



GREATER HORN OF AFRICA (GHA) FOOD SECURITY BULLETIN

Despite heavy rains in April, the delayed onset of the season over the equatorial sector of the Greater Horn of Africa has raised concerns for the food security outlook...

Summary

Extensive rains in April over parts of the equatorial sector of the Greater Horn of Africa marked the start of the March-May cropping season, after a delay of more than a month over key agricultural areas. However, drier than normal conditions continue in Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania due to the below normal performance of the seasonal rains. The production prospects are unfavorable as the delay of the onset of the season implies potential agricultural production losses, particularly in areas where the production season normally ends in May.

April rains have eased the long-term dryness and improved pasture conditions and water availability, but could cause localized flooding in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

The DMC-N has forecast a normal to below rainfall over GHA in May, especially over the eastern sector of the GHA. Coupled with the current poor performance of the rains, the implications for crop production in agricultural productive areas are unfavorable.

The extensive and moderate to heavy rains in April over most of the equatorial sector of the Greater Horn of Africa have marked the start of the delayed March-May cropping season. The delay of the onset of the season by more than a month (Figure 1) over key agricultural areas implies potential agricultural production losses, especially in areas, which normally end the season in May. Already, there are concerns of poor crop production in the northern and Lake Victoria areas in Tanzania, southwestern Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda. Although late planting occurred in Kenya, the good rains received in the last week of April could improve harvest prospects in the key agricultural productive areas.

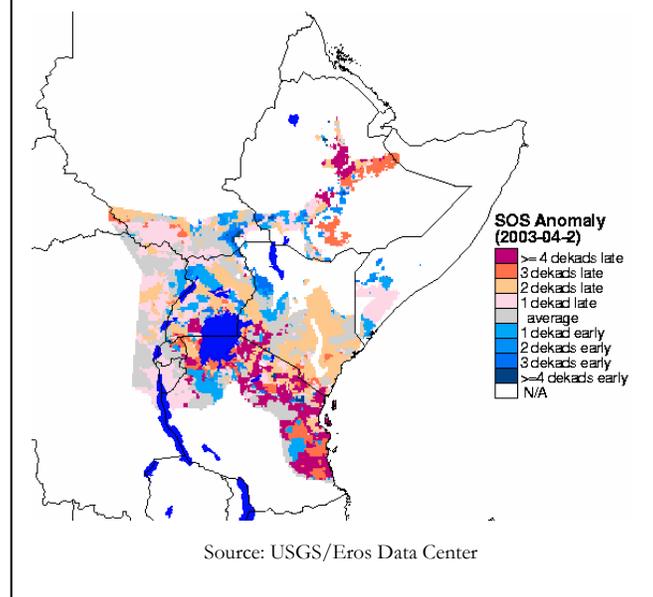
The intensity of the rains since mid April has caused localized flooding in the western and Nyanza Provinces in Kenya and the lower Juba and Shabelle River basins. In Kenya, flooding has caused loss of life and property. Forecasts of additional heavy rains could lead to widespread flooding in parts of Ethiopian, Kenya and Somalia.

Overall, these rains will ease the long-term dryness, which should benefit pastoral communities by improving pasture conditions and water availability, particularly among pastoralists in Ethiopia, who have suffered consecutive severe droughts in the past three years.

Although the recent seasonal forecast updates by the Drought Monitoring Centre-Nairobi (DMC-N) indicates that the rains are likely to continue into May, large areas in the region are expected to experience below normal rainfall totals, especially in parts of Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia.

Continuing drier than normal conditions in the unimodal (November-April) rainfall season areas in central and southern Tanzania (see Figure 2) have caused crops to wilt, seriously reducing harvest prospects. Most of these areas have received less than 50 percent of the normal rainfall during March and April. Both the early and late-planted crops have been affected to varying degrees. In some areas, replanting is not possible, as the season is already well advanced. In areas where planting of short-cycle crops was possible, there has been insufficient soil moisture to support crop growth. Consequently, a significant production shortfall is anticipated this season in Tanzania. The deficit in production will have an effect on the domestic food availability and access. It will also limit the cereals trade with neighboring southern Africa countries, which during the recent past have benefited from importing surplus cereals, particularly maize, from Tanzania.

Figure 1: Start of the Season anomaly map as of 20 April 2003

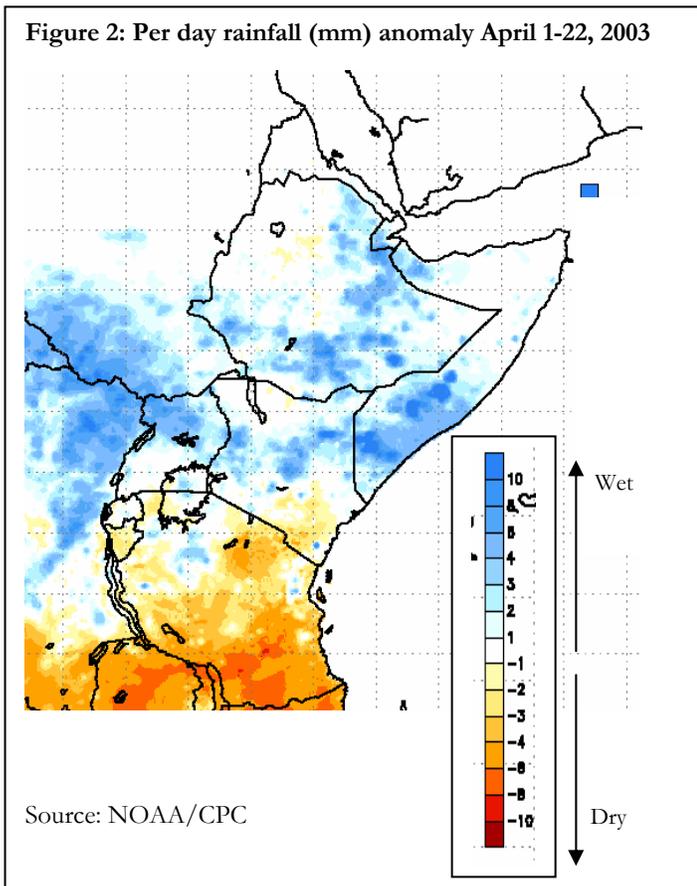


Regional Overview (GHA) – Factors Affecting Food Availability and Access

Agro-climatic Conditions

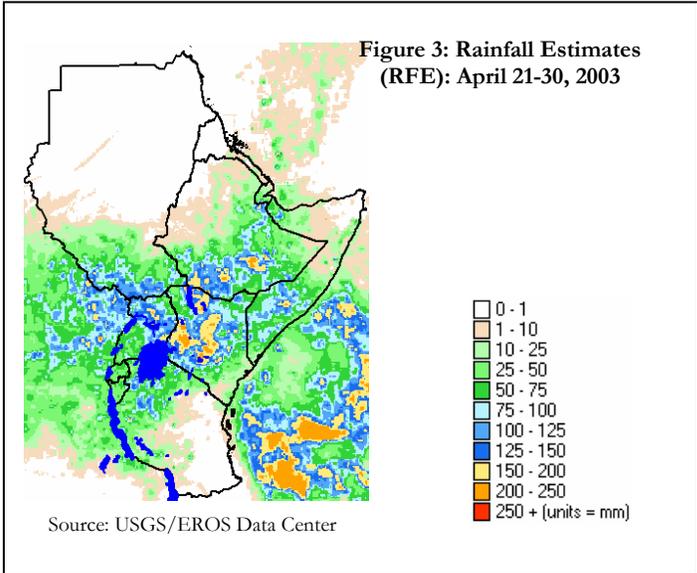
The month of April is the peak of the March-May seasonal rains in the equatorial sector of the GHA. However, the season started late with much of the heavy rains occurring in mid April. Although some areas received widespread rainfall in April, others, particularly much of Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania, are still in critical need (Figure 2). The overall performance of these rains could be described as being too late for some crop growing zones. However, the situation has now significantly improved in areas to the north of the equator, following moderate to very heavy rains in southern Somalia, southern and eastern Ethiopia, southern Sudan, and northern Uganda and much of Kenya.

Figure 2: Per day rainfall (mm) anomaly April 1-22, 2003



The satellite derived rainfall estimates (RFE) in Figure 3 illustrate widespread rainfall over the equatorial GHA during the last 10 days of April. A larger area of GHA received more than 75 of cumulative rainfall during this period.

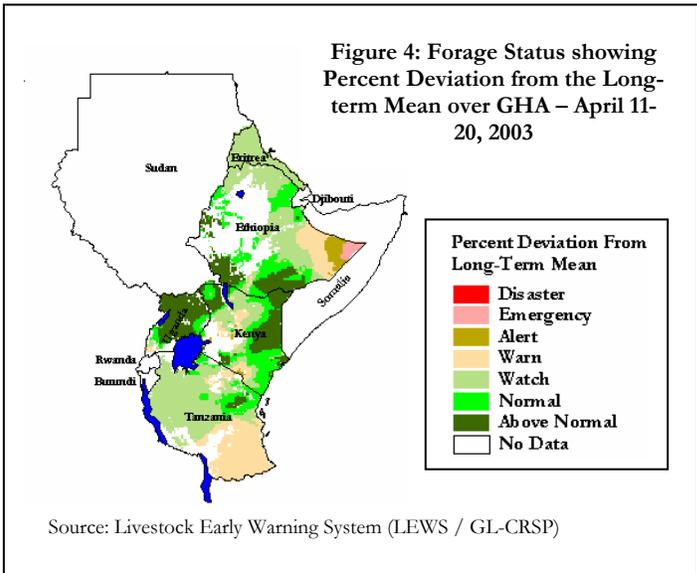
Ethiopia, which suffered severe droughts in 2001/2, is presently receiving above normal rainfall, especially over the eastern half of the country. The rains are expected to replenish the now scarce water resources and pasture in some parts of western and central Afar and Somali Regions in Ethiopia.



Forage Conditions

Figure 4, provides an overview of the forage conditions in pastoral areas of the GHA region as provided by the Livestock Early Warning System (LEWS). While some parts in the region are showing improvement in forage conditions, others are hard hit by the prolonged drought. Areas with high risks of deteriorating forage conditions are southeastern Ethiopia, parts of southern and northern Rift Valley of Kenya and northern Tanzania. Most of Uganda, eastern and northeastern Kenya and southern Ethiopia are showing above normal forage conditions. The Afar Region, which had experienced prolonged drought since last year is showing forage improvement. The LEWS products do not cover Burundi, Djibouti, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan.

Vegetation conditions in most of these countries should improve following receiving heavy rains towards the end of April.



Crop Pests During March 2003

Most of GHA countries remained free of desert locust outbreaks except scattered mature adults of low density reported from Sudan in areas around Tomala, Geramai, Kashomgabatit and Wadi Oko. No armyworm outbreaks were reported during March.

The Desert Locust Control Organization of East and Central Africa (DLCO) continued its quelea control operation in Kilimanjaro, Arusha and Singida Regions in Tanzania with an estimated mortality of 75-98 percent of 12.2 million roosters. Arial spraying operation continued in Mbeya, Tabora, Dodoma and Morogoro Regions where outbreaks have been reported.

Food Security Conditions by Country

Burundi

According to the *March 2003 Bulletin of the Early Warning and Monitoring of Food Security (SAP-SSA) System for Burundi*, civil war is the main factor currently driving the Burundian population towards food insecurity. The war intensified in March with armed attacks across much of the country. Figure 5 illustrates population movements caused by civil insecurity. Looting especially of livestock is taking place with rebel incursions. This has forced livestock owners to sell their animals in large numbers, resulting in reduced prices. In some areas, the price of goats has decreased by 30 percent in the last 3 months.

Figure 5: Population Movements in Burundi



Source World Food Program / FEWS NET Kigali, Rwanda

Harvest prospects for the February-June 2003 crops are unfavorable, aggravated by the month late onset of the season and insufficient and erratic rainfall, especially in the northern and eastern areas of the country. Due to late planting, the young beans and sorghum will fail to mature unless rains last until mid-May. Hailstones damaged crops in some areas affecting over 10,000 households in various parts of the country.

The population affected by both a poor harvest from the January-February crops and currently poor rainfall conditions is resorting to migration in search of labor opportunities. An estimated 500

people from Bugabira District in Karundo Province, in the north of the country, have crossed to neighboring districts of Rwanda in search of farm employment in March 2003 alone.

On the humanitarian side, the FAO Emergency Coordination Project has distributed bean seeds to about 269,525 households, while WFP has supplied seed protection rations to 101,028 households. Given the extent of needs, WFP has made an emergency appeal for 16,000 MT of food aid for a targeted 1.2 million population in the country until the June harvest.

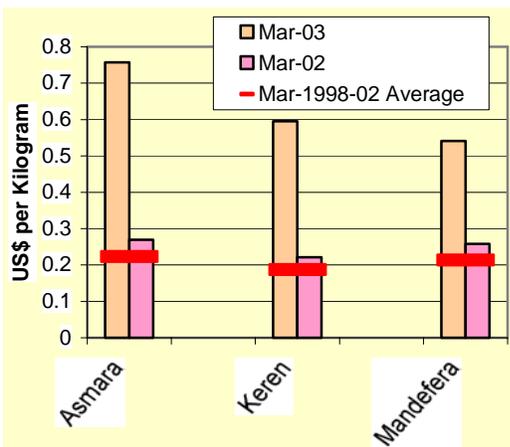
Eritrea

Prospects for recovery from drought-induced food insecurity for the majority of households in the country appear poor following the mediocre performance of the October-February (*Babri*) rainfall season and a false start of the March-May (*Azmera*) season. The *Babri* season rains were insufficient for adequate pasture regeneration and water for domestic use, livestock and irrigation, particularly in the Northern and Southern Red Sea Zones. The March-May (*Azmera*) season rainfall has also started poorly. Most of the country remained dry or received less than 20 percent of normal rainfall for the period of March through April 20. Localized showers of 80-150 percent of normal fell over the Southern Red Sea, central Debub and southeastern Gash Barka. The outlook for May forecasts near to below normal rainfall over much of Eritrea, implying poor production prospects for the *Azmera* season.

According to the March *Monthly Food Outlook* of the National Food Information System (NFIS) of Eritrea, about 18,660 MT of food aid was distributed to 1.47 million people in March and a similar number will receive relief food in April. The emergency food balance stood at 42,755 MT, enough for two and half months. However, food aid is needed until at least October 2003, when harvests from the major June-October (*Kremti*) season are expected. This means that additional food aid pledges are urgently needed. About 13,000 MT of emergency seeds are needed before June 2003 for the drought-affected farmers. By the end of March, only 4,900 MT had been pledged.

Food access for market dependent households remains problematic as food prices are still very high, compared to both 2002 and the five-year (1998-2002) average. March 2003 sorghum prices were higher than March 2002 prices by 92 percent in Asmara, 83 percent in Keren and 43 percent in Mendefera respectively. Compared to the five-year averages, March 2003 sorghum prices rose by 131 percent, in Asmara, 116 percent in Keren and 93 percent in Mendefera (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Sorghum Prices in Reference Markets in Eritrea



Source of Data: Grain Market Board, Asmara

Ethiopia

Despite encouraging donor responses, needs have surpassed available resources and the humanitarian situation is worsening in many areas. According to the World Food Program (WFP), higher delivery costs have reduced the food value of donor pledges and long delivery times have slowed down arrivals. Only 73 percent of the 2003 cereal requirements and 53 percent of the supplementary blended food requirements have been pledged so far.

The supplementary food and the cereal pipelines are secure through May and July, respectively. These pipeline scenarios are based on meeting the needs of the target population of 11.3 million and leave a shortfall of 335,000 MT between April and December. Yet, according to the results of the current multi-agency assessment, another 1.2 million people will require food aid between May and July, for a total of 12.6 million.

Although the March-May (*belg*) season rains started late with poor distribution, their performance has improved in April, and production prospects are better compared to the 2002 *belg* season. With the onset of the season, demand for emergency seeds has increased from drought-affected farmers. Although the emergency seed distributions by the Ministry of Agriculture are ongoing, a seed shortfall remains in many drought-stricken areas. Urgent distributions are needed as the time for planting is running out.

Kenya

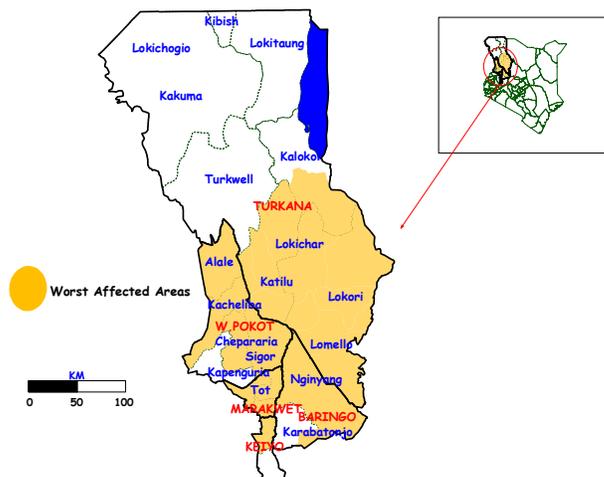
The 2003 long rains began towards the end of March, a month late in southern Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces. Rainfall has resumed in all areas of the country after a three week hiatus soon after the initial onset. Crop yields have been adversely affected by that interruption, particularly in Eastern,

Central and Coast Provinces, where the season is characteristically shorter than in other arable areas. In addition, poor rains recorded in northwestern pastoral districts had worsened the already high food insecurity of pastoralists in the hardest hit areas of West Pokot, Baringo, Marakwet, Keiyo and southern Turkana. However, good continuing rains after mid April should improve the availability of pasture and water, reviving pastoralists' hopes for improvement in their food security situation.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development predicts that the delayed onset of the season, coupled with erratic rainfall, will affect national maize output that normally comes from the early supplying areas of southwestern Kenya. This will significantly tighten maize availability, particularly between July and September 2003. Subsequently, maize imports may become necessary. The magnitude of imports will be ascertained in May when the seasonal outcome of the long-rains becomes clearer.

The mounting food insecurity which began in March, among the pastoralists in northwestern Kenya (West Pokot, Baringo and southern Turkana Districts (Figure 7) is of great concern.

Figure 7: Pastoral Areas Facing High Food Insecurity



Source: Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG)

The Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) reports increased livestock raids, in addition to successive and prolonged droughts have significantly undermined pastoral food security, livelihoods and recovery prospects. Consequently, it is estimated that 508,000 or 36 percent of 1.4 million people, the population in these districts, are food insecure.

Although the Office of the President's Relief and Rehabilitation Department has distributed relief food to the affected population, KFSSG has emphasized that food insecurity in these and other districts could be reversed through a multi-sectoral approach that includes institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanisms, drought mitigation and poverty reduction initiatives.

Rwanda

The food security situation in most of Rwanda is satisfactory until the next expected harvest in June 2003. However, households in the low altitude areas of eastern Rwanda (Bugesera Region, southern Kigali Rural Province, and parts of Kibungo and Umutara Provinces) could experience high levels of food insecurity beginning in June 2003. In these areas, the 2002/03 cropping season had started late. Rainfall has so far been poor and erratic, consequently delaying bean planting and causing crops to wilt, particularly sorghum. Since households in these areas may not be able to cope using traditional strategies such as off-farm employment and petty trade, a food needs assessment will be necessary after June/July to determine required interventions.

The unfavorable harvest prospects this year are raising concerns over food access for market-dependent households. Markets supplies have declined resulting in price increase. In Butare market (located in one of the most chronically food insecure provinces in the country), March prices of sweet potatoes and bananas, the two main staples, were 83 percent and 33 percent, respectively, higher than their three-year (2000-2002) averages. Prices of beans, another main staple, increased only moderately. This must have led many poor families to reduce food consumption or expenditures on other essential household items.

Somalia

The mid March-July (*Gii*) season rains started late in April after a delay of more than three weeks. The cumulative rainfall for March 2003 to mid April was much below normal over most of the agricultural and pastoral areas. Field reports indicate that although some crop sowing started with the March rains in the Lower Juba Valley, the prolonged dryness until mid April caused poor crop growing conditions and pasture establishment. Heavy rains beginning mid April, while improving pasture and water conditions have caused flooding in the lower Juba and Shabelle river basins leading to crop and asset losses, and other humanitarian problems such as displacement and increased incidences of water-borne diseases.

Preliminary results of the nutrition survey undertaken in early February 2003 in Hargeisa indicate a disappointing lack of improvement in nutrition rates among the under-fives, amongst returnee/resettlement/IDP since the last survey in June 2001. In addition, nutrition assessments in Gedo, confirm continuing high levels of malnutrition.

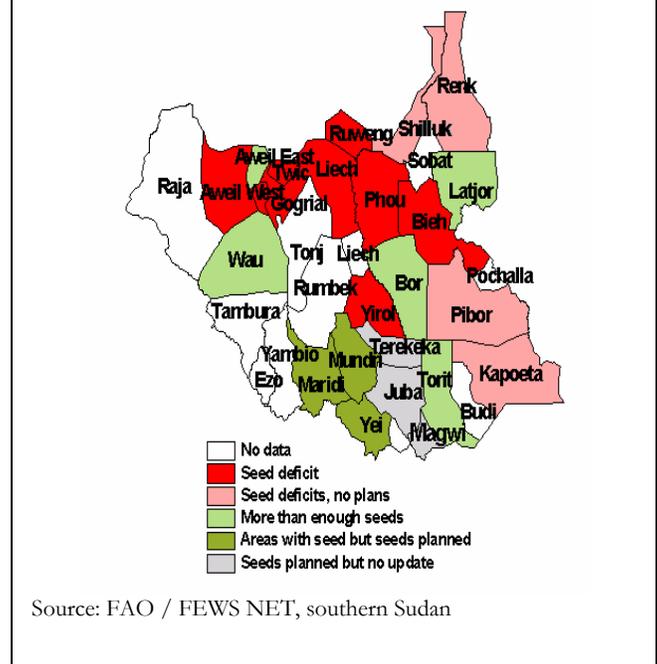
In March humanitarian agencies distributed approximately 1,722 MT of relief food aid in Somalia (Somaliland, Puntland and southern Somalia Regions) – due to the lingering effects of drought and longer-term food insecurity stemming from the poor October-December 2002 (*Deyr*) crop production and civil insecurity. Nearly half of this volume (812 MT) was distributed by WFP and the rest was by CARE.

Sudan

More than 55,000 MT of food aid is required between April and August to meet the needs of the food insecure households. This amount is three times above the requirements of January to March 2003 and higher than the last three years. Although the pipeline for cereals is adequate for this period, shortages of pulses, oil and beans are most likely. WFP is exploring how to improve the pipeline of non-cereal food items.

Current seed distribution plans for the 2003 May-September cropping season indicate that while some areas will get more than their planting needs, others will have shortages (Figure 8). Seeds are needed before the end of May for planting in June. Late distributions will delay planting, reduce harvest prospects and heighten food insecurity in the coming year, particularly if rainfall during the season is poor.

Figure 8: Status of Seed Needs after Planned Distributions

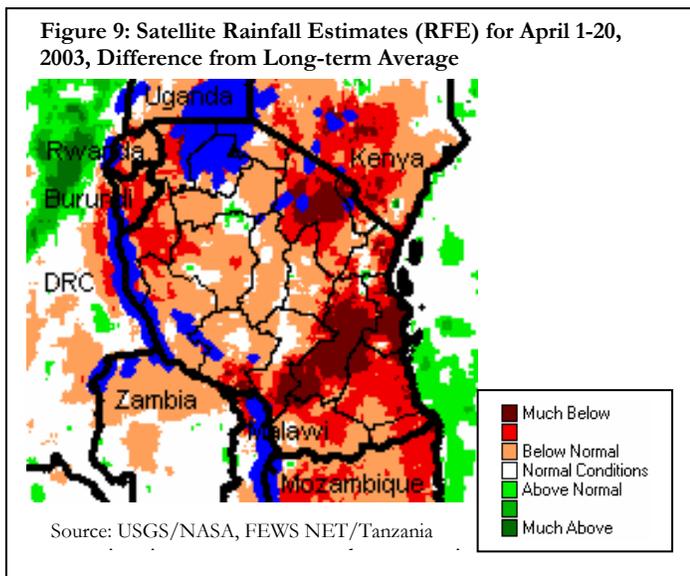


Livestock conditions are generally fair in most parts of Southern Sudan. However, areas of most concern are the southern and central parts of Liech, which are besieged by the aftermaths of the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak and cattle raiding. Although the Foot and Mouth disease has been controlled, the consequences associated with the disease are placing increased demands on vaccinations. There are also significant reductions in milk supply among the livestock-keeping households. At present, there are also suspected cases of black quarter disease, and this will place an additional demand for vaccinations.

In addition, recent cattle raids between the Nuer and Dinka in central Liech have increased tensions between the two ethnic groups. This could prevent the IDPs from returning home to cultivate during the May-September season. Although cattle raiding had stopped for four years since signing of a peace agreement between the two ethnic groups in 1999, the recent raiding could threaten this peace and food security of the 60 percent of households owning livestock in these areas.

Tanzania

Unusual dryness continued in April in several parts of the country. The satellite rainfall estimate (RFE) (Figure 9), shows that rainfall was below, to much below normal in northeastern, northwestern and southern Tanzania during April 1-20. This situation has resulted in looming declines in harvests in the 2002/03 production year and cereal availability in the 2003/04 consumption year. However, the earlier rainfall received in March improved water and pasture availability in most parts of the country thus favoring livestock growth and health.



During May/June, the Food Security Information Team (composed of staff from government and development partners) will be conducting assessments to quantify the production declines in the country. The government of Tanzania has already completed plans to collaborate with development partners and private traders to offset gaps in food production and requirements, with necessary imports.

Due to anticipated food shortages in the coming June-May consumption year, food prices, particularly of maize, have started to rise on most markets. By mid April, average maize prices were above March prices by 24-36 percent and 11-21 percent in central and northern Tanzania respectively. On the Lake Victoria markets, mid April maize prices rose by 1-15 percent and in the southern highlands, the increase was 9-15 percent.

The price increases are unusual because normally around April, harvests from the short rains (*vuli*) in January/February improve food supplies, and anticipated harvests of seasonal rains (*msimu*) crops, which begin in May, stimulate farmers and traders to dispose the previous year's stocks, stabilizing supplies and prices. This year, the performance of crops during the *vuli* and the *musimu* rains was poor, while the delayed onset and forecast of poor performance of the March-May long rains (*masika*) in the bimodal rainfall areas have reduced supplies of maize to markets.

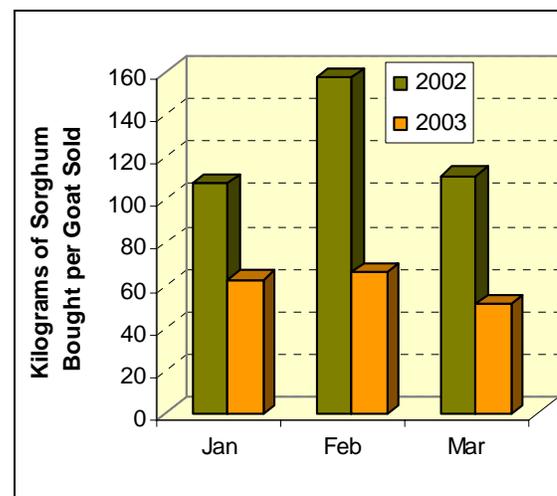
Uganda

The current food availability and access is adequate for most households in the country. However, food insecurity continues to be high among households in northern Uganda (Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts) due to civil insecurity. Nearly 800,000 people are internally displaced in these areas and are on WFP rations.

Poor harvests from the 2002 single season in Karamoja Region, northeastern Uganda, have left resource poor households unable to meet their full consumption requirements. According to an October/November 2002 WFP Emergency Food Needs Assessment (EFNA), about 59,000 households (or 49 percent of all households in Karamoja Region) require 10,143 MT of food aid between January and June 2003. Already, the agency is providing 5,700 MT through the school feeding and recovery and social components of the Protracted Recovery and Reconstruction Operation (PRRO). The balance, 4,500 MT, is for general monthly distributions, which began in February.

In Karamoja, rising food prices and declining livestock prices compared to previous periods, have weakened the terms of trade of pastoralist households. Sorghum prices for January to March 2003 have doubled compared to the same period in 2002, while livestock prices have declined significantly this year compared to last year. These imply that proceeds from the sale of an animal can now only supply a household 50 percent of the food it could have purchased in January to March last year (Figure 10). These conditions will worsen further between April and June, the hunger period, when food prices normally increase.

Figure 10: Terms of Trade: Kilograms of Sorghum per Goat in Karamoja



Source of Data: Karamoja Agro-Pastoral Development Program / FEWS NET, Uganda

Prolonged dryness from the delayed onset of the 2003 first rainy season in central, eastern, western Uganda and the Lake Victoria Basin, have limited crop cultivation. Less than 60 percent of total national annual crop acreage had been sown by early April. If the rains end normally in June, the late-planted long cycle crops, such as millet, sorghum and maize varieties, will suffer moisture stress at critical stages, resulting in reduced yields.

Weather / Climate Watch

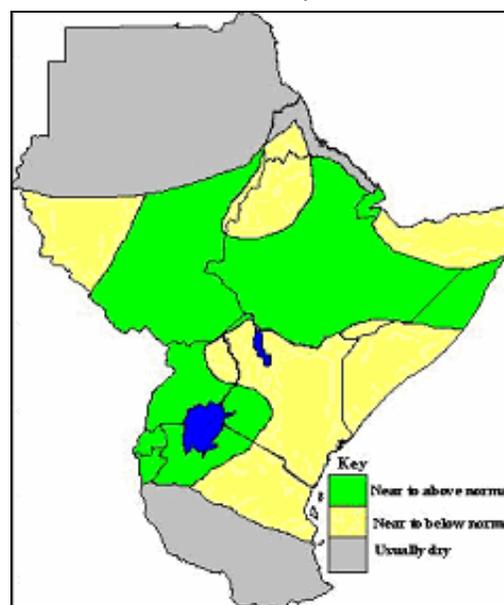
The presence of warmer than normal Sea Surface Temperatures (SST) over the Indian and Atlantic Oceans are still expected to impact negatively on the current seasonal rains in GHA. Parts of the region are expected to receive normal to below rainfall in May, especially over the eastern sector of the GHA. This, coupled with the poor performance of the rains between March and mid April, indicates that there will be reduced production, unless the rains extend beyond the normal season. On the other hand, the pastoral areas are likely to benefit from the late rains, as the water requirements for forage is minimal.

Figure 11 shows the DMC-N climate outlook forecast for May. The forecast indicates that much of Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, western Kenya, western Rwanda, central Somalia, southern Sudan, northwestern Tanzania and Uganda are likely to experience near normal to above normal rainfall. Near to below normal rainfall is likely to occur over much of Eritrea, northwestern Ethiopia, much of Kenya, northern and southern Somalia, and western Sudan, northeastern Tanzania and northeastern Uganda. Closely monitoring of the crop conditions agricultural productive areas, particularly in areas which, where the onset of the seasonal was late is needed.

Often such erratic rainfall performance can be associated with higher likelihood of isolated intense short rainfall events that could result into localized flooding and increases

in malaria and other waterborne diseases. Already, substantial amount of rainfall has fallen causing localized flooding in the last week of April in eastern half of Ethiopia, much of Kenya and Uganda, southern Somalia, southern Sudan.

Figure 11: Climate Outlook for May 2003



Source: Drought Monitoring Centre-Nairobi

Vedasto Rutachokozibwa / Nick Maunder
Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)
E-mail: ruta@fewes.net / nmaunder@fewes.net

Gideon Galu / Hussein Gadain
United States Geological Survey (USGS/FEWS NET)
E-mail: ggalu@fewes.net / hgadain@fewes.net

Dr Wilbur Ottichilo
Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)
E-mail: rcmrd@rcmrd.org

Contacts

Prof. Jerry Stuth
Livestock Early Warning Systems (LEWS/GLCRSP)
E-mail: jwstuth@cnrit.tamu.edu

Mehari Tesfayohannes
Desert Locust Control Organization, Nairobi
Email: delco@insightkenya.com

Prof. Laban Ogallo
Drought Monitoring Centre – Nairobi (DMC-N)
E-mail: dmcnr@lion.meteo.go.ke

**For feedback, contact:
E-mail: gbulletin@fewes.net**