SAHEL WEATHER AND CROP SITUATION REPORT

Report No.1, 18 June 2002

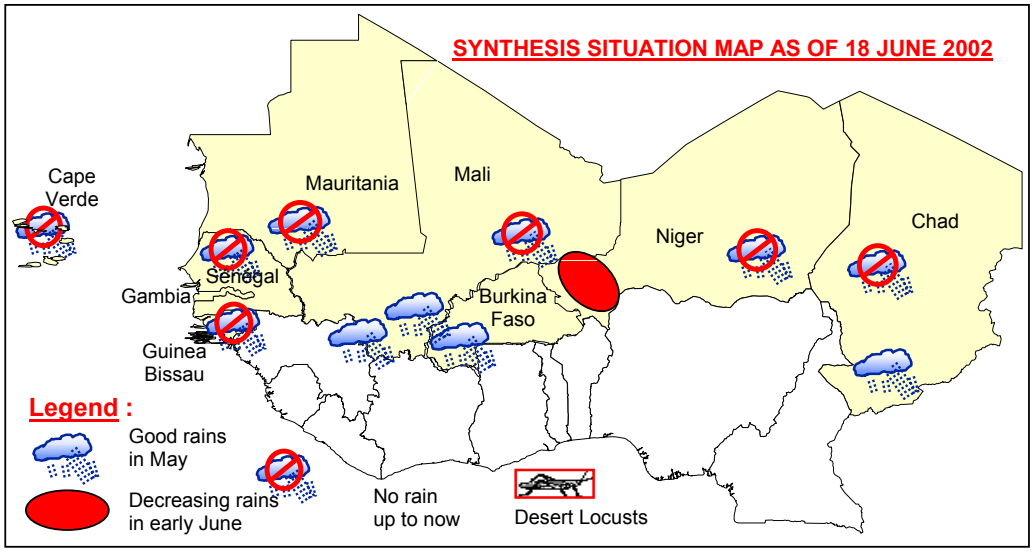
THE RAINY SEASON HAS STARTED GENERALLY ON TIME IN THE CENTRE AND EAST OF THE SAHEL

SUMMARY

The rainy season started in late April or May in southern **Burkina Faso**, **Chad, Mali, Niger** and the extreme south-east of **Senegal**; seasonably dry conditions prevail in the rest of Senegal, **Cape Verde**, **The Gambia** and **Mauritania**. The start of the rainy season is delayed in **Guinea Bissau**, which may seriously affect crop production as the growing season in this country usually starts in late April/early May. Satellite imagery for the first dekad of June confirms the rainfall pattern.

Land preparation and plantings are in progress following the onset of the rains. Dry planting is also underway in Mauritania. Seed availability problems are likely in Mauritania and Cape Verde following the 2001 reduced harvest and the unseasonable heavy rains in early January, and in Guinea Bissau as a result of the delayed rains.

The pest situation is calm. A few Desert Locusts were reported in early May in a few places in Mali and Mauritania.

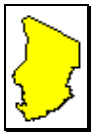


SITUATION BY COUNTRY

BURKINA FASO: The rainy season has started in the south. The first significant rains were registered in early April in the south-west. They progressed northwards in May and covered almost the entire country during the last dekad. Precipitation was generally below average in May but satellite imagery indicates that rains improved significantly and were above average during the first dekad of June. Sowing of millet and sorghum is underway in the south, west and south-west. Elsewhere, land preparation is underway.

No pest activity is reported. Seed availability is generally adequate following the 2001 record harvest.

CAPE VERDE: Seasonably dry conditions prevail. Planting of maize normally starts in July with the onset of the rains on the main islands. Seed availability problems are likely following the 2001 reduced harvest and the exceptionally strong rain in mid-January.



CHAD: The cropping season has started on time in the Sudanian zone. Above-normal first rains were registered in mid-march in the extreme south and in mid April in the south-west. They decreased significantly and were below average in May, but resumed in early June.

Seed availibility should be adequate following the 2001 record crop. No pest activity is reported.

THE GAMBIA: Seasonably dry conditions prevail. Farmers are currently preparing their fields. Planting is expected to start in the weeks ahead with the onset of the rains. Following a record harvest in 2001, seed availability is adequate.

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GUINEA-BISSAU: The start of the rainy season is delayed. The weather remained mostly dry until the first dekad of June. This situation may seriously affect crop production as the growing season usually starts in late April/early May.

Seed shortages are likely following the 2001 reduced harvest.

MALI: The growing season has started in the south. The first significant rains were registered in the extreme south in April. They progressed northwards and were above normal during the first and second dekads of May but decreased during the last dekad. However, precipitation was generally adequate in May and satellite imagery indicates that rainfall improved during the first dekad of June. Land preparation is underway and first planting of millet and sorghum has started in the south. Pastures have started to regenerate.

Seed availability is adequate following the 2001 good harvest. The pest situation is calm although isolated Desert Locusts and groups of grain-eating birds were reported in a few places during the first dekad of May.

MAURITANIA: Seasonably dry conditions prevail. Planting will start following the onset of rains in June/July. Dry plantings are underway in the south-east.

Seed shortages are likely following the 2001 reduced harvest and the unseasonable heavy rains which affected several regions in early January. Isolated Desert Locusts were reported in a few places during the first half of May.

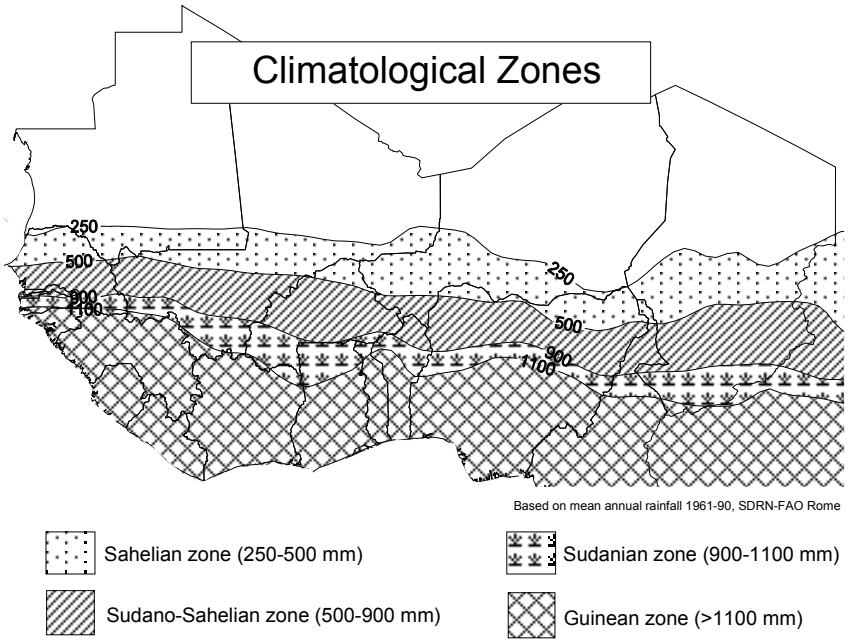
NIGER: The growing season has started in the south. The first rains were registered in the south in mid-May where they permitted land preparation and early plantings. However, the weather was mostly dry in early June. It is estimated that only 2 percent of the villages had planted as of 29 May, instead of 27 percent last year.

Seed availability is generally adequate following the 2001 above average harvest. No significant pest activity has been reported.

SENEGAL: Rains started early in the south-east. Early but limited rains were registered in the extreme south-east in May allowing land preparation and first plantings to start. Elsewhere seasonably dry conditions prevail.

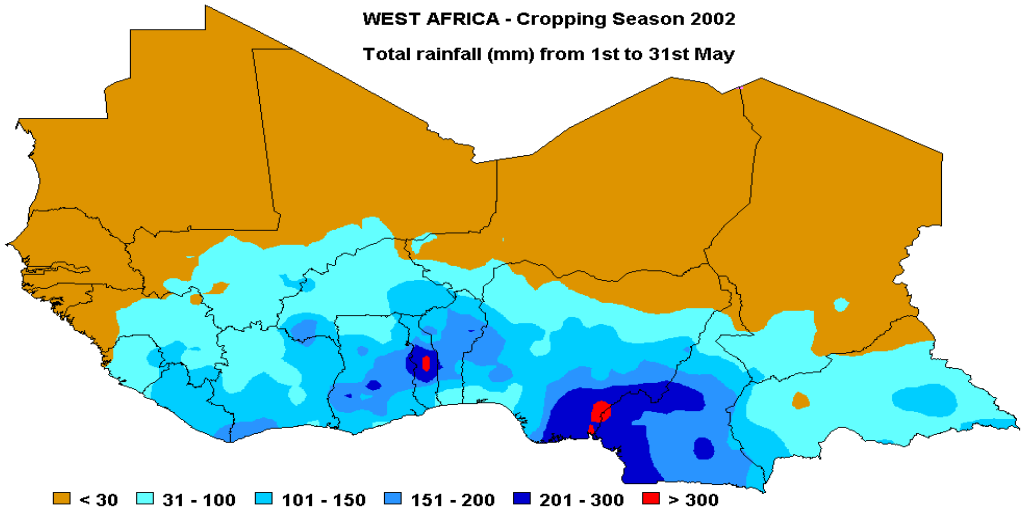
Seed availability is generally adequate and no significant pest activity has been reported.

The following map provides reference to the different climatological zones of the Sahel as defined in the box on page 5

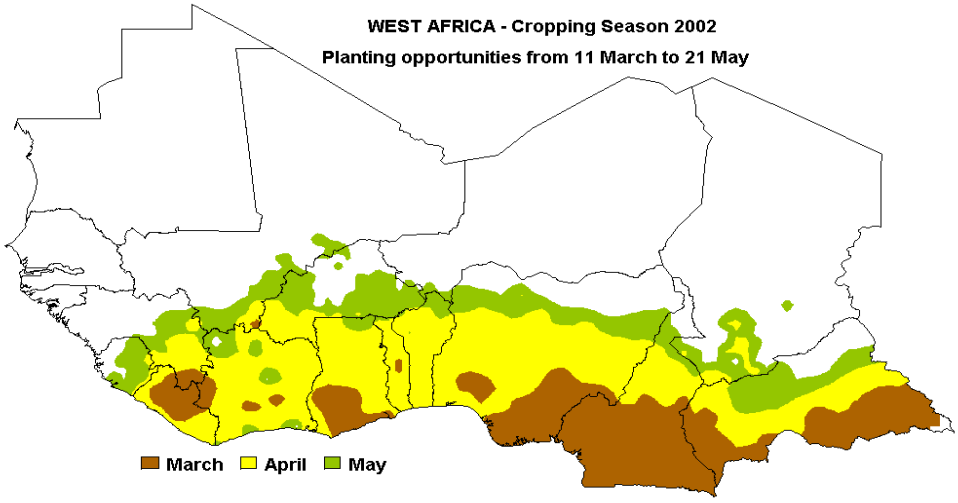


TOTAL RAINFALL AND PLANTING OPPORTUNITY MAPS

The first map indicates the total rainfall amount from 1st to 31st May. Data is extracted from FAO field reports and the RainFall Estimate (RFE) Satellite Imagery as produced by NOAA/USGS/FEWS/USAID project. The RFE images are obtained by interpolating various parameters recorded on the ground and obtained through remote sensing measurements such as: rainfall, relative humidity, wind speed, elevation, cold cloud temperatures.



The map below shows the estimated planting time (opportunity) as defined by the dekad (10-day) satisfying the following requisites: during the first dekad, 25 mm of rainfall should be measured and a total rainfall of at least 20 mm should be recorded during the two next dekads. Data used for this analysis are from FAO field reports and RFE imagery.



Data source: NOAA, FAO - Prepared by: FAO/SDRN, Agrometeorology Group

*This is the **first GIEWS report on the 2002 season on weather and crop conditions in the Sahelian countries of western Africa**. Geographical coverage of these reports includes the nine CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) member states: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. Reports are issued each month from June to November. The final report for 2002 with the first production estimates will be issued in late-November*

*These reports are prepared with data from, and in close collaboration with, FAO Representatives, the Agro-Meteorology Group and the Environmental Monitoring Group (SDRN), the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLO), the Emergency Operations Service (TCEO), the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's). In this report, satellite imagery provided by FAO/ARTEMIS, field data on rainfall, FAO agro-meteorological crop monitoring field reports and information provided by FAO Representatives up to **31 May** have been utilized. The satellite images of the first dekad of June has also been utilized for final updating.*

*In these reports, reference will be made to four different **eco-climatic zones** based on the average annual precipitation and agricultural features, i.e. Sahelian zone, Sudano-Sahelian zone, Sudanian zone and Guinean zone. They are shown in the map on page 3 and described below:*

***Sahelian zone**: Where average annual precipitation ranges between 250 and 500 mm. This zone is at the limit of perennial vegetation. In parts where precipitation is less than 350 mm, only pastures and occasional short-cycle drought-resistant cereal crops are grown; all cropping in this zone is subject to high risk.*

***Sudano-Sahelian zone**: Where average annual precipitation ranges from 500 to 900 mm. In those parts of this zone where precipitation is less than 700 mm, mostly crops with a short growing cycle of 90 days are generally cultivated predominantly sorghum and millet.*

***Sudanian zone**: Where average annual precipitation ranges from 900 to 1 100 mm. In this zone, most cereal crops have a growing cycle of 120 days or more. Most cereals, notably maize, root and cash crops are grown in this zone.*

***Guinean zone**: Where average annual precipitation exceeds 1 100 mm. Guinea-Bissau and a small area of southern Burkina Faso belong to this zone, more suited to root crop cultivation.*

*Reference will also be made to the **Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)**, also known by its trace on the earth's surface, called the **Intertropical Front**. The ITCZ is a quasi-permanent zone between two air masses separating the northern and southern hemisphere trade winds. The ITCZ moves north and south of the equator and usually reaches its most northerly position in July. Its position defines the northern limits of possible precipitation in the Sahel; rain-bearing clouds are generally situated 150-200 km south of the Intertropical Front.*

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