



Food Security Early Warning System Agromet Update



2013/2014 Agricultural Season

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Season: 2013-2014

30-05-2014

Highlights

- Season ends with normal to above-normal rainfall totals in most areas
- Good crop production estimated in several countries in the region.
- Parts of Angola, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland and Tanzania affected to varying extents by dry conditions
- Pasture in good condition in many southern parts

Regional Summary

After a poor start, the season has ended well in many parts of the region, with good, well distributed rains facilitating high agricultural production in several countries. The good rains received in many parts of the region have led to above average harvest prospects in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Malawi and Mozambique are also expecting good production despite the late onset of rains and localized mid-season dryness they experienced.

Overall, most areas received near-normal to above-normal seasonal rainfall totals (figure 1, white and green colours), with large areas in the southern half of the region registering above normal totals. This high rainfall led to good vegetation performance, with most of these same areas showing above-normal vegetation conditions by the end of the season (Figure 2, green colours), a situation which is good for livestock due to the increased availability of forage.

The season started with a late onset in the central/eastern parts of the region, poor rainfall in the drought-affected south-western parts of the region, and below average short season rains in the bimodal areas of Tanzania. This situation persisted until at least November, but in December, most areas except bimodal Tanzania, started receiving good rains. This brought much welcome drought relief in the south-western areas, and ushered in a late onset in the eastern SADC Region. Persistent dry conditions in northern Tanzania led to a failed *Vuli* (short season) rainfall season.

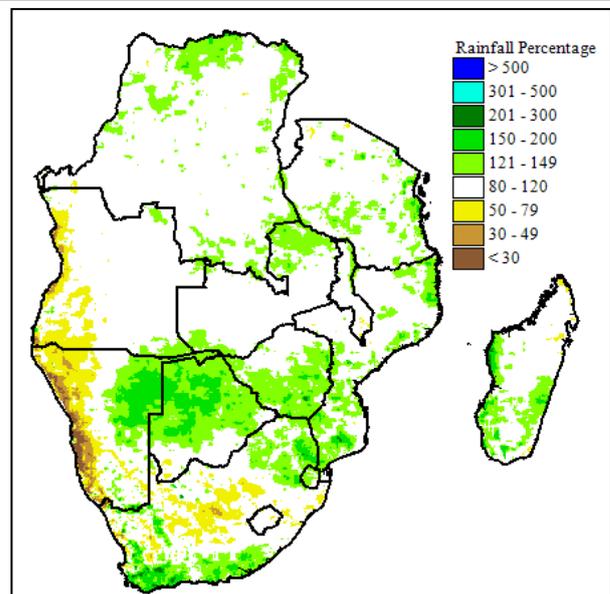


Figure 1. Rainfall for 1 Oct 2013 to 30 April 2014 as percent of average. Source: USGS/FEWSNET

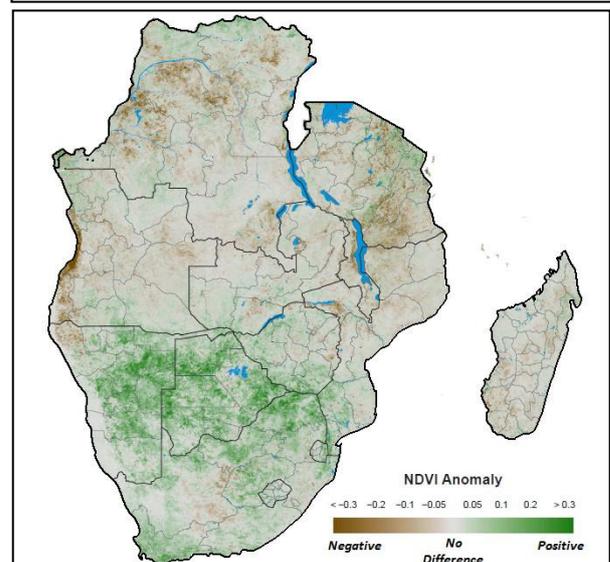


Figure 2. Vegetation Index (NDVI) compared to average conditions for 11-20 April 2014 Source: USGS/FEWSNET

The rains continued to perform well in most parts of the region, although dry spells in March had negative impacts in some areas including parts of Malawi. Dry conditions at varying times during the season also affected parts of south-western Angola, south-western Madagascar, north/central Namibia, Swaziland and northern Tanzania.

National Agrometeorology Summaries

Angola

Poor rainfall was received in parts of south-western Angola for much of the season, prolonging the dry conditions that affected some of these areas since at least last season. Late March saw an increase in rainfall, which improved pastures and facilitated development of drought tolerant crops such as maize, though extreme south-western Angola did not experience this improvement. Rainfall performed generally well in most of the productive parts of the country, and as a result, production is expected to improve from last season.

Botswana

Botswana generally experienced a good season in most areas, with above average seasonal rainfall totals in most parts of the country, except in the south where near average rains were received. The rainfall was well distributed throughout the season, to potentially allow good crop production. The above normal seasonal rains helped to counter the deficits experienced in the last two seasons in many areas, but in the southern areas overall water deficits still exist.

Lesotho

Overall, the country experienced a near-normal season, despite challenges such as a late onset of rains in some areas, and frost in April that negatively affected late planted main cereal food crops in parts of the country. Given the near normal rains experienced during the season, it is likely that average production may be realized.

Madagascar

Madagascar experienced a generally good season, with consistent rains through much of the season. Dry conditions were however experienced in the southern and south-western parts of the country in December, February and March, thereby negatively impacting on maize production in some of these areas. Rice production this year improved significantly compared to last season, which was severely affected by a locust outbreak.

Malawi

Parts of Malawi were affected by late onset of rains and localized prolonged dry spells. After the late onset of rains, rainfall was well distributed during much of the season, with an outlook for good overall production. However, a March dry spell in localized parts negatively affected crop yields in those areas. Despite the challenges faced during the season, a good national harvest is expected.

Mozambique

A delayed onset of over a month was experienced in some of the main maize growing areas in central Mozambique. In addition, an early crop failure occurred in the southern areas, though this was followed by extensive replanting. Other challenges included flooding and pests and diseases. Despite these challenges, rains were good through much of the season, and an average to above average crop is expected in most parts of Mozambique

Namibia

Good seasonal rainfall was received in the north-east and central parts of the country, while poor rainfall and prolonged January/February dry spells occurred in the north-central areas. The mixed seasonal performance led to a forecast cereal production of 122,390 tons – 50% higher than last year, but 2% below average. Much of the improvement is attributed to irrigated agriculture, while dry conditions in the north/central/western areas negatively affected production in most communal-producing areas. There were also reports of crop pest infestation, particularly the bollworm. Livestock condition was reported to have improved in most regions by March

South Africa

Major growing areas in South Africa experienced a very good season, with consistent rains being received throughout the season. Some of the north-western areas did experience a late onset, but this had limited impact on the national production. National crop estimates indicate that a very good maize crop of over 13.5 million tons is expected, representing an 14.7% increase from last year,

Swaziland

Swaziland experienced a slightly delayed onset of rains followed by good rainfall for much of the season. Dry conditions however occurred in some areas from early January through to mid-February. Despite the negative impacts of the dry spell, Swaziland is expecting good maize production

Tanzania

In the bimodal areas in the northern parts of the country, rainfall performance for the *Vuli* (short season) season was poor, resulting in crop failure and low harvests. In the unimodal areas, crops are reported to be in good condition, with a near average harvest expected. Pastures and water availability are also reported in good condition.

Zambia

Zambia received generally good rainfall throughout most of the season, although some of the southern parts of the country experienced dry spells, which had some negative impact in a few southern and western areas. The country is expecting the highest-recorded maize production of 3.35 million metric tons, which is 32.3% higher than last year

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe experienced good rains throughout much of the season and a good maize harvest is expected overall. One challenge was a delayed onset of rains in the northern parts of the country, but this had little impact on crop yields. Reports indicate that more than 1.6 million tons of cereals were expected from harvests, which is the highest in the last 5 years.