

## EAST AFRICA Regional Rain Watch

April 12, 2011

FEWS NET will publish a Rain Watch for the East Africa region every 10 days through the end of the March-June rainy season, with a special focus on ongoing crisis areas in the region. Its purpose is to assess the progress of the season and the potential impacts on food insecurity, which is currently at high or extreme levels in several areas.

### Rainfall deficits persist in the eastern Horn

Performance of the March to May rains has been close to average in most of the cropping areas of Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and western Kenya. However, rains have been below-average in northern Uganda, parts of the bimodal cropping areas of western Uganda, and the *Belg* cropping zones of Ethiopia, including SNNPR and southern areas of Oromia region (Figure 1).

Significant rainfall deficits have also persisted in Djibouti and the northeastern pastoral region of Afar in Ethiopia, where the performance of the *Diraac/Sougoum* (March-June) rains has been below average with rainfall deficits amounting to 25-100 mm.

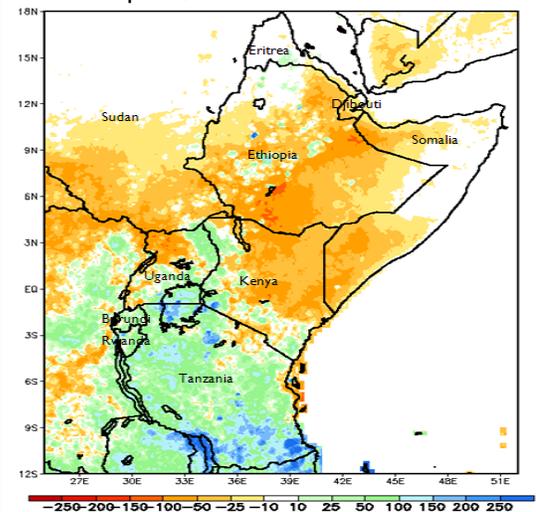
The season is yet to start in the eastern Horn including northeastern Kenya, southern Somalia, and southeastern Ethiopia, despite the expected start of season in the second week of April. Northeastern Kenya, southwestern Ethiopia, and the whole of Somalia have continued to experience exceedingly long consecutive dry days.

The GFS 7-day forecast indicates improved rainfall amounts over most of Ethiopia, with totals of up to 50 mm predicted over the *Belg* zones (Figure 2). Southern Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi are also predicted to continue receiving rainfall. However, rainfall deficits will emerge in the cropping areas of western Kenya and over most of Uganda.

The pastoral areas of eastern Kenya, the agro-pastoral and pastoral areas of south, central and northeast Somalia will continue to remain dry and hot into the next dekad, extending the number of consecutive dry days to above 30 in most areas (Figure 3). This also indicates a delayed start of season.

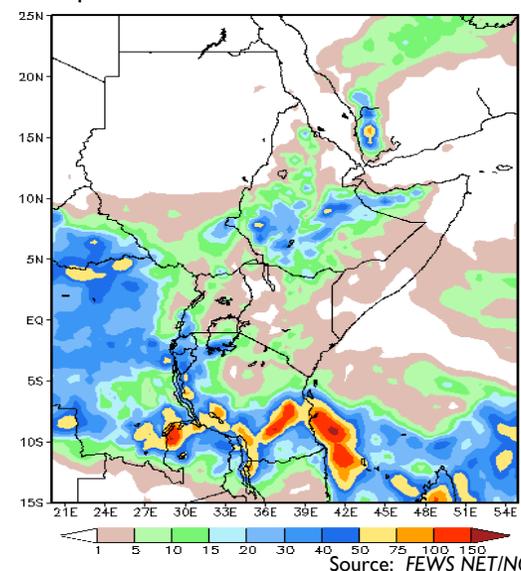
The forecast for low rainfall amounts in the coming week in most of the eastern horn is a key concern in this area since most of the March to May rains are expected in April. Reduced precipitation in April will have a negative impact on crop production and regeneration of range resources.

**Figure 1. Rainfall Anomalies (mm), March 1-April 9, 2011**



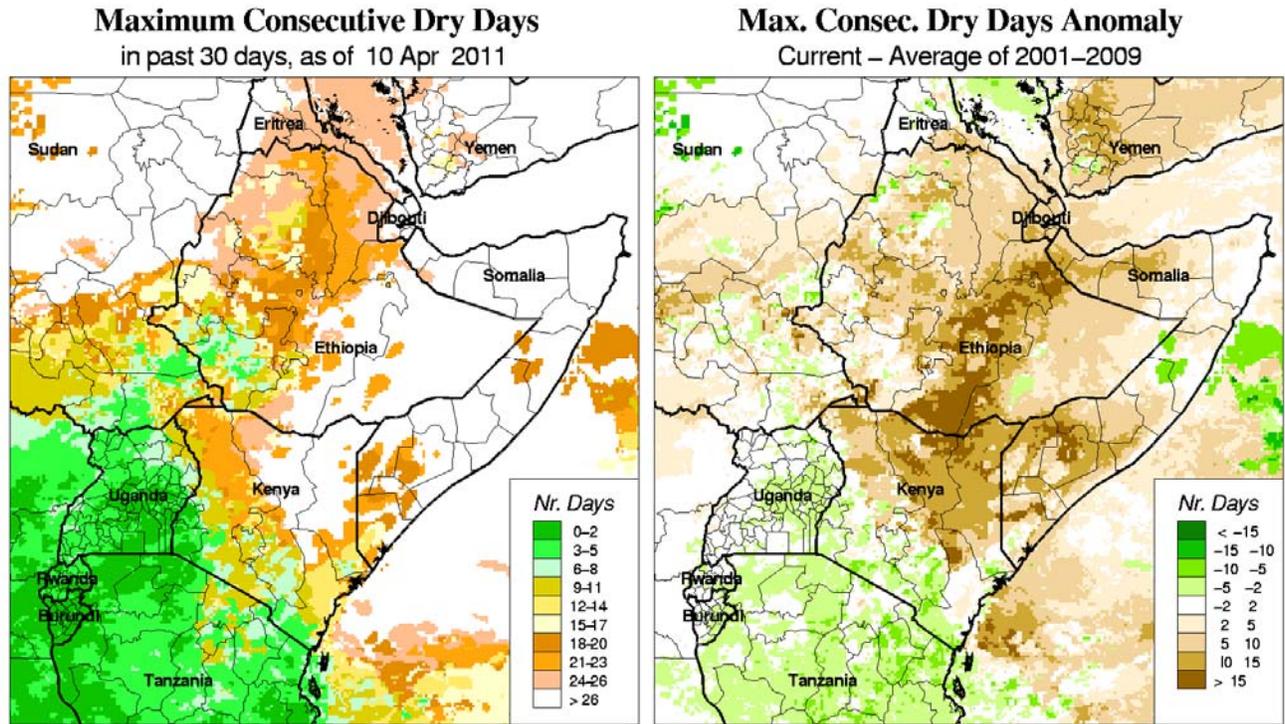
Source: FEWS NET/NOAA

**Figure 2. GFS 7-day Rainfall forecast (mm): 11 – 18 April, 2011**



Source: FEWS NET/NOAA

**Figure 3.** Maximum Consecutive Dry Days and Dry Days Anomaly



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

**Figure 4.** Rainfall Anomaly (% of normal): March 1- April 9, 2011 (RFE)

