



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet-Update

2005/2006 Agricultural Season

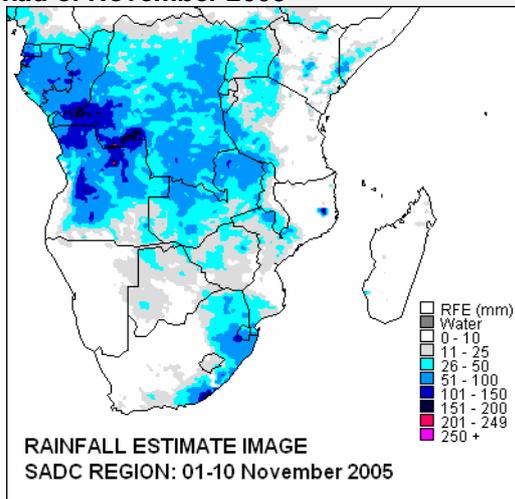


Issue 01 Dekad: 01&02 Month: November Season: 2005-2006 Release date: 28-11-2005

Highlights

- ❑ High rainfall received in Angola DRC and Zambia...
- ❑ Most Member States have commenced land preparation and sowing...
- ❑ South Africa to reduce area under maize cultivation...
- ❑ Malawi still awaits sufficient rainfall for full scale sowing...

Figure 1. Rainfall Performance during 1st Dekad of November 2005



Dekadal Rainfall Performance

The first dekad of November 2005 experienced a substantial amount of rainfall since the beginning of the 2005-06 season. The satellite imagery (figure 1) indicates that most of the rainfall was experienced in Angola, the DRC and the northern half of Zambia. Other areas that had rainfall are western parts of Tanzania as well as in Swaziland, Lesotho and Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces of South Africa. The rest of the region had very low rainfall and in most cases no rainfall. The areas with low to no rainfall covered most of Botswana, central Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and southern part of Angola. The month of November is critical for agricultural production. While the seasonal climate forecast indicates a good rainy season, it is anticipated that the performance will improve with time.

Start of Season Anomaly

In the SADC, agricultural production is heavily dependent on rainfall. In most cases, timely onset of rainfall may imply a good agricultural season as long as all necessary inputs are also available timely. Based on a threshold criterion of 25mm in one dekad and 20mm in the two consecutive dekads, the rainy can be said to have commenced in most SADC Member States except in Namibia, parts of Botswana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Mozambique (figure 2). Yellow areas indicate yet to start season. At the same time, there are areas that have had a delayed onset on the rainy season (see legend). The delay in onset ranges from 10-20 days in most parts of the region.

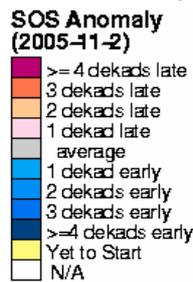
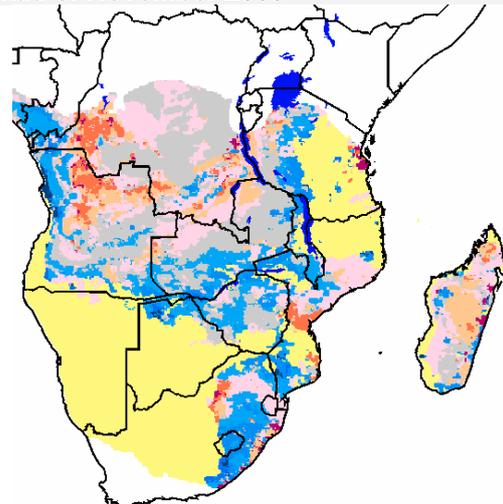


Figure 2. Start of Season Anomaly as of 2nd Dekad of November 2005



Source: USGS/FEWSNet

This 10-Day Agromet Update is a product of the Regional Remote Sensing Unit (RRSU) in the SADC FANR, in collaboration with the USAID FEWSNET Project. Ground information used is obtained from the National Early Warning Systems in the SADC Member States



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Figure 3. Rainfall Performance during 2nd Dekad of November 2005

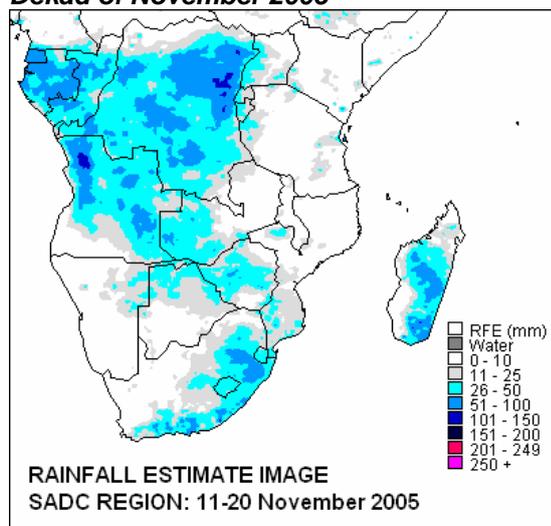
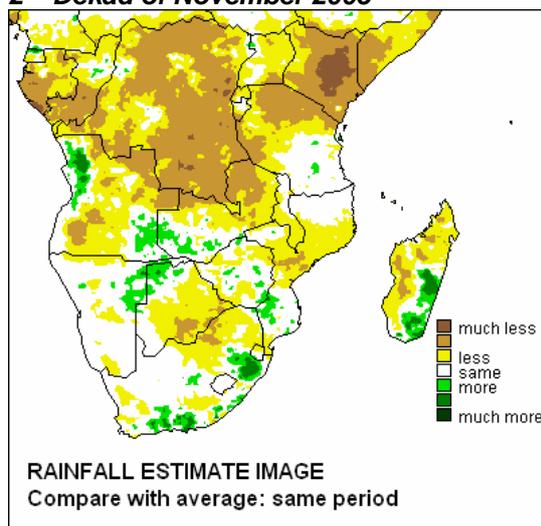


Figure 4. Rainfall Difference from Average for 2nd Dekad of November 2005



Following good performance during the first dekade of November, seasonal rainfall continued into the second dekade. The rainfall received was substantial in Angola and the DRC according to the satellite imagery (figure 3). There was an increase in area covered from previous dekade in parts of Botswana and Zimbabwe. In Zambia, it was confined to the western half of the country, while Tanzania was mostly dry. The eastern half of South Africa had good rainfall, which also extended to Swaziland and Lesotho. Western coastal and the northern parts of Madagascar also received substantial rains (figure 3).

Rainfall performance can be determined by comparing rainfall deficits between dekades and against the long term average. Rainfall difference imagery provides an indication of how much less or more the rainfall received compares to the average. Figure 4 shows that most of the sub-region has received less rainfall in the 2nd dekade of November than average. Isolated areas, however, have shown above normal rainfall. Except for South Africa, most of these areas (green) are not in high maize producing areas although good rains for sowing was available in these areas.

MALAWI The country is receiving humanitarian assistance after a failed season during the 2004-05 season. About 5 million people are reported to be requiring food aid. The situation may only improve if the current season performs well. So far, the rains have not been sufficient to allow full scale sowing of seed. However, land preparation and purchasing of agricultural inputs is being undertaken. The first two dekades of November have not been satisfactory for the country. The second dekade experienced very low rainfall in most parts of the country (figure 3). The situation requires close monitoring for planning purposes and early warning.

SOUTH AFRICA The country had a good harvest last season with a surplus of 5.46 million tonnes. The surplus has had implications on the prices. The latest report from the Crop Estimate Committee forecasts a drop of about 50% in maize cultivated area due to lack of rain and massive surplus. However, sowing of other crops groundnuts, sunflower and soya beans have gone up by 52%, 3% and 54% respectively. Most of the rainfall so far has been in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal which experienced substantial amounts as indicated by the satellite imagery (figure 3).

Dominant Situation in SADC The situation generally in the SADC region is that the rainy season has commenced in some parts (see figure 2) while it has not in many parts. However, in most countries, the dominant activities are those of land preparation while at the same time acquisition of agricultural inputs is taking place. Close monitoring is being undertaken in the emergency countries which include; Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SWAZILAND The country has enjoyed good rainfall in the first two dekades of November as indicated by ground reports and satellite imagery (figures 1&3). The good rains have prompted land preparation and in some cases sowing has even taken place. The rangeland has already started showing signs of recovery and livestock condition is improving.

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