honduras, Primera season precipitation is not expected to begin until June for the inner-North and Caribbean coastal departments. The western center and southern regions of Honduras are experiencing an early start to Primera rains, with a slightly delayed start for departments further in the east. In El Salvador, portions of the coastal strip and Eastern Zone have observed an early start (~1 dekad) of Primera rains, while areas near the Gulf of Fonseca have received less rain since the start of May. For Nicaragua, early season rainfall is slow for departments near the San Juan River, and other departments to the north are not expecting a Primera onset until June. In Costa Rica and Panama, a normal Primera start has been observed except for the Limon and Heredia provinces of Costa Rica.

Primera Start of Season Information provided by the XXIV CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM OF CENTRAL AMERICA supported BY CRRH



The evaluation of climatological threats of MFEWS include the participation of the central and local offices of MFEWS, NOAA-CPC, USGS, NASA, INETER of Nicaragua, Meteorological Service of Honduras, IMN of Costa Rica, INSIVUMEH of Guatemala, ETESA of Panama, NMS of Belize and SNET of El Salvador. Any questions or comments on this product can be directed to Wassila.Thiaw@noaa.gov