SAHEL WEATHER AND CROP SITUATION REPORT

Report No.2, 15 July 2003

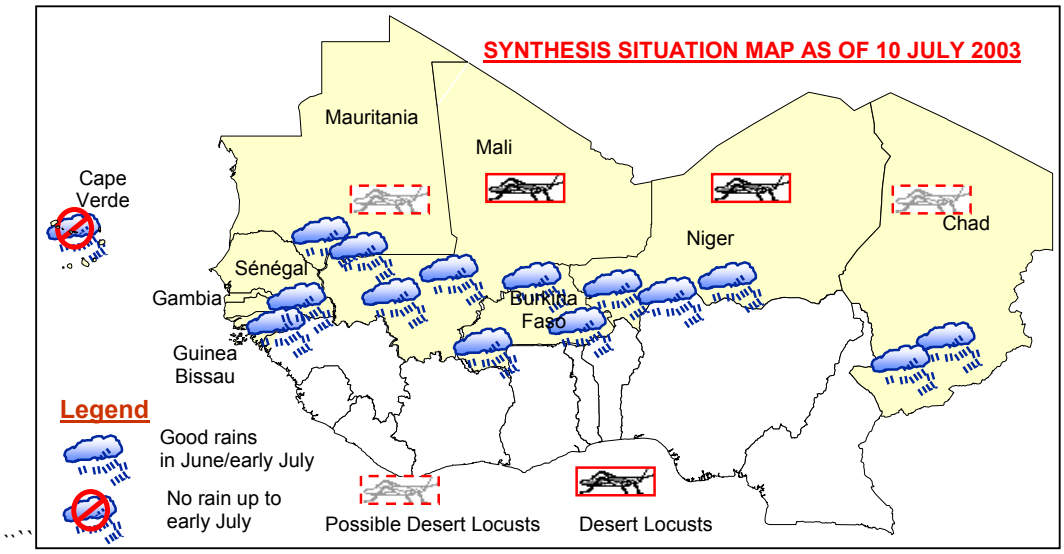
THE RAINY SEASON IS NOW WELL ESTABLISHED IN THE SAHEL

SUMMARY

The cropping season started normally in the Sahel, except for Guinea-Bissau where the onset was somewhat delayed. Rains started in late April or May in southern **Burkina Faso**, **Chad**, **Mali** and **Niger** and the extreme south-east of **Senegal**. They progressed northwards in June in the rest of Senegal, **The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau** and southern **Mauritania**. Rains are expected to start shortly in **Cape Verde.** Satellite imagery for the first dekad of July indicates that precipitation was on the increase across the Sahel.

Plantings are in progress with the onset of the rains. Crops are generally emerging satisfactorily.

Pastures are starting to regenerate. The pest situation is mostly calm. Ecological conditions have become favourable for Desert Locust breeding from southern Mauritania to northern Chad but as locust numbers are extremely low it will take a long time to build up to significant levels.



SITUATION BY COUNTRY

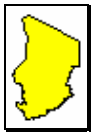
BURKINA FASO

Crops are generally developing satisfactorily. Following first significant rains in early April in the south and south-west, precipitation progressed northwards over the entire country in May and remained generally widespread and abundant. Although it decreased somewhat in mid June, soil moisture is generally adequate for crops. Cumulative rainfall as of late June was above average in most meteorological stations. Coarse grain crops are generally in the tillering/leafing stages in the Sudanian zone and emerging in the Sahelian zone. Planting is almost complete in the north and in the Sahelian zone.

Pastures have started to regenerate. No pest activity is reported. Seed availability is generally adequate following the 2002 record harvest. Seeds were distributed to returnees and refugees from Côte d'Ivoire under an FAO Emergency Agricultural Assistance Project.

CAPE VERDE

Seasonably dry conditions prevail. Planting of maize normally starts in July with the onset of rains on the main islands. Seed shortages are likely following the 2002 poor harvest.



CHAD

The growing season is now well established in the agricultural zones. Following first rains in mid-April, the rainy season actually started in late May in the Sudanian zone. Precipitation progressed northwards to the Sahelian zone in June and planting of coarse grains is now underway. Recently planted millet and sorghum are generally growing satisfactorily in the Sudanian zone.

Pastures are regenerating. Grasshopper and army worm attacks are reported. Although small-scale breeding of Desert Locusts is expected to occur in the north, their number should remain below threatening levels.

THE GAMBIA

The growing season has started. The first rains were registered during the first dekad of June and permitted land preparation and first plantings. Precipitation decreased somewhat during the second dekad but rains covered the entire country during the third dekad and became abundant in early July. Plantings are well underway. Seed shortages are likely following the 2002 poor harvest.

GUINEA-BISSAU

The growing season has started. Although first rains were registered in early May, the rainy season actually started over the entire country in early June. Coarse grain crops are emerging/tillering in the east and the north. Land preparation and plantings of rainfed rice are underway. Transplanting of swamp rice from seedbeds will take place in July/August after desalination of swamp rice fields.

Localised insect attacks have been reported, notably in the east.

MALI

Adequate rains so far have facilitated plantings and crop development in most regions. Following first rains in the extreme south in April, precipitation progressed northwards in May and remained generally widespread and regular in June, except in the western Kayes region where rainfall decreased significantly in late June. Plantings of millet and sorghum are well underway; crops are emerging in the south.

Pastures are improving, notably in the south. Grasshopper attacks were reported in late June in several areas. Grain eating birds are reported in the Office du Niger zone. Low numbers of Desert Locusts are present and will persist in the Adrar des Iforas. Small scale breeding is likely to occur in areas of recent rainfall.

As recommanded by the National Early Warning System, subsidized sales of 8 000 tonnes of animal feed by the Government helped to arrest the deterioration in livestock condition caused by poor pastures..

MAURITANIA

First rains in June allowed plantings in some areas. Significant rains in the south and south-east in mid-June permitted land preparation and planting to start in Brakna, Gorgol, Hodh El Chargui and Guidimakha. Cumulative rainfall as of late June was above average in most meteorological stations, notably in the south-east, and satellite imagery indicates that rains increased in early July.

The pest situation is mostly calm. However, isolated adults of Desert Locust are likely to be present in the south, but no significant developments are likely.

Distributions of emergency food aid and subsidized sales of wheat helped improve the food supply situation in Aftout, the Senegal River Valley and the central plateau area of Hodh El Chargui and Hodh El Gharbi where near-famine conditions and high malnutrition rates and related diseases were previously reported.

NIGER

The rainy season is now well established. Following first rains in the extreme south-west in early April, the weather remained mostly dry until the third dekad of May, when rains progressed northwards in the south-west, allowing land preparation and first plantings to start. Precipitation was abundant and widespread in June and cumulative rainfall as of late June was above average in most meteorological stations. It is estimated that over 93 percent of villages had finished their plantings by late June, compared to about 60 percent last year. Crops are emerging and already tillering/leafing in Dosso and Zinder departments.

Scattered adults of Desert Locusts were present and maturing during June in northwestern Air near Arlit, in the southern Air near Agadez and further south in Tadress. Small-scale breeding is likely to occur in areas of recent rainfall in the Air and Tadress. Grasshopper attacks have been reported in several areas.

Subsidized sales of 12 000 tonnes of cereals and 2 000 tonnes of animal feeds helped improve access to food for poor households as well as livestock condition affected by limited availability of pastures.

SENEGAL

Rains reached the south and centre in June. Following early rains in the extreme south-east in May, rains progressed in June towards the southwest and the centre. Mostly dry conditions still prevailed in the north in late June. Plantings of coarse grains are underway in the south and the centre. Crops are emerging satisfactorily in the south.

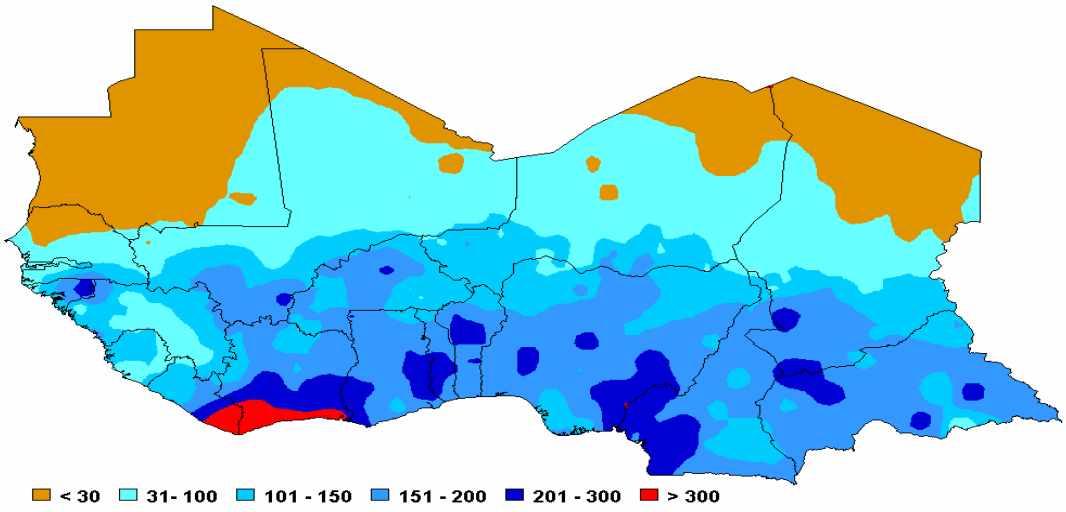
Pastures are starting to regenerate in the south and centre. The pest situation is mostly calm despite reports of grasshopper attacks in Kédougou region.

In response to the tight food situation following the poor 2002 harvest, the Government distributed about 54 000 tonnes of rice to rural households in 2002, and has just launched a new assistance programme including the distribution of 50 000 tonnes of rice and 13 000 tonnes of animal feed, as well as subsidized sales of maize and groundnut seeds, which are also being distributed under an FAO project.

TOTAL RAINFALL AND PLANTING OPPORTUNITY MAPS

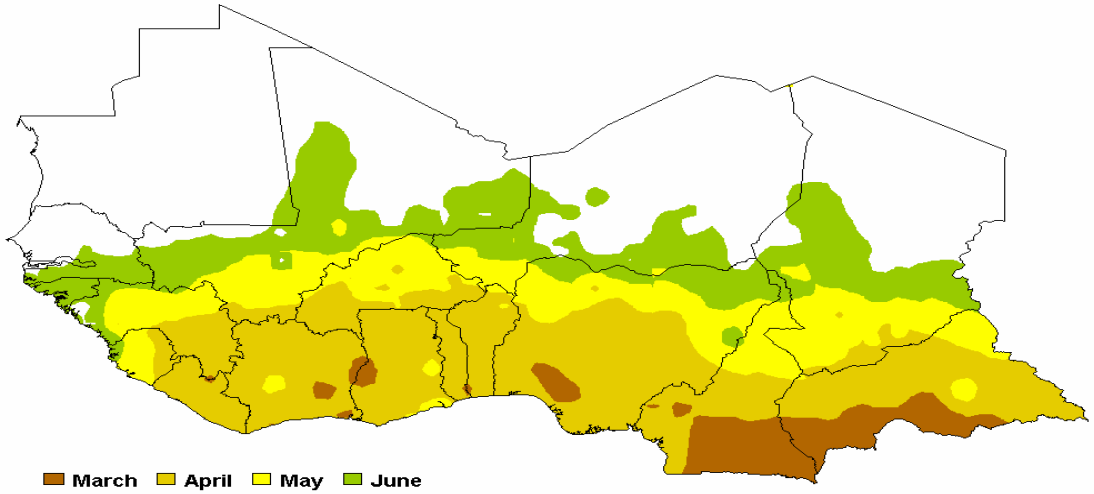
The first map indicates the total rainfall amount from 1st to 30th June. Data is extracted from FAO field reports and the RainFall Estimate (RFE) Satellite Imagery as produced by NOAA/USGS/FEWS/USAID project. The RFE images are obtained by interpolating various parameters recorded on the ground and obtained through remote sensing measurements such as: rainfall, relative humidity, wind speed, elevation, cold cloud temperatures.

WEST AFRICA - Cropping Season 2003
Total rainfall (mm) from 1st to 30th June



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

WEST AFRICA - Cropping Season 2003
Planting opportunities from 11 March to 20 June



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

*This is the **second GIEWS report on the 2003 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 2003 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 ***30 June*** *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:*

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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