



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet-Update

2005/2006 Agricultural Season



Issue 03 Dekad: 01 Month: December Season: 2005-2006 Release date: 15-12-2005

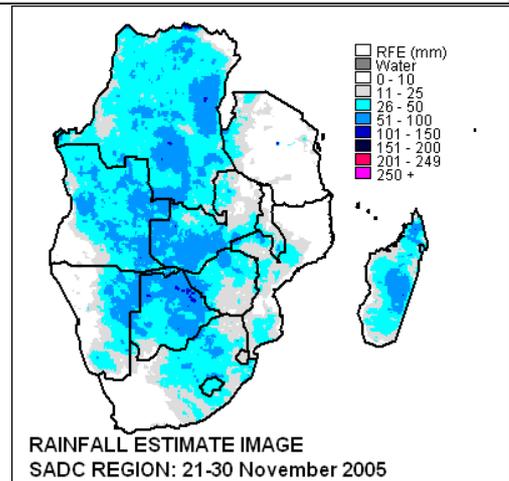
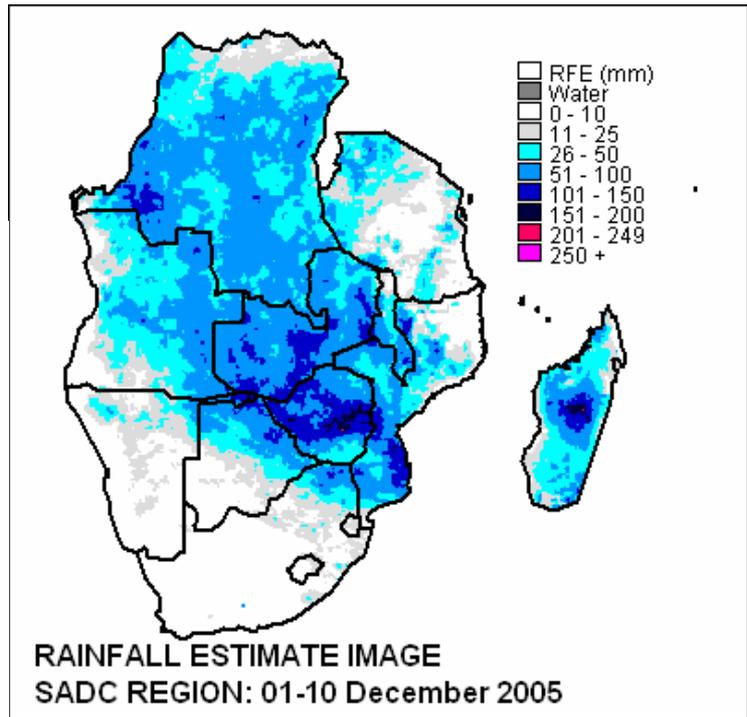
Highlights

- ❑ High rainfall received in most parts of the region...
- ❑ Land preparation and sowing continues in SADC...
- ❑ Tanzania continues to experience dry conditions...
- ❑ Swaziland receives less than 50% normal rainfall...

There was a huge increase in rainfall in the first Dekad of December 2005 in terms of amount as indicated by the satellite image (figure 1). In comparison to the previous Dekad (inset) the rainfall coverage is more less the same but the quantities have increased. The satellite imagery (figure 1) indicates that high rainfall was experienced in the central parts of the region covering Angola, the DRC, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar and parts of Namibia, Botswana and Malawi. The rest of the region had very low rainfall and in most cases no rainfall. The areas with low to no rainfall covered northern Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland and most of Tanzania. This is the third consecutive Dekad that Tanzania has been dry. This may affect agricultural activities causing concern in terms of agricultural production. Malawi received a good coverage that will improve the soil moisture condition.

Rainfall analysis from the beginning of November 2005 indicates that there is continuous improvement in rainfall amounts thereby improving the moisture condition which will allow a high germination percentage. Good germination increases the chances of a good harvest per unit area assuming the distribution of rainfall remains consistent as well as management practices are as recommended. The season presents a good picture in parts of the region where rainfall has been consistent so far.

Fig.1. Rainfall Performance for Dekad 1 of December 2005



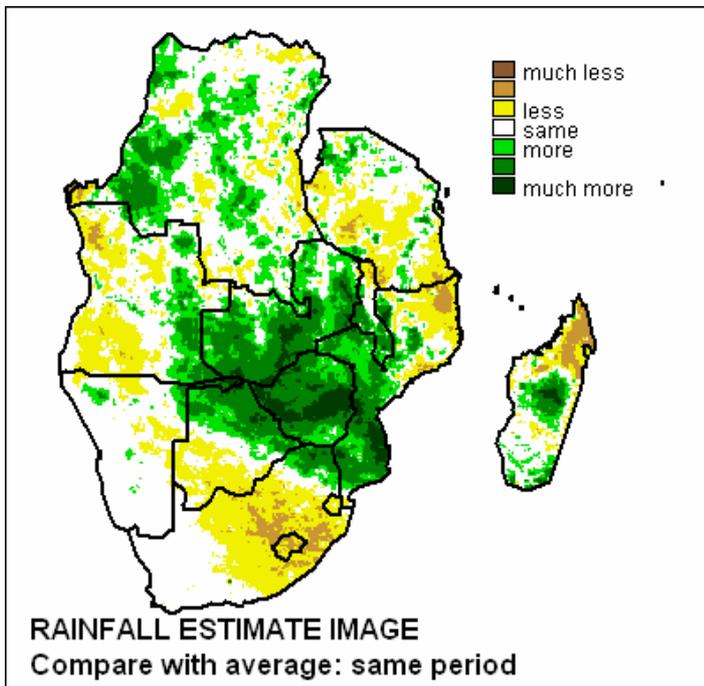
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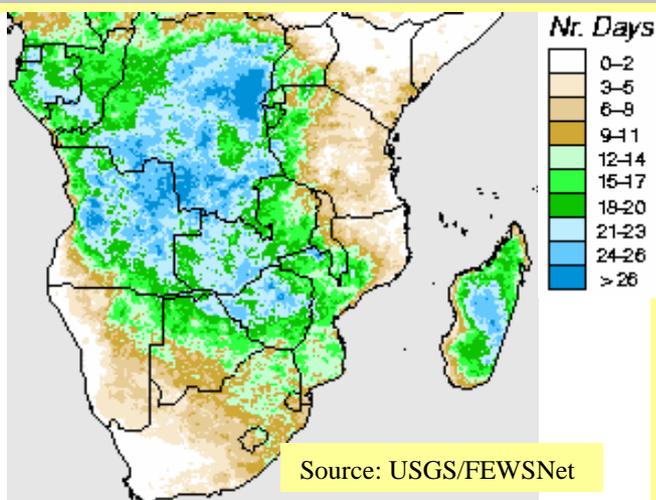


RAINFALL RECEIVED COMPARED TO AVERAGE OF SAME PERIOD



Monitoring of the agricultural season involves comparison of rainfall amounts that are received at a particular time with long term average to put it into context with respect to performance. Analysed satellite imagery indicates that from the rainfall received in the first Dekad of December, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique have received much more than they normally receive during the Dekad being reported. The DRC and Madagascar also have areas that received much more rainfall than they normally get. While very high rainfall has been recorded, parts of Angola, Tanzania and Mozambique received lower than normal. Countries with much less rainfall during the Dekad include South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. The high maize producing areas of South Africa also received less rainfall than normal but the good management of agricultural fields translates into high yields and production in the country.

NUMBER OF RAINY DAYS IN THE LAST 30 DAYS



ZIMBABWE The country received a lot rainfall during the dekad which was much more than normally received during the dekad. Reports indicate that agricultural activities such as land preparation, sowing and fertiliser application are progressing well.

MALAWI Most areas in the country experienced generally reduced rainfall amounts with poor distribution. During the dekad very few areas reported above normal rainfall amounts. As a result, agricultural activities continue to be weeding and land preparation in areas where sufficient rains for planting crops have been received. With about 5 million people receiving humanitarian aid, it is important that there is good production at the end of the year to break the cycle of deficits. So far the central and northern parts of the country which contribute significantly to grain have received below normal rainfall.

Rainy Days as of 13 Dec 2005

The distribution of rainfall is an important factor in agricultural production. The analysed image indicates that last 30 days has had many rainy days of up to 3 weeks. Areas with less rainy days include most of Tanzania, northern Malawi and Mozambique, parts of South Africa and Lesotho and Swaziland. These dry spells may affect agricultural production.

SWAZILAND The country received poor rainfall during the dekad of about 50% of what is normally received. A lot farmers have already put the seed in the ground and germination has taken place. It is hoped that these dry spells will not continue as yields may be affected.

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