

EAST AFRICA Regional Rain Watch

April 22, 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 continues to be close to average in most of the cropping areas of Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and western Kenya. However, rains have been persistently below-average in parts of the bimodal cropping areas of northern Uganda, southern parts of Sudan, southeastern Kenya and the *Belg* cropping areas of Ethiopia, including SNNPR, the northeastern highlands, and southern and eastern parts of Oromia region with deficits amounting to 50-150 mm (Figure 1).

RFE seasonal performance also indicates intensifying rainfall deficits across the eastern sector of the region as was forecast, with major areas of concern in the agro-pastoral and marginal cropping areas of southern Somalia, southeastern lowlands of Kenya, and the pastoral and agro pastoral areas in the extended Mendera triangle of Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia.

The forecast for the last week of April does not indicate any major improvement in the areas of concern, apart from the short-term replenishment of water resources and rangeland conditions. Afar region of Ethiopia and Djibouti are forecast to receive very little rain in the last week of April. April is the month with the highest amount of rainfall during the March to May season in most of these areas, after which the amount of rain received tends to decline.

The key agricultural areas of western Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the *Belg* cropping areas of Ethiopia are expected to have widespread and intense rains (30-100 mm) in the coming week (Figure 2). In the cropping areas that faced substantial rainfall deficits to date however, improvement of rains in the coming week may not improve production prospects as the late onset has already substantially delayed land preparation and planting in some of these areas.

There is an increased likelihood of flooding in most flood-prone areas around Lake Victoria and surrounding areas and southwestern Uganda. The Kenya/Tanzania coastal strip is also at risk of flooding owing to the forecast for heavy to very heavy rains (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Rainfall Anomalies (mm), March 1-April 18, 2011

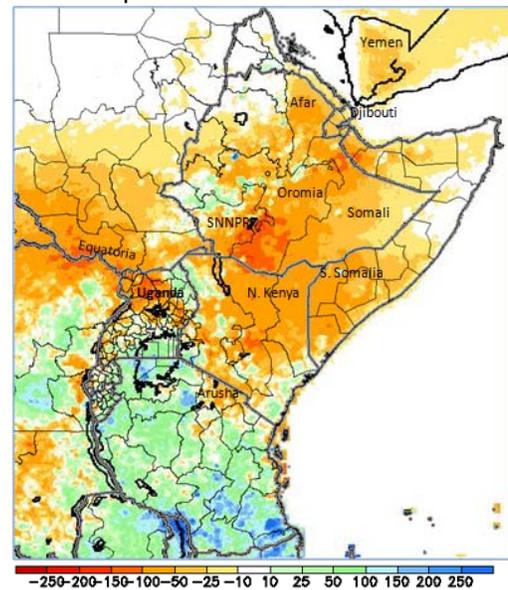


Figure 2. GFS 7-day Rainfall forecast (mm): 20 - 27 April, 2011

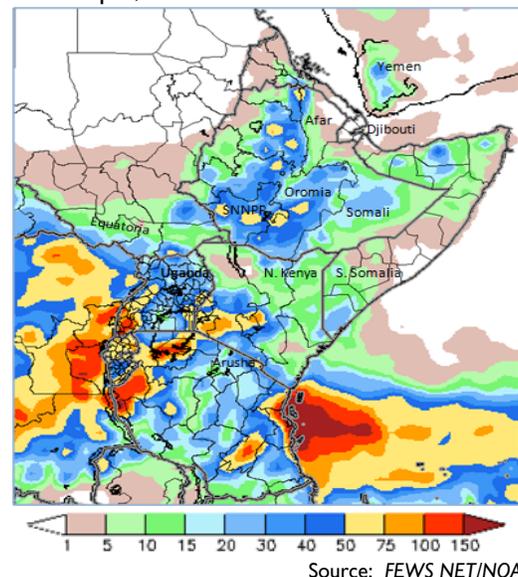
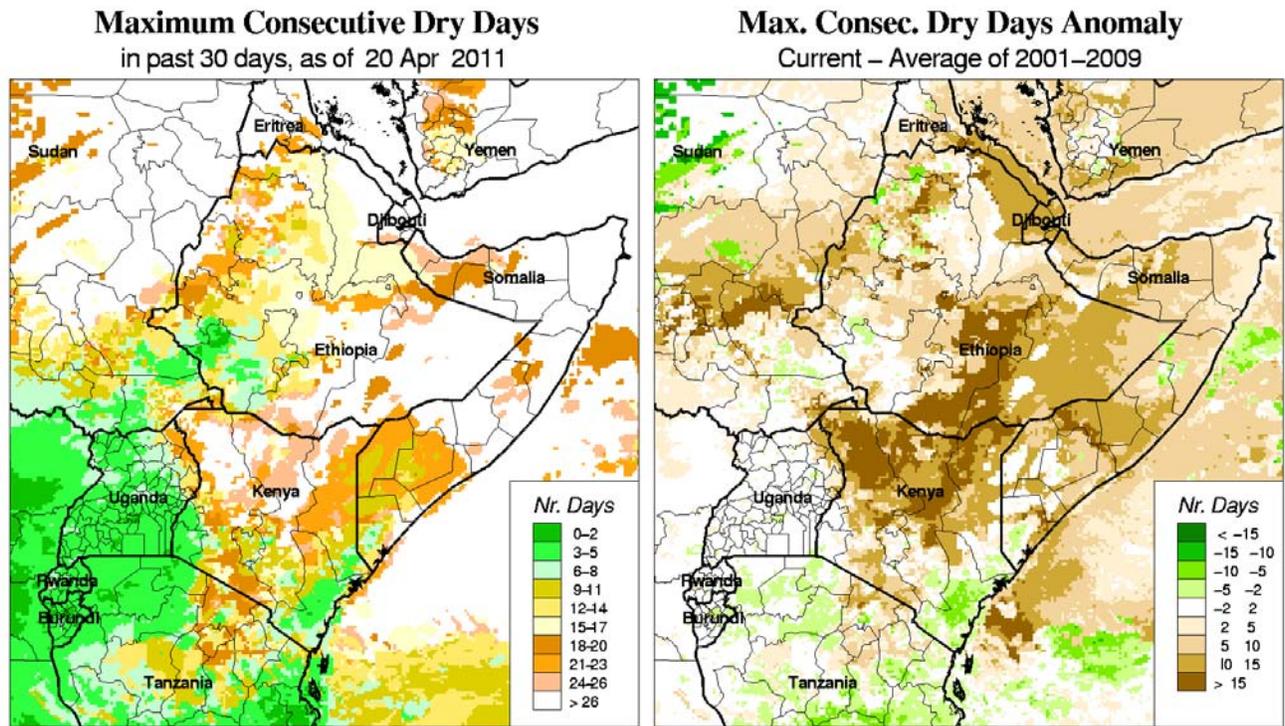
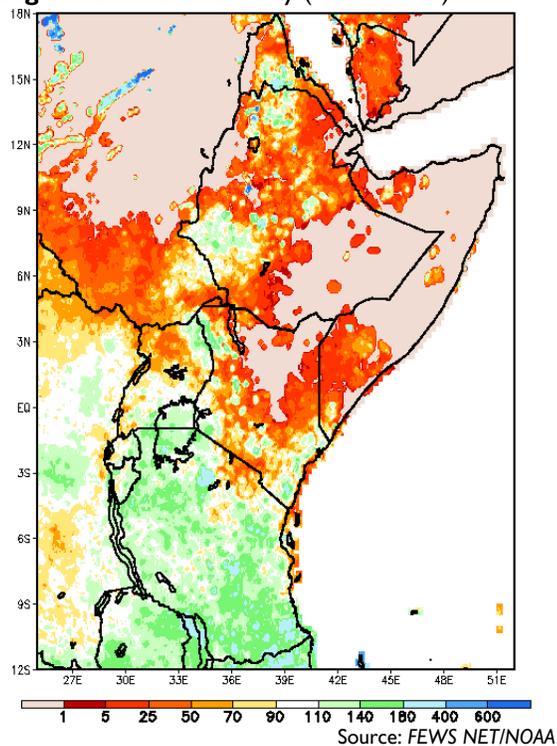


Figure 3. Maximum Consecutive Dry Days and Dry Days Anomaly



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

Figure 4. Rainfall Anomaly (% of normal): March 1- April 18, 2011 (RFE)



Source: FEWS NET/NOAA