

Update on Crop Production

Department of AGRITEX

Overview of the season

- * The 2021/2022 season started late in the 2nd and 3rd dekads of December 2021 .
- * Where it started early, (last week of October to mid- November 2021), it was a false start.
- * Rainfall distribution was poor in both space and time across the country.
- * Incessant rains in January followed by prolonged dry spell in the first week of February to end of March.
- * Incessant rains caused excessive leaching of nitrogen and other crop nutrient
- * The false start resulted in failed crop establishment leading to replanting.
- * The late onset caused late plantings later affected by prolonged dry spell at critical stage causing write offs especially in the central and southern parts of the country.
- * Unusually heavy late rains have been received in April across the country.
- * The positive/ Neegative impact of these rains has not been evaluated but should generally result in a lower deficit for most crops

Impact of the Season on Crop production

- * A decrease in area planted and production for almost all crops
- * Increased write off area for all crops especially for maize in most parts of the country.
- * The late rains received in April may have a negative impact on the quality of produce for crops that have reached the maturity stage but may also have a positive impact on the late planted crops that are still at reproductive stage.

Impact of the season to Crop Production by Province

Mash west

- * A prolonged dry spell of about 28 days was experienced during the period between 2nd week of February to second week of March, which resulted in wilting and write-off of crops.
- * The Southern districts (Chegutu, Ngezi and Sanyati) were affected the most.
- * Widespread rainfall is currently being received in most districts resulting in slight improvement in late planted crop condition.
- * Early planted maize has reached harvesting stage but harvesting being affected by the current incessant rains.
- * Some late planted maize and tobacco have been affected by hailstorm in the 2nd dekad of April in Zvimba district.

Mash Central

- * A prolonged dry spell of 28 to 38 days was experienced from the 2nd week of February to end of March, which resulted in wilting and write-off of some crops.
- * The Northern districts (Mbire, Lower Muzarabani, Lower Mt Darwin and Rushinga) were most affected.
- * Widespread rainfall is currently being received in most districts resulting in sprouting of legumes (cowpeas, groundnuts, sugar beans and soya beans). Stacked and lodged maize is rotting.
- * Late planted maize and tobacco have been affected by hailstorm in the 2nd dekad of April.

Mash East

- * A prolonged dry spell of 23 to 33 days was experienced from the 1st week of February to mid-March, which resulted in wilting and write-off of crops.
- * The most affected districts were Chikomba, Hwedza, parts of Mudzi, UMP, Mutoko and Marondera.
- * Widespread rainfall is currently being received in most districts resulting in sprouting of legumes (cowpeas, groundnuts, sugar beans and soya beans). Stacked and lodged maize is rotting.
- * Current rains being received in most districts have resulted in improved condition in late planted crops.

Manicaland

- * A prolonged dry spell of about 40 days was experienced from the 1st week of February to mid-March, which resulted in widespread write-off of crops.
- * The most affected districts were Buhera, northern and southern parts of Makoni, Mutare West, Mutasa west, Lower Nyanga, lower Chimanimani, lowveld of Chipinge.
- * The current wet spells in the eastern parts have improved condition (fair to good) of late planted maize, cotton, sweet potato and sugar bean.
- * Late planted traditional grains at grain filling stage are currently being affected by quelea birds and armoured crickets. The bulk of the crop is at maturity stage.

Midlands

- * A prolonged dry spell of about 23 to 35 days was experienced during the period between 1st week of February to third week of March, which resulted in wilting and write-off of crops.
- * Most affected districts were parts of Kwekwe, Zvishavane and Mberengwa districts.
- * Early planted maize has reached harvesting stage but harvesting is being affected by the current incessant rains.

Matabeleland North

- * A prolonged dry spell of 30 to 40 days was experienced from the 1st week of February to 1st week of April, which resulted in wilting and write-off of cereal crops.
- * The most affected districts were Binga, Hwange, parts of Lupane, Nkayi and Umguza.
- * Patchy rainfall in all the districts is causing sprouting of legumes (cowpeas, groundnuts, sugar beans and soya beans).
- * Stacked and lodged maize and traditional grains are rotting.
- * Late planted maize and traditional grains in districts like Binga have benefited from the late rains.
- * The bulk of the early planted crop is at harvesting stage.

Matabeleland South

- A prolonged dry spell of 37 to 60 days was experienced from the 1st week of February to end of March, which resulted in severe write-off of crops.
- * The most affected districts were Matobo, Southern Gwanda, parts of Bulilima and Mangwe.
- * Widespread rainfall is currently being received in most districts resulting in sprouting of legumes (cowpeas and groundnuts).
- * Traditional grains and maize are lodging and rotting.
- * The bulk of the late planted crops are at maturity stage and are fair in condition.

Masvingo

- * A prolonged dry spell of 30 to 60 days was experienced from the 1st week of February to end of March, which resulted in write-off of crops.
- * All districts were affected except some parts of Bikita, Gutu, Zaka and Masvingo.
- * Widespread rainfall is currently being received in most districts resulting in sprouting of legumes (cowpeas and groundnuts).
- * The bulk of the late planted crops is at maturity stage and is fair to good in condition.