

Uncertain March–May production prospects following a mixed seasonal rainfall performance

Key Messages

- Uneven rainfall performance during the March–May rainy season has led to mixed outcomes across the bimodal regions of East Africa. While local production is expected to vary locally, regional crop production is likely to be near average overall. Southern Somalia (Bay and Bakool regions) present the largest areas of concern.
- Pasture and surface water conditions are generally adequate, with some concern for southeastern Ethiopia and Somalia.
- Anticipated El Niño conditions may delay the onset of seasonal rains and suppress rainfall across western and northern areas of East Africa during June–September.
- Later in the year forecast El Niño could increase the likelihood of above-average rainfall across many eastern and southern areas of East Africa during the October–December season.

March – May Season

Context: Between March and May, the following are the areas and names of the rainy seasons underway in parts of East Africa: Gu rains in Somalia; long rains in unimodal Kenya (areas of western Kenya) and Uganda (Karamoja) that extends to November; bimodal Kenya and Uganda; Season B rains (mid-February to May) in Burundi; belg rains (mid-February to May) in Ethiopia, as well as the diraac/sugum rains in the northern pastoral areas and gu/genna rains in the southern and southeastern pastoral areas of Ethiopia; and the first season rains in the bimodal areas within southwestern Ethiopia, southwestern South Sudan, and northern Uganda.

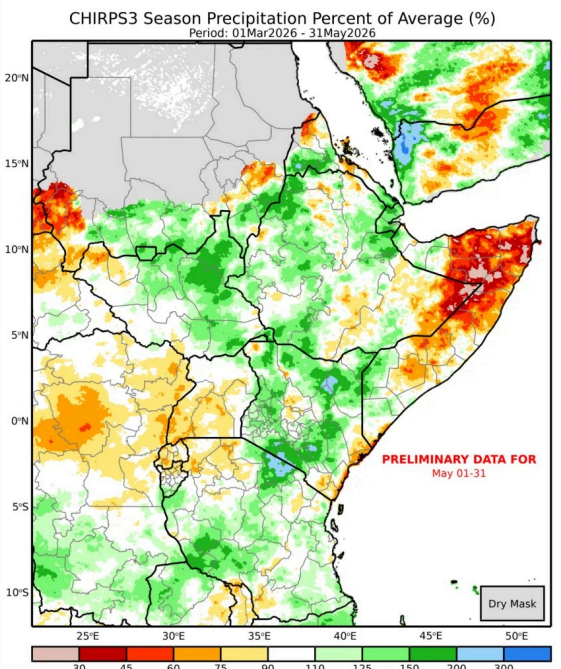
Uneven rainfall performance during the March–May rainy season has resulted in mixed outcomes across East Africa. The season began unusually early in most areas, facilitating early land preparation and planting activities. However, exceptionally heavy early-season rains in parts of Kenya, including Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu counties in the North Rift and Narok county in the South Rift, limited field access and mechanized operations, delaying planting despite otherwise favourable moisture conditions.

Rainfall distribution was also highly variable throughout the season, with extended dry spells occurring during critical crop development stages, particularly in April. As a result, crop conditions vary considerably across the region despite generally favourable cumulative seasonal rainfall totals. March–May rainfall percent anomalies are shown in Figure 1.

Harvests are expected to begin earlier than normal across most bimodal cropping areas of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the southern parts of the Belg-producing regions of Ethiopia following an exceptionally early onset of seasonal rains (Figure 2). However, despite the favorable start to the season, crop production is expected to be near average in many areas due to a dry spell in April that occurred at a critical cropping stage. Across northern Belg-

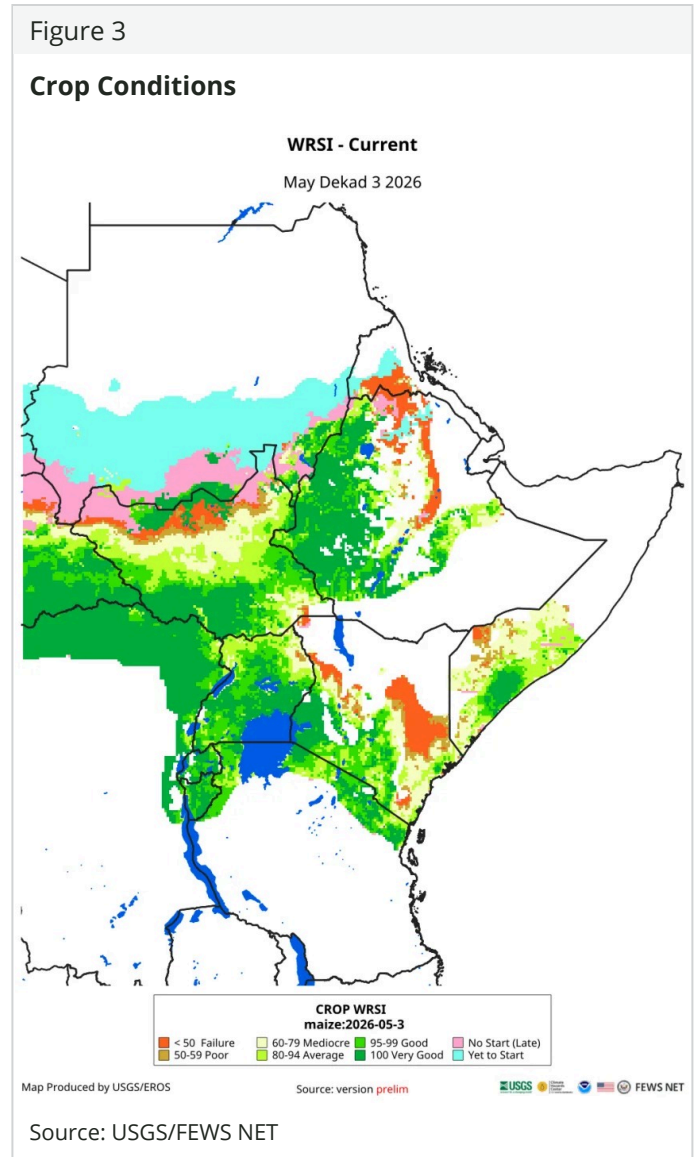
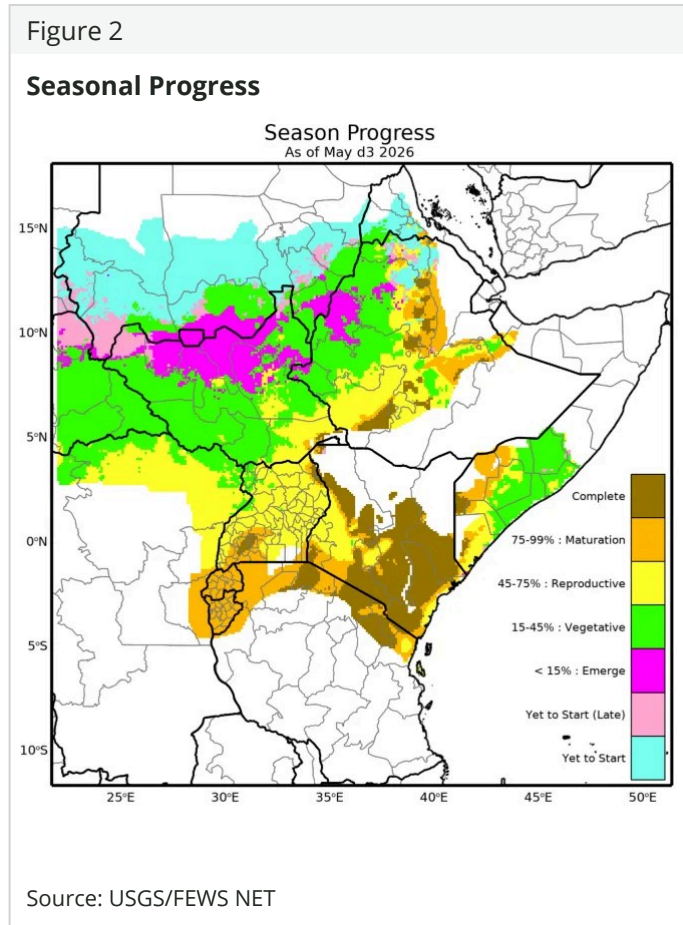
Figure 1

Rainfall Percent of Average



cropping areas of Ethiopia including parts of Amhara and Tigray, and southern agropastoral areas of Somalia including Bay and Bakool, a delayed onset to the seasonal rains limited early planting, and is likely to reduce production prospects.

Rainfall performance was also less favorable in several areas where seasonal totals ended below average. In central-southern Uganda, Rwanda, northern Burundi, parts of central and coastal strip of Kenya and most of the Somali region in eastern Ethiopia cumulative seasonal totals ranged between 60 to 90 percent of average (Figure 1). In other areas where rainfall was relatively well distributed such as parts of southwestern and western Kenya as well as parts of southern Ethiopia and most of bimodal South Sudan, crop conditions and production prospects remain favourable (Figure 3).



Pasture and surface water conditions also remain generally adequate across most pastoral and agropastoral areas following favourable March–May rains across East Africa. In northern and eastern Kenya, above-average seasonal rainfall supported pasture regeneration, improved water availability and limited livestock migration (Figure 4). However, rapid deterioration of vegetation has emerged in parts of eastern and northern Kenya due to persistent above-average temperatures in May.

Conditions are notably less favourable in Somalia and parts of southeastern Ethiopia following extremely below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures which have resulted in poor vegetation and increased stress on rangeland and surface water resources. Concerns remain particularly high across much of Somalia, where current poor conditions follow a failed October–December 2025 rainfall season. Several areas, particularly in the central and northern pastoral regions, have experienced more than 2 consecutive below-average rainfall seasons. These prolonged rainfall deficits have heightened food security concerns especially in the high cropping regions across the southern districts of Bay and Bakool.

Agroclimatic Outlook

June – September

Context: Between June and September, the following are the areas and names of the rainy seasons underway in parts of East Africa: Kiremt rains (June to September) in Western, Central, Northern, and Eastern Ethiopia; main rainy season (June to September) in the unimodal zones of South Sudan and Sudan; long rains in unimodal Uganda and Kenya; Karan/Karma rains (July to September) in northern pastoral areas of Ethiopia, Sitti and Fafan zones of Somali (Ethiopia), the northern sector of Somalia and Djibouti; and second rains (July to November) in South Sudan bimodal zone.

The June–September rainfall season is expected to have a delayed onset across the Kiremt-producing regions of western Ethiopia, the Karan pastoral regions of northeastern Ethiopia and parts of the unimodal cropping zones of Sudan and South Sudan (Figure 5). This is associated with the forecast El Niño development that is likely to suppress rainfall during the June–August period across parts of Ethiopia, Sudan, western Kenya, and Karamoja in Uganda as shown in Figure 6. The delayed onset and the expected below-average rainfall are likely to lead to moisture stress during critical growth stages. Particular concerns remain in the North Rift region of Kenya and Karamoja in Uganda, where crops are currently in vegetative to reproductive stages which are especially sensitive to water deficits. In the unimodal northern areas of South Sudan, field reports indicate that atypically early rainfall prompted early planting; however, subsequent dry spells have resulted in poor germination and crop wilting in some locations, increasing concerns over crop establishment and seasonal production prospects.

Figure 4

Vegetation Conditions

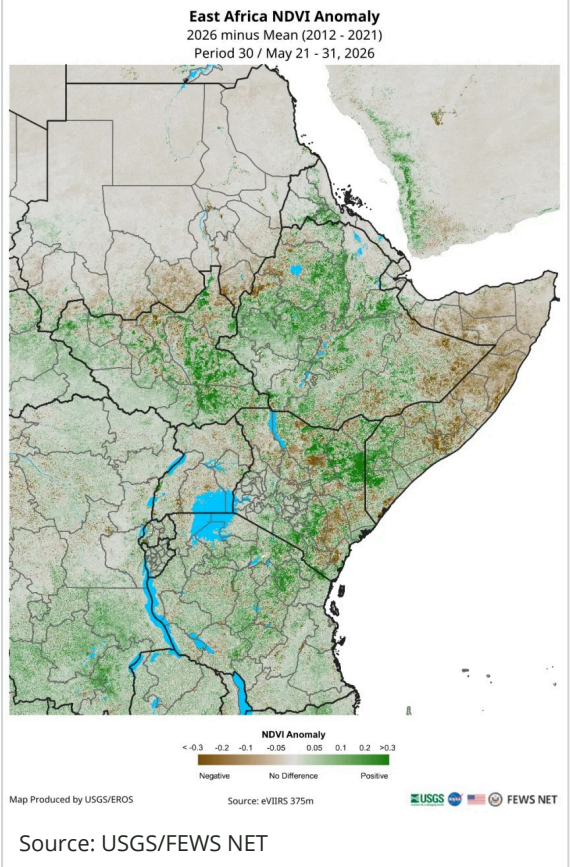
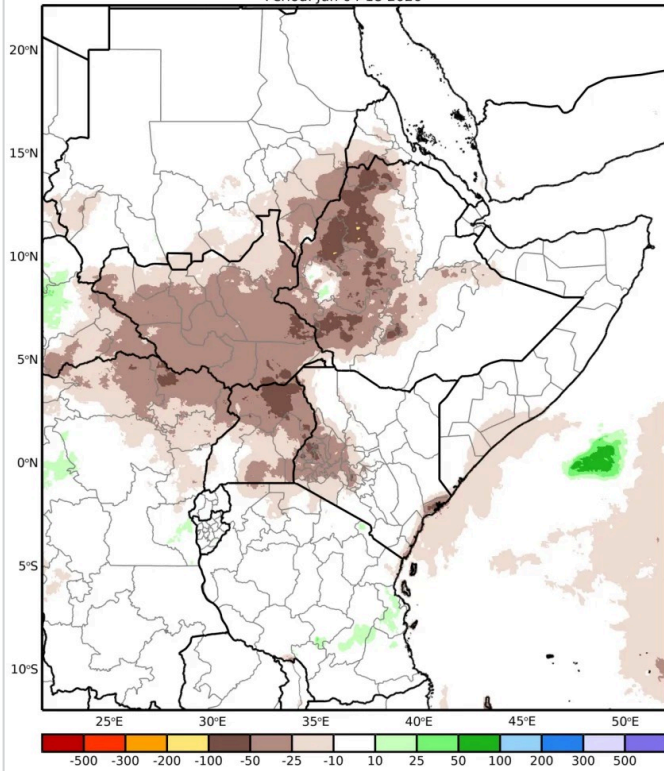


Figure 5

Short Term Forecast

CHIRPS3-GEFS 15-Day Rainfall Anomaly (mm)
Period: Jun 04-18 2026



Source: CHC/UCSB

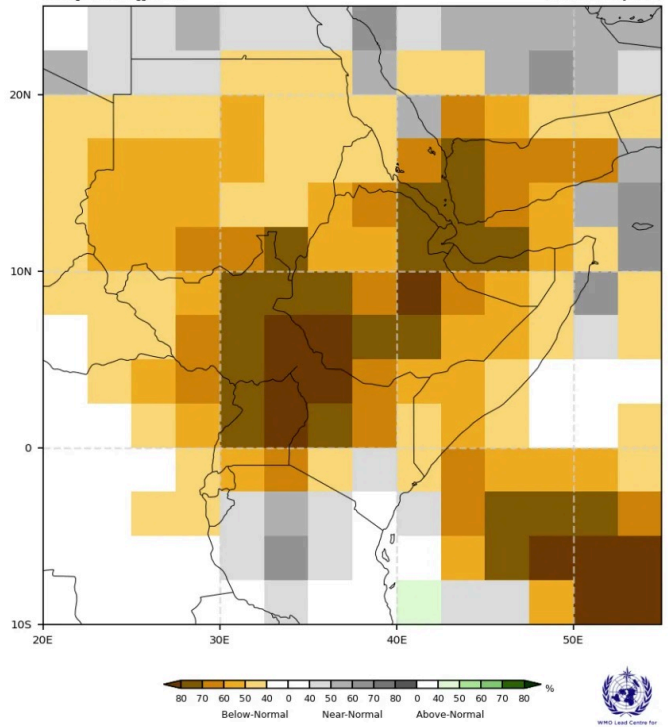
Figure 6

Seasonal Forecast

Probabilistic Multi-Model Ensemble Forecast
CFRTEC, ECMWF, Exeter, Melbourne, Montreal, Moscow, Offenbach, Seoul, Tokyo, Toulouse, Washington

Precipitation : JJA2026

(issued on May2026)



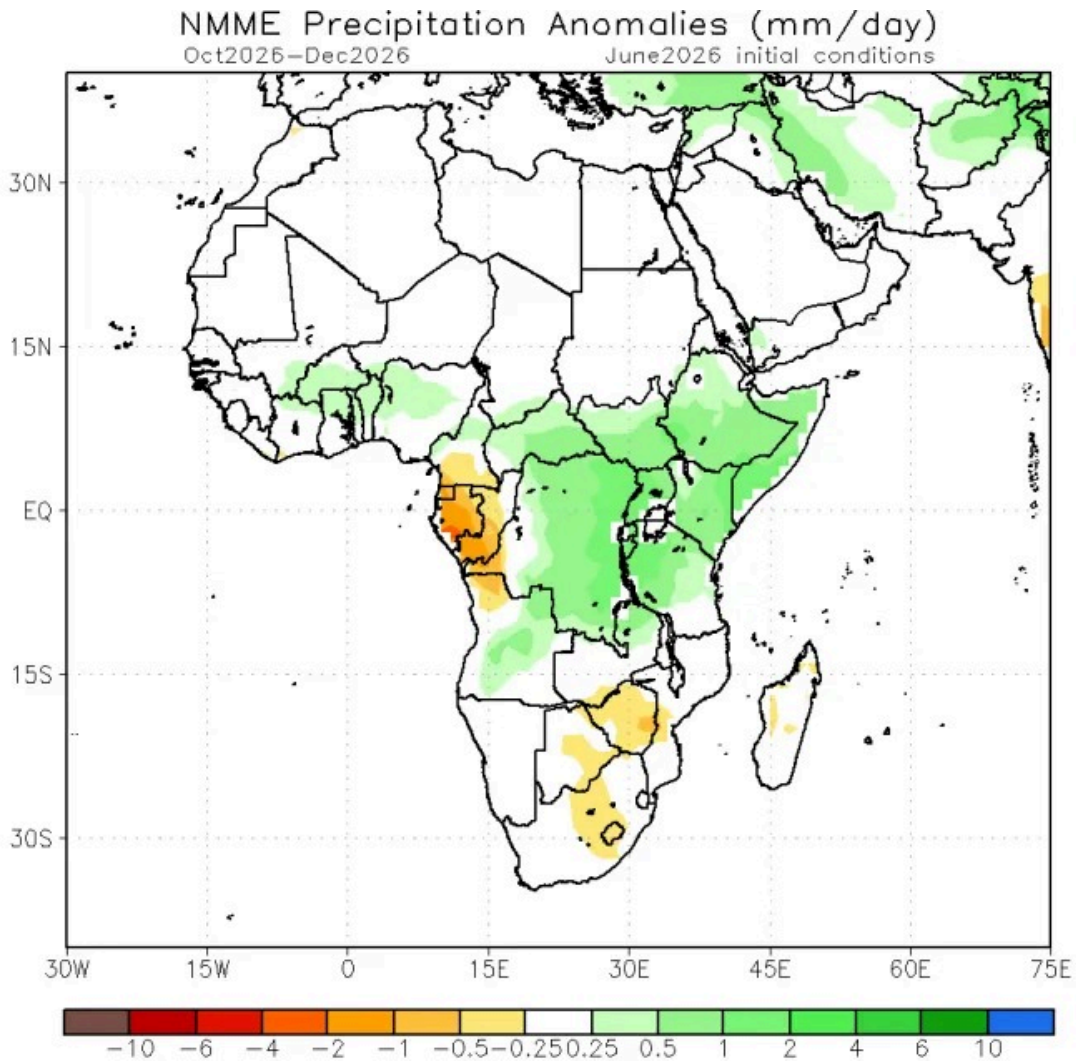
Source: WMO

October – December

There is an increased likelihood of above-average October–December rainfall across much of bimodal and southern areas of East Africa as shown in Figure 7. This is associated with the forecast El Niño development that is expected to persist through 2026. Enhanced rainfall during this period would likely support favourable agricultural and rangeland conditions, improve water availability, and facilitate recovery in areas affected by below-average rainfall earlier in the year including most of Somalia. The anticipated rainfall could also offer relief for most portions of Ethiopia that gain from the October–December rainfall, South Sudan and unimodal areas of western Kenya and Karamoja region of Uganda where below-average June–September rainfall may negatively impact crop and rangeland conditions. However, while the forecast rainfall is expected to be broadly beneficial, there remains an elevated risk of extreme rainfall events and flooding, particularly in flood-prone areas. This is likely to occur during the onset of the season following hardened dry soils across eastern Kenya, most of Somalia and eastern Ethiopia. In season flooding is also expected mainly due to extreme episodic rainfall.

Figure 7

Seasonal Forecast



Source: CPC/NOAA

Recommended citation: FEWS NET. East Africa Seasonal Monitor June 11, 2026: Uncertain March-May production prospects following a mixed seasonal rainfall performance, 2026.

Seasonal Monitor

FEWS NET's Seasonal Monitor reports are produced for Central America and the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa, Central Asia, and Somalia every 10-to-30 days during the region's respective rainy season(s). Seasonal Monitors report updates on weather events (e.g., rainfall patterns) and associated impacts on ground conditions (e.g., cropping conditions, pasture and water availability), as well as the short-term rainfall forecast. Find more remote sensing information [here](#).