SAHEL WEATHER AND CROP SITUATION REPORT

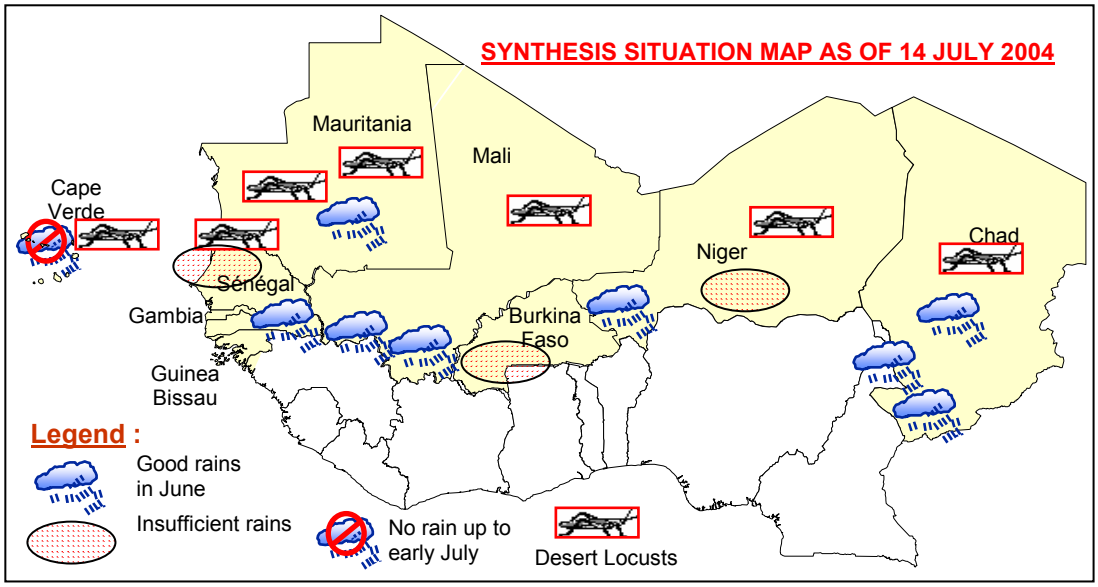
Report No. 2, 16 July 2004

CROP PROSPECTS ARE UNCERTAIN DUE TO BELOW AVERAGE RAINS IN JUNE IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES AND THREAT OF DESERT LOCUSTS ACROSS THE SAHEL.

SUMMARY

Rains arrived in late April in southern **Burkina Faso** and the extreme south of **Chad, Mali** and **Niger**, and reached the east of **Guinea-Bissau** and the extreme south-east of **Senegal** in late May and the east of **The Gambia** in early June. First rains were also registered in southern **Mauritania**. Seasonably dry conditions continue to prevail in **Cape Verde.** Land preparation and planting are in progress following the onset of the rains. However, cumulative rainfall as of late June was below average and planting somewhat delayed in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal. This situation may affect crop development and diminish yield potential if precipitation does not improve in July.

The deteriorating Desert Locust situation continues to pose a serious threat to agricultural production across the Sahel this year. Despite intensive control activities in northern Africa, which is facing widespread infestations, swarms have started moving southwards to the Sahelian countries as ecological conditions improve. Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Niger and Cape Verde have already been infested. Desert Locusts may also be present in Chad and The Gambia. In spite of assistance to several affected countries in northern and western Africa by FAO and several donors, control operations continue to be hampered by insufficient resources. Additional international assistance is urgently required to prevent a potentially disastrous food security situation and a possible reversal of the economic gains made in recent years.



SITUATION BY COUNTRY

BURKINA FASO

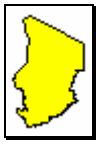
Limited rainfall delays plantings in the north. Following the first significant rains in mid April in the south and south-west, and over the centre and centre-north in May, precipitation was generally limited in June. The growing season has not really started in the north and cumulative rainfall as of late June was generally below average in most meteorological stations. Land preparation and sowing are underway in the south and centre.

No pest activity is reported.

CAPE VERDE

Land preparation is underway. Rains should start soon and allow planting of maize on the main islands, where seed distribution by the government is underway. Dry plantings have started in some areas on Santiago island.

Desert Locusts have been reported on Boa Vista, Santiago and Fogo islands. The situation should be closely monitored.



CHAD

The Desert Locust situation should be closely monitored this year. Since the start of the growing season in May, rainfall has been adequate in general, although it decreased somewhat in mid June. Land preparation and sowing of coarse grains are in progress in the Sahelian zone, while in the Sudanian zone crops are emerging.

The Desert Locust situation should be closely monitored this year. Although the situation remains calm so far, adult groups and swarms are likely to arrive from Northwest Africa in the north and northeast as well as in parts of Kanem, Batha and Biltine in the centre.

Rains are hampering assistance to Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. Most roads are becoming impassable, making transport of food very difficult. As of early July, the estimated number of refugees was 174 800, of whom over 124 420 were living in 9 camps.

THE GAMBIA

Land preparation and plantings are well underway. Rains started in early June in the east and the centre and in late June in the west. Precipitation has been below average, but widespread, allowing land preparation and wet plantings to start.

GUINEA-BISSAU

Abundant rains in early and late June benefited plantings and crop development. First rains were recorded in late May in the east but precipitation became abundant countrywide only in early June. Rains decreased during the second dekad but resumed and were generally above average during the third dekad and in early July. Coarse grains are emerging/tillering in the east and 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.

Following a steep rise in rice price in recent weeks, due to a shortfall in commercial imports, the Government recently ordered 5 000 tonnes of rice to be immediately imported from neighbouring Senegal in partnership with local food importers. A further 27 000 tonnes are expected to arrive from other countries over the coming weeks, including a donation of 5 000 tonnes from China.

MALI

The Desert Locust situation is worrying. Isolated adults and swarms are reported in several locations in the north, including Kidal, Timetrine, Bourem and Tin Essako. There is a risk of substantial numbers and swarms moving to important cereal producing areas in the centre and the south. Moreover, grasshopper attacks were reported in late June in several areas. Grain eating birds and rodents are reported in the Office du Niger zone, where control operations have been undertaken.

Although cumulative rainfall as of late June was below normal in most meteorological stations, precipitation has been adequate in general, benefiting land preparation and plantings. Crops are emerging in the south, while plantings of millet and sorghum are well underway.

MAURITANIA

The Desert Locust situation is deteriorating with swarms moving to cereal producing areas in the centre and the south. Significant rains were recorded during the third dekad of June in Gorgol, Guidimakha, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba and Tagant, allowing land preparation and planting to start. Swarms of Desert Locusts have been reported in central and southern agricultural areas including Adrar, Tagant, Trarza, Brakna and Gorgol. Palms dates are ripening now and the harvest is at risk. Damage has been reported in oases and to dune-fixing trees. Swarms are expected to move to the important cereal producing south. Control operations continue to be hampered by lack of resources. As of late June, 323 455 hectares had been treated. According to official estimates, US$6 million are needed to treat about 500 000 hectares. Moreover, grain eating birds are reported in Trarza, where control operations are being undertaken.

NIGER

The Desert Locust threat remains very serious. Groups of immature and mature locusts have been reported in several locations in the north. More groups and swarms are expected to form in Niger or to arrive from Northwest Africa. The important cereal producing areas in the south may be affected.

Following first rains in the extreme south in late April and substantial rains in most producing areas in May, precipitation remained adequate in early June, but decreased significantly during the last dekad, delaying planting in several locations.

SENEGAL

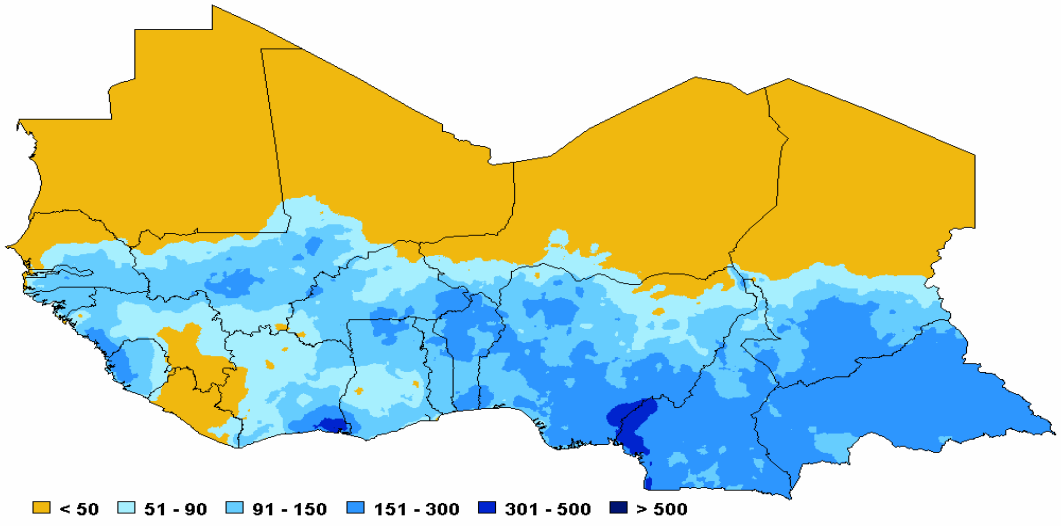
The Desert Locust situation needs to be closely monitored this year. Rains started in the extreme south-east in early June, progressed to the centre and the west from mid-June but the weather remained mostly dry in the north, with precipitation mostly erratic and dry spells occurring in several locations. Wet planting of coarse grains is underway in the south and progressing towards the centre. Dry plantings have also been undertaken in several areas in the groundnut basin. Land preparation is underway in the north.

The Desert Locust situation needs to be closely monitored this year. Swarms have been reported in the north near the Senegal River Valley, in the northeast near Matam and in the centre near Mbake. The situation should be closely monitored as more adult groups and swarms are likely to immigrate from the north.

TOTAL RAINFALL AND PLANTING OPPORTUNITY MAPS

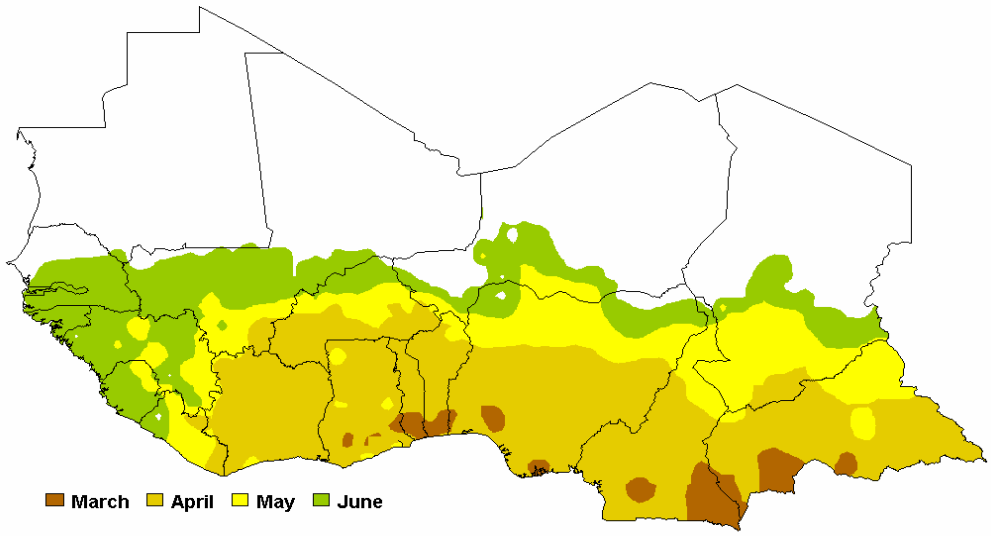
The first map indicates the total rainfall amount from 1st to 30th June. Data is extracted from FAO field reports and the Rainfall Estimate (RFE) Satellite Imagery as produced by NOAA/USGS/FEWS/USAID project. The RFE images are obtained by interpolating various parameters recorded on the ground and obtained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

WEST AFRICA - Cropping Season 2004
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: 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.

WEST AFRICA - Cropping Season 2004
Planting opportunities from 11 March to 20 June



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

This is the ***second GIEWS report of the 2004 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 2004 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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