

Another wet week in the Greater Horn of Africa.

During the last observation period, many parts of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya saw another week of moderate rainfall totals (**Figure 1**). A large distribution of rain amounts ranging between 15- 50 mm were observed across the Oromia and Somali regions of Ethiopia, as well as into the Shabelle and southern regions of Somalia. In western Ethiopia, heavier totals exceeding 75 mm were also observed in the Gambela and northern SNNP regions of Ethiopia. In Kenya, isolated showers and consistently fair rain amounts (~ 30 mm) were seen in central and southeastern provinces. Ample rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands also resulted in a localized flooding event downstream in extreme northeastern Kenya. At present, thousands of people of in the town of Mandera, Kenya have reportedly been displaced, with damages to infrastructure and losses of crops and livestock due to excess water.

This past week's rainfall in East Africa continues to sustain positive anomalies throughout Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya (**Figure 2**). Though early, an above-average October-December rains season is expected to help relieve many areas that have been severely impacted with lost livestock, degraded pastures and poor crop yields from long-term drought conditions. While many of these areas are may be unrecoverable due to the longevity of dryness since early 2008 / late 2007, the currently above-average conditions will help begin to improve pastoral and agro-pastoral activity, offset soil moisture deficits, and, provide a more promising outlook for crop harvests by the end of the year. So far, this has resulted in above-average crop conditions across many areas that have been affected by long term dryness (**Figure 3**).

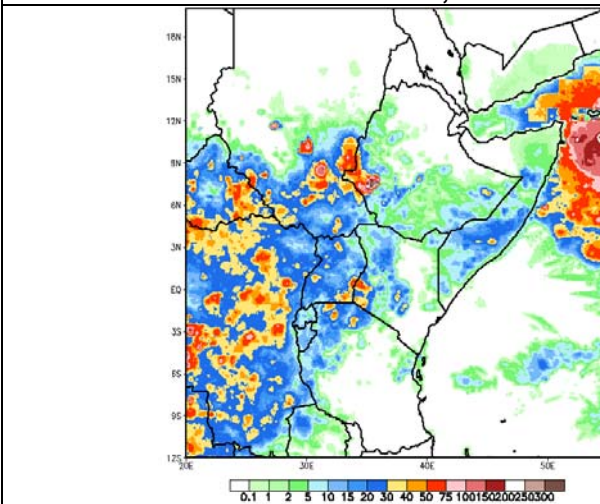
Similar to last week, precipitation forecasts over the next seven days do not suggest much change in the current rainfall pattern. High probabilities for excessive rains are concentrated in southwestern Ethiopia and parts of northern Somalia due to an active tropical circulation. In southeastern Ethiopia, and parts of southern Somalia and Kenya, considerable rain amounts between 25 – 40 mm may be expected.

An anomalously early start to the South Indian Cyclone Season

The development of Tropical Storm "Asma" not only marks the first tropical system for the 2007-2008 South Indian season, but also one of the earliest on record (Average South Indian Start of Cyclone Season is November 15th). Currently, Asma is moving westward towards southern Africa, and it is expected to make its first landfall in northern Madagascar. Significant amounts of rain are expected along the eastern coastline, with the possibility of localized flooding in the next seven days.

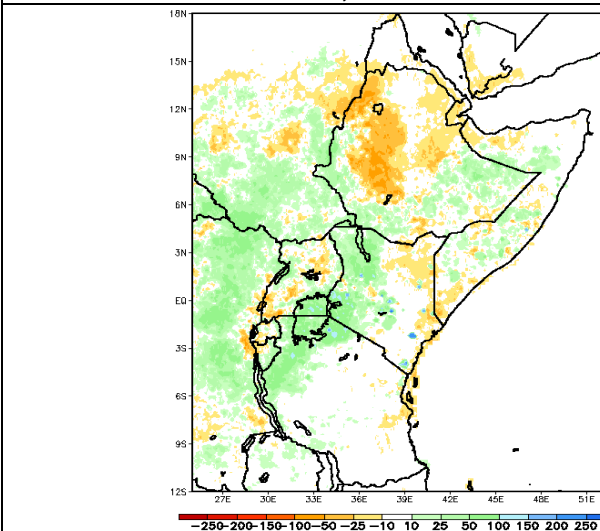
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**Figure 1: Satellite Derived Rainfall Estimates (mm)
From October 14th to October 20th, 2008**



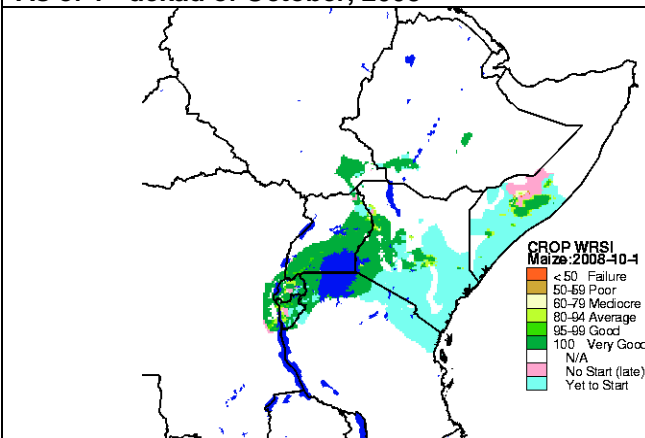
Source: FEWS/NOAA

**Figure 2: Rainfall Anomalies (mm)
October 1st – October 20th, 2008**



Source: FEWS/NOAA

**Figure 3: Crop WRSI for Maize
As of 1st dekad of October, 2008**



Source: FEWS/USGS