



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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CLIMATE ADVISORY FOR THE 2019/20 SUMMER SEASON

Drought conditions persist in some parts of the country; and water restrictions remain in place in several provinces. The majority of the country reported reasonable to poor veld and livestock conditions. The average level of major dams has increased in the Western Cape but decreased in other provinces.

According to the Seasonal Climate Watch issued by the South African Weather Service dated 30 September 2019, below normal rainfall is anticipated over the central and south-eastern parts of the country during late spring. Above normal rainfall is expected during early summer to mid-summer in the central and eastern regions of the country. However, caution should be exercised as the forecasting system is uncertain resulting in the forecast also being uncertain. Temperatures are expected to be above normal for the northern most parts of the country.

The September 2019 Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) report states that the region continues to experience the impacts of the poor 2019 harvest with poor households in most parts of the region continuing to experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The most affected areas include; Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Lesotho. Currently, most households across the region have exhausted own production and are relying mainly on market purchases for food with atypically high maize grain prices. Similarly, these outcomes are present in conflict affected areas in DRC. Across the region there are no expectations of improvement through at least January 2020.

FEWS NET further reported that national and international forecasts indicate the possibility of below average rainfall for the first half of the season in southern parts of the region, which may result in a delayed onset. These forecasts indicate, central parts of the region are likely to receive near-normal rains from October through December, while northern areas may receive normal to below normal rainfall. Cumulative rainfall for October to March 2020 is expected to be average to above average in northern parts of the region with some central and southern areas anticipated to receive below average rainfall. Casual labour opportunities are expected to remain limited through at least January 2020. Currently poor households are earning income through activities including land preparation, brick molding, and selling of thatching grass. However, as

better-off households who normally provide these opportunities have also been affected by drought, opportunities are limited. The possibility for a delayed and erratic start of the season in some areas is expected to delay normal agriculture labour opportunities and delay access to this income source.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of standardised tools that aims at providing a "common currency" for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity.

Farmers are advised to approach the season with caution. Dryland farmers are advised to wait for sufficient moisture before planting, consider drought resistant cultivars and short season cultivars. The farmers are also advised to consider other alternative crops such as sorghum. Moreover, they are advised to be conservative in their planting i.e. planting density/cultivar/area being planted. Farmers using irrigation should be mindful of the forecast i.e. dam levels might not be replenished as quickly while irrigating due to the expected high temperatures. They must also comply with water restrictions in their areas. All farmers should follow weather and climate forecast regularly so as to make informed decisions.

Farmers are advised to keep livestock in balance with carrying capacity of the veld, and provide additional feed such as relevant licks. They should also provide enough water points on the farms as well as shelter during bad weather conditions. The veld remains dry especially in summer rainfall areas thereby maintaining the risk of veld fires. Therefore, maintenance of fire belts should be prioritised as well as adherence to veld fire warnings. Episodes of localised flooding resulting from thunderstorms are likely and preventative measures should be in place. As above normal temperatures are anticipated, heat waves are also likely, therefore measures to combat these should be in place. Farmers are encouraged to implement strategies provided in the early warning information issued.

All farmers should check continuous updates from the South African Weather Service.

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