



# FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

## Agromet Update

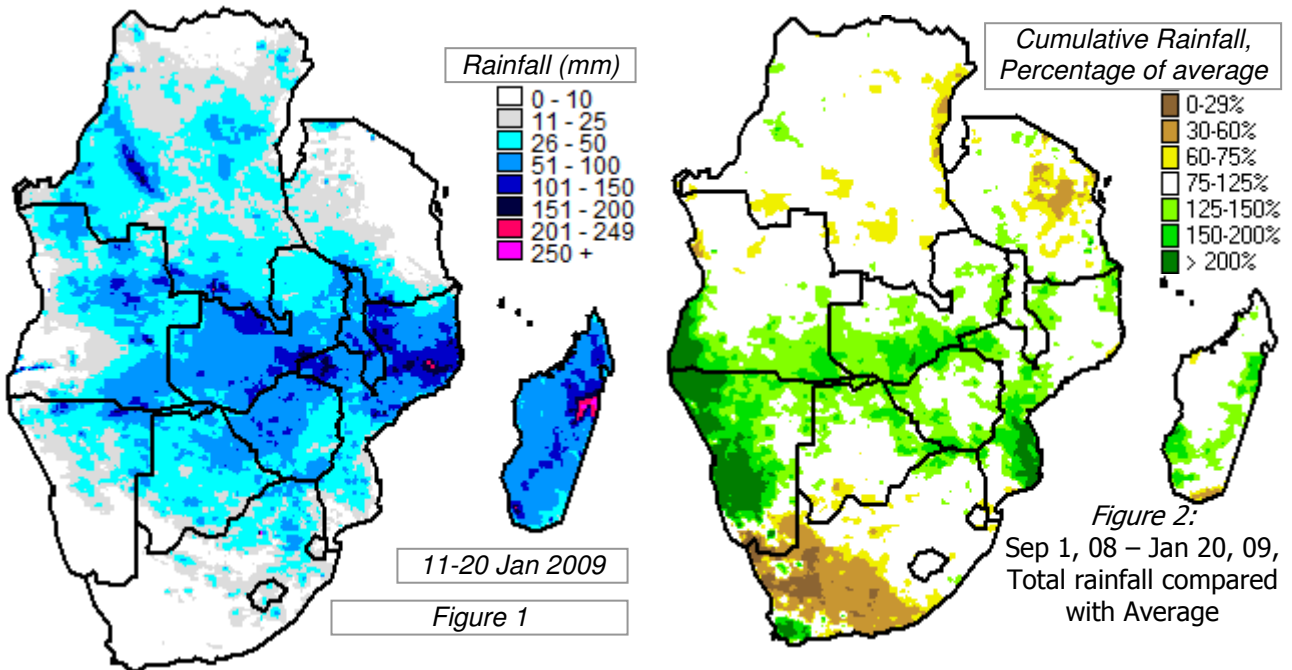


2008/2009 Agricultural Season

Issue 08 Period: January 11-20, 2009 Season: 2008-2009 Release date: 26-01-2009

### Regional Overview

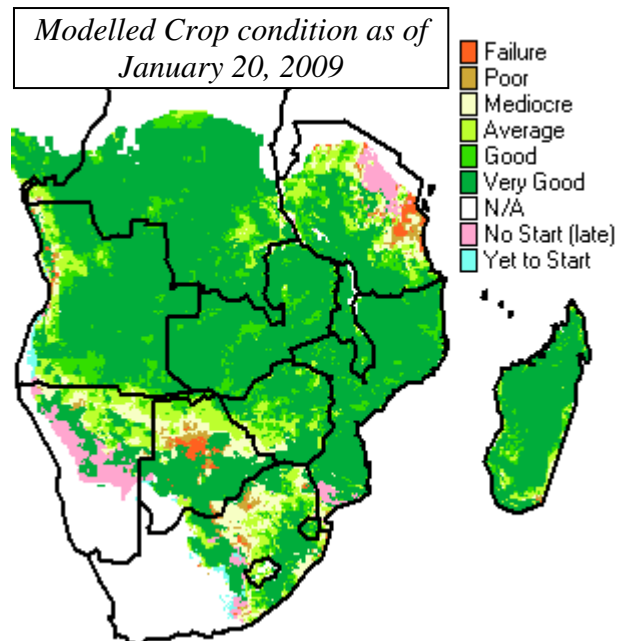
### Rainfall Performance



Moderate to heavy rains were received in the central parts of the region, covering southern and western Zambia, eastern Botswana, western Zimbabwe, Malawi, central and northern Mozambique, eastern Angola, northern Namibia. Rains were lighter in the northern parts of the region (northern DRC, most of Tanzania). Lighter rains fell in the southern parts of the region (South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, central and southern Namibia). Madagascar received widespread moderate to heavy rains in the period under review.

Elevated flood risks in the Limpopo, Zambezi and Buzi river basins will remain a concern owing to the continuation of moderate to heavy rains in these areas.

Water balance models for the maize crop suggest that the crop's water requirements have been satisfied in most parts of the region. However, moisture stress in northern and eastern Tanzania, and also some parts of north-western South Africa, could compromise crop yields in these areas.



## Country Summaries

### Botswana

Significant rains fell across most parts of Botswana except for the south-west parts of the country in dekad 2 of January. Rainfall has been falling consistently in the last 30 days over the eastern parts of the country, and as a result, the crop conditions in these areas are reported to be in good condition. Crop stage ranges from vegetative to flowering stage in many of the crop-growing areas.

### Lesotho

The central and south-eastern parts of the country received moderate rains in the period under review, but the rains fell in only a couple of rainy days. The rest of the country received light, below average rains. Cumulative rains have been consistently below average in the northern and eastern districts, which are usually the most productive in terms of cereal summer crops. Crops in most areas continued to experience water stress, at a time when they are approaching a period of high water demand. Crop stages ranged from vegetative to tasselling, and condition ranged from fair to good. Continued poor rainfall performance will compromise final potential crop yields. Farmers were mostly engaged in weeding their field in the period under review.

### Malawi

After a late start to the season, rainfall has been consistent over the last dekad. Crops are generally reported to be in good condition in most parts of the country, though some areas experienced damage due to hailstorms. There were also some reports of flooding in the lower Shire valley, in the southern parts of the country. In the south, maize has started flowering for the early planted crop, while in the northern half, it is in vegetative stage. Rains in northern Malawi started in late December, so planting continued until January.

### Mauritius

Weather during the 2008/2009 cropping season to-date has been very conducive for good re-growth of ratoons as well as plant cane crops. The present crop has benefited significantly from the substantial rainfall that has been recorded during the usually dry period of September to December. This is reflected in the sugar cane stalk height which is higher than the normal in all of the country's sugar plantations.

### Mozambique

Moderate to heavy rains were received in the northern half of Mozambique during the second dekad of January, with light to moderate rainfall in the central areas, and little to no rainfall in the south. In most parts of the country, the maize crop is reported to be in good condition and in vegetative condition, although in some areas in the south, some of the crop has reached flowering stage. There have been reports of crops being attacked by pests (caterpillars), particularly in the central provinces and some of the southern areas, although these have not caused significant damage.

### South Africa

Light rains were received in the Freestate, North West, Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal provinces. Moderate to heavy rains were received in the Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, while the western provinces were largely dry. Some crops in the North West provinces had suffered some mild moisture stress but sufficient rains were received to relieve those crops. Reports from the country indicate that the crop in the central and eastern parts was in good condition and had reached flowering stage in some areas.

### Tanzania

Little to no rainfall was received in most parts of Tanzania excluding parts of the south-west during the second dekad. Prolonged dryness from early December has affected the bimodal rainfall areas that are in the northern and eastern parts of the country, and the first season *Vuli* crop has been significantly affected by the dryness, with reports indicating that crops in many areas have reached permanent wilting point and subsequently failed. Over the uni-modal rainfall sector, wilting of crops was also observed over some of the central parts of the country, and farmers have been compelled to replant short-term drought tolerant crops.

### Zambia

Moderate to heavy rainfall was reported during the second dekad of January, although there was a slight reduction in rainfall in the northern part of the country. Overall, the rainfall was good for crop development. In some areas however, farmers were not able to perform weeding due to the continuous

rains that fell during the dekad. In the northern areas, the decrease in rainfall allowed farmers to weed and to apply fertilizer. In many parts of the country, the maize crop is reported to be in good condition, and is ranging from late vegetative stage to flowering stages. Slight reductions in the targeted area may be experienced due to low rains. Late supply of fertilizers may cause a reduction in yields in some areas.

#### Zimbabwe

Good rainfall was received in the country during the second dekad of January. Rainfall has been falling consistently well over the last 30 days, resulting in many areas having above normal rainfall. The maize crop condition is largely dependant on the availability of fertilizer in most areas, with crops being in good condition where fertilizer was available, and poor condition where fertilizer was not available. The maize crop is ranging from vegetative to early flowering stages in most areas.