10-Day Rainfall & Agromet Bulletin

Department of Meteorological Services

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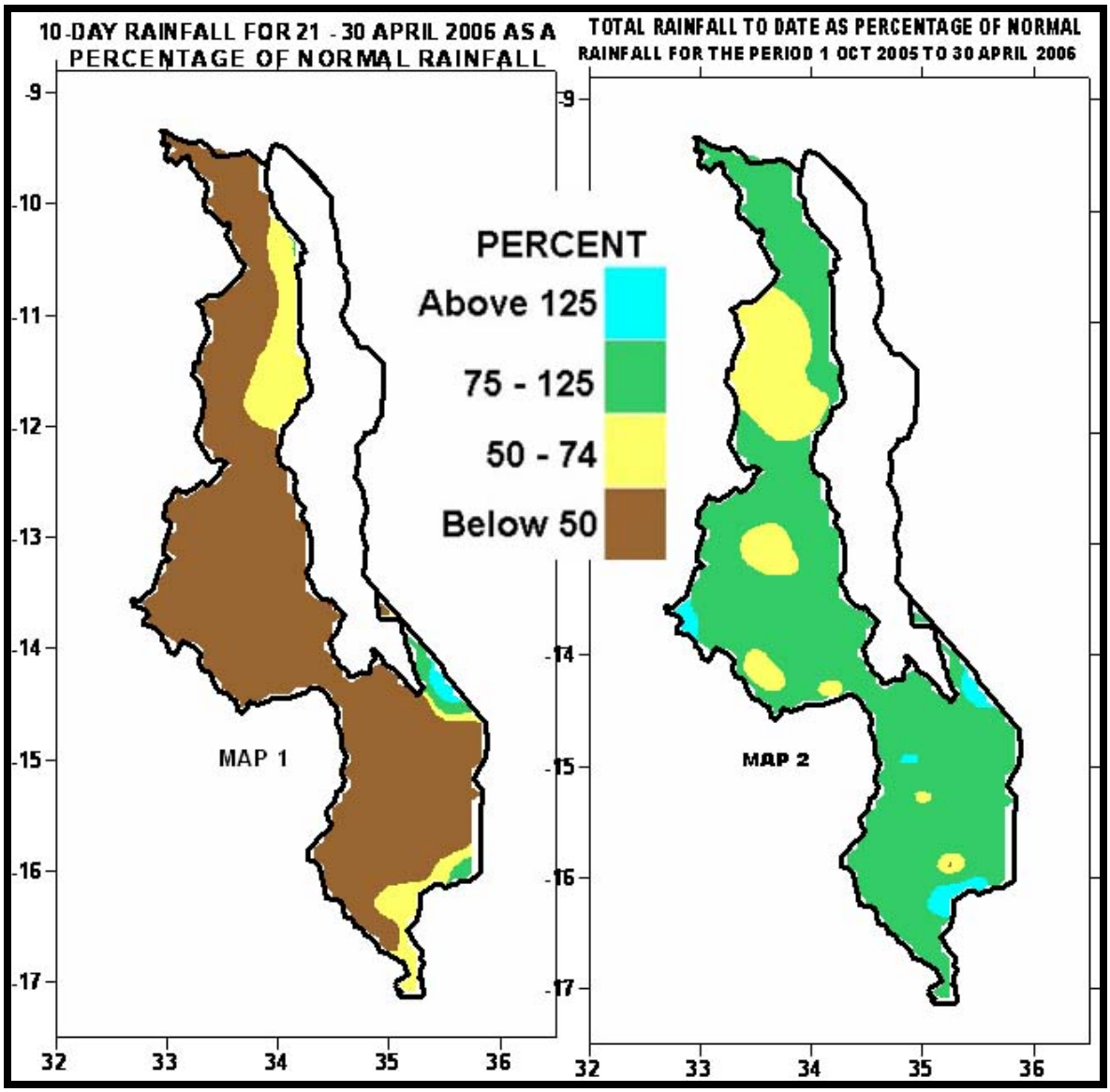
HIGHLIGHTS

- Mostly dry weather experienced in the last days of April 2006…
- Most areas registered normal cumulative rainfall amounts during 2005/06 season…
- Occasional winter rains expected over highlands and lakeshore areas…



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1. WEATHER SUMMARY

1.1 RAINFALL

During the last 10-days of April 2006 the main rain belt shifted to East Africa marking the end of the main rains in Malawi. Consequently most parts of Malawi experienced dry conditions except some parts of Mulanje and Mangochi districts in the south where substantial rainfall was experienced. Otherwise, most areas registered below normal 10-day rainfall amounts ranging from 0 to 25mm.The few areas that received above normal dekadal rainfall amounts included Namwera (195%) and Lujeri (132%). See Table 1 and Map 1.

As at 30th April 2006 cumulative rainfall performance showed that most areas of Malawi had received between 75 and 125% of the expected cumulative rainfall amounts. This entails that during 2005/06 rainfall season Malawi has received normal rainfall amounts. See Table1 and Map 2.

[Note: Normal = 75 – 125%, above normal = 125%, below normal = 75%, extremely below normal = 50%]

1.2 MEAN AIR TEMPERATURE

Warm to hot temperatures were maintained over Malawi. Mean daily maximum temperatures ranged from 21°C at Dedza to 31°C at Ngabu. Mean daily minimum temperatures ranged from 13°C to 20°C. See Table 2.

1.3 MEAN DAILY WIND SPEEDS

Mean daily wind speeds measured at a height of 2m above the ground indicated that light and variable winds prevailed over the country. The average speeds ranged from 0.8m/s (2.9 Km/hr) at Chitedze to 3.0 m/s (10.8 Km/hr) at Salima. See Table 2.

1.4 MEAN RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Mean Relative Humidity values during the period ranged from 46% at Dedza in the centre to 83% at Mzuzu in the north giving a 10-day national average of 70%. See Table 2.

2. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Dry conditions that were experienced in most parts of the country facilitated harvesting and drying of matured crops. The maize crop in the north was at maturity and drying stages while in the centre and south the crop was being harvested.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF 2005-06 SEASON

During 2005/06 crop growing season, Malawi experienced good rains for agricultural production. Although most areas experienced late onset of effective planting rains, the season progressed very well from mid November 2005 to mid January 2006. This supported planting and development of most crops. However, in February some parts of the country experienced three to four weeks of dry spells. The dry spells were widely spread, but the intensity varied from one area to another. The worst affected areas included Nsanje and Kasungu Districts. During early March incessant rains caused flash floods in Salima and Ntcheu districts in central region and Mangochi and Machinga in the south. Another wave of flash floods was reported early April 2006 in Nkhata Bay district. Good rains that resumed in March 2006 continued falling in most parts of Malawi till mid April. By 30th April 2006, many areas of the country registered normal rainfall amounts.

All in all, despite late onset of effective planting rains in many areas, outbreak of army worms at the beginning of the season, occurrence of localized dry spells, hailstorms and flash floods in some districts, production of most crops has increased this season. Among other factors, the increase in production could be attributed to good rainfall pattern and government's input subsidy programme.

3. FORECAST FOR MAY 2006

A series of high pressure systems will periodically induce cool and moist south easterly air mass from the Indian Ocean into Malawi. Therefore, occasional winter rains are expected particularly over highlands and along the Lakeshore during the month of May 2006.

THIS IS THE LAST 10—DAY BULLETIN FOR 2005-06 SEASON

TABLE 1: DEKADAL RAINFALL FOR SELECTED STATIONS FOR DEKAD 3 OF APRIL 2006: PERIOD 21- 30

STATION NAME	DEKADAL TOTAL RAINFALL	DEKADAL NORMAL	**DEKADAL TOTAL AS % OF**	TOTAL TO DATE	NORMAL TO DATE	**TOTAL TO DATE AS % OF**	RAINY DAYS
SOUTHERN REGION	mm	mm	**NORMAL**	mm	mm	**NORMAL**	**≥ 0.3 mm**
Balaka Township	0.0	0.4	**0**	1056.6	825.2	**128**	0
Chancellor College	7.0	13.2	**53**	1281.9	1393.2	**92**	2
Chichiri Met.	4.5	16.7	**27**	1264.7	1070.4	**118**	4
Chileka Airport	0.0	3.5	**0**	1019.8	878.1	**116**	0
Chingale Agric	0.0	7.7	**0**	908.4	947.0	**96**	0
Chiradzulu Agric	4.2	9.0	**47**	1035.3	1044.8	**99**	1
Liwonde Township	0.0	8.3	**0**	877.9	830.0	**106**	0
Lujeri Tea Estate	83.4	63.0	**132**	1989.8	1983.7	**100**	4
Mangochi Met.	0.0	8.9	**0**	816.8	826.2	**99**	0
Monkey Bay Met.	0.0	4.1	**0**	878.9	916.8	**96**	0
Mulanje Boma	24.1	34.2	**70**	2227.7	1611.6	**138**	4
Namiasi Agric	0.0	7.3	**0**	837.7	796.8	**105**	0
Naminjiwa Agric	1.0	5.8	**17**	1106.9	931.7	**119**	1
Namwera Agric	21.5	11.0	**195**	1540.6	1062.7	**145**	1
Nchalo Sucoma	7.3	10.1	**72**	880.9	678.3	**130**	2
Ngabu Met.	4.0	11.1	**36**	785.3	766.4	**102**	2
Ntaja Met.	2.6	10.5	**25**	854.8	892.1	**96**	2
Thyolo Boma	9.1	24.7	**37**	1439.8	1148.4	**125**	1
Zomba RTC	6.1	10.0	**61**	1781.5	1200.7	**148**	2
CENTRAL REGION							
Chitedze Met.	2.5	8.4	**30**	701.0	905.4	**77**	1
Dedza Met	0.6	10.2	**6**	661.5	936.4	**71**	1
Dwangwa	1.3	36.3	**4**	1421.6	1394.7	**102**	1
Kaluluma DTC	0.7	3.7	**19**	775.8	809.8	**96**	1
K.I.A Met	0.0	4.0	**0**	779.2	827.7	**94**	0
Kasungu Met	0.0	8.0	**0**	550.7	848.7	**65**	0
Mchinji Boma	0.0	15.0	**0**	1454.7	1042.0	**140**	0
Ntcheu – Nkhande	0.0	8.1	**0**	1102.6	1058.5	**104**	0
Ntchisi Boma	0.0	6.3	**0**	677.3	868.5	**78**	0
Salima Met	0.0	11.1	**0**	1668.4	1258.3	**133**	0
Dedza RTC	0.0	5.1	**0**	912.1	979.0	**93**	0
NORTHERN REGION							
Bolero Met	0.0	4.7	**0**	457.3	728.2	**63**	0
Bwengu Agric.	4.4	8.8	**50**	592.2	826.1	**72**	2
Chikangawa forest	18.2	24.7	**74**	671.5	1121.3	**60**	4
Chitipa Met	2.3	9.0	**26**	990.2	979.2	**101**	1
Karonga Met.	14.0	33.9	**41**	1024.9	1049.6	**98**	5
Mzimba Met	1.0	8.7	**11**	651.1	883.6	**74**	1
Mzuzu Met.	42.6	59.2	**72**	955.5	1184.1	**81**	4
NkhataBay Met.	90.2	146.3	**62**	1281.2	1637.1	**78**	5
Vinthukutu Agric	55.4	65.6	**84**	1363.9	1222.6	**112**	6

TABLE 2: AGROMETEOROLOGICAL PARAMETERS FOR DEKAD 3 OF APRIL 2006

STATION	MAX TEMP (°C)	MIN TEMP (°C)	ABS MAX (°C)	ABS MIN (°C)	WIND SPEED m/s	RH %
BOLERO	28.0	14.6	30.0	11.5	1.1	68
CHICHIRI	23.3	15.8	28.2	13.0	1.0	79
CHILEKA	26.6	17.7	30.4	14.0	2.9	74
NTAJA	27.7	18.6	31.3	17.0	1.9	78
CHITEDZE	26.7	14.5	28.3	13.2	0.8	73
CHITIPA	25.7	15.8	28.2	13.9	2.9	69
DEDZA	20.8	12.6	24.7	12.3	1.2	46
KASUNGU	26.9	14.8	28.6	13.1	1.8	66
KARONGA	29.6	21.1	31.2	19.6	1.9	71
K I A	25.8	13.6	27.4	12.2	1.6	70
MANGOCHI	29.8	19.5	31.5	17.5	1.8	70
MONKEY BAY	30.2	19.6	31.5	18.0	1.8	65
MZIMBA	26.0	15.6	29.0	13.0	1.3	69
MZUZU	23.4	14.4	25.6	11.2	1.8	83
NGABU	31.1	20.4	35.9	16.6	1.3	64
NKHATA BAY	28.5	18.4	30.9	15.8	N/A	80
SALIMA	29.0	20.1	30.6	17.8	3.0	66

Glossary of some terms on this table

- RH = Relative Humidity
- Mean Temperature of the day =(Max of the day + Min of the same day)/2
- ABS Max (Min) = Absolute Maximum (minimum) is the highest (lowest) of maximum (minimum) temperatures observed for a given number of days (calendar month) of a specified period of months (years).
- To convert Meters Per Second (mps) to Kilometers per hour (Km/hr) = mpsx3.6