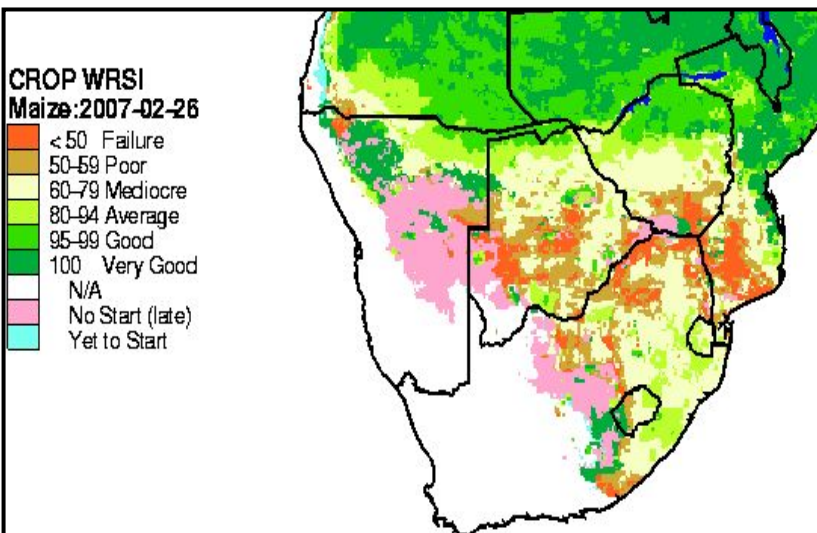
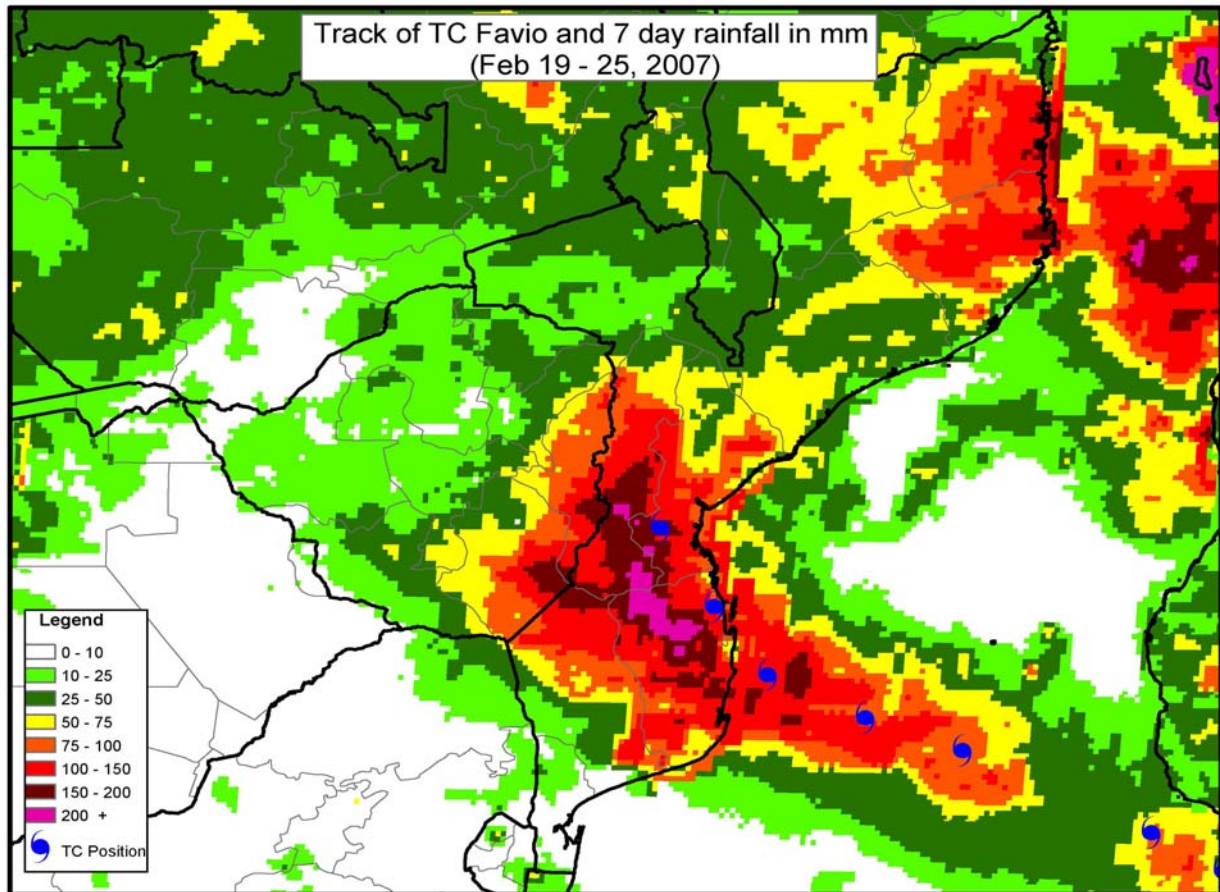


Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

For
March 1 - 7, 2007

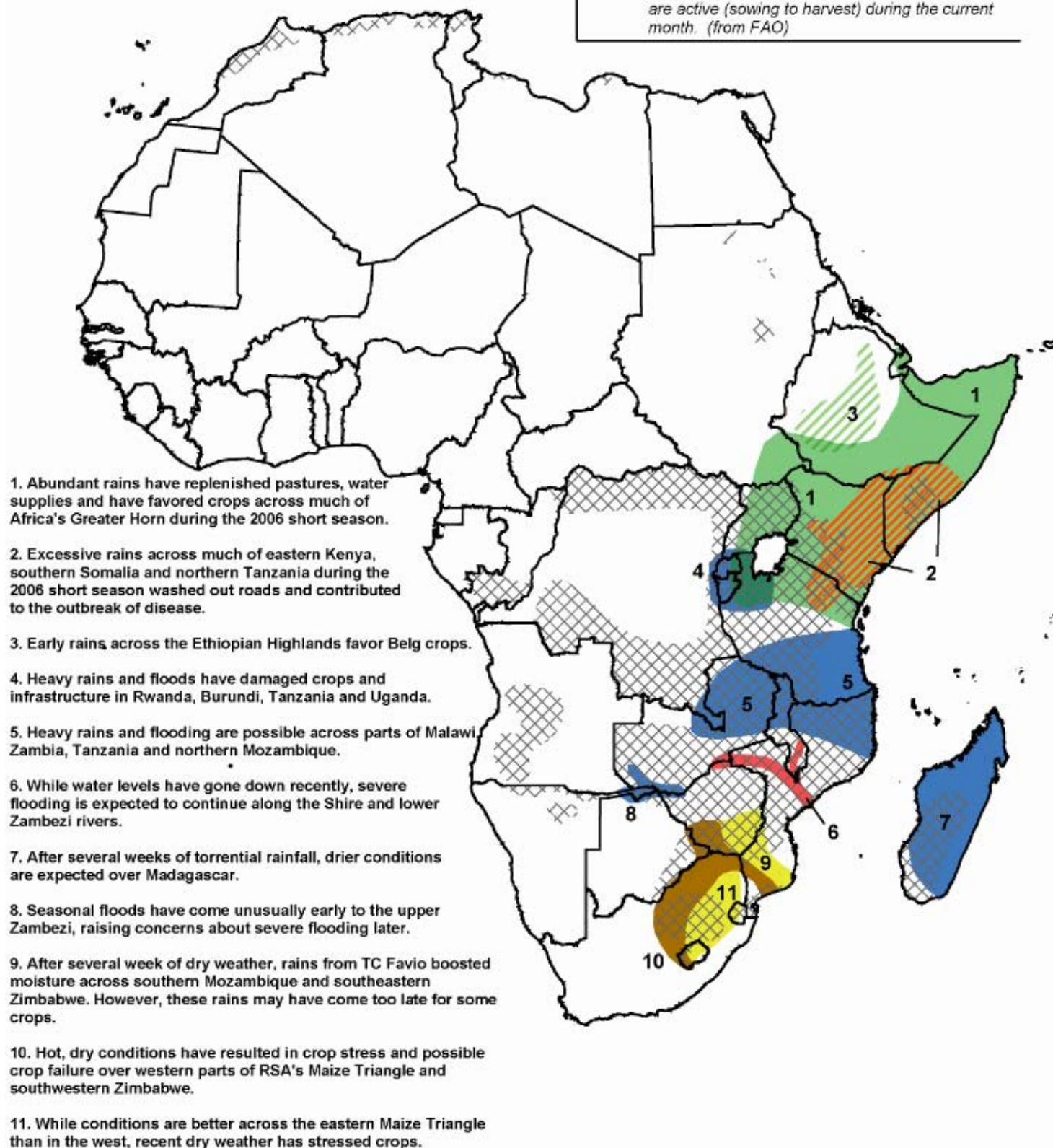
Weekly Introduction: Favio strikes Mozambique, conditions worsen in the Maize Triangle



Tropical Cyclone Favio (TC 14) struck the northern part of Mozambique's Inhambane province on February 22 with winds of 90 knots. The remnants of Favio tracked inland across central Mozambique and into eastern Zimbabwe. Inhambane, Manica and southern Sofala were hardest hit, with 150 to 300 mm of rainfall. Favio produced significant amounts of rain and some damaging winds across eastern portions of Zimbabwe as well (50 – 150+ mm). These rains triggered some floods but also reduced moisture deficits and increased moisture supplies. Favio's rains missed the Zambezi Basin, where severe flooding has been occurring, but dropped heavy rains on the Save and Buzi Basins. Despite the recent rains, drought continues across southern portions of Zimbabwe. To the south, hot and dry weather have taken their toll on crops in South Africa's Maize Triangle.

Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits Assessment

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)



Valid: March 1 - 7, 2007

Text Explanation:

- 1) Abundant to excessive rains fell across the Greater Horn during the 2006 short season. In the pastoral areas of Somalia, Kenya, southern and eastern Ethiopia, abundant rains favored the rejuvenation of pastures degraded by previous years' droughts and overgrazing. The abundant rains also replenished water supplies and allowed cropping in areas typically too dry for cultivations during a typical short season. In the grain producing areas of Kenya, northern Tanzania and Uganda, abundant and well distributed rains favored second season crops while replenish drinking water and irrigation supplies. However, the excessive rains triggered floods, crop damage and contributed to the spread of disease in some locations.
- 2) While abundant seasonal rains favored crops and pastures across much of the horn, these rains also triggered severe flooding in some areas. Floods washed away crops and roads across eastern Kenya and Somalia. Even as the flood waters receded, many areas have been rendered inaccessible. The flood waters have also contributed to an outbreak of water borne diseases such as Rift Valley Fever and Cholera.
- 3) Belg rains started falling in late January across the southern and eastern highlands of Ethiopia. This early start of the Belg rains will favor land preparation efforts for and the emergence of Belg and long cycle crops. Showers are expected to continue across the region during the period. The Belg season is a minor season, yet is significant due to the time of year when crops may be harvested and consumed.
- 4) Torrential rains in February triggered flooding and damaged crops across Burundi, Rwanda and parts of southern Uganda. Drier weather during the last week or so of February has allowed for improving conditions across the region. However, heavy rains have returned. During the first week of March, heavy rains may trigger additional floods and landslides. However, the abundance of moisture bodes well for crops, pastures and water supplies.
- 5) Heavy rains may trigger floods and landslides across southern Tanzania, northern Mozambique, northern Malawi and Zambia during the period. While flooding and landslides are possible, these heavy rains will also result in abundant moisture for crops, pastures and water supplies in the region.
- 6) Flooding has been severe since January along the Zambezi River in Mozambique and along the Shire, a major tributary of the Zambezi, in Malawi. However, simulated hydrographs produced by the USGS indicate that river levels are beginning to recede and are below 2001 flood levels. Therefore, it appears that conditions are slowly beginning to improve. However, locally heavy rainfall over Zambia and parts of Malawi will result in added runoff. Therefore, flooding problems are expected to persist during the period. There are some positive aspects to the flooding. The heavy rains and abundant moisture bode well for crops and pastures, while the unusually high river levels may result in better than usual flood recession cropping opportunities.
- 7) Very heavy rainfall since the beginning of 2007 has triggered floods and landslides across Madagascar. Heavy rains have tapered off recently across southwestern portions of the island, resulting in some improvement. However, abundant rainfall continues across the north and east. Along east coast of Madagascar, Tropical Cyclone Gamede is producing squalls. These squalls are characterized by heavy rain and strong winds. This will continue into the first day or so of the period. Elsewhere, rainfall across Madagascar is not expected to be as heavy as in recent weeks. However, locally heavy rain is still possible, along with the potential for continued flooding and landslides.
- 8) Heavy rains in southern Angola, western Zambia and northern Namibia during January and February have pushed river levels up along the upper portions of the Zambezi. Flooding is occurring much earlier than normal in some areas, including the Caprivi Strip in Namibia. This has raised concerns about the severity of the floods during March and April. Abundant rainfall is expected during the period over southern Angola and western Zambia.
- 9) Dry weather since the beginning of the New Year has resulted in low river levels, reduced moisture for pastures and has stressed crops across southeastern Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique. Tropical Cyclone Favio produced a round of heavy rainfall across these areas, with 50 to locally 200+ mm of rain falling over a few days. These rains have increased river levels along the Limpopo and its major tributaries, favoring this year's flood recession crop. The rain also increased moisture for pastures. However, these rains may have come too late to be of benefit to crops stressed by the dry spell.
- 10) Hot, dry weather has resulted in crop stress across southwestern Zimbabwe and western portions of RSA's Maize Triangle. Light rainfall and hot temperatures, particularly during February, stressed reproductive corn in RSA. In southwestern Zimbabwe, rainfall has been scant since the beginning of 2007. Dry weather is expected early in the period; however showers are possible late in the period over the western Maize Triangle.
- 11) While conditions are worse in the west, a 2 to 3 week stretch of hot and dry weather during moisture sensitive stages of development has resulted in crop stress over eastern portions of the Maize Triangle. Portions of Lesotho and western Swaziland have also been affected. As a result, yield reductions are likely in these areas.

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