The Agricultural Stress Index (ASI) combines vegetation condition and temperature variables to illustrate the level of water stress experienced by crops in specific geographic areas. The compiled results are analysed longitudinally by comparing current values to the long-term minimum and maximum values and by spatially aggregating agricultural areas by administrative area.

**Analysis**

In most parts of Syria, March rainfall totals were average to above average compared with the longitudinal average of March over the past 18 years. Below average rains were received in large parts of crop-growing Idlib, Latakia and Tartous governorates as well as in parts of Hama, Quneitra and Dara governorates. Precipitation levels were also lower compared to the same month last year in parts of Idlib, Latakia and Tartous governorates as well as eastern part of Hassakeh, pockets of Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Quneitra governorates.

Harvesting of the winter wheat and barley crops, which were planted from November through January, is expected to start in May 2017. The increasing moisture stress in February captured by ASI in northern cropland areas of Syria has continued into the first and second dekads of March. Based on the information from the field, rainfall performance was relatively better in the second dekad of March. This has resulted in slightly improved vegetation cover in the third dekad of March, particularly in Al Hasakeh, Aleppo, Latakia and Tartous governorates. Field observations in Idlib, Aleppo and Hama indicated healthy wheat, barley and winter vegetable development.

**Rainfall Difference**

2017 Mar - 2016 Mar

2017 Mar - Long-term average

*REF Data Sources:*
RFE 2.0: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Climate Prediction Center (CPC) Rainfall Estimator (RFE). Daily data is downloaded from CPC and monthly 15 year averages and monthly anomalies are processed by RFSAN.

*Date of Production: 00.04.2017*

Please note that the ASI is based on remotely sensed data only, there is no confirmation on what crops have been planted.