• Nigeria has had a variable rainfall season so far. Drier than average conditions until late April were reversed in May by wetter than average conditions across the whole country.

• In northern areas, the season got off to a good and mostly earlier than usual start. More modest and poorly distributed rainfall in June and July led to lower than average vegetation development in central and eastern Nigeria.

• There is not a well defined rainfall tendency for the later stages of the season (mid August-late September). Some focus areas have been identified for closer monitoring.

• So far, no major concern has emerged, though Adamawa state in the east and Zamfara-Niger in the west require closer monitoring given recent poor rains and low vegetation health.
Nigeria has had a mixed quality rainfall season so far. Drier than average conditions prevailed in the very early stages (until late April), followed by wetter than average conditions across the whole country, during May. This wiped out early season deficits (see map above left) and brought suitable conditions for planting and early crop development.

In June and July, good conditions prevailed in the NE of the country, with drier conditions in the West and NW regions. The south and SE alternated between drier than usual conditions in June and wetter conditions in July.

For northern areas, the key stage of the season is approaching now – a lot of the seasonal outcomes will depend on August rainfall. At this stage, no major concerns emerged, though areas of dryness in the center and west require continued monitoring.
The timeliness of the start of the growing season in Nigeria was variable across the country (see map above left). In the southernmost regions, favourable early rains (March) led to earlier than usual onset of suitable moisture conditions. Dryness in April led to delays in the start of the season in central Nigeria of up to 4 weeks in some areas. Much better rains in May resulted in earlier than usual starts of the season in northern areas, particularly in eastern areas of Borno state, where vegetation cover has remained above average until now (maps right).

More irregular and poorly distributed rains in June and early July degraded some of the vegetation development by mid-July, with below average vegetation spreading across areas of eastern Nigeria (map below right).
For Nigeria, drier than average conditions are forecast for mid-August in the southern half of the country particularly around the Niger delta regions, states of Bayelsa, Ondo, Kogi, Ebonyi, Rivers. Some north central areas (roughly from Zamfara to Bauchi) are also forecast to be drier than usual.

This pronounced dryness is expected to be transitory but may lead to a build up of moisture deficits in the central-eastern areas of Nigeria, specifically Adamawa, southern Borno, Gombe and parts of Taraba. This may negatively impact on crop production in these regions wherever crops are in the flowering stage, particularly if the forecast is accurate and if rains do not improve in late August.
This slide presents seasonal profiles for selected locations around Nigeria where monitoring information shows relevant patterns.

Location A (Kebbi state) is representative of areas in western Nigeria where rainfall deficits in June led to delayed vegetation development. Recent drier than average conditions should lead to further poor vegetation cover and crop development.

Location B has a more optimistic outlook as vegetation should recover following better recent rainfall.

Location C in eastern Borno state enjoyed abundant early rainfall; this led to strong and above average vegetation growth which is now expected to revert to more average levels in the coming few weeks.

Location D shows some delay in vegetation development probably due to poor rainfall distribution but this should pick up in the next few weeks in response to recent rainfall.

Location E (Adamawa) endured drier than average conditions in the last three weeks and this should maintain vegetation cover at lower than average levels.

Get your own plots at: http://dataviz.vam.wfp.org/seasonal_explorer/rainfall_vegetation/visualizations
Seasonal rainfall forecasts are issued by a variety of institutions and can provide a perspective for seasonal development up to three months ahead. However, for the later stages of the season (September-October) in West Africa, these forecasts are not consistent among different institutions:

The most recent ECMWF forecasts (European Centre for Medium range Weather Forecasts) are pessimistic indicating moderately drier than average conditions for the period August-October 2019. In contrast, the most recent forecasts from CPC (Climate Prediction Centre, USA), indicates favourable conditions across northern Nigeria.

A lack of consistent perspectives means that for this season, only satellite monitoring and short range forecasts are able to provide relevant information.