



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## **CLIMATE ADVISORY FOR THE 2018 WINTER SEASON**

Drought conditions persist in the Western Cape, parts of the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape. Water restrictions remain in place in several provinces. The majority of summer rainfall areas have reported reasonable to good veld and livestock conditions.

According to the Seasonal Climate Watch issued by the South African Weather Service (SAWS) dated 28 May 2018, there is possibility for above normal rainfall during mid and late winter. However, there is lack of confidence in the forecasting system and therefore the forecast is very uncertain. Also, temperatures are anticipated to be above normal across the country during mid and late winter. Nonetheless, due to lack of confidence in the forecasts; temperature conditions for the rest of winter remain uncertain.

The May 2018 Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) report indicates that harvesting activities have started in most countries in the region. For areas that experienced poorly distributed rains and drought conditions the harvest will produce enough maize to consume for 1 to 2 months, so it is only expected to marginally improve food security at the household level. In contrast, areas where the increased February and March rains improved the crop situation, staple supplies from the 2018 harvest are expected to improve the food security situation through September. As a result of the ongoing harvest, most areas across the region are experiencing Minimal ([The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification] IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, with the exception of parts of southwestern and eastern Madagascar; central Mozambique, where households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes due to the drought conditions experienced in December and January. Additionally, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to have more areas than any other country in the region experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are mainly in the conflict affected Kasai, Tanganyika, and Ituri provinces, where households were unable to engage in meaningful farming activities. After May, southern parts of Mozambique and Zimbabwe are projected to face earlier than usual food consumption gaps and will mostly experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.

Furthermore, FEWS NET reported that in most monitored markets, staple prices across the region are mostly stable and below the previous year and the five-year average. However, in some areas- including parts of Malawi and Madagascar, maize grain prices decreased slightly because of reduced demand on the market since most households at this point are relying on own production. Given the below-normal maize yields anticipated this year, food prices are expected to start to increase earlier than normal since farming households are likely to start market purchases for food earlier than normal.

[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.]

Dryland winter crop farmers are advised to 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 in the country 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 has dried out in summer rainfall areas, this increases the risk of veld fires. Therefore creation of fire belts should be prioritised as well as adherence to veld fire warnings. Episodes of cold spells and localised flooding resulting from frontal systems will occur during winter and measures should be in place to minimise or adapt to the negative impacts of these hazards.

**For media enquiries and further information contact:**

Steve Galane: Departmental Spokesperson

083 635 7346

[SteveGAL@daff.gov.za](mailto:SteveGAL@daff.gov.za)