



Tharaka Nithi County

SEASONAL FORECAST & AGRO-WEATHER ADVISORIES FOR OCTOBER – NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2023 PERIOD

Contents

1	Seasonal weather Forecast.....	2
1.1	In summary.....	2
1.2	Spatial Map of Predicted OND 2023 seasonal total Rainfall.....	2
1.3	Comparison of OND 2023 Seasonal Totals with Long-Term Means.....	3
1.4	Expected seasonal total rainfall distribution by ward/AEZ	3
2	OND 2023 Agro-Weather advisories	4
2.1	Upper & Middle Zones	4
2.2	Lower zones	4
2.3	General Impacts and opportunities.....	4
2.4	Other advisories and strategies.....	4
2.5	Advisories to the County Government.....	5
3	How to get Weather Updates.....	5

1 Seasonal weather Forecast

1.1 In summary

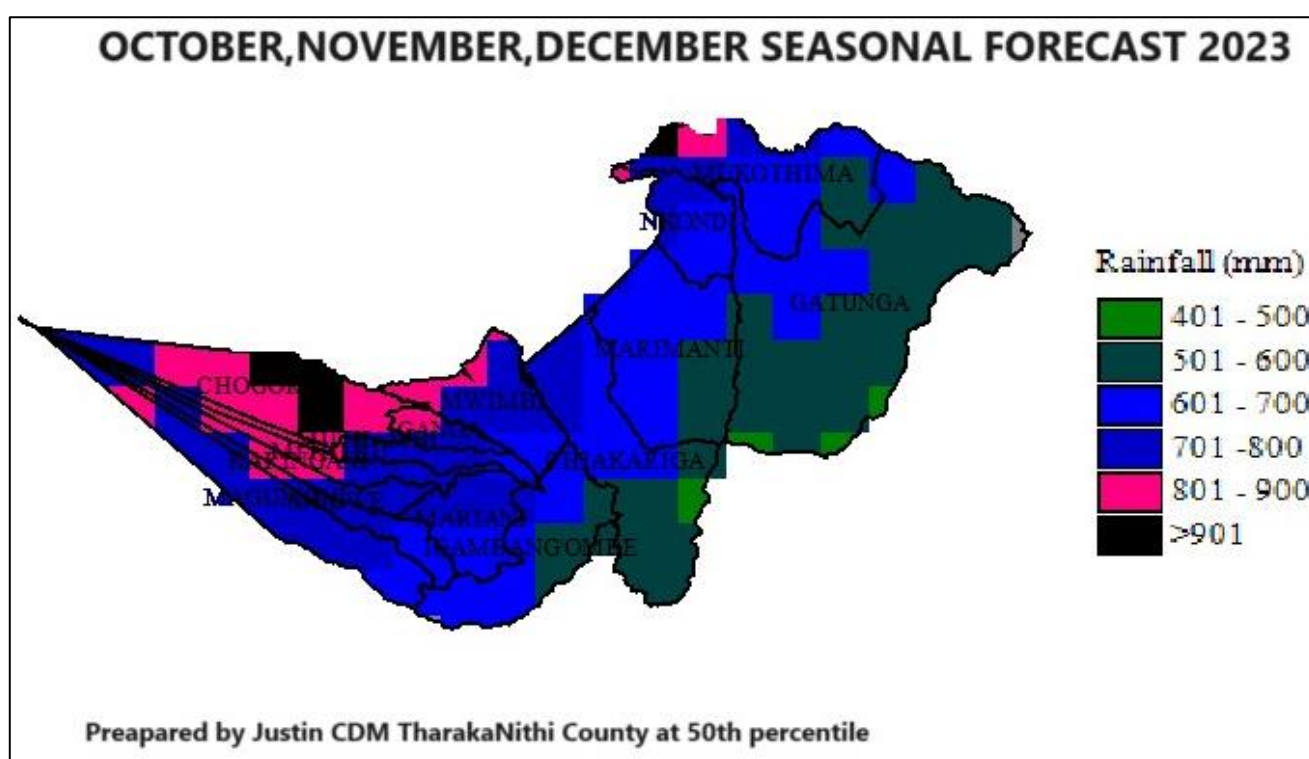
The Short Rains October-November-December 2023 seasonal rainfall is expected to be highly enhanced (way above the Long-Term Mean) in most parts of Tharaka Nithi County. The distribution both in time and space is expected to be good in most parts of the county.

Expected onset and cessation dates

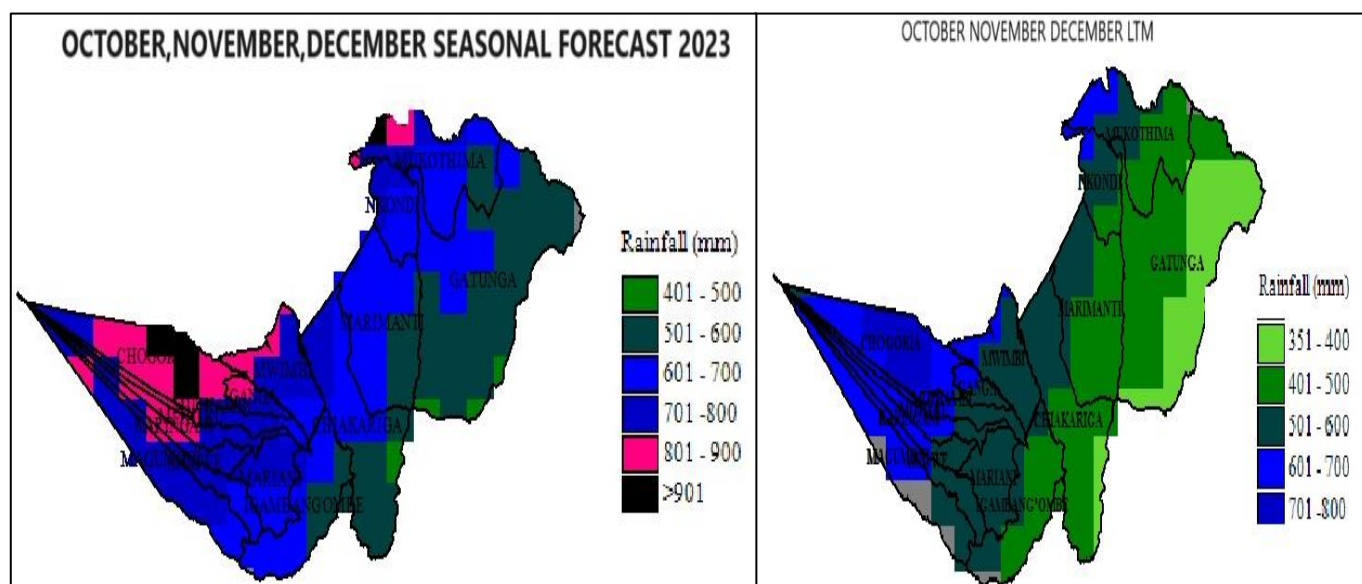
	Onset Dates	Cessation Dates
TharakaNithi	2 nd to 3 rd week of October 2023	2 nd to 3 rd week of January 2024

The upper areas of the County are likely to receive more rains compared with the lower areas. Farmers are advised to take advantage of the enhanced rainfall to plant perennial crops and grow longer- growing season crops like maize.

1.2 Spatial Map of Predicted OND 2023 seasonal total Rainfall



1.3 Comparison of OND 2023 Seasonal Totals with Long-Term Means



1.4 Expected seasonal total rainfall distribution by ward/AEZ

SNO	Sub county	Ward/ climatic zone	Seasonal Amount in mm		Probable onset dates	Probable Cessation dates
			Normal (Long term mean 1991-2020)	Forecast for OND 2023		
1	Chuka-Mara	Mwimbi	500-600	700-800	Between 9 th -18 th Oct 2023	Between 12 th - 23 rd January 2024
		Mwimbi	600-700	800-900		
		Ganga	500-600	800-900		
		Ganga	600-700	700-800		
		Igamba-ngombe	400-500	500-600		
		Igamba-ngombe	500-600	700-800		
2	Tharaka North	Mukothima	400-500	500-600	Between 9 th -18 th Oct 2023	Between 9 th - 21 st January 2024
		Mukothima	500-600	600-700		
		Mukothima	600-700	800-900		
		Nkondi	500-600	600-700		
		Nkondi	600-700	700-800		
3	Tharaka South	Gatunga	350-400	400-500	Between 9 th -19 th Oct 2023	Between 8 th -18 th January 2024
		Gatunga	400-500	600-700		
		Gatunga		600-700		
		Chiakariga	350-400	500-600		
		Chiakariga	400-500	600-700		
		Chiakariga		700-800		
		Marimanti	400-500	500-600		
		Marimanti	500-600	700-800		

2 OND 2023 Agro-Weather advisories

2.1 Upper & Middle Zones

These are Tea, dairy, Mt. Kenya Forest, Coffee and Banana zones. These areas include Mwimbi, Ganga Mitheru, Muthambi, upper Mariani, Magumoni, Mugwe and upper parts of Igamba-Ngombe.

Areas in these zones are likely to receive rainfall ranging between 600 to 900 mm of rainfall.

Farmers are advised to grow perennial crops like Fruit trees, bananas, Longer maturing maize (6 series maize varieties).

2.2 Lower zones

These are Sorghum, Millet and Grazing Zones. **The areas include Nkondi, Gatunga, Marimanti, Chiakariga, Lower IgambaNgombe, Mukothima.** These areas are also likely to receive enhanced rainfall (Way above the long-term mean). Farmers are advised to Plant perennial crops like Mangos and Pawpaw.

Farmers can also plant long term crops like maize (5 series – 511,513,512,516), duma DH04, pan 3m-05.

2.3 General Impacts and opportunities

1. Flooding of farm lands is highly likely in low lying areas, along river banks and other flood prone areas, these areas should be avoided for farming.
2. A lot of soil erosion is likely to occur on sloppy farms. Hence proper measures should be taken to avoid soil loss
3. Leaching of nutrients is likely due to the heavy rains so crops may show poor performance
4. High post-harvest losses of grains due to rotting leading and high aflatoxin contamination
5. Outbreak of livestock diseases like Rift Valley Fever, Mastitis, tick-borne diseases etc

2.4 Other advisories and strategies

- Plant long term crops and perennials to take advantage of the rains e.g. fruit trees, bananas, tea, coffee, agro-forestry trees
- Grow long term crops like maize, dolichols and pigeon peas which are expected to mature at the end of the rains rather those which mature while rains are still on.
- Good yields of cereals are expected hence repair of stores should be undertaken early enough. Use of mechanical grain dryers will be necessary.
- Good fodder production is expected so farmers should make plans to store/conservate extra fodder for later seasons. Dry season may follow after ELNINO rains
- Invest in on-farm water harvesting by constructing farm ponds
- Avoid growing crops in basins and low-lying areas where flooding is common
- Conservate river bank flood areas by planting bamboo, indigenous trees and grasses
- Open up drainage trenches in the flood prone farms
- Make plans to move to higher safer areas in case floods threaten your homestead
- Repair terraces and grass strips by stabilizing with napier and other grasses
- Plant on unploughed ground to avoid loose soil which can easily be washed away. Use herbicides to control weeds
- Avoid farming on steep areas especially where no conservation measures are in place
- Harvest as soon as crop matures and dry grains immediately using mechanical driers
- Plant beans/pulses in mid-November and consider staggered planting
- Avoid harvesting crops on rainy days
- Repair leaking/ damaged grain and hay stores
- Due to continuous rains weeds can easily overwhelm crops. Judicious use of herbicides is advised especially where selective one are available
- Deworm livestock regularly and vaccinate against diseases

- Repair and build shelters for safety of animals especially goats
- Mix green fodder with hay to avoid bloat in animals
- Make silage and bale to conserve fodder
- Make Hay stores for conservation
- Make fish ponds on high ground; construct dykes, and dig drainage channels to protect ponds from being washed away by flood waters
- Adoption of traditional drying methods for cereals

2.5 Advisories to the County Government

- Strengthen the market structures e.g co-operative groups
- Provision of storage facilities e.g warehouses
- Provision and awareness for Dryers (currently 2 within the county, not enough and inaccessible. These should be the Small and mobile dryers.

3 How to get Weather Updates

You can get weekly weather updates from the Counties folder in the KMD Website

<https://meteo.go.ke/node/4292> and SMS messages every Monday evening or early Tuesday morning.

{Prepared by Tharaka Nithi Meteorological department in conjunction with Tharaka Nithi County Department of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries and Partners under the sponsorship of KCEP-CRAL Programme}