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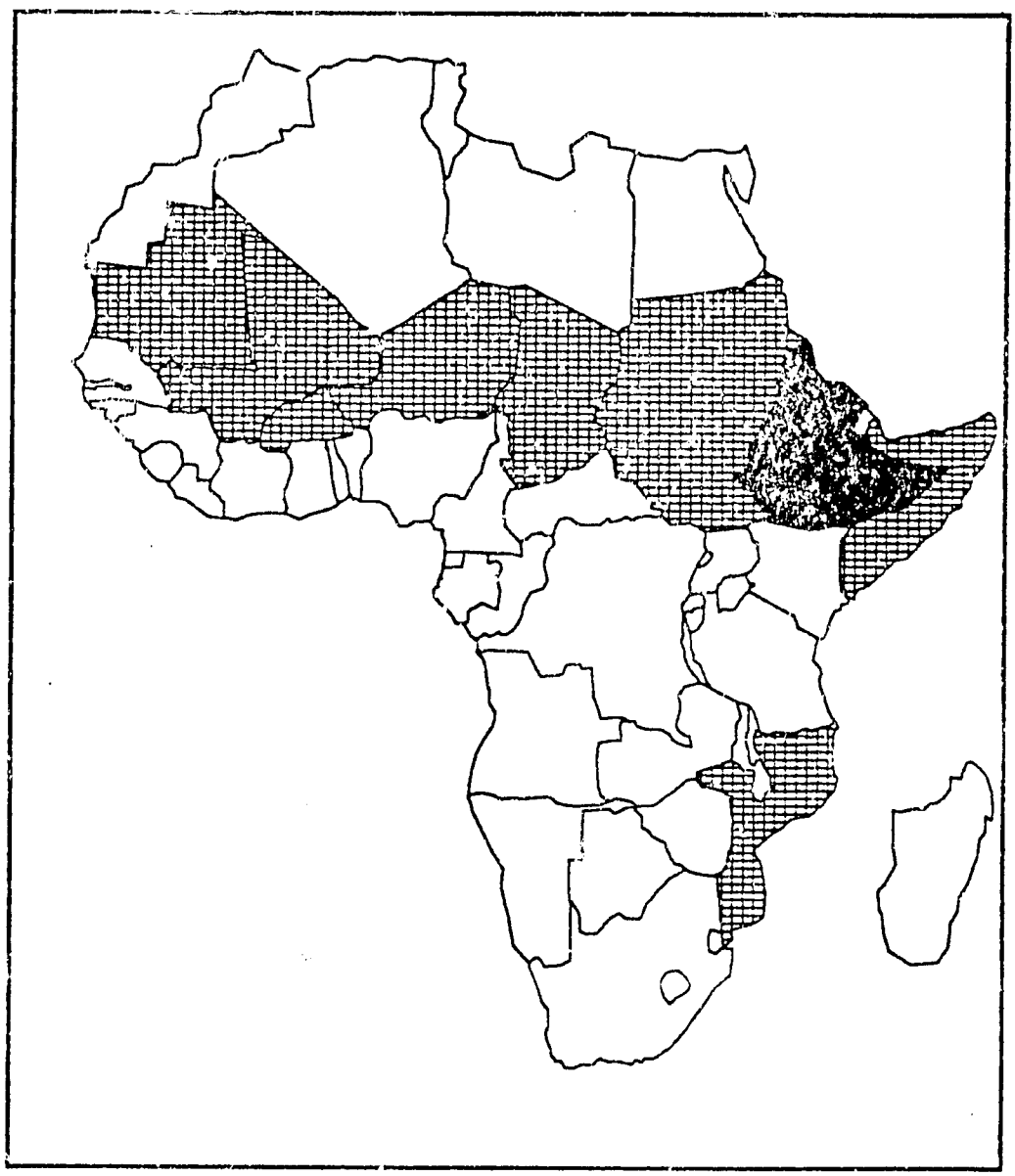
September 1986

FEWS Country Report

ETHIOPIA



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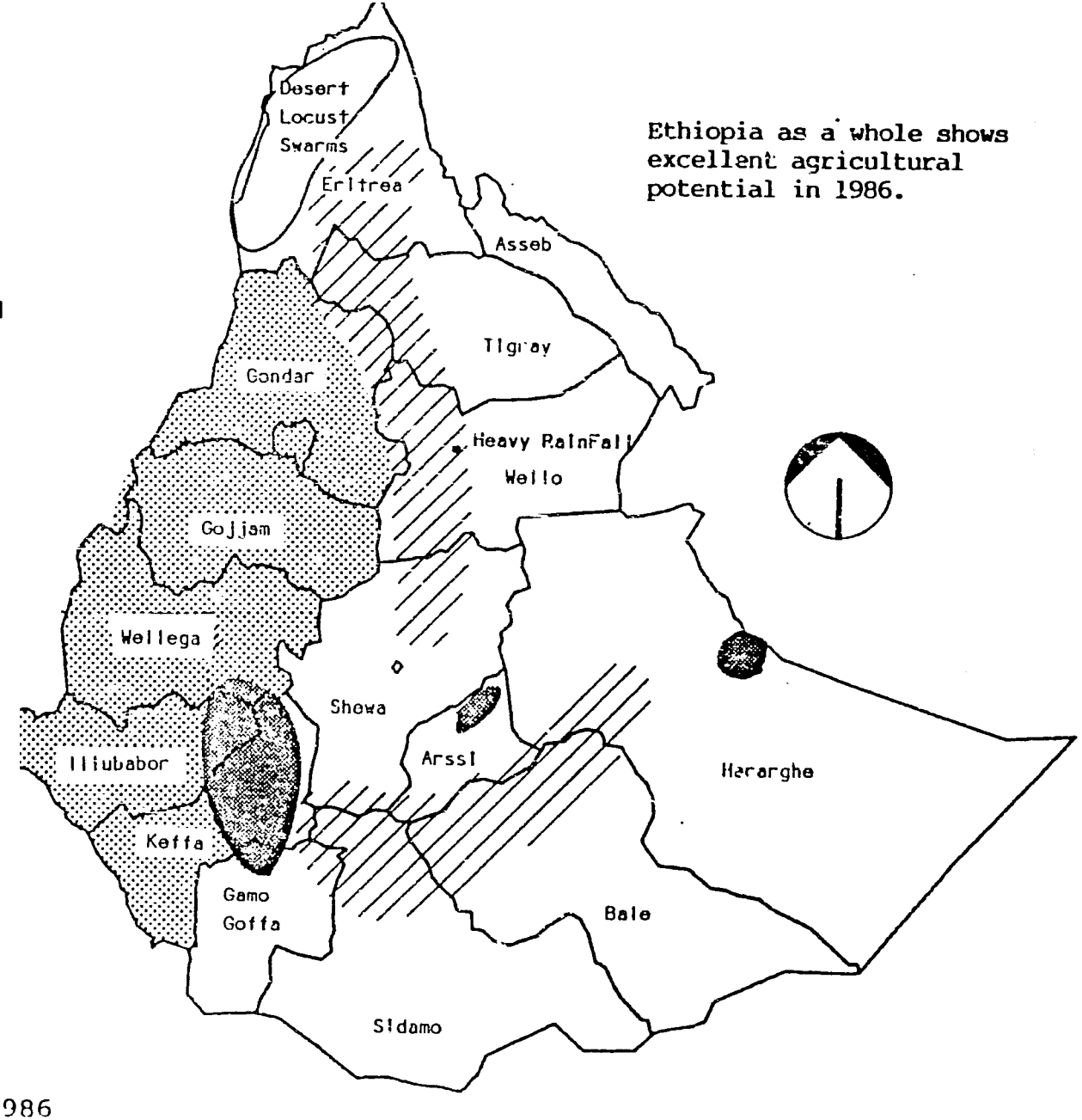
Map 1

ETHIOPIA: Summary Map

1986 Agriculture Estimated at 90% of Normal

Areas With Very Favorable Crop Prospects

Potential Areas of Crop Failure



Ethiopia as a whole shows excellent agricultural potential in 1986.

Map: FEWS/PWA, September, 1986

Famine Early Warning System Country Report

ETHIOPIA

Two Tales of One Plague

Prepared for the
Africa Bureau of the
U.S. Agency for
International Development

Prepared by
Price, Williams & Associates, Inc.
September 1986

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INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth of a series of monthly reports issued by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) on Ethiopia. It is designed to provide decisionmakers with current information and analysis on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. Each situation identified is described in terms of geographical extent and the number of people involved, or at-risk, and the proximate causes insofar as they have been discerned.

Use of the term "at-risk" to identify vulnerable populations is problematical since no generally agreed upon definition exists. Yet it is necessary to identify or "target" populations in-need or "at-risk" in order to determine appropriate forms and levels of intervention. Thus for the present, until a better usage can be found FEWS reports will employ the term "at-risk" to mean...

> ...those persons lacking sufficient food, or resources to acquire sufficient food, to avert a nutritional crisis, i.e., a progressive deterioration in their health or nutritional condition below the status quo and who, as a result, require specific intervention to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Perhaps of most importance to decisionmakers, the process underlying the deteriorating situation is highlighted by the FEWS effort, hopefully with enough specificity and forewarning to permit alternative intervention strategies to be examined and implemented. Food assistance strategies are key to famine avoidance. However, other types of intervention can be of major importance both in the short-term and in the long-run, including medical, transport, storage, economic development policy change, etc.

Where possible, food needs estimates are included in the FEWS reports. It is important to understand, however, that no direct relation exists between numbers of persons at-risk and the quantity of food assistance needed. This is because famines are the culmination of slow-onset disaster processes which can be complex in the extreme.

The food needs of individual populations at-risk depend upon when in the disaster process identification is made and the extent of its cumulative impact on the individuals concerned. Further, the amount of food assistance required, whether from internal or external sources, depends upon a host of considerations. Thus the food needs estimates presented periodically in FEWS reports should not be interpreted to mean food aid needs, e.g., as under PL480 or other donor programs.

FEWS is operated by AID's Office of Technical Resources in the Bureau for Africa in cooperation with numerous USG and other organizations.

SUMMARY

Two diametrically opposed stories have emerged about the locust situation in Eritrea. The information available from Khartoum via the EPLF (Eritrean People's Liberation Front) warns of uncontrollable outbreaks and swarming in Eritrea. The prognosis is large spillover migrations south into Ethiopia and west into Sudan. FAO now subscribes to this view. The USAID mission in Addis Ababa has been unable to confirm any of these reports, and has yet to identify a single emergency control campaign need.

Main seasonal rains continue to promise a generally excellent harvest this fall. Satellite imagery reveals vigorous vegetation development, and a recent in-country assessment reinforces the prognosis. In addition, many of the people currently counted at-risk should achieve self-sufficiency in food production. In western Ethiopia, the one area of earlier concern, agricultural prospects are still believed to be slightly lower than normal. People in that area were generally able to sow alternate crops after losing their first planting due to poor rains. However, a relatively small number of people are still counted at-risk in the areas of the Didesa and Gibe River Valleys where their troubles are compounded by the loss of draft animals due to Trypanosomiasis.

Key Issues

- Because of the security situation, it has been impossible to confirm, or deny flatly, reports of a severe locust problem in Eritrea.

- The level of carryover emergency food aid stocks available for 1987 is a matter of controversy between the Ethiopian Government and international donors. If present distribution levels persist, carryover stocks should be sufficient for Ethiopia's 1987 requirement.

September Indicators

- Continued good rains are needed in western Ethiopia to assure the success of replanting and crop substitution after a disastrous beginning for the main season crops.

LOCUSTS

There are reports from Sudan, through the EPLF, of swarming locusts in large numbers in Eritrea. It has not been possible to confirm these reports in Addis Ababa. Reports filtering out of Eritrea into Sudan also emphasize the importance of aid to combat a massive Desert Locust problem. In Ethiopia, the reports of locust activity within Eritrea are not as apocalyptic. Locust activity in government controlled areas of Eritrea does not appear to seriously threaten either Eritrea or the rest of Ethiopia. The European Economic Community's Office of Emergency Operations is of the opinion that

while locust swarms in Eritrea will be locally destructive, they are unlikely to have much impact on the rest of Ethiopia this year.

Anxiety over the locust threat began early this summer. An FAO technical meeting on June 5 and 6 issued a report dealing primarily with Migratory Locust in Sudan, and Desert Locust in Sudan and Ethiopia. Forecasts of gregarious summer breeding of Migratory Locust swarms returning to Sudan, and/or Desert Locust swarms migrating from winter breeding areas along the Red Sea coast and Arabia to summer breeding areas in Sudan and Ethiopia, raised the possibility of a horrific double plague situation.

Each year, locust swarms which hatch during one breeding season in Desert Locust recession areas (including northern Ethiopia and much of northern Sudan) migrate following the path of the monsoon rains. If meterological conditions are favorable, these breeding swarms will produce more swarms that move on to the next season's breeding area. Locust swarms increase geometrically, if the right rainfall conditions prevail on their normal breeding circuits. (See Map 2)

The current reports of locust swarms in Eritrea, if accurate, are important locally since they impact already marginal agricultural areas. Regardless of the actual current population levels, Desert Locusts will migrate in September and October (to the south and east) as they move towards the winter breeding grounds. They could become important to rangeland areas in eastern Ethiopia and to the agriculturalists in the highlands of Hararghe Region. Regionally, swarms of Desert Locusts become economically significant if they successfully migrate to their winter breeding areas and breed as a group. If this occurs, new swarms could be expected to migrate west into Sudan, Eritrea, and the rest of Ethiopia, as well as south into Kenya and even Tanzania.

RAINFALL AND VEGETATION

Rainfall in Ethiopia is described as uniformly good with dry areas of below normal rainfall only in the easternmost end of the highlands of Hararghe Province, in the area around Jijiga. Rainfall could hinder crop production should it be excessive. In Wello Region, the station at Kembolcha reported 187mm of rain in the last 10 days of August. This amount of rainfall could make it unfavorably wet for crop production. If such conditions persist, potential crop yield in the area will decline.

Vegetation indices for Ethiopia, which are derived from satellite imagery, are generally better this year

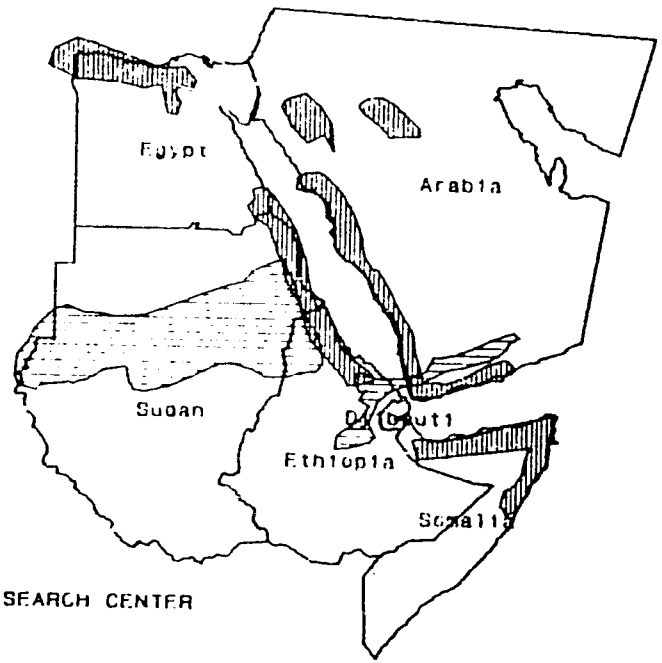
ETHIOPIA MAP 2: DESERT LOCUST SEASONS

SUMMER AND WINTER BREEDING AREAS FOR DESERT LOCUST SWARMS IN THE REGION

SEASON

Winter

Summer



SOURCE: ANTI-LOCUST RESEARCH CENTER

FEWS/PWA

compared with the same time last year. Exceptions are areas just to the north of the highlands of Hararghe Region extending southwest into the Rift Valley and southeast Hararghe Region. (See Images 1 and 2)

POPULATION AT-RISK

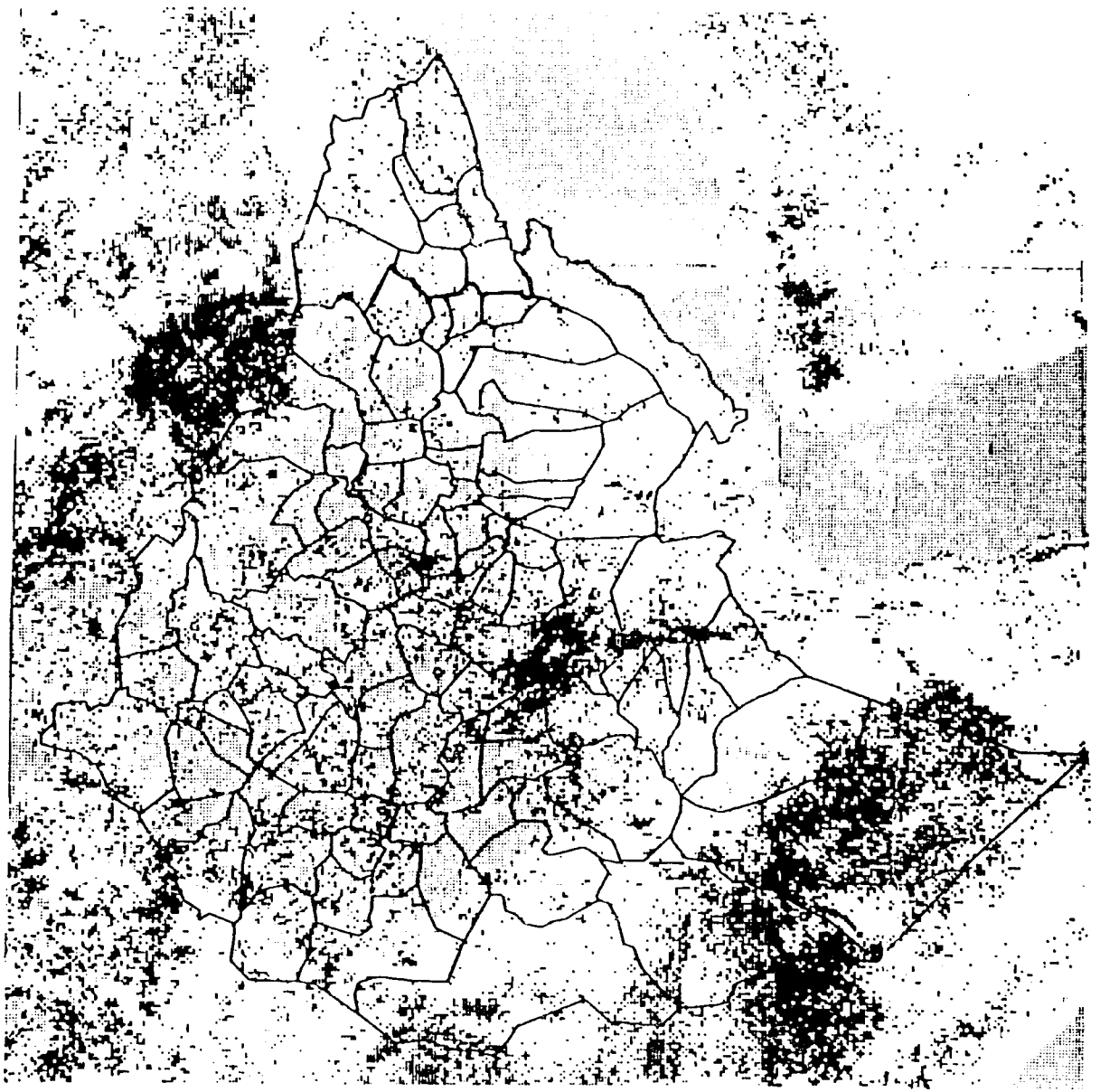
According to the USAID mission in Addis Ababa, the current estimate of the population at-risk is approximately 4,000,000 people. The population at-risk, given current prospects, should drop with the bulk of those remaining at risk located in the conflict affected areas of Eritrea and Tigray (a maximum of 2,185,000). Even there --especially in Tigray -- the agricultural prospects are so improved that the population at-risk could fall from the current 1,186,000. Residual populations at-risk will remain in other regions as well.

CROP PRODUCTION/ FOOD AVAILABILITY

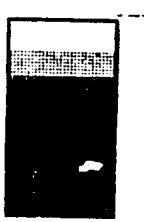
A very early and preliminary "1987 Food Need Assessment for Ethiopia" has just been issued by the USAID Mission in Addis Ababa. Its conservative assessment of current agricultural prospects for this year's main season and short season are good with excellent early growth throughout the cropland and rangelands of Ethiopia. Total production is forecast to be at least normal. One exception to this general picture is the Jijiga area at the eastern end of the highlands of Hararghe Region, a usually marginal cropping area, where rains have not been adequate. In western Ethiopia, in the Regions of Gonder, Gojjam, Wellega, Keffa and Illubabor, total production is estimated to be down 10% from last year due to the failure of early rains that necessitated replanting and crop substitution.

The ultimate conclusion of this report is that Ethiopia will have an emergency food requirement of only 80,000MT in CY 1987. This requirement can be covered by carryover stocks of emergency food aid. There is a structural deficit of 467,000MT, of which 420,000MT will be covered by the remaining carryover stocks of emergency food aid and normal food aid programs. The balance of 47,000MT could be covered if commercial imports increase, as expected, over their 1986 levels.

ETHIOPIA IMAGE 1: Negative Vegetation Index Changes, August 10-20, 1986
As Compared To The Same Period Last Year



SOURCE: NOAA



81121	65.2854%	No Change, or Positive Char
21794	17.5396%	Clouds in Either Image
14679	11.8135%	1 Category Decline
4054	3.2626%	2
1541	1.2402%	3
650	0.5231%	4
417	0.3356%	5 or more Category Decline

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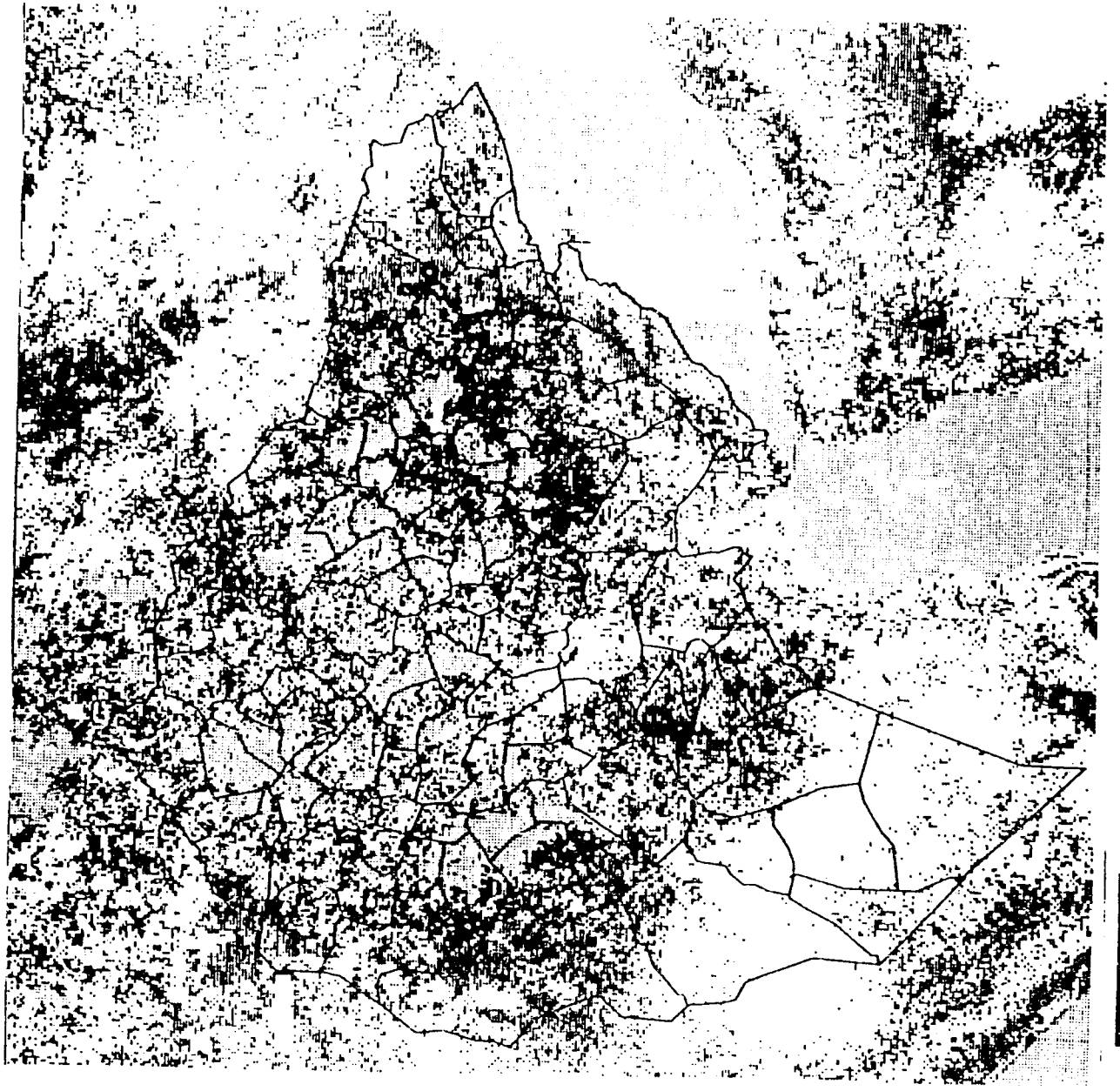
ETHIOPIA IMAGE 2: Positive Vegetation Index Changes, August 10-20, 1986
As Compared To The Same Period Last Year



SOURCE: NOAA

64751	52.1110%	No Change, or Negative Chan
21794	17.5396%	Clouds in Either Image
24119	19.4107%	1 Category Improvement
7712	6.2065%	2
3522	2.8345%	3
1439	1.1581%	4
919	0.7396%	5 or more Category Improveme

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