



# FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

## Agromet-Update

### 2005/2006 Agricultural Season



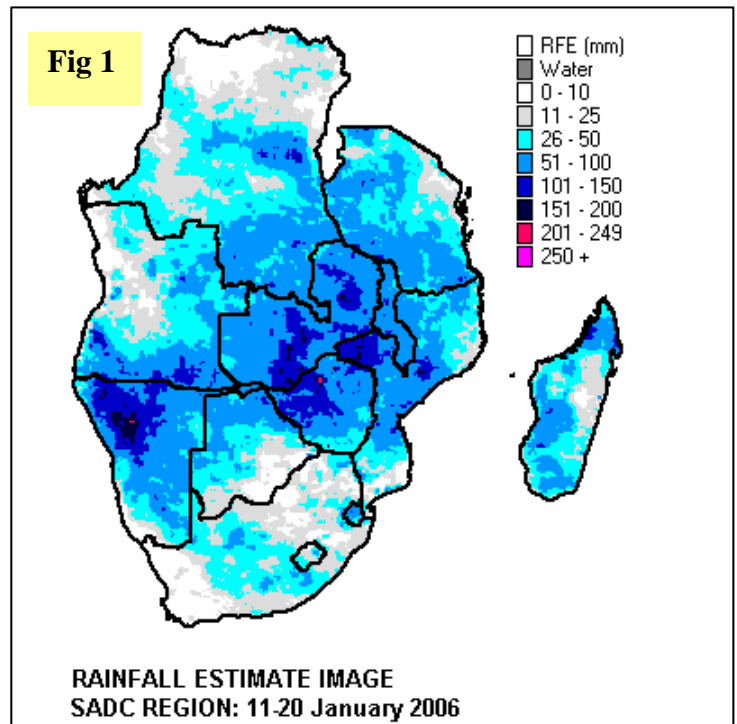
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### Highlights

- ❑ High production prospects as good rains continue across the region
- ❑ Good rains bring some relief to Tanzania in uni-modal areas
- ❑ Army worm outbreak reported to be under control in Zimbabwe

In the second dekad of January, rainfall continued to be sufficient across much of the SADC region, with most areas receiving above normal rains. Western Angola, Lesotho, northern and southern Mozambique and South Africa are the main areas that received poor rains, though in most of these areas, this was compensated by the good rains that were received in the previous dekad. Most of the other areas had good rains. In most areas, rainfall has been quite consistent in the last few months since the beginning of December 2005. Good rains are expected to continue, and this situation is likely to have positive impacts on production this season, which is expected to be high in many countries.

Fig.1. Rainfall Performance for Dekad 2 of January 2006



## Army Worm Infestation under control in Zimbabwe

The army worms reported on in the previous edition of the *Agromet Update* are said to be under control in Zimbabwe. They had already destroyed almost one thousand hectares in one instance, and were affecting most of the country's provinces, including the most productive central provinces. Worsening the situation was the fact that chemicals for spraying the armyworms were in short supply when the outbreak was first detected. Reports however indicate that chemicals are now more available, and spraying teams have been mobilized. In addition, the heavy rains currently falling in the country will act as a double-blessing, as the worms are said to be destroyed by excessive rains. However a dry spell could reverse the natural gains. There have been no further updates on the outbreak that occurred in some of the central and northern districts of Malawi, but it is likely that the heavy rains being experienced there will help to suppress them.

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

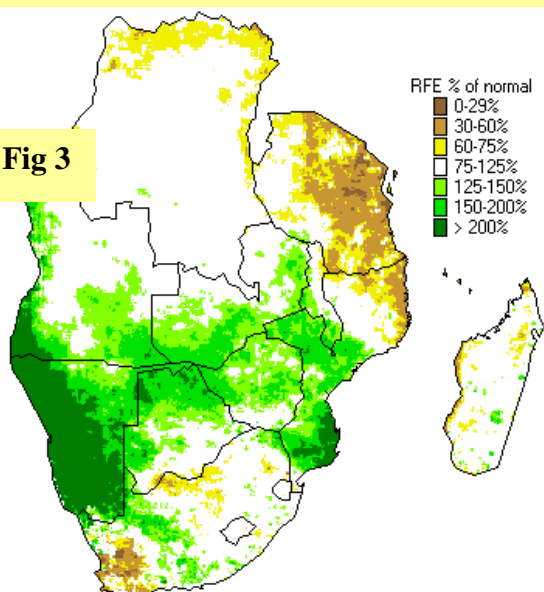


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**PERCENTAGE RAINFALL RECEIVED  
BETWEEN 1 SEPTEMBER 2005 AND  
20 JANUARY 2006**

Fig 3



Most areas in the SADC region have received high rains so far this season. The percentage rainfall map (Figure 3) shows the total amount of rainfall received so far this season, as a percentage of the total amount of rainfall normally received during the same period. Green colours show areas where above normal rains have been received, areas in white indicate where approximately normal rains have been received, and yellow/brown colours show areas where below-normal rains have fallen. Tanzania and northern Mozambique, and parts of South Africa are the areas that have received less rainfall, although recent rains in Tanzania have been alleviating the situation in a few areas there.

**MALAWI** Heavy rains continued to fall in many parts of the country, particularly the southern and part of the extreme northern areas. There were further reports of flooding in the southern and central areas of Mangochi and Salima respectively. In other areas, the rains were mainly sufficient for crop development, except in parts of northern Malawi, where low rains were received. Overall though, most areas received good rains to support crop growth, and if the good rains continue, a good crop harvest can be expected at the end of the season. A first national estimate of forecast crop production is expected from the relevant government agencies at the end of January.

There were no further reports on the status of the armyworm outbreak that was reported in the previous dekad.

**ZIMBABWE** Good rains were received in most areas of the country (figure 1), a situation that has persisted for the last few dekads. This raises chances of a good crop being harvested, on the back of poor harvests in the last few years. Farmers are reported to be currently weeding and applying top-dressing fertilizer to their crops. Reports of high prices of agricultural inputs and high inflation continue. This may affect agricultural production, especially for resource-poor farmers. Reports from Zimbabwe indicate the armyworm outbreak is now under control, as spraying teams have been deployed, and chemicals are now more available. The heavy rains will also help

**TANZANIA** Between 11 and 20 January, Tanzania received good rains, particularly in the south-western *Uni-modal* half of the country (Figure 1), breaking a long spell of poor rainfall in the country. This may signal the start of the rainy season in the uni-modal areas, which has started quite late. In some areas, the season has not yet started, and is late. Apart from some the areas near Lake Victoria, most of the north-eastern areas with the short-season *Vuli* maize crop did not benefit much (e.g. Tanga and Arusha Regions). Crops in the *Vuli* areas are now in the flowering stage, a critical crop growing stage, and production prospects for this region are bleak. The north-eastern half of the country is the most severely affected, and a poor crop harvest is likely. Mitigation measures may be needed.

**LESOTHO** Poor rains were received across much of the country during the second dekad of January. This was compensated for by the high rains that had been received in the previous dekad. However, good rains will be required in the coming dekads in order to avoid moisture stress, especially as some crops are now at the tasselling stage, during which regular rainfall supply is critical for good crop development.

**ZAMBIA** Good rains continued to be received across most of the country. Most of the crops are at vegetative stage, while a few areas in the north-west are reported to have crops at flowering stage. A few areas in the east (Mambwe District) are reported to be suffering from the effects of earlier moisture deficits, but overall, good harvests are likely if the good rains continue. There re reports that crops growing near river banks in Magoye district have been washed away by floods.

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