



The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

for

August 10 - 16, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

Locust Update:

The FAO site (<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>) was last updated on August 2. Their report indicates that adults are present in parts of the summer breeding areas in the Sahel of West Africa in southern **Mauritania** and northern **Niger** and **Mali**. Adults are also present along the **Indo-Pakistan** border. Good rains have fallen in most of these areas and small-scale breeding in August will cause locusts to increase slightly. A similar situation is expected in **Sudan**. Elsewhere, isolated adults are present in southern **Egypt** and northern **Somalia**. Ground control operations were undertaken against small infestations on farms near Adrar, **Algeria**.

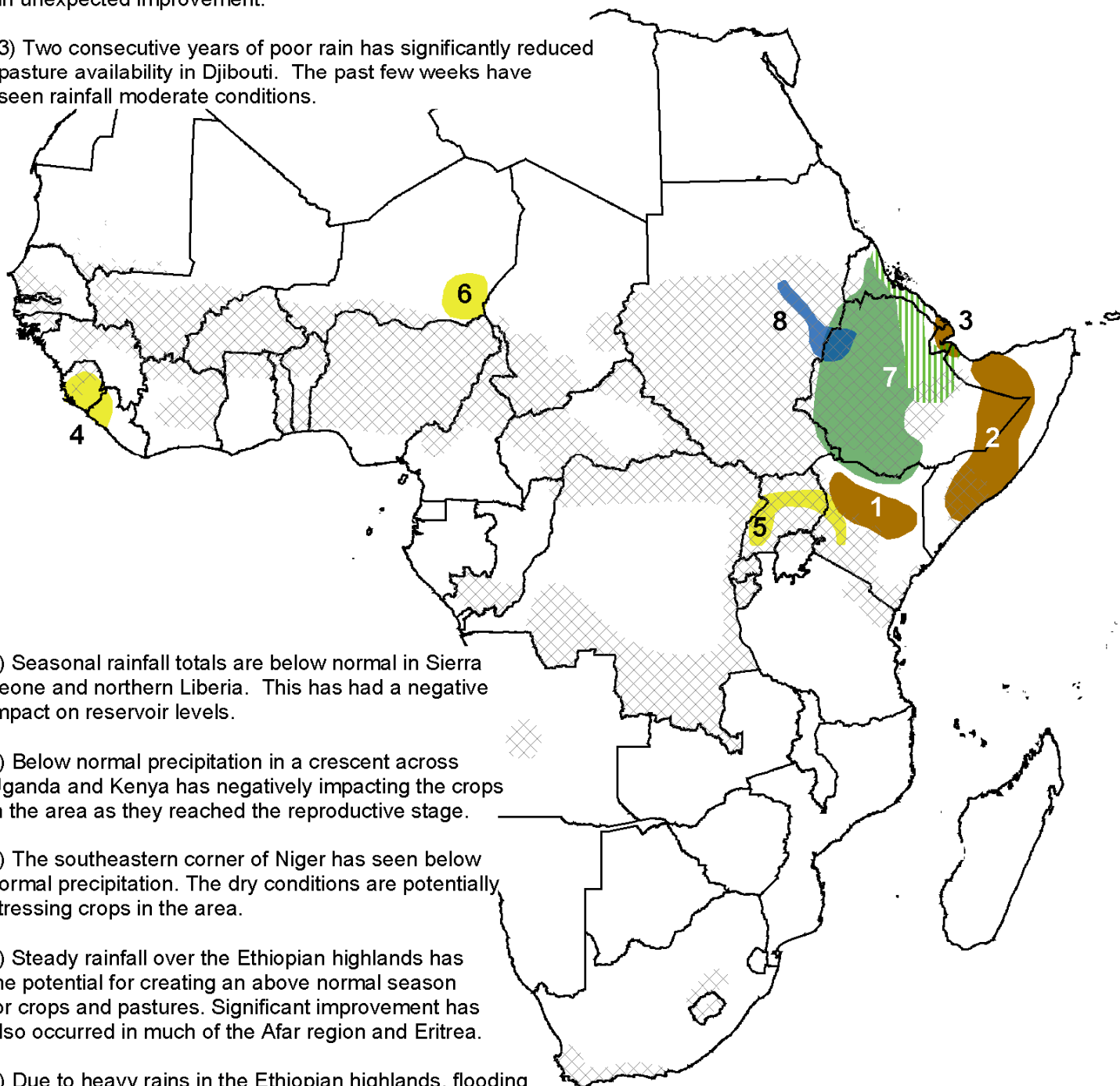
Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits Assessment

1) Poor conditions in central Kenya are the result of several poor wet seasons. The next hope for improvement for agriculture, pasture, and drinking water availability will be in October.

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)

2) Somalia and eastern Ethiopia's poor rains of the June-September 2005 wet season was only slightly improved by the February-May 2006 rains. In some localized areas unseasonable rainfall has resulted in unexpected improvement.

3) Two consecutive years of poor rain has significantly reduced pasture availability in Djibouti. The past few weeks have seen rainfall moderate conditions.



4) Seasonal rainfall totals are below normal in Sierra Leone and northern Liberia. This has had a negative impact on reservoir levels.

5) Below normal precipitation in a crescent across Uganda and Kenya has negatively impacting the crops in the area as they reached the reproductive stage.

6) The southeastern corner of Niger has seen below normal precipitation. The dry conditions are potentially stressing crops in the area.

7) Steady rainfall over the Ethiopian highlands has the potential for creating an above normal season for crops and pastures. Significant improvement has also occurred in much of the Afar region and Eritrea.

8) Due to heavy rains in the Ethiopian highlands, flooding is likely along the Blue Nile and its tributaries.

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Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Almost no rainfall during the 2005 short rains and less than 50 percent of normal precipitation during the March to May rains, have left the area devastated. The one exception is the month of April when widespread heavy rains caused localized flooding. The drought has devastated crops, pastures and drinking water supplies throughout the area. During the past week, however, unseasonable rainfall moved through the western areas, providing some unexpected relief. These rains will not bring long term relief, which will hopefully arrive in October with the start of the short rainy season.
2. There has been some improvement in drought affected portions of Somalia, and eastern Ethiopia. Poor March – May rains occurred in central Somalia and eastern Ethiopia following, in many areas, a poor long rainy season in 2005. From March to May most of the area received about half its normal rainfall. Water available for drinking, pastures and crops all suffered as a result of these light and erratic rains. During the past two weeks, some thunderstorms have brought relief to isolated areas, mainly in the north. Similar conditions are likely next week, but these will not improve overall poor conditions.
3. Improvement continues in Djibouti, where conditions had been very poor as a result of a wet season that ended early last year and was late to start this year. During the past two weeks some isolated locations have received in excess of 75 mm of rainfall, with most areas receiving more than 50 mm of precipitation. The heaviest of the rainfall has been in the south, where rainfall totals are approaching normal. The northern areas are still running about 50 mm below normal since February, or about half of normal precipitation. If these showers continue in the area into next two weeks, conditions may return to normal.
4. Most of Sierra Leone and northern Liberia's reservoirs have dropped significantly below normal. The low water levels can be attributed to below normal rainfall during the early part of the wet season. This is not expected to have an impact on agriculture in the countries, but may impact water availability. The month of August is typically one of the wettest times of year, and during the past month rainfall deficits have been reduced.
5. Conditions are improving in a crescent shaped area in Uganda and Kenya. Starting in June, rainfall in the region became slightly erratic, allowing small rainfall deficits to accrue. During the month of July, during a sensitive period of crop development, rainfall dropped off significantly. The dry conditions have also stressed pastures and reduced available drinking water. The dry conditions have also had an impact on the maize and sorghum crops that are not yet mature. There has been some recent improvement, especially in Uganda, with more moderate improvement in Kenya.
6. The southeast corner of Niger has seen erratic rainfall during the current rainy season. Although conditions have improved during the past week, overall deficits remain, and the impact on pasture in the area has been significant. Some areas are running below 75 percent of normal. Improvement is not likely during the coming week, although some scattered showers are possible in isolated areas.
7. Good cropping conditions dominate most of Ethiopia's Meher producing regions. Across Tigray, Ahmara, Beneshangul Gumuz, SSNPR, Gambella, and western areas of Oromiya above normal precipitation has created conditions favorable for crop growth. Conditions are also rapidly improving in the nearby Afar region, and along Eritrea's Red Sea coast. It should be noted that while the overall picture is good, the rainfall has been heavy at times, and caused localized flash flooding, including in Dire Dawa, as well as hail which has damaged crops locally. The overall good conditions are expected to continue in most areas with flooding a possibility in some locations.
8. The good cropping conditions in the Ethiopian highlands have resulted in flooding potential along the Blue Nile river, and its tributaries. The excessive rainfall has provided for good conditions, but at the cost of some urban flooding, as well as causing streams and rivers to occasionally burst their banks. The possibility exists that at some locations in the Blue Nile basin, flooding could be an issue during the coming period.

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