El Niño Timor-Leste Update:  
2 weeks of low rainfall putting some rice fields at risk.  
16/04/2016 – 30/04/2016

A 2 week period of low rainfall at the end of April may mark the end of the wet season for many areas in Timor-Leste. For areas along the south coast it can be normal to have a short period of low rainfall before the second round of rains allow the possibility of a second crop. For those rice fields that are struggling to get enough water from irrigation systems, this period of low rain may prove to be very critical. Rice crops in the Maliana basin that are flowering are especially at risk. Most of the maize has been harvested. Reports have come in that the production was fairly good in the mountains however many coastal areas have had low production or total crop failure.

From West to East...

**Oecusse** received only 9mm of rain in the last month. Maize has been harvested with good production in the mountains but lower fields have failed. Dry land rice is now being harvested.

**Bobonaro** has received low rainfall. This is impacting on rice fields in areas around Maumali, Mautalo, Manapa and around Cailaco. Many fields are in flowering stage where water is critical for development but there has not been enough for all the fields. Rice fields around Maliana vila are doing well. (refer to extra map of the rice fields around Maliana)

**Covalima** had very little rain with extension coordinators reporting “no rain” over the last two weeks of April. The weather station only recorded a few millimetres of rain. Rice fields are growing well apart from the Tilomar area which has not been able to plant rice.

**Liquica** maize yields were good in the mountains but most coastal crops have failed. The rice fields along the Loes river are growing well.

**Ermera** rice fields are growing well. Some animals have poor condition in Posto Hatolia.

**Dili** has received some good rain on some days. Households continue to maintain kitchen gardens and market gardens for selling vegetables into the city. The police are enforcing government rules on penning of animals by putting down those animals (such as pigs) that are not penned.

**Aileu** has had only a little rain over the last two weeks. Rice continues to grow well in Aileu Vila and Laulara. Animals are in low condition with treatments being given to pigs, cows, goats and dogs.

**Ainaro** farmers in Hatu-Udo near the coast are planting their second crop of maize. Many farmers have now planted their rice in Hatu-Udo and Ainaro Postos.

**Manufahi** farmers are busy ploughing fields ready for a second season of maize. They hope to make up for low production in the first season. Rice fields are being prepared.

*Maize crop in Betano showing low production.  
Photo: Asep Sewantin, 20/4/2016*
especially in Caraulun where the irrigation system is working again after 12 years.

Manatuto corn fields have been harvested but rice planting has been delayed. Many farmers have been able to plant rice in Posto Manatuto and in Soibada, some farmers are starting to harvest rice.

Baucau many areas have been planted with rice however along the coast in Laga and Vemasse there is a shortage of water. The plateau received less than half the average historical rainfall for April.

Viqueque received a little rainfall. Many farmers along the coast are preparing fields for a second maize crop and some are planting rice (although less than normal). In Ossu, crops have performed well.

Rice fields being prepared in Uatulari with seedling beds.
Photo: Benvindo Jose Ernesto, 26/4/2016

Lautem has only received a little rain. Many farmers have harvested the corn and some have begun planting rice.

There has been some discussion about the possibility of a La Nina forming later in the year. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology is taking a conservative approach stating the likelihood of La Nina forming is 50%. The months of April and May are difficult to predict the ENSO outcome. A La Nina means increased rainfall and possibly good news for farmers with second season crops in Timor-Leste during the dry season. In any case the outlook is more positive for Timor-Leste.

Finally, some encouragement to buy local produce where there is surplus and re-distribute to areas of need. With the onset of El Nino some corn was bought from the Los Palos plateau in September, 2015, from surplus stock. It has just been re-distributed to needy families along the Lautem coast and to Atauro. Along the west coast of Atauro, a few farmers who’ve received drums and kept them for food storage will have their drums topped up with corn to help them through this difficult period. We hope this will send a message about the importance of good storage for food security.

As food stocks are set to become low in many areas later this year, consider buying surplus stocks now from areas like Los Palos and fill those yellow drums already distributed by the Maize Storage Program.

Regards,
Samuel Bacon
Cropping Systems Advisor
Seeds of Life
samuel.bacon@seedsoflifetimor.org

Surplus maize from Los Palos on its way to west coast, Atauro
Photo: Samuel Bacon, 3/5/2016
Diagrammatic map of rice field conditions in the Maliana Basin

April, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Original Map source: Seeds of Life, Municipal Land Use Map, by Petronilo Munez, Jr.

Current rice field information: Wayan Tambun, Regional Advisor, Seeds of Life.
Udan (Rainfall)
April 16/04/16 - 30/04/16
Iha fatin barak udanenus los iha fulan Abril semana 3 no 4
(in many places there has been very little rain in weeks 3 & 4 of April)

Informasaun Mapa
Dadus iha goral dat liu husu husu agrikultor sira iha posto administrativo.
Se karik sala rumu favor iha kontatu ba samuel.bacon@seedsoflife.timor.org.

Informasaun Dadus
Kona ba Udan:
Udan lae iha - iha loron ida mos lae iha durante semana rua
Udan uitoan - udan ne'ebè la subsente ba to'os
Udan naton - udan diak ba Ia nia to'os
Udan boot - udan liu buat ne'ebè iha preseiza
Udan boot demais - udan estraga to'os ka fatin

Legenda
Udan (rain)
- udan lae iha (no rain)
- udan uitoan (little rain)
- udan naton (enough rain)
- udan boot (heavy rain)
- udan boot demais (very heavy rain)
Batar (Maize)

Abril 16/04/16 - 30/04/16

Produsaun diak iha foho maibe menus no balu mate deit besik tasi
(Good production in the mountains but low and some crop failure along the coast)

Produsaun menus maibe sira fila rai hodi kuda fali.
(Low maize production but they are ploughing in order to grow again)

Balu kuda epoka segundu
(Some planting for second season)

Informasaun Mapa
Dadus iha geral deit liu husu agrikultor sira iha Posto Administrativo.
Se karik sala rumu favor ida kontatu ba samuel.bacon@seedsoffiletim.org.

Informasaun Dadus
Kona ba Batar:
La kuda - seidauk kuda batar
Moris diak - batar lao diak no buras
Namlaiak - batar komesa sae aat tanba udan menus
Balu mate - mate iha fatin balu deit
Barak mate - batar barak mate iha Posto Admin

Legenda
Batar (Corn)
- la kuda (not planted)
- balu kuda ona (some planted)
- barak kuda ona (many planted)
- moris diak (growing well)
- namlaiak (wilting)
- balu mate ona (some failed)
- barak mate ona (many failed)
- balu kolleta ona (some harvested)
- barak kolleta ona (many harvested)
Hare (Rice)

bril 16/04/16 - 30/04/16

Natar balu risku ati mate tanba bee menus durante tempu funan
(Some rice fields at risk of failure due to lack of water at flowering)

Ema prepara hela rai no foin kuda hare
(Rice fields being prepared and rice being planted)

Preparasaun natar iha Caraulun iha fatin nebee kleur la halo, irigasi foin diak liu husi suporta husi JICA.
(Rice fields being prepared after many years of no production due to rehabilitation of irrigation system in the Caraulun area supported by JICA.)

Informasaun Mapa

Dadus iha gerael deit liu husi husu agrikultor sira iha posto administrativo.
Se karik sala rumu favor ida kontatu ba samuel.bacon@seedsoflifetimor.org.

Seeds of Life
Fini ba Moris

Informasaun Dadas

Kona ba Hare:
La kuda - seidauk kuda hare
Balu kuda ona - iha fatin balu, laos P. Admin hotu Moris diak - hare lao diak no buras
Namlaik - hare komesa sae aat tanba bee menus
Balu koileta - iha fatin balu sei koa hare
Balu mate - mate iha fatin balu deit
Barak mate - hare barak mate iha Posto Admin

Legenda

- la kuda (not planted)
- seidauk kuda (not yet planted)
- balu kuda ona (some planted)
- balu kuda ona (many planted)
- moris diak (moris diak)
- namlaik (wilting)
- balu mate ona (some failed)
- barak mate ona (many failed)
- balu koileta ona (some harvested)
- balu koileta ona (many harvested)
Informasaun Mapa

Dadus iha geral deit liu husi husu agrikultor sira iha Posto Administrativo. Se karik sala ruma favor ida kontatu ba samuel.bacon@seedsolifetimor.org.

Informasaun Dadus

Mapa iha ne'e hatudu deit fatin ne'ebe ita hetan informasaun kona ba animal nia kondisaun iha geral husi Koordinator Extensionista (se informasaun iha). Dala ruma animal problema lae iha entaun ami husik hanesan "Dadus lae iha". (This map only shows information that has been received about animal condition usually from the Extension Coordinator. In some cases there is no problem with animals reported so it is left as "no data")

Legenda

Animal
- Dadus lae iha (no data)
- Krekas (low condition)
- Balu mate (some died)
- Barak mate (many died)
Integrated Multi-Satellite Data for Rainfall

Rain (or lack of) in last week of April:

Source: [http://pmm.nasa.gov/data-access/google-earth](http://pmm.nasa.gov/data-access/google-earth)

**Rainfall in March** (note, scale on left hand axis varies)

Data courtesy of ALGIS Agromet Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Most data delivered through the recent weather station upgrade to Hobo RX3000 automatic weather stations.

**Oecusse** – very little rain along the coast for Oecusse (April historical average: 89mm)
Graphs from Sites with Data Garrison Stations:

**Fohorem** – virtually no rain in the last two weeks in Covalima mountains (April historical average: 128mm)

![Last month of Rain](image1)

**Fazenda Algarve** – Rainfall in the mountains of Liquica (April historical average: 149mm)

![Last month of Rain](image2)

**Atauro** – Only three rain events totalling approximately 36mm (Vila Atauro during April (April historical average: 87mm)

![Last month of Rain](image3)
**South Coast** – a dry 2 weeks

**Betano** – A dry two weeks after some reasonable rains, but note that this is nearly average rainfall. May is historically Betano’s wettest month of the year. (April historical average: 102mm)

**Viqueque** – A good start to the month delivered above average rain to Viqueque but the last 2 weeks have been fairly dry. (April historical average: 210mm)
Central Mountains – low rainfall in last two weeks

Laklubar – After Laklubar’s record rainfall months totalling over 1000mm in February and March, the rainfall in April has been below average. (April historical average: 190mm)

Rain in Past Month: 141.2 mm

Flexia - low rainfall in last 2 weeks around Fleixa (Hato-Builico April historical average: 250mm)

Rain in Past Month: 259.9 mm

Quintal Portugal – above average rainfall in Aileu (April historical average: 121mm)

Rain in Past Month: 219.1 mm
**Eastern Plateaus** – again low rainfall in last 2 weeks

**Darasula** – Very low rainfall on Baucau plateau especially in 2\(^{nd}\) half of April. (April historical average: 131mm)

Rain in Past Month: 56.8 mm

Up-to-date real Weather Data at: [http://timoragriresearch.weebly.com/](http://timoragriresearch.weebly.com/)

**Los Palos** – After heavy rain there has been little follow up rain (good for drying the harvest). (April historical average: 207mm)

Rain in Past Month: 196.0 mm