The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

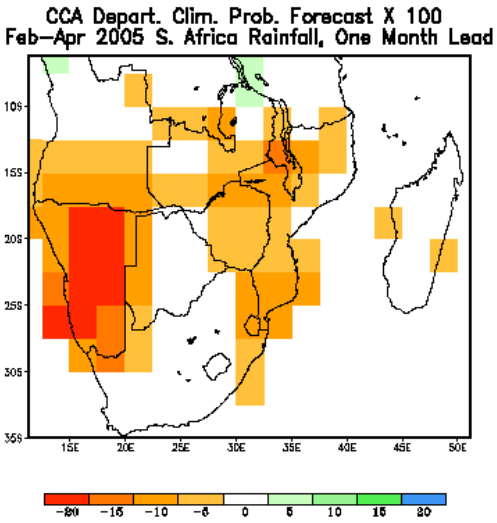
January 20 - 26, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

CCA Outlook Forecasts: February – April

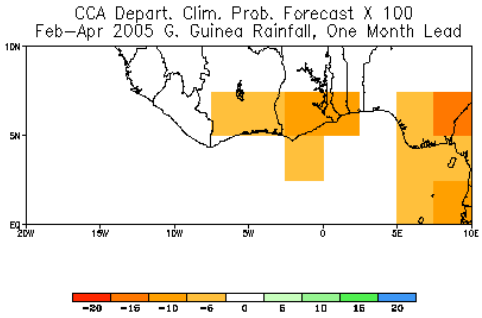
Southern Africa:

The outlook for Feb-Apr 2005 southern Africa rainfall at one month lead shows a moderate to high tilt in the odds favoring below average rainfall over Namibia and portions of southern Angola. There is a tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall over portions of the Mpumalanga and Northern Transvaal provinces of South Africa, Swaziland, most of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and southern Zambia. There is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall locally along both coasts in Madagascar. However, there is a tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall locally over northwestern Angola, northwestern Zambia and western Tanzania. Climatology is expected elsewhere.



Gulf of Guinea Region:

There is a low to moderate tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall along portions of the Gulf of Guinea coast from Cote d'Ivoire eastward to Benin, and over southeastern Nigeria. Climatology is expected elsewhere.



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 January 10 (http://www.fao.org/NEWS/GLOBAL/locusts/Locuhome.htm). 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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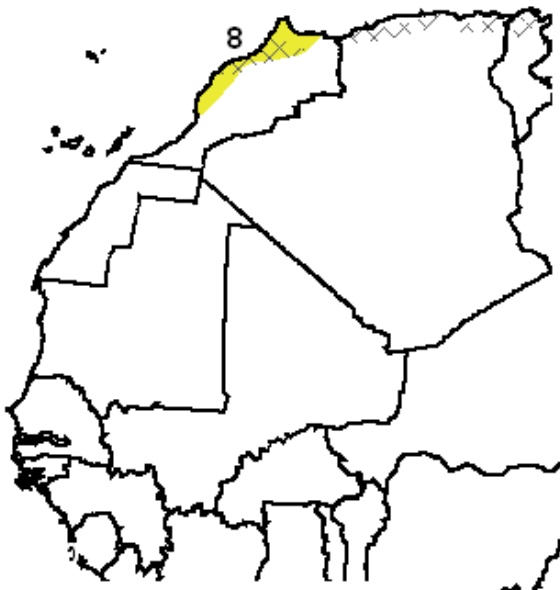
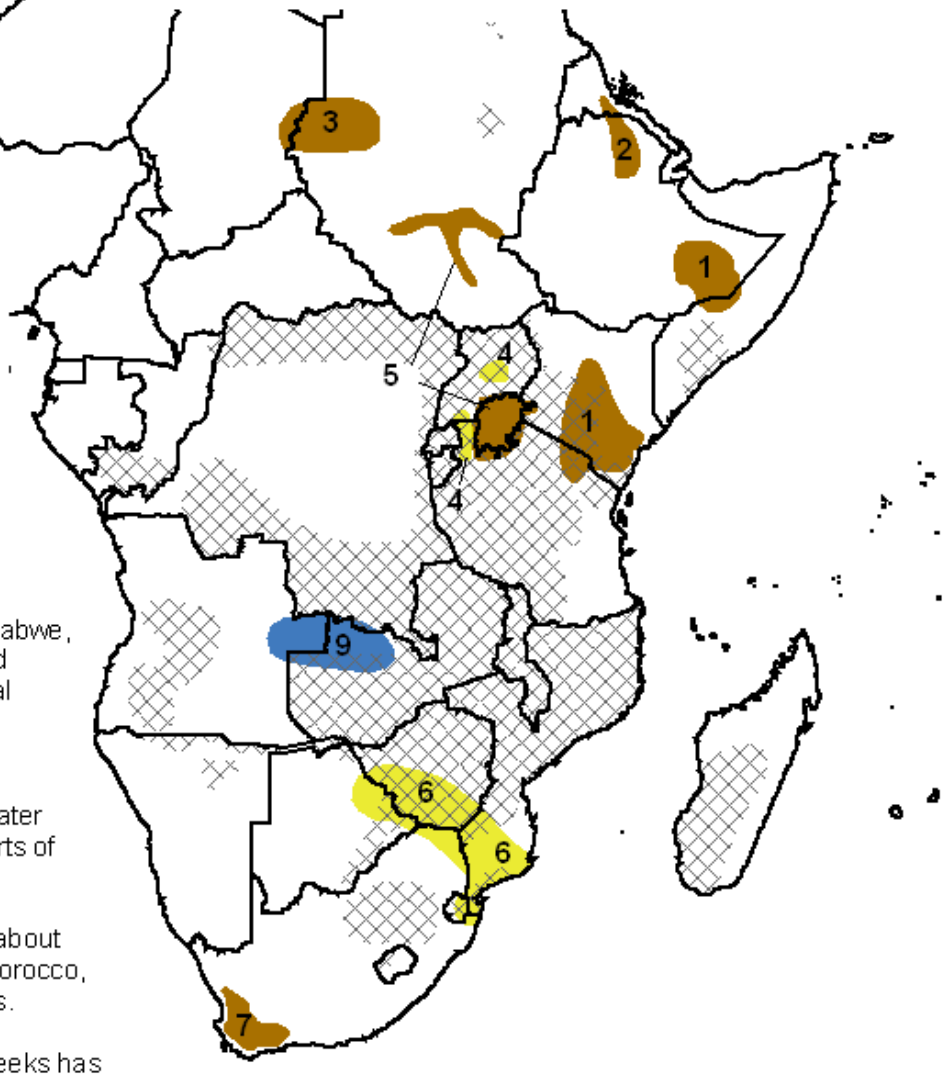
NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1. Eastern Ethiopia, Kenya and northeastern Tanzania received below normal precipitation during 2004. The dryness has reduced moisture for pastures and water supplies.

2. Western Afar Province of northern Ethiopia continues to have dry season water resource problems due to a lack of 2004 precipitation.

3. Dry pastures and reduced water resources continue in central Darfur in Sudan and adjacent parts of Chad. This is the result of a shortened 2004 wet season.



4. Central Uganda and northwestern Tanzania have received 50-70 percent of normal rainfall, possibly reducing second crop yields.

5. Lake Victoria's level remains near the 10-year low, reducing vital seasonal flooding downstream along the Nile.

6. Drought continues to intensify over southern Mozambique, southern Zimbabwe, extreme northeastern South Africa and eastern Botswana. However, beneficial rains will likely fall over the next week.

7. Below normal rains during the 2004 rainy season has resulted in severe water shortages during the dry season in parts of inland Western Cape in South Africa.

8. Rainfall since November has been about half of normal over western parts of Morocco, reducing soil moisture for winter grains.

9. Heavy rains over the last several weeks has cause some localized flooding in northwestern Zambia and east central Angola.

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Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Across portions of Ethiopia's Somali region and adjacent parts of Somalia, central and southeastern Kenya and adjacent parts of Tanzania rainfall was significantly below normal during both the long and the short wet season. The dry conditions have reduced soil moisture, degrading pastures in pastoral areas and crops in the bi-modal areas. The coming week will bring continued dryness and while the Kenya/Tanzania Area may see some light showers in January and February, the next chance for significant rainfall will be in March, while dry conditions will continue until April in affected parts of Ethiopia and Somalia.

2. Western parts of Ethiopia's Afar region and parts of Tigray and Amhara saw 50 percent of normal precipitation during 2004, resulting in degraded pastures and water supply problems. Some isolated rainfall may bring temporary relief to the area during the period. The next opportunity for easing deficits will be in late February and March with the arrival of the Belg rains, though July and August tend to be the wettest months.

3. The dry conditions in Darfur, Sudan and adjacent parts of Chad are the result of a wet season that was suppressed by dry winds from the Sahara. This has reduced water supplies and aggravated the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region. Dry conditions will persist during the coming period. The next opportunity for relief will be in late June or July.

4. In northwestern Tanzania and in parts of Uganda rainfall has been about 50 to 70 percent of normal. Harvesting is currently going on in the area and the slightly drier than normal conditions may result in yield reductions in second season crops. There is a slight chance of light rain during the period.

5. Dry conditions over the Lake Victoria basin has resulted in very low lake levels. Although during the past week as much as 75 mm of rainfall fell on the lake, Victoria remains just above ten-year-lows. This has caused a reduction in the annual flooding that occurs down stream from the lake in southern parts of Sudan. The flooding is necessary for fish and wild plants (water lily) production and it also replenishes degraded pastures during the dry season that lasts from November to May. With below normal lake levels, the annual flooding has been less than in normal. The coming week will likely bring seasonably drier conditions to the lake. January and February tend to be drier while heavier rains normally return to the lake in March.

6. Short term dryness continues to impact southern Mozambique, eastern Swaziland, southern Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana and extreme northern South Africa. Significant portions of the area have not seen precipitation during the past 30 days. Hotter than normal temperatures have been evaporating soil moisture, which has aggravated the dry conditions in the region, and is degrading pasture conditions. The Save and Limpopo Rivers are both running at below normal levels. In southern Zimbabwe heavy rain fell during the past week, easing the dry conditions there, but also causing some minor flooding in Chisumbanje. The area is expected to receive substantial amounts of precipitation during the coming week.

7. Interior section of Western Cape in South Africa received 40 to 75 percent below normal rainfall from April to September of 2004. This has resulted in severe water shortages, stressed pastures and keeping soil moisture levels below normal. Some dams in the region are at or near record low levels. Some light rain is expected in the area during the week.

8. A two month long dry spell over western Morocco is the result of half the normal precipitation falling on the area since November 2004 stressing the winter grain crop. No rainfall is expected during the coming period.

9. Flooding is occurring in portions of northwestern Zambia and east central Angola as the result of heavy rains which have fallen on the area during the past two weeks. More heavy rain is expected during the period.

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

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