

SUMMARY

During the first dekad of October 2004, most parts of the country experienced normal to above normal rainfall. This condition favored crops that are at reproductive stage and the recently sown pulse crops in the areas. On the contrary, some areas from the west (Aira, Alge, Bedele and Shambu), central (Addis Ababa), southwest (Jima and Sekoru), eastern (Gelemso and Mieso) and south (Kibre Mengist) exhibited heavy falls ranging from 32 - 46 mm. As a result, some areas like Asosa reported crop damage and livestock loss due to heavy fall with thunderstorm. Pursuant the crop phenological report harvesting of root crops and cereals was under way in some areas of northeastern parts of the country. Medium field condition due to water stress has been observed in some areas of eastern Tigray and Amhara. Shambu and Arsi Robe reported severe weed infestation on beans and teff crops, respectively.

During the second dekad of October 2004, southern and pocket areas of western, eastern and central Benishangul-Gumuz, pocket areas of eastern SNNPR, western, central and eastern Tigray and pocket areas of northern Amhara and eastern Hararghe exhibited normal to above normal rainfall while the rest portions of the country were under below normal rainfall. This above normal rainfall condition over some Meher producing areas favored the existing crops as well as the late sown crops and the crops that are going to be sown like chickpea, lentil and some short season varieties of crops over agro-pastoral areas of southern Oromiya. Besides, it had indispensable contribution to mitigate the shortage of pasture and drinking water over northern Somali and the lowland of southern Oromiya. On the contrary, the observed below normal rainfall over some areas of southern and northeastern Amhara, western and eastern Oromiya, northern SNNPR, eastern and southwestern Benishangul-Gumuz and southeastern Tigray negatively affected the crops on their water requirements, thus some stations: Majete, Laliblela, Gimbi, Dembi Dolo, Bullen, Assosa and Mekele reported slight wilting and medium field condition due to moisture stress. Moreover, the observed dry spells over some Meher producing areas of northern SNNPR, eastern Amhara, central, eastern and western Oromiya facilitated the on going harvest and post harvest activities of long and medium cycle crops.

1.2 RAINFALL ANOMALY (Fig. 2)

Southern and pocket areas of western, eastern and central Benishangul-Gumuz, pocket areas of eastern SNNPR, western, central and eastern Tigray and pocket areas of northern Amhara and eastern Hararghe exhibited normal to above normal rainfall while the rest portions of the country were under below normal rainfall.

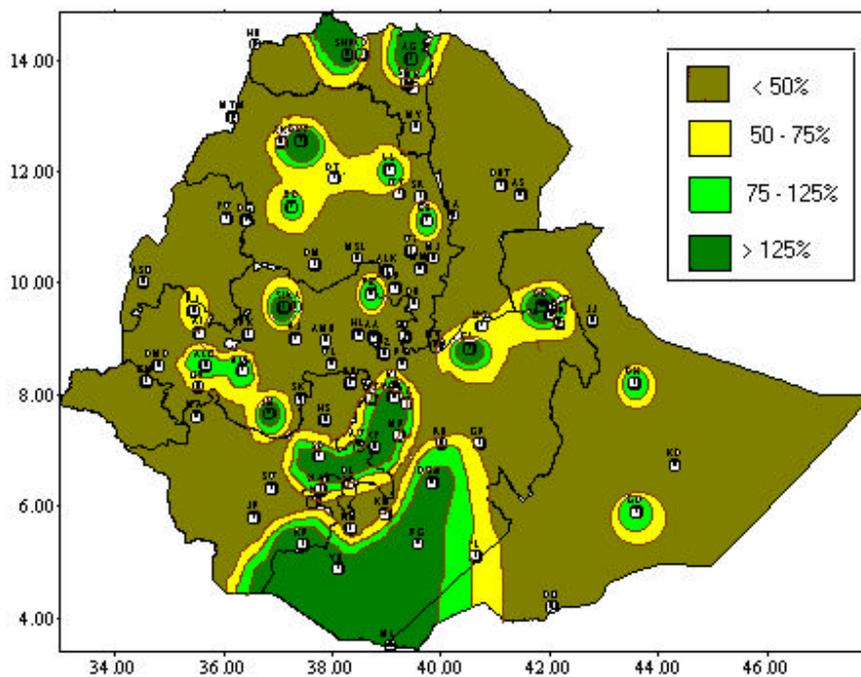


Fig. 2 Percent of normal rainfall (11-20, October 2004)

Explanatory notes for the legend:
<50 -- Much below normal
50—75% -- below normal
75—125% --- Normal
> 125% ---- Above normal

1.3 TEMPERATURE ANOMALY

D/Zeit, Bale Robe, Alamaya, D/Berihan, Koffele, Mehal Meda, Michew, Meraro and Wegel Tena recorded extreme minimum air temperature for two to six consecutive days, particularly Alemaya and Debre Berihan experienced extreme minimum air temperature below 0°C for two and four consecutive days, respectively.

2. WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE THIRD DEKAD OF OCTOBER 2004

For the coming ten days, the rain bearing systems will have better strength over southern half of the country. In general, Somali, northern half of SNNPR, Gambella and neighboring areas of western and eastern Oromiya as well as Borena will have near normal rains. Southern half of SNNPR, will get below normal rains, However, most parts of Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Ben-Gumuz and central Oromiya will be under dry weather condition. Hence, sunny weather accompanied by a fall in early morning and nighttime temperature is expected over the highlands of the aforementioned places.

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE

3.1 VEGETATION CONDITION AND IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE

The observed normal to above normal rainfall distribution over Meher growing areas of the country favored the existing crops as well as the late sown crops and crops which are going to be sown like chickpea and lentil. It also had positive impact on the availability of pasture and drinking water over southern Oromiya and northern tip of Somali. In accordance with crop phenological reports maize was at full ripeness stage in southern Amhara (Majete), western and central Oromiya (Nejo, Aira, Gimbi, sekoru and Bedelle), at wax ripen stage in western and central Amhara (Dangila and Bahir Dar), western and eastern Oromiya (Alge, Dembi Dolo, Meisso) and eastern Benishangul-Gumuz (Chagni) while at tasseling stage in eastern Amhara (Bati) and the lowlands of Bale (Dolo Mena). Sorghum was at ripeness stage in western and eastern Oromiya (Gimbi and Gelemso) and at flowering stage in eastern Amhara (Combolcha), western and eastern Oromiya (Nejo, Aira, Dembi Dolo and Meisso), southwestern Benishangul-Gumuz (Assosa) and northern SNNPR (Bui) while at tasseling stage in some areas of eastern Amhara (Bati). Teff was at ripeness stage in eastern and southern Amhara (Sirinka, Combolcha and Majete), southeastern Tigray (Mekele) central and eastern Oromiya (Zeway and Gelemso) as well as northern and northeastern SNNPR (Hossaina and Sodo) while at flowering stage in southern Amhara (Wereilu), central and western Oromiya (Shambu and Bedelle), southwestern Benishangul-Gumuz (Assosa) as well and at tasseling stage in western and eastern Amhara (Bati and Dangila), central Oromiya (Kachissei, Fithce and Woliso) and Bale lowlands (Dolo Mena). Millet was at flowering stage in some areas of western Oromiya (Nejo) and at tasseling stage in eastern Benishangul-Gumuz (Bullen and Chagni). Wheat was reported at full ripeness stage in eastern, northeastern and southern Amhara (Combolcha, Lalibela and Wereilu Amba Mariam) central Oromiya (Fithce) and southeastern Tigray (Mekele) while at flowering stage in central Oromiya (Kachissei and Shambu) and at shooting stage in some areas of northeastern Amhara (Wegel Tena) and western Oromiya (Dembi Dolo). Barley was at ripeness stage in northeastern and southern Amhara (Lalibela and Amba Maraiam). Pulse crops like Beans and peas were at ripeness stage in southern Amhara (Wereilu), central Oromiya (Fithce) and at budding stage in some areas of northeastern SNNPR as well. Oil crops like nug were at dark and yellow ripeness stages in central Oromiya (Woliso) and western Oromiya (Gimbi), respectively while at flowering in central Oromiya (Kachissei) and eastern Benishangul-Gumuz (Bullen) while at budding stage in western Oromiya (Aira). Addition to this, slight weed infestation and slight damage due to disease occurred in Gimbi and Dembi Dollo. Besides, slight wilting and medium field condition were reported due to moisture stress that prevailed at some areas of southern and northeastern Amhara, western and eastern Oromiya, northern and northeastern SNNPR, southwestern and eastern Benishangul-Gumuz as well as southeastern Tigray.

3.2 EXPECTED WEATHER IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE DURING THE COMING DAKAD

The anticipated near normal rainfall distribution over northern half of SNNPR, Gambella, western Oromiya will have positive impact on late sown long and medium cycle crops over Meher growing areas. However, it might adversely affect the on going harvest and post harvest activities that are being performed over the above mentioned areas where long and medium cycle crops are attaining at ripeness stage. Moreover, the expected near normal rainfall over much of Somali, Borena and some areas of southern half of SNNPR will have indispensable contribution to the availability of pasture and drinking water.