



FOOD SECURITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agromet Update

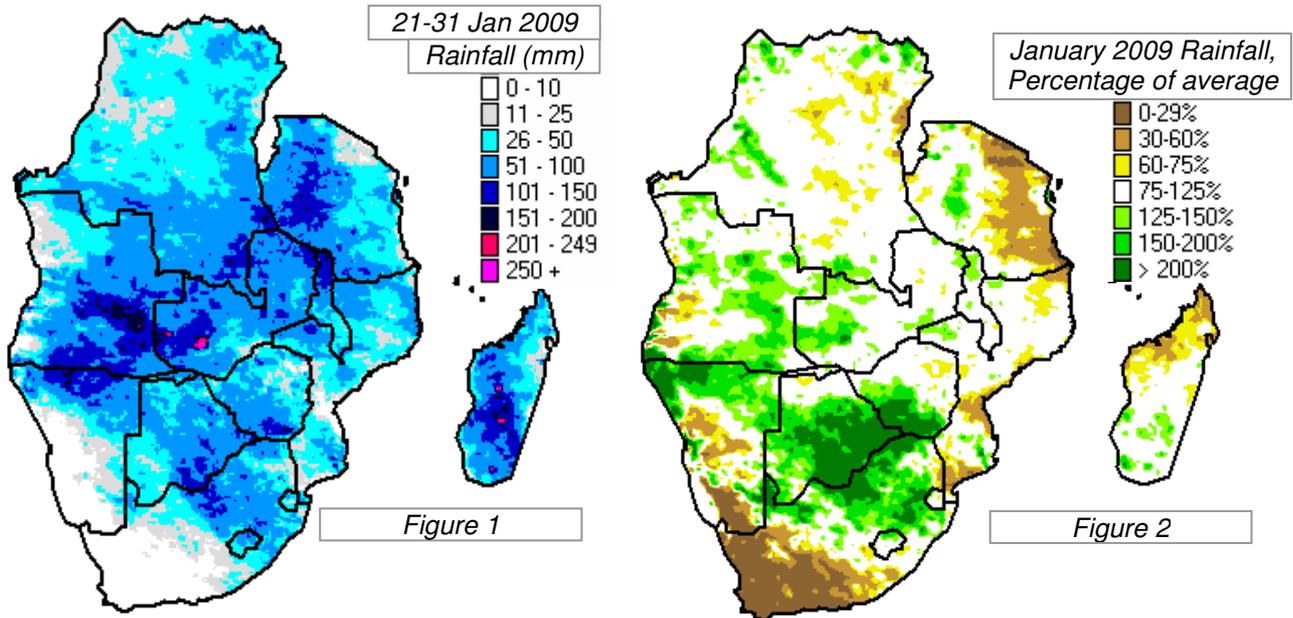


2008/2009 Agricultural Season

Issue 09 Period: January 21-31, 2009 Season: 2008-2009 Release date: 09-02-2009

Regional Overview

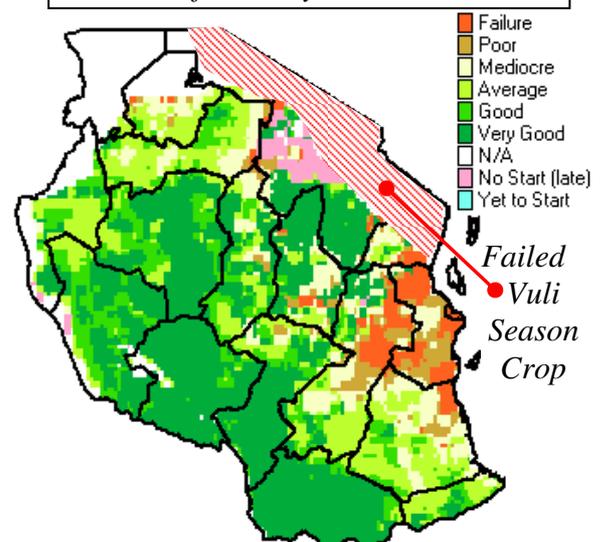
Rainfall Performance



Good rains covered most parts of the region in the third dekad of January 2009. The central parts received moderate to heavy rains during this period, with the heaviest falls being received in the western parts of Zambia and the south-eastern parts of Angola. Below average rains were received in the eastern parts - covering northern Zimbabwe, northern Mozambique, southern Malawi and northern Madagascar.

Above average January rainfall was witnessed in eastern Angola, Botswana, northern Namibia, northern South Africa, western Zambia, and southern Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, monthly rainfall was well below normal in eastern parts of Tanzania with the exception of a few isolated areas in the northern coast. Water balance models suggest that rainfall performance has generally been adequate to sustain a healthy maize crop in most parts of the region. A major exception is the northern and eastern parts of Tanzania where drought conditions are being experienced. The short-season (*Vuli*) crops largely failed and now the poor rainfall performance in the uni-modal rainfall areas threatens to destroy crops in eastern parts of the country. Reports from the country indicate that crops are wilting in these areas.

Tanzania: Modelled Crop condition as of January 31, 2009



Country Summaries

Angola

The central and eastern parts of the country (Bie, Moxico, Cuando Cubango provinces) witnessed good, above average rainfall in most of January, especially in the last dekad of the month. Meanwhile, there was below average monthly rainfall performance in the Huambo, Huila and Benguela provinces.

Lesotho

Normal to above normal rainfall totals were received in the country in the period under review, with the exception of the south-western parts which were relatively dry. The good rainfall improved soil moisture in most parts of the country but also caused water-logging in a few areas. Crops in the south-western parts of the country continued to experience water deficits. The summer crop ranged from vegetative to tasselling stages, and was reportedly in fair to good condition in most places. Most farmers were engaged in weeding.

Malawi

Light to moderate rains were received in most parts of the country in the period under review, with a few areas in the centre and north getting heavy rains, in excess of 200 mm. Several areas had rainfall totals above 100mm but there were a few areas where below average rains were received, especially in the lower Shire Valley and other southern parts. Overall there was good rainfall distribution with sunny intervals and this allowed farmers to engage in relevant farm management practices. Crop stages ranged from vegetative for the late planted crop to flowering and cob formation for the crop planted in mid-November. Good crop yields are anticipated if the good rainfall performance continues until the end of February.

Mozambique

Light to moderate rainfall was received in most parts of the country in the period under review. The rains were below average in most parts of the country with the exception of a few districts in the Inhambane province and eastern parts of the Gaza province. Reports from the country indicated that the threat from pest attack on crops was under control following pest control measures in the affected districts.

South Africa

Moderate to heavy rains were received in the northern, central and eastern provinces - covering North-West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State and the Limpopo provinces. Several areas of these provinces recorded rainfall totals in excess of 100mm in this period. The southern and western provinces were dry in most areas. The maize crop was reportedly in good condition in the main maize cropping areas of the country and had reached flowering stage.

Tanzania

Significant rains fell across much of Tanzania during the third dekad of January, excluding many of the bimodal areas in the northern parts of the country, as well as the eastern parts of the country, in the unimodal areas. The rains that were received in the western half of the country brought to an end the dryness that had prevailed over the last few weeks, and brought relief to crops there. However, in many eastern areas, the dryness continues, and crops in many areas are reported to be in very poor to moderate condition, with some crops wilting. The first (*Vuli*) rains performed very poorly, and have already resulted in a failed first-season crop.

Zambia

Moderate to heavy rainfall was recorded over most parts of Zambia. The main exception was in the southern to central parts of the country where relatively light rainfall was received. The maize crop is reported to have reached flowering to grain filling stages, and crops are reported to be in good condition in most parts of the country.

Zimbabwe

The southern parts of the country received moderate to heavy rains in the period under review. The Matebeleland South province and southern parts of Masvingo province had above average rainfall totals in this period. The northern half of the country witnessed lighter, below average rainfall amounts. January rainfall totals were below average for the north-eastern districts of the country, which are the most productive districts in terms of cereal crops. Overall, the rainfall performance since the start of the season has been satisfactory and farmers who had access to fertilisers should have good yields.