



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet Update

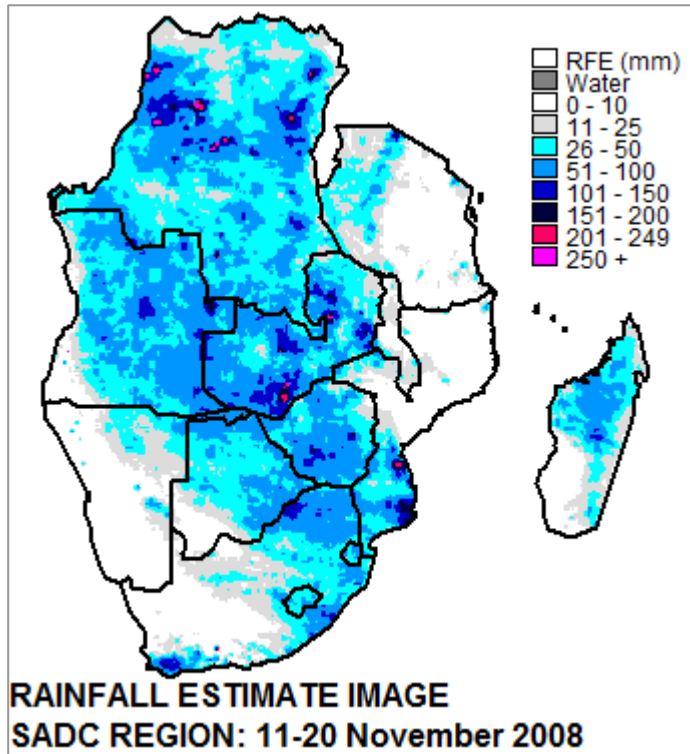


2008/2009 Agricultural Season

Issue 03 Period: November 11-20, 2008 Season: 2008-2009 Release date: 26-11-2008

Regional Overview

Rainfall Performance



Widespread rainfall activity was witnessed in the period under review (November 11-20, 2008), covering Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, southern Mozambique, northern Madagascar, north-eastern Namibia, northern and eastern South Africa, Swaziland, western Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For these areas, the rainfall intensity and coverage was an improvement compared with the period before and should encourage widespread land preparation and planting. In general, it can be seen that rainfall activity in most parts of the region has been improving since the beginning of the month and this should reduce concerns in areas where the

rains had been delayed.

Meanwhile, most of Malawi, northern Mozambique and eastern Tanzania were dry in the period under review. However, northern Malawi, northern Mozambique, and most of Tanzania usually get planting rains in late November through to December.

Rainfall totals received so far have been normal and above normal in most parts of the areas that have received rains. A notable exception is central Mozambique where no substantial rains have been received yet. Most parts of Zambia, northern Namibia, northern Botswana and southern Angola have seen above average rainfall totals and this indicates a good start to the season for these areas.

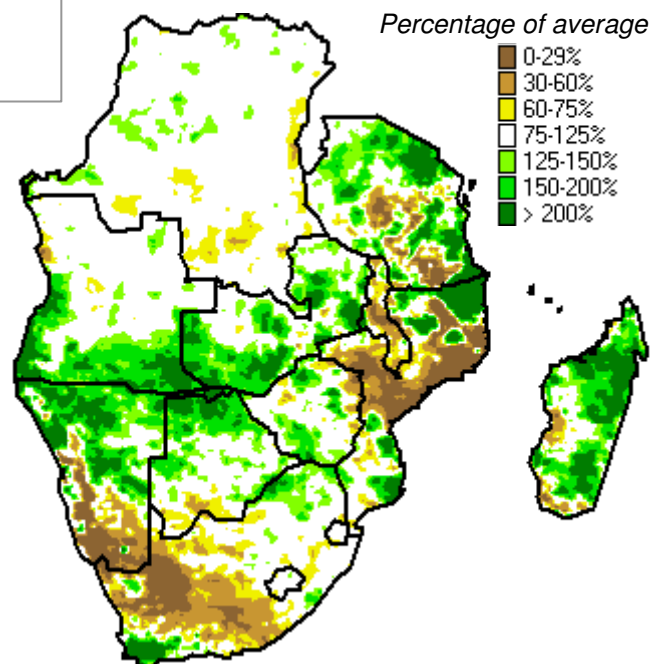


Figure 2: September 1- November 20, 2008, Total rainfall compared with Average

Country Summaries

Botswana

Good rains were received in most parts of the country, which led to an improvement in grazing conditions. The arable areas in the eastern parts of the country also received good rains to facilitate land preparation, planting and crop development in these areas. The government has been distributing agricultural inputs to increase farmers' access to seeds and fertilizer. The government has also been undertaking measures to control the spread of the foot and mouth disease that was detected earlier this year in the high cattle-production district of Ghanzi that borders with Namibia.

Lesotho

Reports from the country indicate that most parts of the country recorded good rains during the second dekad of November 2008. These rains were normal to above normal for most parts with the exception of the north-eastern and the southern-most areas where below average totals were recorded. Widespread planting is reportedly in progress with most farmers battling to plant before the end of the month. Most farmers started cultivation late and for some places like the highlands this can be described as late planting, and puts the maize and sorghum crops at risk of frost attack later in the season. The winter wheat crop is at maturing stage and its condition ranged from bad to fair.

Madagascar

Reports from the country suggest that steady rains have been received in most parts of the Island since the beginning of November. Some moderate showers were received in the northern and south-eastern parts of the country in the second dekad of the month. The main agricultural activities in the country include harvesting of the rice crop, land preparation and summer crop planting. Seed, fertilizer and manure were reportedly adequate in areas around Antananarivo.

Malawi

Light to moderate rains were received in some parts of central and southern Malawi, while dry conditions prevailed in the north. The rainfall season is generally expected to start in November in the south, and December in the north. Due to the sporadic nature of rainfall, the major activity continued to be land preparation and input acquisition, although some farmers managed to plant in the few areas where rainfall has been received in the southern and central areas. Vouchers for the government agricultural inputs subsidy program were being distributed to increase farmers' access to inputs.

Mozambique

Good rains were received in much of southern Mozambique between 11 and 20 November. These rains are likely to be interpreted as start of season rains, and will encourage many farmers to plant. More recent rainfall data, as well as forecasts, both indicate reduced rainfall has been received since 21 November, and that rainfall is also likely to be reduced in the next dekad.

South Africa

The northern, central and eastern parts of the country received some widespread significant showers in the second dekad of the month, covering the Free State, Limpopo, Kwazulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and North West provinces. Several areas of these provinces received more than 100 mm in the dekad. There were reports of widespread planting in the eastern and central parts of the country, and also some northern parts of the country. These areas have received good rains since late October and there should be enough soil moisture in the soil to support good germination. Reports from the northern parts indicate improvements in vegetation and pasture conditions.

Swaziland

Significant good rains were received in most parts of the country during the second dekad of November. This led to good germination of crops that had already been planted. The good rains in the previous dekad had resulted in a large increase in the ploughing and planting activities in the country, and the follow-up rains in this dekad were good for crop germination and development.

Tanzania

Little rainfall was received over most parts of Tanzania, except for the north-western areas, where light to moderate rains were received. This situation occurred after significant rains had been received over the majority of the bimodal rainfall areas located in the north of the country during the previous dekad. The dryness of the 2nd dekad represents a slightly erratic start to the rainfall season in the bimodal areas, and

this could have negative impacts if the dryness persists, particularly the potential failure of recently planted crops. In the unimodal rainfall areas (which cover the rest of the country except for the northern areas), the major activity continues to be land preparation, where the rainfall season normally starts from late November onwards.

Zambia

Significant above normal rains were received over most parts of Zambia in the second dekad of November. According to short term rainfall forecasts, these good rains are expected to continue into the coming dekads, thus signalling a good opportunity for planting and germination to take place in many areas.

Zimbabwe

Good rains were received throughout most parts of Zimbabwe except for the north-eastern areas. These rains were sufficient to allow planting in most areas. Input availability is a challenge to many farmers due to the shortages of seed and fertilizer in the country.