



REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME

agromet update



Rainfall, Vegetation and Crop Monitoring

Issue 02 dekad: 02 Month: November

Season: 2003/2004

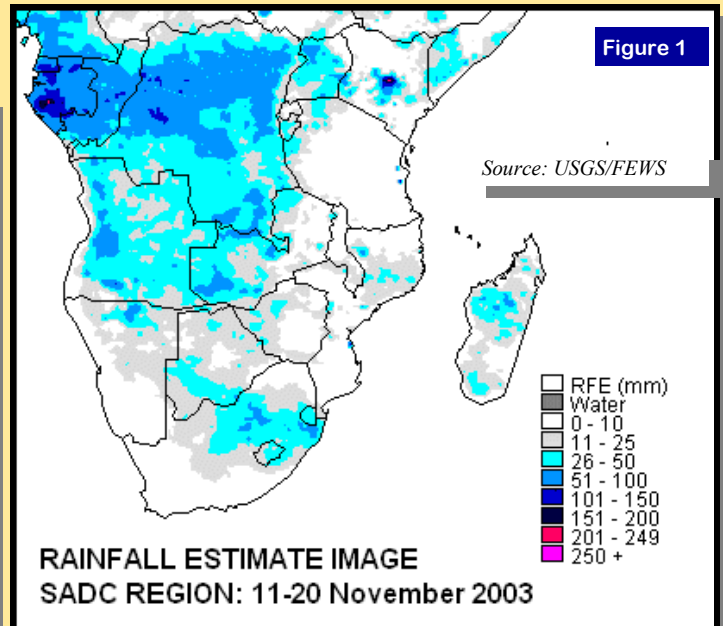
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Highlights

- Poor rainfall continues in November in the SADC region...
- Tanzania bi-modal and uni-modal rainfall not performing well in 2003-04 season...
- Namibian Government provides seed to communities affected by the drought...
- Agricultural Ministry launches the Targeted Input Programme (TIP) in Malawi...

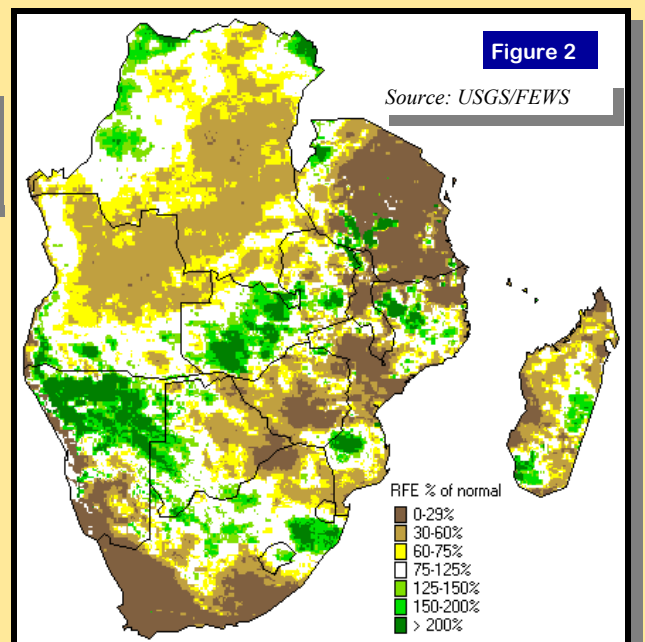
Rainfall performance during 2nd dekad of November 2003

In the previous Agromet Update, it was reported that the month of November was critical for the onset of the growing season rainfall. The rainfall estimate image (figure 1) suggests that the second dekad rainfall covered mostly the DRC, Angola, Zambia and parts of South Africa. The imagery also shows that the western half of the sub-region received either no rainfall or very little of less than 10mm. So far November, which is the mean start of the rains has been dry or with very little rainfall in Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and parts of Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa. By the end of November, it will become evident whether climatologically, the planting rains will have delayed. This will require enhanced monitoring of the season especially in the Emergency Operations (EMOP) countries in the region.



Percent rainfall received in the critical month of November 2003 only

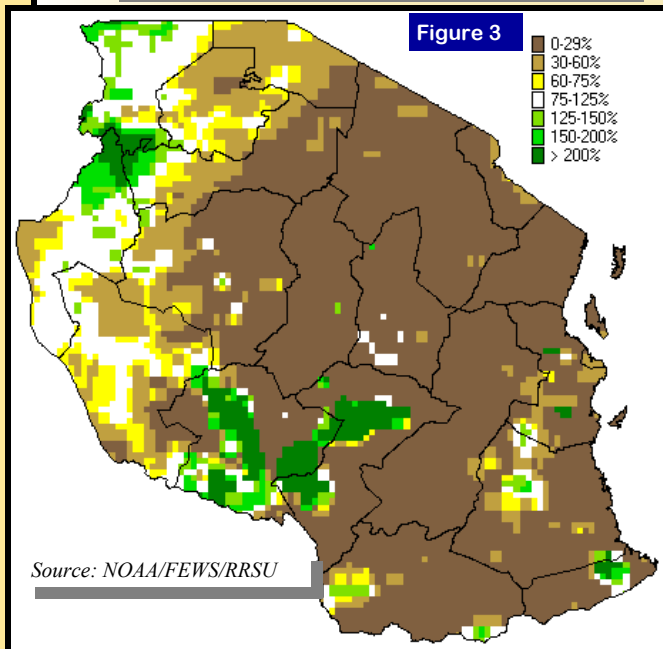
With respect to November rainfall, the region has received rainfall of varying magnitude in the countries. Analyzing climatological data using a threshold, most countries should be planting by now assuming all the inputs are available. However, figure 2, shows percentage rainfall received in the first two dekads of November 2003, with parts of the region (dark brown) having received less than 30% of their normal rainfall (worst scenario) and also less than 60% (light brown). The green portions indicate that they have received more than normal during these two dekads but this does not mean that they are doing better than other parts of the region. This is because the analysis is looking a small portion of the growing season.



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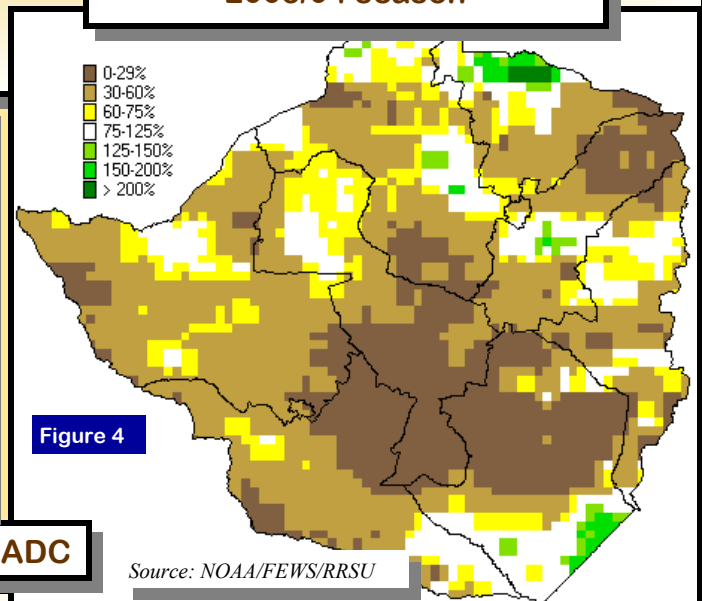
Tanzania November rainfall for 2003/04 season



Tanzania is currently receiving humanitarian assistance as a result of a failed crop in the previous season. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has made an appeal to donors for US \$17 million in food aid to support two million people make it through the 2003/04 season as they tend their current crops. Analysis shows that the current season appears to have a slow start. The country experiences bi-modal and uni-modal rainfall patterns. So far, the rainfall in both bi-modal and uni-modal rainfall areas has not performed very well. Analysis of November rainfall only (figure 3) shows that almost the entire country has received less than 30% of normal rainfall. This will affect both the preparation and the crop that has been planted for the current season. If the situation continues in the next couple of weeks, the humanitarian situation will be compounded. Planting in the uni-modal rainfall should strictly be under expert advice to avoid replanting as some farmers may plant when the conditions in terms of moisture availability is not sufficient.

The first two dekads of November 2003 have not been favorable for Zimbabwe. The country has been experiencing mostly dry conditions with isolated rainfall reported in some parts. Rainfall estimate analysis of November rainfall only (figure 4) suggests that central parts of the country covering Masvingo, Midlands and Matebeleland south received no more than 30% (dark brown) of normal rainfall. The light brown and yellow patches are under 60%. The season is critical for the country to produce sufficient grain as over 5 million people are currently receiving humanitarian assistance from the international community.

Zimbabwe November rainfall for 2003/04 season



Season Monitoring in other countries in SADC

Malawi

The onset of main rains is expected during November 2003 over the south and central areas, stretching into early December over some parts of northern Malawi. The pre-season rains which have so far occurred have prompted farmers to intensify land preparation ready for planting rains. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Food Security (MoAIFS) launched the Targeted Input Programme (TIP) under which 1.7 million farm families will be provided with farm inputs (seed and fertilizer) for planting 0.1 ha each.

Zambia

Zambia produced 1.2 million MT of maize during the 2002/03 farming season. However, food deficits are still affecting southern and western provinces. In southern province, sowing has taken place in a few areas of the province and germination of dry and early planted crops is generally good.

Mozambique

The southern part of the country has been experiencing poor rainfall for the last 3 dekads. The south normally has an earlier onset than the north by end of November. So far the rainfall has not been sufficient to support germination and sustain the new plants. Soil moisture is reaching very low levels as a result.

Namibia

Land preparation is in progress. The government is providing seed to communities who were adversely affected by the drought last season. Up to 20,000 households identified will be catered under this arrangement with seed vouchers that will enable them to cover a maximum of 3 hectares per household. This arrangement will cater for households in the north central Regions (Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto) and those in Kavango Region. The onset is yet to come.