



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet-Update

2005/2006 Agricultural Season



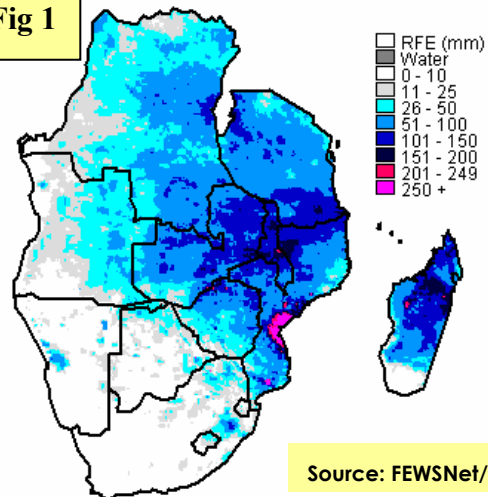
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Highlights

- ❑ High rainfall received in the central and eastern parts of the region...
- ❑ Dry to low rainfall conditions in south-western half of region...
- ❑ Flooding which damaged infrastructure and crops reported in Malawi ...
- ❑ Rainfall still unsatisfactory in Swaziland...

Fig.1. Rainfall Performance for Dekad 1 of March 2006

Fig 1



RAINFALL ESTIMATE IMAGE
SADC REGION: 01-10 March 2006

High Rainfall During Dekad 1 March 2006 affects livelihoods

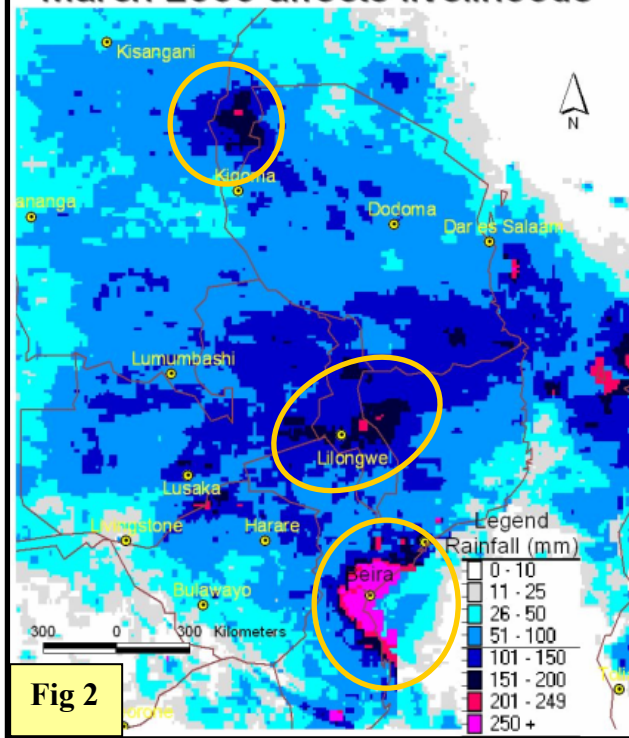


Fig 2

The season has continued to receive high rainfall in the second half of the season. The first dekad of March received a lot of rainfall that was confined to the central and eastern half of the region (Figure 1 & 2). Central Malawi and Mozambique received high rainfall of above 200mm. Most of this rainfall was received in one day on the 9 March 2006. Huge amounts such as these always cause problems for rural communities (Figure 2). The most affected district in Malawi is Salima where livestock and about 50 hectares of maize were destroyed. Beira was the most affected in Mozambique. There were also reports of infrastructure losses in eastern DRC near Burundi and Rwanda. While high rainfall was experienced in the region, most of Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa had very little rainfall (Figures 1 & 2). The season is supposed to be coming to an end and such high rainfall will only allow improper drying of the crops leading to poor storage condition as grain is expected to have less than 12% moisture before storage.

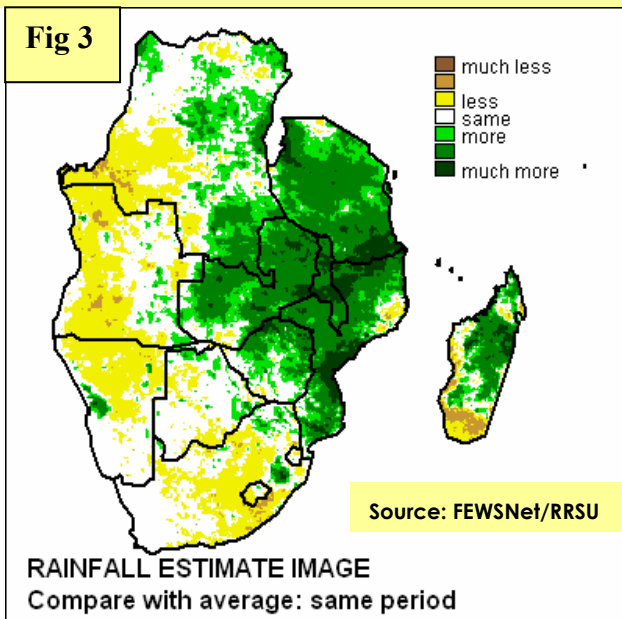
This 10-Day Agromet Update is a product of the Regional Remote Sensing Unit (RRSU) in the SADC FANR, in collaboration with the USAID FEWSNET Project. Ground information used is obtained from the National Early Warning Systems in the SADC Member States



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Fig.3. Comparison of Dekadal Rainfall for first Dekad of March 2006 with average over the same period



Analysis of rainfall amounts received during a particular dekad is a good way of looking at the amount of rainfall received compared to what should be received normally. Figure 3 shows a map indicating that most of Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique have received rainfall far much more than they would normally get during the dekad under review. The dark green areas received well over 250mm. These amounts were reported to have caused flooding in Malawi. Zimbabwe also received much more rainfall except for the southern half of the country (Figure 3). Less than normal rainfall was observed in Angola, Namibia, and South Africa. Normal rainfall was observed in Botswana as well parts of Lesotho and Swaziland. In Angola, areas around Huila and Cunene have received much less rainfall and these areas have generally not performed well this season. The southern tip of Madagascar has also received much less rainfall during the dekad while the central and northern have received much more.

MOZAMBIQUE The country received a substantial amount of rainfall (figure 1 & 2). However, Sofala province received much more rainfall than normal which could have caused flooding with subsequent damage to crops and infrastructure. Nampula province received less than it normally receives at this time of the year and has had moisture problems this season.

MALAWI The country received significant amounts of rainfall. The rains have improved water resources and supported planting, growth and development of tuber crops. However, incessant rains may cause problems for crops particularly in the south and some parts of central region where most crops have reached maturity, drying and harvesting stages. Persistent high relative humidity values experienced created a conducive environment for occurrence of fungal diseases that might increase pre-harvest crop losses this season. In Salima and Mangochi, torrential rains caused flash floods that left farm families homeless, destroyed crops and washed away bridges and roads. High amounts of up to 600mm were received in Salima. Such amounts over a 10 day period are detrimental to crops. Crop production in flooded areas will significantly reduce as crops were washed away and the little that remained is already being harvested for immediate consumption.

ZAMBIA The country continued to experience rainfall characterised by good distribution of heavy to moderate rainfall. Most of the country received rainfall much more than it normally does during the dekad under review. The crops are reported to be doing well although the excess rainfall is threatening the drying of crops as they mature. Livingstone and Kazungula districts received much less rainfall during the dekad. These areas generally receive low rainfall and are always grain deficit areas.

SWAZILAND The country has continued to perform poorly in terms of rainfall received. The crop situation was expected to improve with more rainfall but the crop situation is still not favourable especially in the Lowveld. The dry spells that started at the end of January 2006 have not completely eased off as rainfall distribution is still not satisfactory. Crop production in the affected areas will significantly be affected if the rainfall situation does not improve. However, other parts of the country especially in the middle and high veld have a good crop.

LESOTHO The country did not perform well during the dekad under review. The northern parts of the country received medium rainfall while the southern parts had very low rainfall. However, as the season advances towards the end, not much change is expected for crops because winter is also approaching which has detrimental effects on the crops.

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