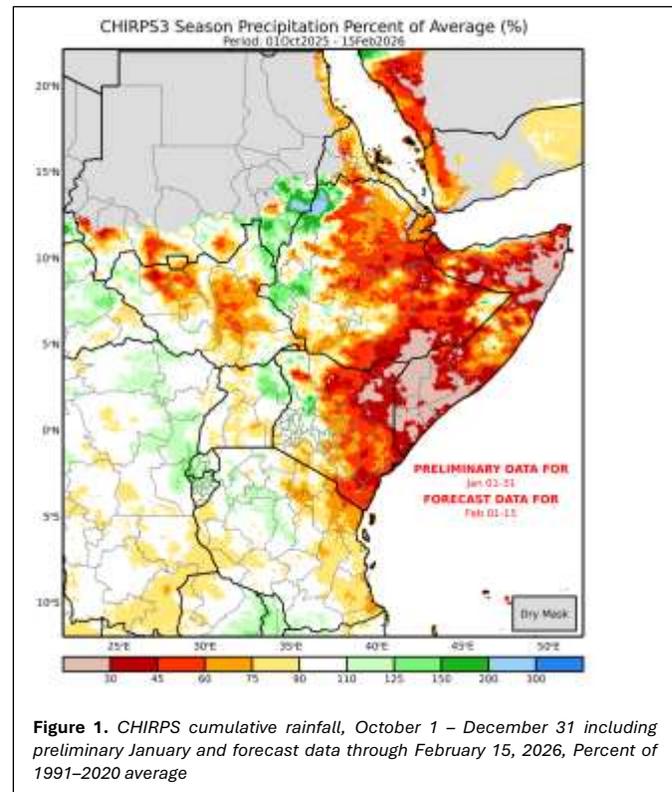


Persistent Dryness and Mixed Prospects Ahead of the March–May Season

KEY MESSAGES

- The October–December 2025 short rains was characterized by extreme deficits across **Somalia, eastern and southeastern Ethiopia**, and eastern half of **Kenya**. Typical dry conditions persisted into February 2026 across much of the region (Figure 1), exacerbating the severe dry conditions and driving serious concerns for food security.
- **Western Kenya, western Ethiopia**, much of Burundi, **Uganda, western Rwanda** and **Central Tanzania** received near-average to slightly above-average rainfall, supporting improvements in soil moisture ahead of the March–May season. However, early rainfall deficits due to the delayed OND season and poor seasonal rainfall distribution may lead to reduced overall production.
- Across the eastern Horn, the combination of extremely poor OND rains, continued January dryness, and above-average temperatures has severely limited prospects for crop recovery. Poor to failed harvests are expected in marginal agricultural areas of **central, southern, and eastern Kenya, southern Somalia**, and **southern and southeastern Ethiopia**. Pasture and water resources have also continued to deteriorate across pastoral areas of **Somalia, southern and southeastern Ethiopia**, and **eastern half of Kenya**, prompting livestock migrations earlier, further, and in greater numbers than is typical.
- Short term forecasts indicate likely above-average rainfall in **Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda**, and **western Kenya beginning in February–March**. A potential early onset of the Belg rains is also expected in **southwestern Ethiopia**. Seasonal forecast from the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (**GHACOF**) indicates average to above-average March–May rainfall across western and central parts of the region. However, near-normal rainfall is projected for **Eastern East Africa (EEA)** including most of **eastern Kenya, southern Somalia**, and **southern and southeastern Ethiopia**, this raises concern about recovery, given the extreme rainfall deficits experienced during the recent October–December short/Deyr season.



SEASONAL PROGRESS

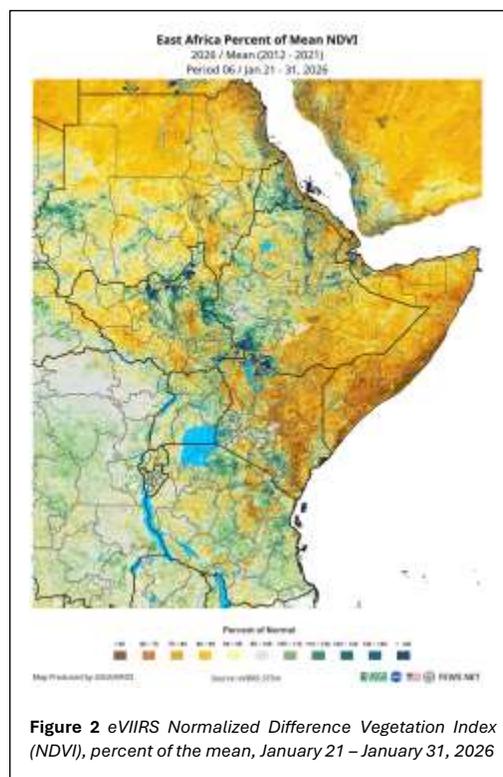
OCTOBER – DECEMBER, 2025

Context: Between October and December, the following are the areas and names of the rainy seasons underway in parts of East Africa: Short rains (October to December) in Northern, Northeastern, Southern and Coastal Kenya; Burundi; Rwanda; Northern, Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Uganda; Deyr rains in Somalia; Deyr/Hageya rains in Southern and Southeastern Ethiopia.

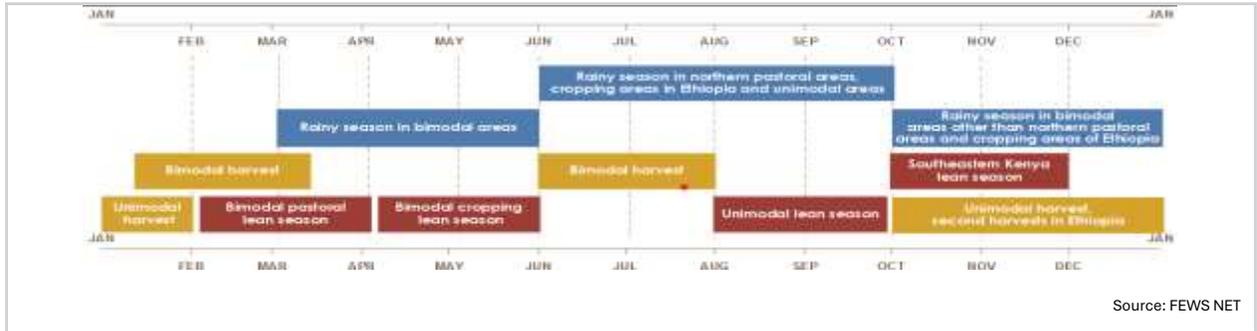
The October–December 2025 short rains in the eastern Horn of Africa were exceptionally poor, with many areas experiencing extreme rainfall deficits. Rainfall failed to materialize in **southern Somalia** while **northern and eastern Kenya** and **southern and southeastern Ethiopia** received only 30 to 60 percent of average rainfall (Figure 1). The season ranked as one of the driest on record in southern Somalia and parts of eastern Kenya and southeastern Ethiopia. These dry conditions limited crop establishment, pasture regeneration and surface water replenishment. A recent rapid field assessment conducted in **Kenya** between 15th and 23rd January indicated that planted seeds failed to germinate across much of the marginal agricultural regions of **Taita Taveta County**. Most of the germinated crops remained stunted at knee to waist high level with very low chances of recovery in all the 20 counties visited. In **Somalia**, the government declared a drought emergency in November 2025 following a delayed onset coupled with in-season extreme rainfall deficits. Humanitarian agencies reported widespread drought in **southern Somalia, Mandera and Wajir in northeastern Kenya**, and the **Somali region of Ethiopia**. Dry and hotter-than-average (+0.5–1.5 degrees C) conditions have persisted through early 2026, severely hampering crop recovery. In marginal agricultural zones of **eastern Kenya, southern and southeastern Ethiopia**, and much of central and **southern Somalia**, moisture levels remain critically low due to the combination of significantly below-average October–December rainfall and anomalous high temperatures which has driven elevated evapotranspiration, causing crops to wither. The resulting crop shortfalls are expected to reduce food availability at the household and community levels.

Pasture and water resources across pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in **Somalia, eastern Ethiopia**, and **northern and northeastern Kenya** continued to decline during the October–December 2025 rainy season, when they are typically replenished, and continuing into January 2026 (Figure 2), driven by prolonged moisture deficits, hotter-than-normal temperatures and high atmospheric water demand. In **Somalia**, grazing lands that typically regenerate after the short rains showed significant vegetation stress and low forage biomass, forcing pastoralists to move herds earlier and over longer distances than usual in search of pasture and water. Similarly, pastoral communities in the **Somali, Oromia**, and parts of **northern Ethiopia** have reported drying water pans and shrinking pasture availability, raising concerns for herd health. In **northern and eastern Kenya**, in counties such as **Marsabit, Turkana, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, and Tana River** key water sources for both livestock and households including boreholes and traditional surface water points have dropped to unusually low levels for this stage of the season, prompting earlier-than-normal livestock migrations. The atypical movements are likely to escalate localized conflicts in hotspot areas over scarce water and grazing lands.

Western Kenya, western Ethiopia, eastern Uganda, and western Rwanda generally experienced **average to slightly above-average rainfall during the October–December 2025 short rains**. This has helped sustain soil moisture levels ahead of the upcoming March–May season. However,



Seasonal Calendar for a Typical Year



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