



REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME

agromet update



Rainfall, Vegetation and Crop Monitoring

Issue 01 dekad: 01 Month: November

Season: 2003/2004

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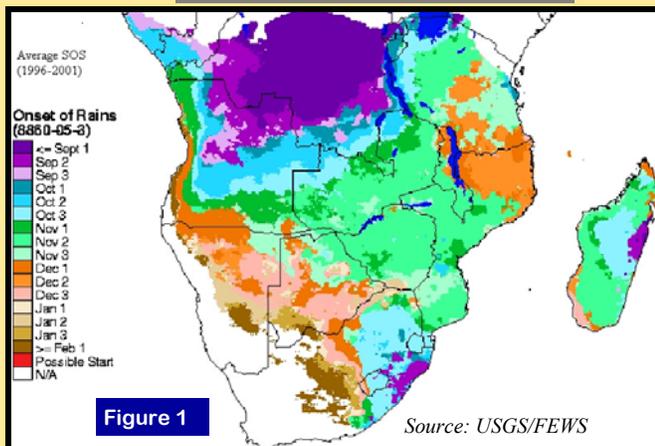
Highlights

- Month of November critical for onset of planting rainfall in the SADC region...
- Implications of a delayed onset of rainfall after November 2003...
- Inconsistent rainfall since onset in some parts of SADC affect crop performance ...
- Input deficits reported in some member states...

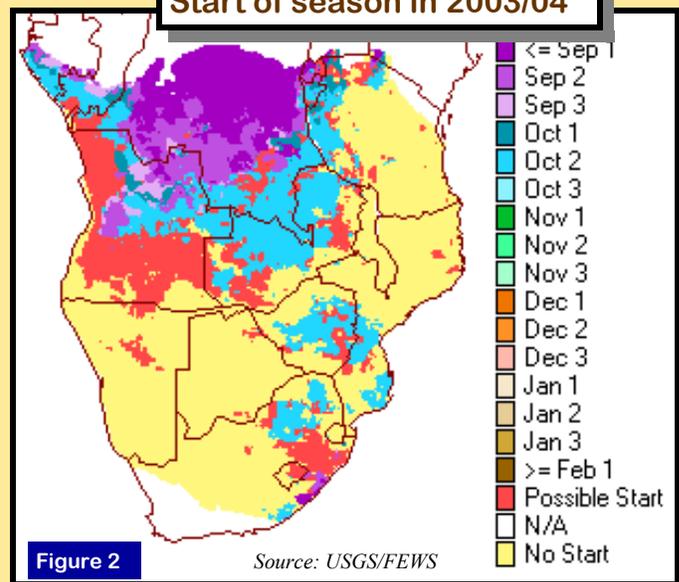
November critical for onset of planting rainfall in SADC

Based on experience and analysis of historical daily rainfall in the SADC region and a scientifically accepted threshold, the growing season normally starts in September in the northern and parts of the south-western parts of the region. The onset eventually engulfs the central parts of the SADC region while moving to the south (figure 1). Until the first dekad of November 2003 (figure 2), only parts of DRC, Angola, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe have satisfied the criteria. Most of the region has not satisfied this criteria and therefore, the growing season has not started. Figure 3 shows the start of season anomaly with parts of the region having an early start (DRC, Angola, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and other parts having a late start of up to 3 weeks. However, the overall scenario is that of the season having not started in most parts of the region.

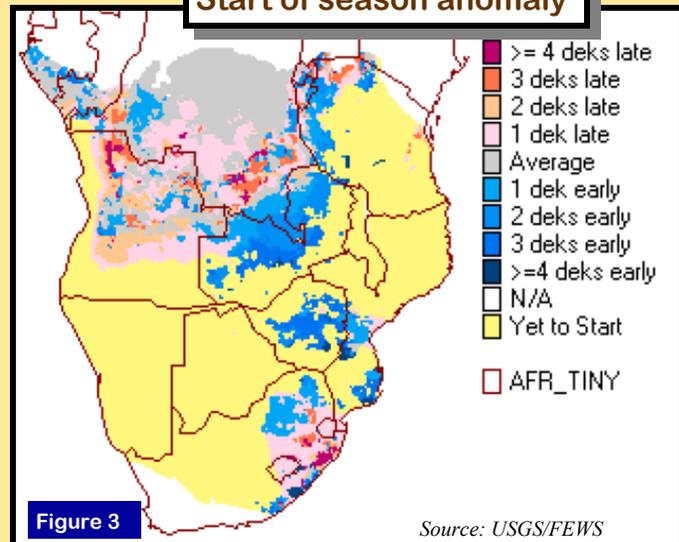
Average start of season



Start of season in 2003/04



Start of season anomaly



Implications of a delayed onset after November 2003

Maize crop varieties have specific maturity periods and most of the varieties grown in southern Africa have a maturity period ranging from 90-140 days. These varieties are suitable for particular agro-ecological zones that provide suitable climatic conditions to mature. The month of November is critical as delayed onset will impact on the length of the growing season and therefore these varieties may not perform well due to insufficient rainfall. Research had also shown that delay in planting has implications on the yield obtained. The rainfall at the end of November will determine the food security situation in 2003/04.

Information on seed availability SADC for 2003/04

Seed is considered to be the starting point in any agricultural production. Information on seed availability can be used to estimate possible hectares to be planted and ultimately, the production assuming the mean yield per hectare is known for a particular area. The SADC Seed Security Network collates information on seed from the Seed Focal Points and seed companies in the SADC Member states. The information collected is mainly from the formal circles. The information in table below estimates the area that may be planted in the 2003/04 growing season using available/demand seed.

Source: SADC Seed Network

Maize seed production during the last growing season (2002/03) in tonnes

Country	Available	Demand	Surplus/Deficit	ha to be covered by available seed
Angola	-	-	-	-
Botswana	874	1748	-874	34960
DRC	-	-	-	-
Malawi	14815	9878	4937	395120
Mozambique	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	-	-
South Africa	31000	28000	3000	1120000
Tanzania	-	-	-	-
Namibia	17	200	-183	680
Zambia	17712	12500	5212	500000
Zimbabwe	23000	60000	-37000	920000

*Malawi, Zambia & Zimbabwe - includes Open Pollinated Varieties (OPV) and Hybrids

*These figures change as demand increases and satisfied by imports

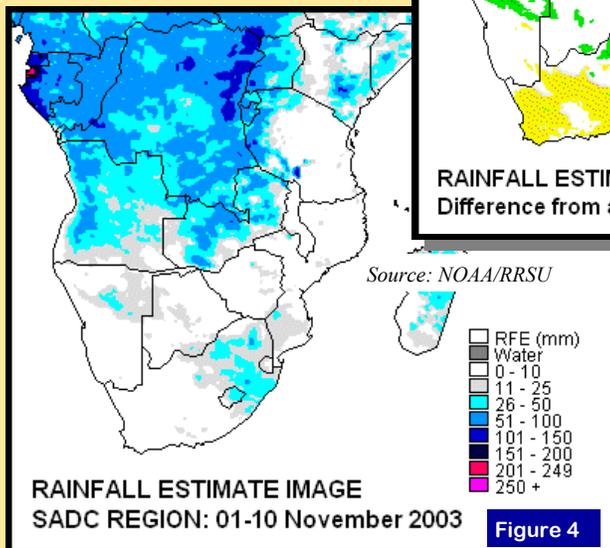
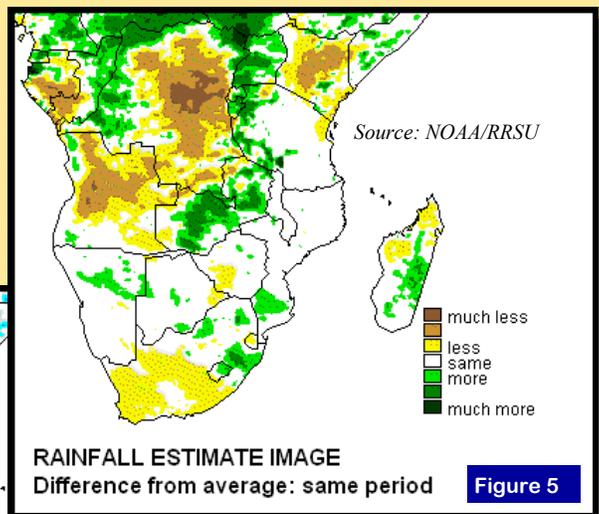
SADC land preparation

In many cropping areas in the region, farmers have continued with preparation and acquisition of farm inputs, such as seed and fertilizer, getting ready for planting when sufficient rains come. However, in some countries, inputs have been reported to be in short supply as well as out of reach as a result of high costs.

01-10 November 2003 rainfall performance

During the first dekad of November 2003, significant rainfall was confined to the northern parts of the region covering mainly the DRC, Angola, eastern Tanzania and Zambia. Low rainfall was also observed in the south, covering South Africa and Lesotho. The rest of the sub-continent covering Namibia, Botswana, most of Tanzania, Mozambique, Swaziland and parts of Lesotho were either dry or with minimal rainfall (figure 4).

The difference image depicts the rainfall situation with respect to average. The scenario is that parts of DRC, Angola, South Africa and Swaziland have received less than average at this time of the year (figure 5). However, this situation is normal considering that most of the areas experience the onset of the rainy season by end of November. This is confirmed by figure 1, which shows the mean onset of rainfall.



South African Yield

Using Ceres growth simulation model Enviro Vision of South Africa estimates that the most probable RSA crop production for 2003/04 is between 7.476 and 7.743 million tons.