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Articles drawn from presentations compiled by the following organizations

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Next ACIF meeting
Date: 31 October 2013
Time: 9.00 am
Venue: Celebration Centre62 Swan Drive
         Borrowdale
Understanding the Rainfall Season Forecast.

A seasonal forecast is a long range forecast produced with a lead time of 3 months, indicating how much the season is expected to depart from the ‘normal situation’. The rainfall season is split into four seasons OND, NDJ, DFJ and JFM. The main seasons being the OND and JFM.

The seasonal forecast for any region is given in terms of possibilities of each of the categories; below normal (B), Normal (N) and Above Normal (A) occurring. The category with the highest percentage will be the expected forecast.

**Normal rainfall (N):** This is when an area receives between 75% and 125% of its long term average cumulative rainfall in a sub-season (OND, NDJ, DFJ or JFM).

**Below normal (B):** This is when an area receives below 75% of its long term average for the sub-season. It is related with increased risk of prolonged dry spells and subsequent crop failure (Agricultural drought). It also calls for careful water-resource management as dam-levels may go down (Hydrological drought) thus affecting power-generation.

**Above normal (A):** This is when an area receives more than 125% of its long term mean for a particular sub-season. Above normal rains usually trigger widespread flooding, nutrient leaching, malaria, cholera, typhoid and other water-borne disease.

**Global rainfall indicators**
- Sea Surface Temperatures SSTs– A warm ocean means that there will be an increase in evaporation and a high likelihood of high rainfall.
- EL Nino which is associated with a negative Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) is usually associated with poor rains.
- LA nina is associated with a positive SOI and is often associated with above normal rainfall.

**OND 2013 Forecast**

Region 1 and 2 (Harare, much of Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, north eastern parts of Midlands, parts Manicaland and Matebeleland North) are expected to receive normal to above normal rains. Regions 3 (Matebeleland South, Masvingo, the bulk of Midlands, the extreme southern parts of Manicaland and extreme southern parts of Mashonaland East) is expected to receive normal to above normal rains.

**JFM 2014 Forecast**

Region 1 and 2 (Mashonaland Provinces, Harare, most of Matebeleland North, northwest Matebeleland South, Bulawayo, most of Manicaland, northern parts of Masvingo and northern parts of Midlands): normal to above normal rains are expected. Region 3 (Most of Masvingo, the extreme southern parts of Manicaland, southeast Matebeleland South and the southern parts of Midlands): normal to below normal rains are expected.

**Mean Onset**

The rainfall season is expected to begin before the end of November for the bulk of the country.
The Zimbabwe Seed Traders Association (ZSTA) provided an update on the seed situation in the country. The ZSTA which is made up of 21 seed companies is responsible for coordinating seed production and marketing in the country.

2011/12 season sales pattern
In the 2011/12 season 40,109 MT of maize seed were sold. ZSTA indicated that over the years purchases by farmers have been declining due to liquidity challenges and this is a major cause of concern. In the 2011/12 season Government and NGOs were the major buyers of seed (22,625 MT). The ZSTA emphasised the need to improve farmers purchasing power.

Seed availability
Seed houses have a cumulative total of 56,174 MT of maize seed in stock of which 52,052 MT is hybrid maize seed and 4,122 MT are open pollinated maize varieties (Table 1). The amount of seed available is sufficient to meet the national maize requirement of 35,000–40,000MT. Seed is available in most districts around the country. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the amount of seed available for various crops for the 2013/14 Agriculture season.

Table 1: 2013/14 Agriculture Season Seed Availability in Tonnes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maize Seed</th>
<th>Small grain seed</th>
<th>Pulse Seed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>OPV</td>
<td>White sorghum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52,052</td>
<td>4,122</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Projected Fertilizer Supply 2013/14 Season (000 Tonnes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fertilizer Type</th>
<th>Stock</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compounds</td>
<td>Prod</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends</td>
<td>Prod</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Basal</td>
<td>Prod</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Top dressing</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime</td>
<td>Prod</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Ministry of Agriculture Mechanization and Irrigation Development provided an update on the Government Agriculture Input Support programme for the 2013/14 season and on the CAADP implementation progress.

**Government input scheme for the 2013/14 Season**
The Government intends to provide free inputs (seed, fertilizer, chemicals) to all communal farmers, resettlement, small scale and A1 farmers in the 2013/14 agricultural season. A2 farmers will access funds through bank loans.

**CAADP implementation progress.**
- Zimbabwe launched the CAADP programme in August 2009 at St Lucia Park in Harare.
- The Stock-taking, Growth and Investment Analysis Exercise (Gap Analysis) was conducted.

**Benefits of Pfumvudza**
Using the Pfumvudza approach, farmers only need two input packs of the Pfumvudza, a hoe and a small piece of land to produce enough grain to feed a household for a year.

With 2 input packs a household can cultivate a 16m*39m piece of land intensively (fig 1). The premise for this is, that, it is much easier to maintain a smaller plot at high standards than a bigger one. Hence if small-scale farmers can concentrate their efforts into small plots they are more likely to get higher yields. In addition in times of drought farmers can water their plots and reduce the effects of moisture stress. Cultivating small plots will also reduce the amount of mulch required, which often is a limiting factor.

Foundations for Farming is conducting free training on Pfumvudza every **Tuesday at Rest haven** from 8am to 12pm until the end of November.