



# agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **National Agro-meteorological Committee (NAC) Advisory on the 2017 winter season Statement from Climate Change and Disaster Management 10 DAFF16**

**July 2017**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Rainfall received in April was near normal to above normal, but below normal mainly in the Eastern Cape and the extreme western parts of the country. The rainfall decreased further over the central and western parts of the country in May resulting in below normal rainfall. The eastern parts of the country received near normal to above normal rainfall. Mid – June received below normal rainfall with patches of near normal rainfall in some winter rainfall areas, and patches of above normal rainfall in the north-eastern parts of the country. The season July 2016 to May 2017 received below normal rainfall in the south-west becoming near normal to above normal in other regions of the country.

### **II. CURRENT CONDITIONS**

#### **Conditions in provinces during May/June 2017**

Drought continues in the Western Cape and parts of the Northern Cape. Crops, veld and livestock conditions in other parts of the country are reasonable to good. Cases of rabies were reported in the Eastern Cape, and foot and mouth disease in Mpumalanga. Fires resulted in extensive damages in parts of the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Free State. Livestock mortalities due to inappropriate use/application of dips and/or home remedies were reported in KwaZulu-Natal. The level of major dams remains high in most provinces, but critically low in the Western Cape.

### **III. MARKET INFORMATION**

#### **Major grain commodities**

ABSA mentioned that by mid-June week on week new season white maize prices for delivery in July increased by 0.5%, while yellow maize prices increased by 0.8%. During early June, wheat prices for delivery in July increased by 0.6%. The weather outlook remains integral with winter wheat still in early stages of development. Sunflower prices decreased week on week by 0.9%, while soybean prices increased by 1.3%.

#### **Livestock domestic markets**

FNB indicated that beef prices were lower due to lower post-holiday demand. Weaner calves prices weakened due to lack of demand. It is expected that weaner calf prices will remain bullish due to the drought induced supply tightness and the herd rebuilding

process. Lamb and mutton prices posted good gains as a result of reduced availability across markets. It is anticipated that the markets will retain the current momentum in the short term on limited availability and stable demand. Pork and baconer prices saw a slight moderation as a result of softer demand. The market is expected to firm slightly in the short term to medium term with softer seasonal demand. Poultry prices traded sideways to lower due to the low seasonal demand.

## **VI. SADC REGION**

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) report issued in June stated that households are increasingly consuming their own produced crops and most areas in the region are experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity outcomes. Some exceptions remain in eastern parts of the DRC, and most of Tanzania where Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist due to the drought conditions which affected production, as well as conflict in the DRC. These outcomes are expected to continue in these areas through September. As is typical during the harvesting period, demand for maize purchases continue to decline across the region and has resulted in significant price decreases in some countries in the region. Mozambique is a typical example where May prices have generally decreased by between 57 and 73 percent and similar price trends have also been reported in Malawi and Zimbabwe. There are concerns that an oversupply of maize markets will result in small gains for poor households that typically sell maize grain for their livelihood, especially when compared to production costs they incurred. Improvements in the 2017 harvests across the region continue to present income earning opportunities for poor households that are currently engaged in harvesting activities. Average levels of labor opportunities and income are expected to continue through July because harvesting began slightly later than normal in some countries due to late rains. Between July and September, poor households are also expected to get additional incomes through gardening activities. Winter cropping is currently underway in parts of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, South Africa, and Mozambique. Prospects for these crops remain positive because of the favorable moisture conditions this season. Apart from further increasing local and household food supplies, winter harvesting activities are also expected to provide labor opportunities for poor households.

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

Source: <http://www.fews.net/southern-africa>

## **V. RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE FORECAST**

In summation, the forecasting system remains uncertain on a specific direction of rainfall i.e. as to whether it may be below normal or above normal. Temperatures are expected to be above normal except in the southwest where they may be cooler. Users are encouraged to continually check updates i.e. seasonal forecasts and utilize 7 day weather forecasts for short term planning.

## **VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drought continues in the Western Cape and parts of the Northern Cape, and the seasonal forecast still indicates uncertainty on the specific direction of the rainfall during the remainder of winter for the country. Temperatures are anticipated to be above normal across the country but below normal in the south-western parts of the country. With the seasonal forecast in mind, and the current conditions, farmers are advised to continue to conserve water and other resources in accordance with the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 1983, (Act No. 43 of 1983). Winter crop farmers should wait for sufficient moisture before planting and stay within the normal planting window. They are also advised to be conservative in their planting i.e. planting density/cultivar/area being planted. In addition they should consider drought tolerant cultivars where possible. Irrigation farmers should reduce the planting area in line with water restrictions in their areas. Farmers should follow the weather and climate forecast regularly so as to make informed decisions.

Livestock must continually be kept in line with carrying capacity of the veld, and be provided with additional feed such as relevant licks. They should also be provided with enough water points on the farm as well as shelter during bad weather conditions. As the veld is dry in summer rainfall areas this increases the risk of veld fires. Therefore creation of fire belts should be prioritized as well as adherence to veld fire warnings. Episodes of cold spells and localized flooding resulting from frontal systems will continue to occur during the remainder of winter and precautionary measures should remain in place e.g. moving livestock to a safe location during inclement weather. Farmers are encouraged to implement measures provided in the early warning information issued.

**Challenges of communication facilities in most districts in the provinces inhibit both dissemination and access to information and thus undermining the effectiveness of an early warning system.**

**Continuous support to Early Warning Committee and National Agro-Meteorological committee members will ensure the effective dissemination of early warning information as an integral component of an effective Early Warning System in support of disaster risk reduction.**

**Participation in the established study groups and Fire Protection Associations among farming communities will encourage knowledge sharing, good farming practices as well as effective implementation of the disaster risk reduction measures. Reporting of disaster risk issues to the local office including diseases and pests outbreak will ensure immediate attention and controlling of incidences.**

**The following form part of the recommendations in the full advisory for disaster risk reduction:**

- **Contingency plans for drought in winter rainfall areas.**
- **Adherence to the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No. 43 of 1983).**

DAFF through CCDM will continue to revisit the provinces for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

For a complete advisory, visit the DAFF website [www.daff.gov.za](http://www.daff.gov.za) or contact D: CCDM for more information: - Tel: 012 309 5722/23, Fax: 012 309 5878.