SOMALIA Rain Watch — December 16, 2008

FEWS NET will publish a Rain Watch for Somalia every dekad through the end of the current Deyr (October-December) rainy season. The purpose of this document is to provide updated information on the progress of the Deyr rains to facilitate contingency and response planning. This Somalia Rain Watch is valid through December 22, 2008 and is produced in collaboration with USGS, the Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) Somalia, a number of other agencies, and several Somali NGOs.

Deyr Seasonal Rainfall Ended With Mixed Performance

The *Deyr* (October-December) is the secondary rainy season in Somalia and contributes approximately 25 to 30 percent to Somalia's total annual cereal production, while *Gu* (April-June), the main rainy season, contributes to the remaining 70-75 percent. The performance of the *Deyr* season has important food security implications for the country as it is followed by the long dry season of *Jilaal* (January to March). In most regions, the *Deyr* 2008 season started either late September or during first *dekad* of October, indicating a timely onset of the rainy season. However, the overall rainfall performance in terms of the intensity, coverage and distribution over time has been mixed. Most of the central and southern regions received below normal rains, while most of northeast and northwest regions received normal rainfall with pockets of lower rainfall levels (medium rains) (see Figure 1).

Although the *Deyr* rainfall performance has been mixed, in the drought-affected regions of Galgadud and Mudug, where serious water shortages have persisted for the last 18 months, as well as in the Hawd and Addun pastoral areas, localized good rains were received in October and early November. Similarly, in the northwest pastoral areas, specifically the Hawd of Hargeisa and the Togdheer and Sool regions, moderate rains have been received, which has facilitated regeneration of browse and replenished some of the underground reservoirs (*berkads*).

The southern agricultural regions of Gedo, Bakool, Bay and the Jubas also received good rains in October and early November. For instance, rain gauges located in Baidoa, Hudur and Dinsoor recorded 39 mm, 117 mm and 53 mm of rainfall, respectively, during November. The rains replenished most water catchments and improved germination levels as well as the development of crops. Pasture also gradually regenerated (see Figure 3). However, in September, localized torrential rainfall was received in Lower Shabelle, which resulted in substantial crop damage, particularly to sesame and late planted maize in the coastal zones of the Barawa, Kurtunwarey and Merka districts.

Field reports and satellite imagery confirm that *Deyr* rains ended earlier than expected in November, and dry conditions persist, especially in the central regions and in parts of southern regions (see Figure 2 percent of normal). As a result, water catchments were not sufficiently replenished and some water reservoirs (*berkads*) dried early. In the Lower and Middle Shabelle regions and in parts of the Juba regions, dry conditions also persist. There are major concerns over the crop performance in most agricultural areas, as well as possible early pasture depletion in pastoral areas. Some rainfed crops are experiencing a low moisture situation, causing them to dry up, especially in the Lower and Middle Shabelle regions.

Conversely, most parts of the Hawd, Nugaal Valley, the western parts of the agro-pastoral livelihoods and the western part of Golis-Guban received normal rains that were widely distributed. Thus far, normal livestock migration from rain deficit localities to the rainfed areas of the Hawd and Nugal livelihood zones, have been observed; however, increased livestock migration to such areas has subsequently placed pressure on pasture resources.

Although the *Deyr* season ended earlier than expected, sometimes in December some *Hays* rains (off-season coastal rains) will fall along the coastal beltline. However, these rains are minimal. It is predicted that the dry spell will persist (see Figure 4) for the next seven days. In addition, there will be no risk of flooding due to low rainfall conditions in the upper catchments of the Ethiopian highlands.

For more rain gauge data please contact hdro@faoswalim.org or visit http://www.faoswalim.org.

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Figure 1. Rainfall estimate (mm), Sept 10 -Dec 10 , 2008

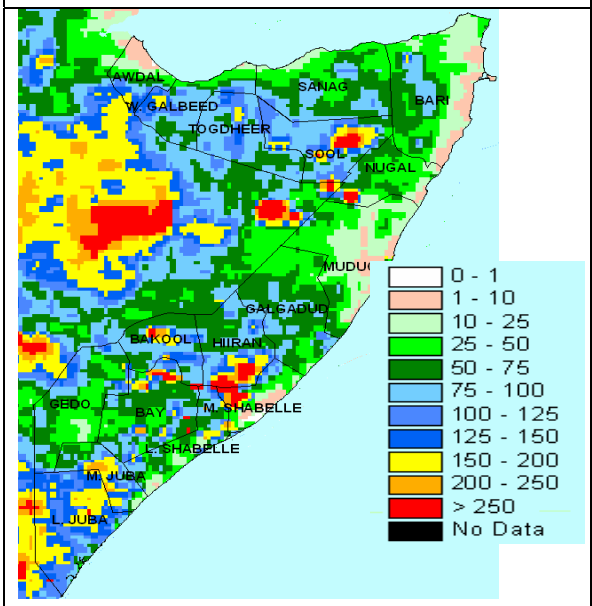


Figure 2: Rainfall Percent of normal Sept 10 -Dec 10, 2008

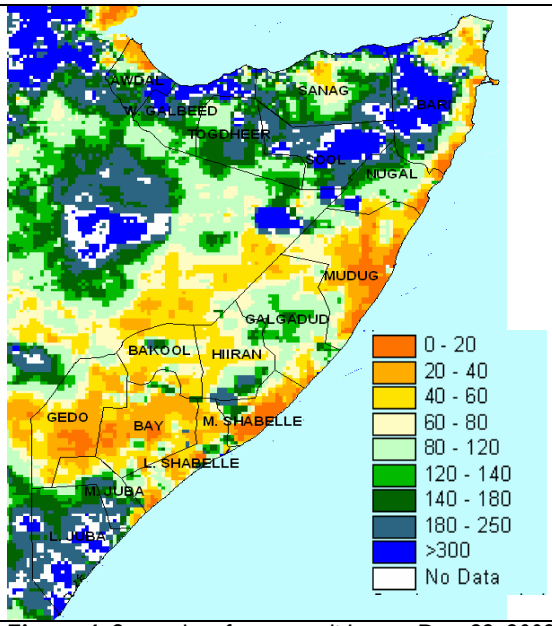


Figure 3.Spot NDVI first dekad of Dec' 2008

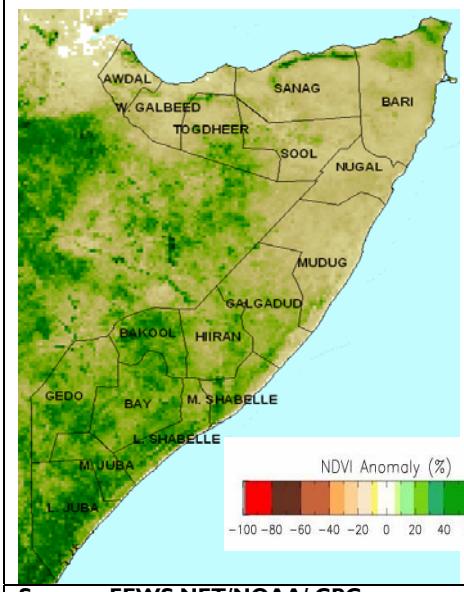
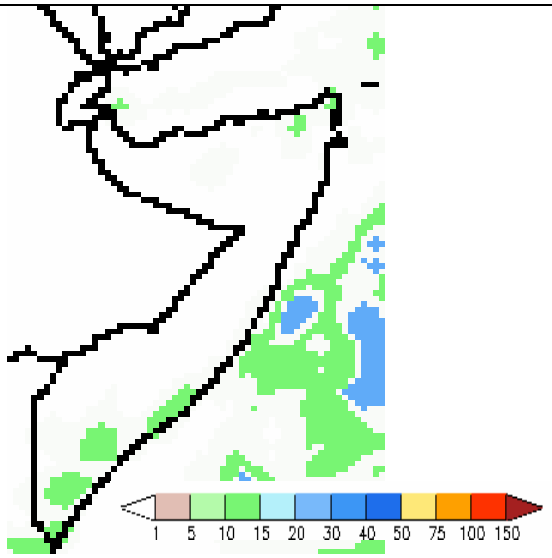


Figure 4. Seven days forecast valid up to Dec 22, 2008



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