FEWS NET
FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

EAST AFRICA Seasonal Monitor

June 5, 2017

March to May rains performed poorly over many areas of the Horn of Africa

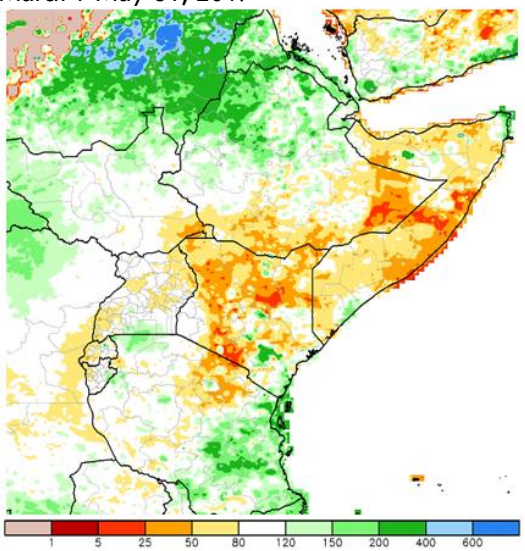
KEY MESSAGES

- Light rainfall occurred in much of the Horn of Africa during mid to late May. Overall, performance of the March to May seasonal rains was very poor in many southern and central areas of Somalia, southeastern Somalia, and northern/northeastern Kenya. In these areas, harvest prospects and regeneration of pasture and water resources are poorer than normal. In northern Belg-producing areas of Ethiopia, recent improvements in seasonal rainfall have improved cropping conditions.

- In western areas of East Africa, following an earlier than normal onset of rains and long dry spells in March, seasonal rains improved in April and May, contributing to improvements in crop conditions. Harvest prospects in many of these areas are near normal.

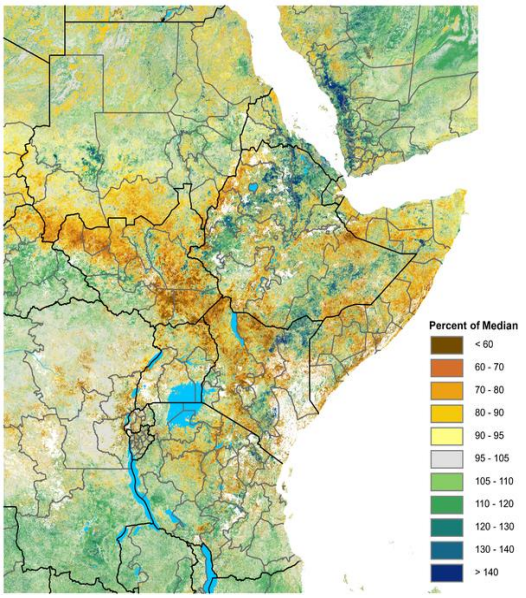
- Over the next two weeks, seasonal rainfall is expected to come to an end of the Horn of Africa, except in coastal strip areas, and increases in rainfall are expected in Sudan, western Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Seasonal rainfall is already moving further north, with an earlier than normal start of season in many areas of southern Sudan.

Figure 1. ARC2 seasonal rainfall estimate anomaly, percent of normal (1983-2009), March 1-May 31, 2017



Source: NOAA/NWS/CPC

Figure 2. eMODIS/NDVI percent of normal (2001-2010), May 11-20, 2017



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

SEASONAL PROGRESS

Since mid-May, seasonal rainfall has remained below average over many areas of the Horn of Africa, although increases were observed in localized areas of central Somalia and northern Ethiopia. Overall, March to May seasonal rainfall was significantly delayed by as a much as one month, unevenly distributed across time and space, and rainfall totals were less than 80 percent of average across large areas of Somalia, Kenya, southeastern Ethiopia, and parts of northern Tanzania (Figure 1). Meanwhile, seasonal rainfall totals were below average in localized areas between northeastern and southwestern Uganda, neighboring areas of western Rwanda, and Burundi, eastern DRC, and southeastern DRC.

Very poor seasonal performance in the Horn of Africa is leading to below-average harvest prospects in the marginal cropping areas of southeastern Kenya, southern Somalia, and southern *Belg*-cropping areas of Ethiopia. In southern Somalia and southeastern Kenya, maize crop conditions are generally good and in the early vegetative phase, but the forecast end of seasonal rains this month is likely to result in significantly reduced yields. Recent field assessments in Kenya and Somalia confirm this situation. Yields for other short-maturing crops, such as legumes, are nevertheless likely to be near average. Meanwhile, in main maize production areas of central Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi, crop production prospects are favorable following an earlier-than-normal onset and average to slightly above-average rainfall amounts from mid-April through May.

Please see http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/african_desk/cpc_intl/ and http://earlywarning.usgs.gov/?l=en for more information on remote sensing.

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Infestations of Fall Armyworm (FAW) remain a concern in Uganda, Tanzania, parts of western and southeastern Kenya, and parts of southern Ethiopia, and remain to be fully suppressed despite persistently heavy rains in April and May and control efforts by the various national governments through the use of pesticides, according to recent field assessments in affected cropping areas.

Vegetation conditions remain poorer than normal across broad areas of Somalia, northern and southern Kenya, northeastern Uganda, and southwestern and southeastern Ethiopia, according to eMODIS/NDVI (Figure 2) following very poor performance of March to May rainfall. In recent weeks, vegetation conditions have improved slightly in parts of northern and southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and northeastern Tanzania, and much of northern Ethiopia with increases in seasonal rainfall.

The following is a country-by-country update on recent seasonal progress to date:

- In **Ethiopia**, *Gu/Genna* seasonal rains in southern and southeastern areas were characterized by delayed onset, erratic distribution over time, and well below-average rainfall amounts. Late season rainfall between the end of April and early May helped to partially replenish surface water points in some woredas of Somali Region, Borena and Guji zones of Oromia, and South Omo in southern SNNPR. However, with minimal rainfall occurring in these areas since mid-May, these improvements are likely to be short-lived and resources to be depleted by early June, significantly limiting the duration and extent of improvements in livestock body conditions and productivity. In many southern *Belg*-producing areas of the country, below-average rainfall performance was punctuated by long-dry spells, and reduced yields are expected in lowland areas of SNNPR along the Rift Valley. Due to late planting, the green and dry *Belg* harvest in SNNPR is likely to be significantly delayed. However, in *Belg*-producing areas of northeastern Amhara and southern Tigray, significant improvements in rainfall performance in April and May has eliminated early season deficits and improved cropping prospects. Meanwhile, in western *Meher*-producing areas, early seasonal rainfall has been favorable for early planting of some crops.

- In **Somalia**, *Gu* seasonal rainfall performance has been broadly below average, ranging from seasonal rainfall totals less than 50 percent of normal in central Somalia to 50 to 80 percent of normal in southern and northern areas. In southern agropastoral areas, seasonal rainfall during May has nevertheless contributed to some improvements in rangeland resources and cropping conditions. Following near normal late-season performance in early May, mid-May was drier than normal, followed by another increase in rains again in late May. With forecast average *Hagaa* rains in southern Bay and coastal areas, most late-planted crops may reach full development. However, total production is still expected to be below average due to early season losses. Significantly below-average production is expected in agropastoral areas of Hiraan. Northern areas of the country have seen consistently near average rainfall since the beginning of May.

- In **Kenya,** the March to May "long" rains were significantly delayed, unevenly distributed, and well below average (25 -50 percent of average) across some pastoral and marginal agricultural areas of northern and southern Kenya. The worst-affected areas include Isiolo and the southern Rift Valley counties of Kajiado, parts of Narok, and Naivasha. Recent heavy rains in mid-May has caused flooding in Kilifi, Kwale, and Taita Taveta counties, destroying recently planted crops and resulting in livestock deaths. Crop production prospects are below normal in marginal agricultural areas of coastal and southeastern Kenya due to significantly delayed planting (mid- to late-April) and poor seasonal rainfall performance (50-80 percent of normal rainfall), with no indication that rainfall will persist into June, except in some coastal strip areas. Recent rainfall has contributed to marginal improvements in pasture and water availability, but these are expected to be short-lived due to overall poorer than normal regeneration of these resources.

- In **Tanzania,** late seasonal rains are likely to result in favorable crop production prospects for both *Msimu* and *Masika* seasons. There are early indication of average to slightly above average yield prospects in the country. However, crop yields are likely to be below average in bimodal areas near Mt. Kilimanjaro in northern Tanzania due to poor seasonal performance.

- In **Uganda,** March to May seasonal rainfall has generally been below average and unevenly distributed in northern and southwestern areas. Field reports suggest planting is significantly delayed in eastern and northern bimodal areas and in Karamoja, where green harvests are expected to be delayed by up to one month. Meanwhile, Fall Armyworm (FAW) has reportedly spread into 60 districts in Uganda. During a FEWS NET field visit to central, western, and eastern Uganda in May, about 30 percent of farmers in areas visited reported the presence of Fall Armyworm on their crops, primarily on maize, and stated that the pest had destroyed 10-30 percent of their crops. Harvest prospects are poorer than usual in northern areas due to a combination of poor seasonal progress and damage by Fall Armyworm. In central, western, and

southeastern areas, rainfall supported timely planting and many poor households are now consuming green harvests of maize and beans. The main harvest is expected to be on time in June/July, although harvest prospects are slightly poorer than normal due to some crop losses from Fall Armyworm.

- In **Sudan**, seasonal rains began early in mid-May in southern areas bordering South Sudan and western Ethiopia. Cropping conditions are currently good and planting has already begun.

- In **South Sudan**, April to June first season rainfall has been average in Western and Central Equatoria. In Eastern Equatoria, seasonal rainfall has improved in recent weeks and is expected to be generally sufficient to support planted crops. However, ongoing conflict has restricted many agricultural households' access to field and area planted is expected to be below average.

- In **Rwanda and Burundi,** harvests of Season B (February – May) beans and maize crops are underway and yields are reportedly near average, except in lowlands areas in Kirehe and Bugesera districts in Eastern Province and Rusizi District in Western Province in Rwanda, where yields are reportedly below average due to the combined effects of below-average rainfall and Fall Armyworm infestations.

- In **Yemen**, rainfall continued to be near to above average in many areas of central and western Yemen during mid- to late-May, with overall near-average rainfall totals for the March to May season. However, conflict continues to constrain household access to some agricultural areas and limits on imports are resulting in higher than normal prices for fuel, an important input for water pumps for irrigation.

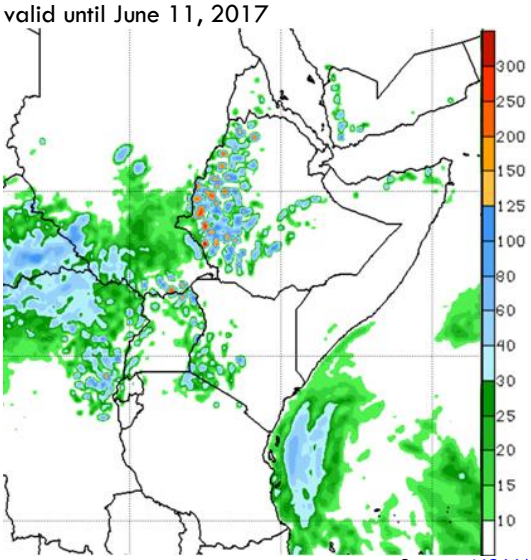
- In **Djibouti**, the *Diraac/Sugum* rains (March to May) have generally been average to slightly above average. Livestock body conditions have largely improved with recent favorable *Diraac* rains.

- In **eastern DRC**, season B (February – May) harvest prospects are near normal over northwestern areas of the country, but below-average yields are expected elsewhere due to poorer than usual seasonal performance.

FORECAST

The short- and medium-term rainfall forecast for early to mid-June indicates moderate to very heavy rains are likely to continue over western Ethiopia, southern Sudan, South Sudan, western Yemen, and along East Africa's coastal strip (Figure 1). Continued heavy to very heavy rainfall amounts (more than 125 mm) over western Ethiopia could result in flooding. As rainfall intensifies by mid-June over the Ethiopian highlands, the risk of downstream flooding in the Jubba and Shabelle riverine areas of southern Somalia also increases. High rainfall amounts are also forecast for Kenya's southern coastal areas and the northeastern coastal strip of Tanzania. Rainfall is expected to subside significantly over Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Somalia during the coming week, while much of Tanzania, eastern and northern Kenya are likely to remain seasonally dry in the coming months.

Figure 3. One-week GFS-Rainfall forecast (mm), valid until June 11, 2017



Source: NOAA/CPC