

*Continued adequate moisture conditions raise hopes for average to above-average harvest*

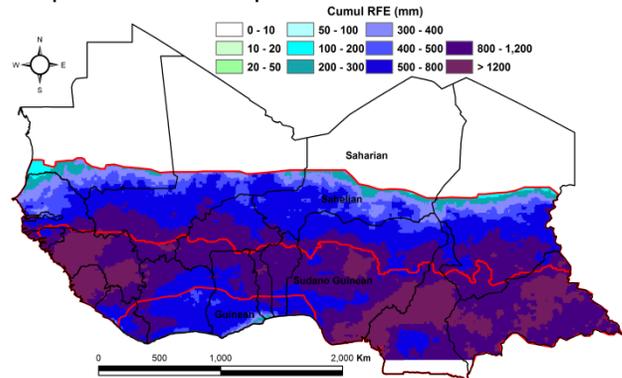
**KEY MESSAGES**

- The Intertropical Front (ITF) started its southward retreat in early September but it remains either at or north of its average position, which could mean a normal to longer growing period.
- From early July until mid-September, mostly average to above-average rainfall that has been well-distributed over time has fallen throughout most of the region (**Figures 1 and 2**), which is ensuring good growing conditions.
- Seasonal rainfall deficits (**Figure 2**) are minimal and limited to the extreme western part of the Sahel, the middle of Niger and the southern part of the Gulf of Guinea countries; these deficits are not expected to adversely affect crop development.
- The medium-term forecast for the next two weeks ([Sept 23-29](#) and [Sept 30-Oct 6](#)) calls for a drier agro-pastoral zone, likely signaling a normal end of the rainy season, and for moderate to heavy rains over the rest of the region where agricultural conditions will remain favorable.
- Heavy rainfall over the past two months has caused flooding in some areas along the Niger, Benue and Senegal River basins. Based on the past two weeks' rainfall amount and frequency as well as the next two-week forecast, the risk of flooding remains high in Senegal and Nigeria.

**UPDATE ON SEASONAL PROGRESS**

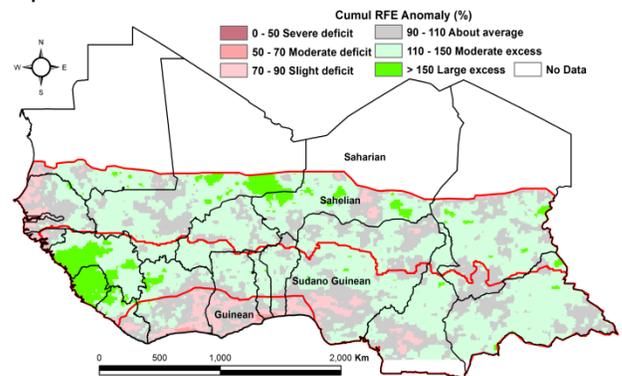
- The Intertropical Front (ITF) reached its northernmost position at the end of August and started its southward retreat in early September. However, the retreat has been slower than average, leaving the ITF north of its climatological position over eastern Mauritania, Mali and Niger and at its climatological position in western Mauritania and over Chad (**Figure 3**).
- The seasonal “minor dry season” in the bi-modal zone finished as usual in late August and early September.
- Seasonal rainfall (April-September) has been average to above average over most of the region (**Figures 1 and 2**). Rainfall deficits are light and limited to a few areas scattered across the region including western Senegal, central Niger, and the southern part of the Gulf of Guinea countries. These deficits, however, are not expected to have an adverse impact on crop and pasture production because:
  - the rainfall distribution over time was favorable without any long dry spells

**Figure 1:** Total rainfall estimate (RFE) in mm, 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of April-2<sup>nd</sup> dekad of September



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

**Figure 2:** Rainfall estimate (RFE) anomaly compared to the 2006-2015 mean, 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of April-2<sup>nd</sup> dekad of September

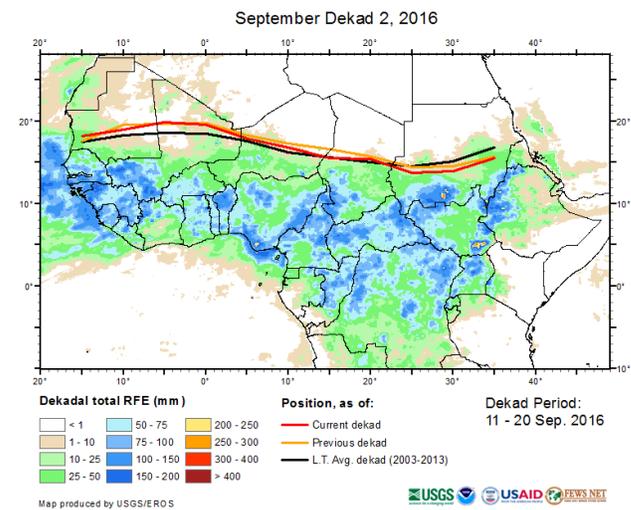


Source: USGS/FEWS NET

More information on remote sensing can be found at: [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/african\\_desk/cpc\\_intl/](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/african_desk/cpc_intl/) and <http://earlywarning.usgs.gov/?l=en>

- most of the previously mentioned deficit areas were wetter than average during previous months
- In some places, the heavy rainfall during August resulted in flooding in low lying areas and along major rivers. Light to moderate flooding has been reported in Mali and Niger along the Niger River and in Nigeria along the Benue and Niger Rivers. Flooding has also been reported in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Senegal over low lying areas with often poor drainage systems.
- While rainfall subsided over most of the Niger River basin during the past two weeks, the Senegal and Benue basins have received heavy and frequent rains. Since the next two week forecast also calls for heavy rains over a large portion of these two basins, the risk of flooding remains high.
- The mostly adequate and well-distributed seasonal rainfall across all agro-ecological zones is favorable to crop development, and an average to above-average harvest is expected as a result.

**Figure 3:** Intertropical Front (ITF) position compared to climatological average in 2<sup>nd</sup> dekad of September

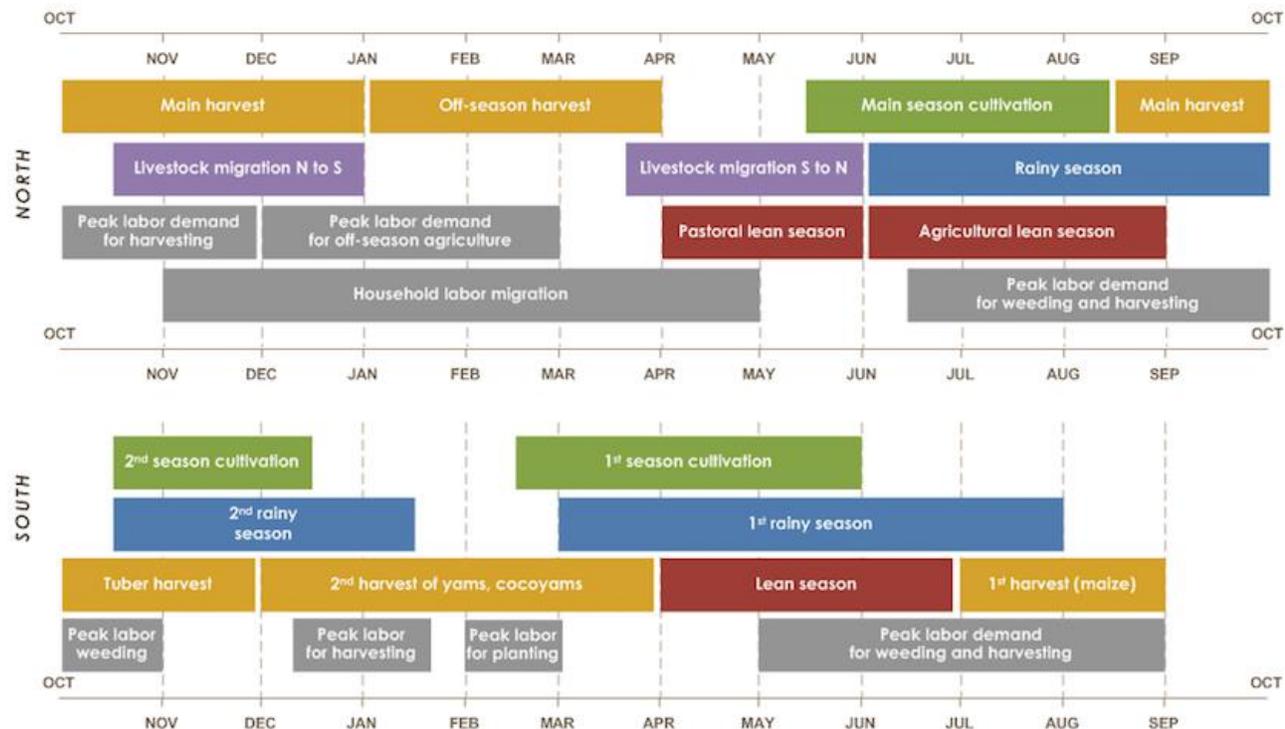


Source: USGS/FEWS NET

**FORECASTS**

- [NOAA/CPC's](#) short and medium-term forecasts call for moderate to heavy rains in the region with the exception of the agro-pastoral zone where drier conditions are expected. Rainfall is also expected to be below average in southern Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal for the next two weeks ([Sept 23-29](#) and [Sept 30-Oct 6](#)).
- In next month, which officially marks the end of the growing period in West Africa, the [NOAA-NCEP](#) seasonal forecast calls for average rainfall across the whole region.

**SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR**



Source: FEWS NET