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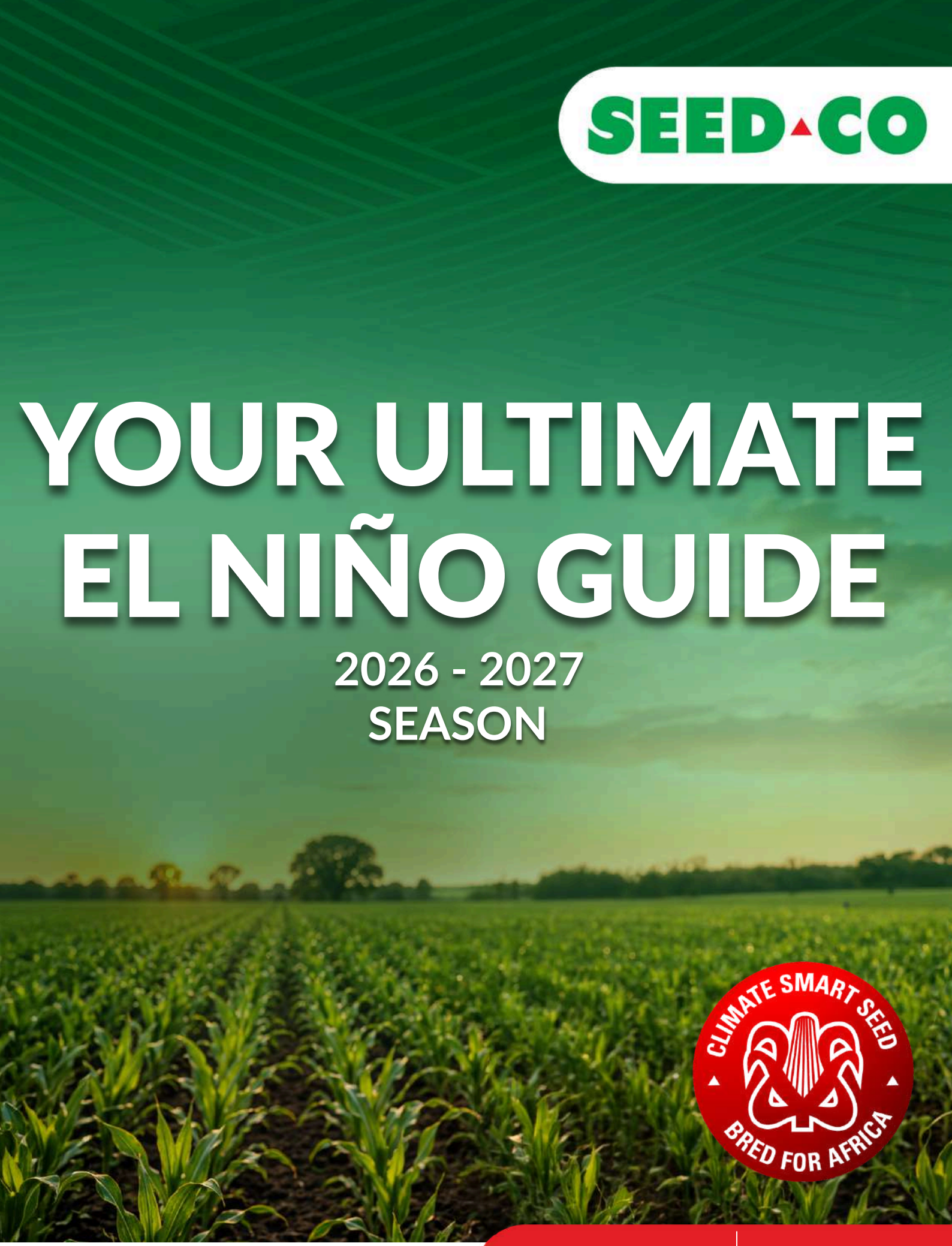
YOUR ULTIMATE EL NIÑO GUIDE

2026 - 2027 SEASON



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SEED CO AGRONOMY · 2026/27 SEASON

FOREWORD

Preparing Africa's Farmers for the 2026/27 El Niño Season



Wendy Madzura
Seed Co Group Head Of Agronomy

"While no one can control the weather, every farmer can prepare for it."

Across Africa, farming has always been a story of resilience, determination and hope. While no one can control the weather, every farmer can prepare for it, and early preparation remains the best investment in a successful harvest.

As we look towards the 2026/27 season, this principle must guide our planning, our field decisions and the advice we give to farmers across the Seed Co footprint, which spans over 21 African countries and counting.

The El Niño outlook for the 2026/27 season is reflected in regional climate assessments issued through the Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) and the relevant African regional climate outlook forums, including ACCOF, and in seasonal guidance from the Meteorological Services Departments and national meteorological agencies of countries across Africa. These outlooks indicate heightened climate risks, including a greater likelihood of below-normal rainfall, prolonged dry spells and above-average temperatures in parts of Southern Africa, while parts of East Africa may experience normal to above-normal rainfall and increased flood and crop-disease risks. Seasonal forecasts are probabilistic rather than certainties, and conditions may vary within countries. Farmers and agronomists should therefore use the outlooks as planning guidance and continue to follow updated country-specific forecasts and advisories from their national meteorological services.

For more than 86 years, Seed Co has partnered with African farmers through locally adapted genetics, agronomic advisory services, demonstration plots, digital weather advisories and climate-smart production recommendations. Our responsibility in this season is to turn that legacy into practical, locally relevant solutions: recommendations that reflect each country's rainfall outlook, agro-ecology, planting window, farmer resources and crop-management realities.

It is not enough to describe the risk; we must help farmers act on it. That means translating forecasts into timely variety placement, planting-date guidance, moisture conservation, water harvesting, drainage where excess rainfall is a concern, crop diversification and consistent follow-up through demonstrations and advisory channels. Country-specific recommendations must be validated against local conditions and revised when updated meteorological information becomes available.

Country meteorological outlook

Table 1 · as presented in the seasonal planning material

Country	OND 2026	JFM 2027	Estimated planting window*
Zimbabwe	Below normal across most of country	Below normal; south/west normal-to-below	Late Nov–Dec; plant only after effective rain
Zambia	Below normal south/central; wetter north	Southern region - below normal, Northern region above normal rainfall expected	Late Nov–Dec; north may open earlier
Botswana	Below normal	Below normal	Dec–Jan; wait for effective rain
Malawi	Below normal south/central; normal-to-above north	South/central below; north normal-to-above	Nov–Dec; north earlier, south/central later
Mozambique	Below normal south/central; north variable/wetter	Drier central/south; wetter north	Nov–Dec; north may open earlier
Kenya	Above normal; heavy-rain/flood risk	No strong national signal; generally drier transition	Oct–Nov; local onset + flood-risk staggering
Tanzania	Above normal; wetter north/east	Normal-to-above; eastern favoured	Oct–Nov Vuli; Nov–Dec Msimu zone
Ethiopia	Wetter southern/eastern; variable elsewhere	No strong national signal; rainfall mainly limited outside Belg	Oct–Nov in OND-rain zones; highly localised
Nigeria	Variable; normal-to-above many areas; dry-spell risk	Predominantly dry season	May–Jun 2027 main season; state-specific
Uganda	Near-normal to above; wetter zone	Variable; near-normal to above	Sep–Nov in bimodal zones; local onset
WECA	Variable / country-specific	Variable / country-specific	Country-specific; local onset required

The outlook must lead to differentiated action rather than a single Africa-wide prescription. In drought-exposed areas, agronomists should prioritise effective-rainfall planting decisions, early and suitable maturity options, moisture conservation and diversification. In areas facing heavier rainfall or flood risk, recommendations should give greater attention to locally appropriate planting dates, drainage, crop health and disease monitoring. These are planning directions; final variety and management choices must be made with local agronomic evidence and the latest country guidance.

Mitigation and variety focus,by the country

Country	Maize variety focus	Other crops
Zimbabwe	SC 301 SC 303 SC 555 SC 659 SC 657 SC 665 SC 727 SC 719	Soya beans, sugar beans, sorghum and horticulture; follow regional recommendations.
Zambia	SC 303 SC 419 SC 561 SC 555 SC 657 SC 647 SC 608 SC 727 SC 719	Soybean (SC Spike) and horticulture, guided by local recommendations.
Botswana	SC 419 SC 555 SC 608 SC 506 SC 657 SC 719	XH102 sorghum and horticulture, guided by local recommendations.
Malawi	SC 301 SC 419 SC 449 SC 555 SC 665 SC 657 SC 719	Soya beans, common beans, sorghum, rice and horticulture.
Mozambique	SC 303 SC 419 SC 547 SC 555 SC 719 SC 657	Small grains and horticulture; confirm locally suitable crops by region.
Kenya	SC 301 SC 403 SC 419 SC 555 SC 657 SC 719	Sorghum, wheat, horticulture, potatoes and beans where locally recommended by county/region.
Tanzania	SC 419 SC 555 SC 657 SC 719	Horticulture and other locally suitable crops guided by region and the SBU recommendations.
Uganda	SC 419 SC 555 SC 657 SC 719	Other locally suitable crops guided by country-specific recommendations.
Nigeria	SC 651 SC 719 SC 419 SC 665	State-specific crop options according to local recommendations.
WECA	SC 719 SC 649 SC 419 SC 608 SC 657	Locally suitable crops guided by country and agro-ecological recommendations.
Ethiopia	SC 657 SC 719	Locally suitable crops guided by Ethiopia-specific agro-ecological recommendations.

The agronomists in our countries are central to this response. We must be solution-finders: interpreting local forecasts, validating recommendations in the field, strengthening demonstrations, communicating clearly and promptly, and listening to farmers as conditions evolve. Each SBU should translate the continental outlook into district- and agro-ecology-specific advice, with clear guidance on what farmers should do before planting, at establishment, during crop growth and when rainfall deviates from expectations.

The 6 Agronomic Pillars for El Niño Mitigation

01 Variety & Maturity

Match maturity to rainfall endowment and planting date. Use at least two maturity series especially for Southern Africa.

NB: Select long season varieties (600–700 series) under high rainfall or irrigation.

02 Planting Window

Trigger planting on effective rainfall (>30 mm). Stagger planting dates to spread establishment risk and avoid false starts after short showers. In East Africa early planting is recommended for areas prone to water logging

03 Water Harvesting & Conservation

Southern Africa; Prioritize water harvesting, irrigation planning, moisture conservation (Pfumvudza) and run-off interception: tied ridges, potholing, mulching, dip-ploughing and wet ripping East Africa; Prioritize water ways, drainage and contouring.

04 Crop Diversification

Expand climate-smart crops such as sorghum, beans, soybean, sunflower and vegetables according to agro-ecology and market opportunity.

05 Pest & Disease

Stress increases vulnerability. Intensify scouting and integrated management, especially after dry spells, first effective rains and periods of excess moisture.

06 Plant Population

Adjust population to rainfall potential and soil moisture.

- **Southern Africa**, reduce population to manage competition for low moisture
- **East Africa**, match population to variety recommendations to avoid crop lodging

OUR CLIMATE-SMART COMMITMENT

Seed Co's climate-smart commitment is practical and collaborative: provide locally adapted varieties, support farmers through demonstrations and training, share timely weather and agronomic advisories, promote conservation agriculture and water-smart farming, and work with national meteorological agencies to strengthen preparedness.

A CALL TO ACTION

I encourage every agronomist to approach this season with scientific discipline, urgency, humility and optimism. Let us move beyond general warnings to country-specific recommendations, beyond information-sharing to field-level action, and beyond isolated activities to coordinated support for farmers. Our forecasts may change; our commitment to preparedness, evidence-led agronomy and the farmer must not.

> **"Climate uncertainty does not have to mean uncertainty in our response."**

Through early preparedness, quality Seed Co genetics, practical climate-smart agronomy and strong country-level execution, we can help build resilient farms and prosperous farming communities across Africa.

Wendy Madzura
Group Head of Agronomy
Seed Co Group

86+	21+	6
years partnering with African farmers	African countries across the Seed Co footprint	El Niño mitigation pillars guiding the season

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE IN AN EL NIÑO YEAR

Seed Co Group | Agronomy Department



Written By
Philip Chalcraft

El Niño influences rainfall and temperature patterns differently across Seed Co's operational regions. Some areas may face prolonged dry spells and high temperatures, while others experience heavier rainfall or flooding. Regenerative agriculture offers practical ways to strengthen soil health, improve water management and build resilience to this variability. It complements, rather than replaces, good agronomy and locally adapted seed varieties.

Key Benefits

Why soil health matters this season

01
Moisture conservation
Crop residues and organic matter help protect the soil surface, reduce evaporation and improve moisture availability between rainfall events. This is particularly valuable during hot, dry periods.

02
Better infiltration and rooting
Stable soil aggregates, biological activity and less compaction encourage rainfall to soak in rather than run off. Deeper, healthier roots can access more water and nutrients.

03
Improved nutrient efficiency
Soil organic matter and biological processes support nutrient cycling. Good moisture management helps roots take up nutrients and improves the value of fertiliser applications.

04
Long-term resilience
Rotations, residue retention and reduced disturbance can gradually improve soil structure, organic matter and soil life, helping production systems cope better with seasonal extremes.

IMPORTANT DURING EL NIÑO

Regenerative benefits are generally cumulative, not immediate. Farmers should start with manageable changes, observe results and adapt practices to soil type, rainfall and available resources. During drought, conserving existing soil moisture is the priority; during intense rainfall, maintaining cover and infiltration can help limit erosion and runoff. No single practice guarantees protection against extreme weather.

Practical Recommendations for Farmers

Start small, observe, adapt

01

Keep soil covered

Retain crop residues or mulch where feasible. Avoid routine burning and excessive residue removal, while balancing livestock feed needs and pest or disease risks.

02

Limit unnecessary tillage

Reduce repeated cultivation that exposes soil and loses moisture. Where a compacted layer is confirmed, use targeted ripping at suitable soil moisture rather than routine deep tillage.

03

Diversify rotations

Include locally suitable legumes and other crops to vary root systems, support soil biology and help break pest and disease cycles.

04

Use cover crops carefully

Choose species and planting windows suited to local rainfall. In dry conditions, terminate cover crops in good time so they do not use water needed for the following crop.

05

Manage crops to conditions

Test soils, correct key constraints, use balanced nutrition, choose appropriate Seed Co varieties and adjust planting dates and populations to realistic rainfall and yield potential.

In the Field

Poorly managed vs well managed



Poorly managed



Well managed



Poorly managed



Well managed

KEY MESSAGE

Every rainfall event matters. Building healthier, better covered soils can help farmers capture and use water more effectively, while sound variety selection, crop establishment and nutrition remain essential to resilient yields.

PREPAREDNESS, NOT PANIC · 2026/27 CROPPING SEASON

FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED

Zimbabwe's proactive strategy to outsmart El Niño and safeguard the 2026/27 cropping season.

SEED CO ZIMBABWE · AGRONOMY & EXTENSION

SOURCE: METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SUMMER CROPPING · 2026/27

Recent seasonal climate forecasts from the Zimbabwe Meteorological Services Department (MSD) indicate an increased likelihood of an El Niño event developing ahead of the 2026/27 summer cropping season. A more definive rainfall outlook is expected in the August forecast, but current projections already give farmers an opportunity to prepare, not to panic. The Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization and Water Resources Development has intensified its preparedness and response planning to ensure farmers receive timely technical guidance. Climate variability is not new to Zimbabwean agriculture. Over many years Seed Co has invested continuously in breeding, testing and developing climate-smart maize hybrids capable of performing under diverse environmental conditions.

Seed Co Zimbabwe is not waiting for the season to arrive. It is preparing for it.

Seed Already on the Shelf

Placed by rainfall record, climate prediction and agronomic data

Seed Co has already begun stocking retail outlets across the country with high-quality certified seed matched to specific agro-ecological regions, provinces and districts. Our product placement strategy is based on extensive historical rainfall records, current climate predictions and years of agronomic performance data, so farmers can access hybrids suited to the rainfall potential of their own production environment.

The portifolio includes proven **ultra-early, very early and early maturing** hybrids, while the **Series 6 and Series 7 hybrids** remain excellent options for irrigated maize. In high-potential areas and irrigated fields, medium and long-season varieties retain drought escape atributes that let them grow well even in strained conditions.

ULTRA-EARLY TO EARLY MATURING

SC301 SC303 SC419 SC437 SC547 SC555

SERIES 6 & 7 · IRRIGATED AND HIGH POTENTIAL

SC657 SC659 SC665 SC719 SC727

Early maturity, drought resilience, efficient moisture utilisation and stable yield performance traits that let farmers manage climatic risk while maintaining productivity and profitability.

Product Recommendations

Regional varietal guidelines by Natural Region

NATURAL REGION	DRYLAND VARIETIES	HIGH POTENTIAL AREAS
I · Specialised & diversified	SC301 · SC303 · SC419 · SC437 · SC547 · SC555	SC659 · SC665 · SC657 · SC727 · SC719
II · Intensive farming	SC301 · SC303 · SC419 · SC437 · SC547 · SC555	SC659 · SC665 · SC657 · SC727 · SC719
III · Semi-intensive	SC301 · SC303 · SC419 · SC437 · SC547 · SC555	
IV · Semi-extensive	SC301 · SC303 · SC419 · SC437 · SC547 · SC555	
Va · Extensive	SC301 · SC303 · SC419 · SC437	
Vb · Extensive	SC301 · SC303 · SC419 · SC437	

A predicted "Super El Niño" for 2026/27 presents a significant threat to Zimbabwe's key urban and agricultural hubs — **Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Chinhoyi, Marondera** and **Gweru**. Below-normal rainfall and extreme heat could bring severe water scarcity to already-stretched urban supplies.

The Volatility Is the Story

Not a wetting trend, a widening of the range

The agro-ecological regions that have historically recorded higher- than-usual rainfall are primarily **Natural Regions I and II,** the Eastern Highlands, the central watershed and parts of **Mashonaland**. Areas like **Nyanga, Vumba** and the **Honde Valley** have seen increasingly erratic but intense precipitation: mid-season dry spells followed by devastating cyclonic storms that dump excessive rainfall in short periods.

More strikingly, the drier Natural Regions IV and V in the Lowveld, parts of Masvingo and Matabeleland South, have occasionally received well-above-normal seasonal totals during strong ENSO years or tropical cyclone intrusions. This is not a consistent wetting trend but a manifestation of climate volatility: the same regions that suffer recurrent droughts are now also prone to flash floods that disrupt planting calendars, cause soil erosion and damage infrastructure.

The consequence is widespread crop failure risk in rain-fed areas and pasture shortages for livestock. The risk of destructive veld fires is also elevated, with the **Mashonaland provinces** and **Manicaland,** home to Harare, Marondera and Mutare identified as being at extreme risk. Government and partners are urging early action: climate-smart agriculture with drought-tolerant and short-season varieties, preserved livestock feed, rehabilitated boreholes, climate-resilient solar-powered piped water, accelerated dam construction and irrigation development.

What the Science Says

Rainfall distribution, heat, and the two combined

The crucial role of rainfall

78%

of maize yield variability in Zimbabwe explained by rainfall patterns in one study. Distribution matters more than total; a dry spell at flowering devastates yields even in a normal-total season.

−0.533

The "red line" on the drought gauge. In some African regions, rainfall variability only significantly damages yields once it passes specific negative thresholds; the impact is non linear.

−22% / +20%

A 30% rainfall reduction cut maize yield by 22% in a near-normal year but raised it 20% in a drier year, the "normal" year's distribution was more harmful than its shortfall.

Heat and variability

30°C

Maize yields can suffer above 30°C in semi-arid zones with the threshold dropping to 24°C in cooler regions. Local context decides the number.

2%

Drop in agricultural productivity for each one-unit increase in daily temperature variability, by disrupting crop physiology. Averages are not the whole story.

57%

Lentil yield loss under combined drought and heat stress in field experiments far higher than either stress alone. The combination is the real danger.



Our El Niño Responsiveness Pillars

Five interventions, science-based and practical

1 Adopt climate-smart crops and varieties
Switch to drought tolerant, short cycle or traditional grain crops; millet, sorghum that thrive with minimal rainfall. Match crops and varieties to the local environment rather than attempting to grow what the region's water availability cannot support.

2 Improve water management
Deploy small-scale irrigation, rainwater harvesting through tied ridges and pot-holing, and watersaving techniques such as drip irrigation to secure water during dry spells.

3 Improve water management
Shift from reactive crisis response to proactive planning. Use seasonal forecasts to issue early alerts, pre-position supplies and guide farmers on optimal planting times and crop choices.

4 Diversify farming systems
Spread risk to prevent total livelihood collapse. Combine multiple crops; maize, sorghum, beans, cowpeas, integrate crop and livestock production, and promote home gardens to create multiple income and food sources.

5 Strengthen financial safety nets
Offer agricultural insurance, facilitate access to credit, and manage strategic food reserves to stabilise income and food supply.

Seed Alone Is Only Part of the Solution

Successful farming under variable climatic conditions depends on combining the right genetics with sound agronomic practice. Seed Co's Agronomy Team, working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services, has intensified farmer training on climate-smart agriculture, conservation farming, optimum planting techniques, appropriate planting dates, soil moisture conservation and correct variety selection.

500+
Sales outlets nationwide — Farm City, ProFarmer, Gain Cash & Carry, N Richards, Farm Bizz, Farmer's Choice, Farm Shop, Seed Co depots and village-based agencies.

***558#**
The Seed Co Prepayment Facility, a flexible way to buy seed ahead of planting, securing inputs before peak demand.

These intervenons are designed to eliminate fear and uncertainty by equipping farmers with knowledge that enables informed decisions.

Regardless of seasonal conditions, informed management significantly improves the likelihood of higher yields and increased gross profit per unit area. With early preparation, climate-smart pracces, the right hybrid for the right environment and continued technical support, Zimbabwean farmers will navigate the coming season and continue producing profitable crops.

SEED CO ZIMBABWE — Standing With Farmers, Whatever the Weather

Delivering the right genetics and practical agronomic support that help agriculture thrive. Visit any of 500+ outlets nationwide, or secure your seed early through the prepayment facility on *558#.

Dior Pote · Head of Agronomy & Extension Services · Seed Co Limited

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

El Niño variety positioning by Natural Region and Seed Co Zone

Regions/towns	Seed Co Zone	Agro-ecological region	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contacts
Chimanimani, Nyanga, Mutare	5	Region 1	**SC555, SC657, SC665, SC659, SC719, SC727**	Soya beans, Vegetables, Sorghum	**Kazembe Maocha - Manicaland** +263 0772 632 866 kazembe.maocha@seedcogroup.com
Harare, Chinhoyi, Mazowe, Chegutu	4	Region 2	**SC419, SC449, SC547, SC555, SC659, SC657, SC665, SC608**	Soya beans, Vegetables, Sorghum, Beans	**Keneth Muzembe - Harare** +263 772 956 329 keneth.muzembe@seedcogroup.com **Ephraim Mafaune - Mashonaland West** +263 772 572 148 ephraim.mafaune@seedcogroup.com **Abigail Mugabe** +263 784 613 968 abigail.mugabe@seedcogroup.com **Fleming Nzwere** +263 715 024 185 fleming.nzwere@seedcogroup.com **Stewart Zura - Mashonaland Central** +263 772 897 906 stewart.zura@seedcogroup.com
Kwekwe, Gweru, Zvishavane	3	Region 3	**SC419, SC449, SC547, SC555**	Sorghum, Beans, Vegetables	**John Moyo - Midlands** +263 779 037 745 john.moyo@seedcogroup.com **Davson Machaya - Midlands Zones III, IV, Va** +263 773 207 055 davson.machaya@seedcogroup.com
Masvingo, Gutu, Bikita	2	Region 4	**SC301, SC303, SC419, SC437, SC449, SC547, SC555**	Sorghum, Beans, Vegetables, Millet	**Godfree Magavu - Masvingo** +263 773 619 066 godfree.magavu@seedcogroup.com
Bulawayo, Gwanda, Insiza, Bubi	1	Region 5	**SC301, SC303, SC419, SC449**	Sorghum, Beans, Vegetables, Millet	**Godwill Macherera - Matebeleland North / South** +263 772 939 308 godwill.macherera@seedcogroup.com **Wallace Banda** +263 778 499 940 wallace.banda@seedcogroup.com



Written by Dior Pote

Head Of Agronomy - Seed Co Zimbabwe

SCRATCH & HARVEST PROMOTION

SEED·CO

Yauya mbeu inohwinhisa

Tenga 10kg yeSeed Co zvichipfura kuti uwane mukana wekuhwina mibairo yakawanda ipapo ipapo.



Zviri nyore:

1. Tenga 10kg mbeu yeSeed Co
2. Wana scratch card rako
3. Scratcher ipapo ipapo
4. Hwina ipapo ipapo

Mibairo iripo:

Hats | T-shirts | MaZambia

Tenga. Scratcher. Hwina

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EL NIÑO PREPAREDNESS

LESS RAIN, MORE HEAT. HERE IS THE PLAN.

A risk-by-risk response for Botswana's 2026 summer season; and the varieties, spacing and timing that carry a crop through it

SEED CO BOTSWANA | SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES | SUMMER SEASON · 2026



The Department of Meteorological Services, in its mid-April 2026 winter forecast, highlighted a high risk of an El Niño effect this summer.

The Department issues these reports twice a year; the winter report in April, and the summer report at the end of September. The winter report we are benchmarking on, together with regional weather reports, indicates an El Niño effect likely to persist through the end of 2026.

Seed Co Botswana stands ready to be more than a seed supplier. We are your climate-smart solutions partner: drought tolerant and early maturing maize hybrids, resilient small grain varieties, tailored recommendations for Botswana's different production zones, and expert agronomic support.

Four Production Risks

Suppressed rainfall · extreme heat

Pest & disease pressure

Drought stress costs **up to 20%** of maize yield while worsening heat tolerant pests. **Fall Armyworm** thrives in El Niño heat, causing widespread defoliation; **Maize Streak Virus** spreads as leafhopper activity rises.

Heat stress, lower yields

Moisture stress during **flowering and grain filling** lowers yield and drives flower abortion, poorer grain quality, and in some instances total crop failure.

Poor germination

Moisture is very scarce during El Niño, and lack of moisture at establishment is critical. Poor germination cuts production before the season has properly begun.

Delayed rainfall

In a semi-arid, rain-fed system, delayed rain shortens the growing season, poor germination, stunted growth, greater pest vulnerability, plunging yields.

Risk, Meet Response

Five mitigation strategies

THE RISK

Reduced rainfall, dry spells, heatwaves

Districts such as **Kgalagadi (Hukuntsi), Southern (Kanye), South East (Ramotswa)** and **Kgatleng (Mochudi)** are highly vulnerable to El Niño-induced drought.

THE RESPONSE · CROP & VARIETY CHOICE

Select early maturing, drought tolerant varieties

Careful crop and variety selection is critical to improving resilience and reducing the risk of crop failure. Our sorghum **SC XH 102** performs in harsh conditions with minimal bird damage (7–10%).

THE RISK

Erratic rainfall and false starts

Rainfall uncertainty is high in **Central (Serowe)**, **North East (Francistown)** and **Ghanzi (Gantsi).**

THE RESPONSE · PLANTING STRATEGY

Delay, then stagger

Plant only after 30–35mm within two consecutive days. Then plant in phases over days or weeks rather than the whole field at once spreading risk across the season reduces the chance of total crop failure.

THE RISK

Scarce and competed for soil moisture

Limited water resources in key rivers serving **Ngamiland (Maun), Chobe (Kasane)** and **Central (Tuli Block).**

THE RESPONSE · SOIL WATER MANAGEMENT

Conserve first, irrigate efficiently

Minimum or zero tillage to retain moisture. Efficient irrigation systems for horticulture. Control weeds early, before they compete with the crop for moisture and nutrients.

THE RISK

Crops competing with each other for water

Too many plants per hectare in a dry season means every plant reaches wilting point sooner.

THE RESPONSE · PLANT POPULATION & SPACING

Give every plant its share

For rainfed maize, a standing population of **20,000–22,000 plants per hectare**, spaced **1.0m between rows** and **0.4m between plants.**

THE RISK

Fall Armyworm and Maize Streak Virus

Pest and disease pressure climbs with temperature, and stressed plants are least able to withstand it.

THE RESPONSE · INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Scout, rotate, then spray

Regular field scouting, resistant or tolerant varieties, crop rotation and field sanitation, timely planting and judicious pesticide use only when economic damage thresholds are reached.

The Varieties for This Season

Early maturing · drought tolerant

White Maize

SC 419 SC 555

Early maturing white hybrids with great drought tolerance capabilities, the first choice where the season is expected to be short.

Yellow Maize

SC 608 SC 506

Early maturing yellow hybrids carrying the same drought tolerance, for farmers producing into the yellow maize market.

Sorghum

SC XH 102

The variety of choice for harsh conditions; a tremendous performer that delivers good yield with minimal bird damage of just **7–10%**.

Get the Numbers Right

Rainfed maize · plant population and spacing

20–22k	1.0 m	0.4 m	30–35 mm
PLANTS PER HECTARE	BETWEEN ROWS	BETWEEN PLANTS	RAIN OVER TWO DAYS BEFORE PLANTING

District Watchlist

Where each strategy matters most

HIGHEST DROUGHT VULNERABILITY

Kgalagadi (Hukuntsi), **Southern** (Kanye), **South East** (Ramotswa), **Kgatleng** (Mochudi)

Lead with variety choice; early maturity is the primary defence.

STAGGER AND TIME THE PLANTING

Central (Serowe), **North East** (Francistown), **Ghanzi** (Gantsi)

Align planting dates with the onset of effective rains and spread establishment across the window.

WATER MANAGEMENT CRITICAL

Ngamiland (Maun), **Chobe**(Kasane), **Central** (Tuli Block)

Conserve and optimise the limited resources in key rivers to sustain irrigation long term.

In Conclusion, Farmers Are Encouraged To

Six actions

- ☐ **Purchase certified Seed Co seed early**, guided by agro-ecological region.
- ☐ **Prepare land before the rains.**
- ☐ **Plant immediately after effective rains;** 30–35mm over two consecutive days.
- ☐ **Follow recommended agronomic practices** for spacing, population and weed control.
- ☐ **Consult local Seed Co agronomists** for technical support.
- ☐ **Adopt climate smart farming practices** to improve resilience and productivity.

SEED CO BOTSWANA - Your Climate Smart Solutions Partner

Reliable forecasts, the right seed, sound agronomy and timely advice build resilient farming systems and safeguard productivity despite the challenges El Niño may present.

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

Country El Nino forecast Summary

For Botswana El Nino means a higher risk of a hot, dry and poorly distributed rainfall season

Provinces/ Regions/ Towns/ Counties	Seed Co Zone	Agro ecological region/zone	Recommended Maize varieties	Other Crops
Kgalagadi(Hukutsi, Kang,Tsabong), Ghanzi	1	Kalahari	SC 419, SC 506	Soya-Safari, Beans-SC Bounty, Sorghum-SC XH 102, Vegetables
Central(Bobonong, Mahalapye, Palalpye, Serowe, Letlhakane, Gweta), North East, Parts of Ngamiland	2	Western Sandveld, Southern Hardveld,Eastern Hardveld, North East	SC 419, SC 555, SC 506, SC 608 Irrigation: SC 701, SC 719	Soya-SC Spike, Safari, Beans-SC Bounty, Sorghum-SC XH 102, Vegetables
Chobe, Northern Ngamiland(Shakawe, Gumare), Ramotswa, Lobatse, Goodhope, Kanye	3	Chobe,Okavango,South East,	SC 419, SC 555, SC 506, SC 608 Irrigation: SC 701, SC 719	Soya- SC Spike, Safari Beans-SC Bounty Sorghum-SC XH 102,Vegetables



Written by Aobakwe Gababolokwe

Head Of Agronomy - Seed Co Botswana

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BRED FOR AFRICA

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CLIMATE-SMART GUIDE · SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

PLANT ON DATA, NOT ON FAITH

Preparing for Nigeria's 2026 rainy season; a state-by-state guide to a year that will be uneven from Bayelsa to Borno.

SEED CO NIGERIA · AGRONOMY TEAM

SOURCE: NIMET 2026 SEASONAL CLIMATE PREDICTION

RAINY SEASON · FEBRUARY – NOVEMBER 2026

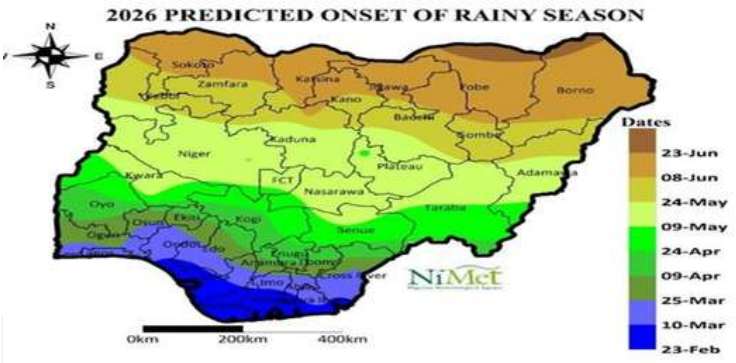
Every planting season begins with the same ques□on: when will the rains come, and will they be enough? For 2026, the Nigerian Meteorological Agency has answered with a note of cauon. NiMet's Seasonal Climate Predicon, released in Abuja, describes a season of variable rainfall, prolonged dry spells and warmer-than-average temperatures across large parts of the country — even as the broader El Niño–Southern Oscillaon paern sits in a near-neutral phase.

Rainfall this year will not behave the same way in every state. Plant to your local onset date, not to what neighbouring states or early rains suggest.

For Nigeria's farmers the message is clear. This is not a season to plant on faith. It is a season to plant on data. Seed Co Nigeria has developed this guide to help farmers across the country's growing zones prepare early, plant correctly and protect their yields.

A Country Divided by Timing

NiMet 2026 predicted onset of rainy season



NiMet's 2026 onset map. Onset dates run from 23 February in the far south-east delta to 23 June in the north-east; the same calendar date means a different thing in every band.

EARLY ONSET EXPECTED

Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa and Oyo — plus parts of Kebbi, Niger, Jigawa, Katsina, Kano, Adamawa and Taraba.

CENTRAL STATES

Onset between 21 April and 15 May.

NORTHERN STATES

No established rains until 18–23 June. Borno should plan for a late start.

Heavy January–February rain and flash flooding in Lagos, Ogun, Kogi, Anambra and Ebonyi were not the start of the plan□ng season. Do not use them to set plan□ng dates.

Three Risks to Plan For Now

Beyond onset

Prolonged dry spells

Parts of **Oyo** and **Ogun** face severe dry spells exceeding **15 days** between March and May. **Katsina, Zamfara, Kwara, Oyo** and **Ogun** may see below-normal rainfall overall.

Waterlogging, south & centre

A delayed end to the season is expected in **Lagos, Ogun, Anambra, Enugu, Cross River, Benue, Nasarawa** and **Kaduna** — raising waterlogging and late disease pressure.

Heat stress & pest pressure

Day and night temperatures run warmer than the long-term average in January, February, March and May — condions that favour **Fall Armyworm** outbreaks and heat stress at flowering.

The boom line: Rainfall this year will not behave the same way in every state. Plant according to your local NiMet onset date and Seed Co agronomist guidance, not according to what neighbouring states or early rains suggest.

Five Agronomic Recommendations

The season ahead, in order of action

1

Prepare land early

Plough and harrow **before** the rains arrive so plannng can begin the moment effecve rain falls. Waing to prepare land aer the rains start costs 7–14 days of growing me you cannot recover in a shortened season.

2

Plant on effective rain, not first rain

Plant only after **30–35mm within two consecutive days**, and confirm your local onset date with your Seed Co agronomist or NiMet. Where early onset is forecast, stagger plan□ng across a 1–2 week window to spread the risk of a dry spell.

3

Conserve moisture from day one

Mulching, minimum tillage and water harvesting tied ridges and basins, particularly in **Oyo, Ogun, Katsina, Zamfara** and **Kwara**. Maintain permanent ground cover and practise crop rotation.

4

Match fertility and spacing to the hybrid

Use recommended plant populaons and split your nitrogen top-dress at knee height rather than applying it all basal, so nutrients are not lost if early rains are followed by a dry spell.

- ≈53,333 plants / ha
- 75cm × 25cm
- 1 plant per stand

5

Scout for Fall Armyworm weekly

Warmer day and night temperatures from January through March and in May raise Fall Armyworm and foliar disease pressure. Scout every **2–3 days from emergence** and apply integrated pest management at the **first sign of damage,** not once infestation is visible.



Varieties Suited to This Season

Climate-smart traits · proven yield · maturity diversity

SC 651

Climate smart hybrid with good tolerance to drought and resistance to striga. For farmers seeking dependable performance in variable rainfall conditions.

SC 719

Strong yielder; up to 12 mt/ha with good standability. Well suited to areas with a longer, more stable growing window.

SC 419

Early maturing, around 90 days. Well adapted to the Guinea Savannah. Reaches maturity within the available rainfall window in late-onset areas such as Borno.

Select varieties on your state's expected onset date, length of season and dry-spell risk. Always confirm the right hybrid for your agro-ecological zone with your nearest Seed Co agent.

What Farmers Should Do Now

Six actions before the rains

- ☐ **Purchase cerfied Seed Co seed early**, guided by the recommended variety for your agro-ecological zone.
- ☐ **Complete land preparation** before the rains are fully established.
- ☐ **Plant only after effecve, established rainfall** — not the first shower.
- ☐ **Follow recommended ferlizer, spacing** and top-dressing practices.
- ☐ **Consult your local Seed Co agronomist** for state specific advice.
- ☐ **Adopt climate-smart pracces** mulching, minimum tillage, moisture conservaon.

Nigeria's 2026 season will reward preparation over improvisation.

Onset, dry spells and season length will vary sharply by state. Farmers who prepare land early, choose the right hybrid, conserve moisture and scout consistently will be best placed to protect their yields. This is not a season for alarm — it is a season for an cipatory ac on.

SEED CO NIGERIA - Farm the Forecast

Seed Co agents and agronomists are available across the country to help translate this outlook into a planting plan for your specific locaon. Visit your nearest Seed Co outlet or the Seed Co Nigeria website for further guidance.

SEED CO / REGIONAL GROWING GUIDE

NIGERIA

OCT–MAR CLIMATE PATTERN

Rainfall cessation and Harmattan characteristics, north to south.

OCTOBER 2026 / COMPLETE TABLE



Zone	Representative states	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Regional team contact
Sahel / extreme north	Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno	Rains end early Oct; Harmattan onset by late Nov, dust and cold nights	Peak Harmattan; coldest nights; warmer daytime than average	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com
Sudan savanna	Kano, Kebbi, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa	Cessation early–mid Oct; harvest window for maize, sorghum, millet	Dry, dusty, cool mornings; land prep for irrigation/dry-season farming	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com
Guinea savanna / Middle Belt	Niger, Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Kwara, Nasarawa, FCT	Cessation mid–late Oct; some late rains; November harvest window	Moderate Harmattan; Jos Plateau notably cold (12–15°C mornings)	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com
Derived savanna	Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Kogi, Enugu, Ebonyi	Cessation late Oct–Nov	Mild, hazy Harmattan; occasional out-of-season showers in recent years	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

State/zone-specific placement aligned to rainfall duration and agro-ecology

Agro-ecological region / states	Seed Co Zone	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contact
Ogun, Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Edo, Anambra, Imo, Cross-rivers, Benue, Enugu, Ebonyi	Zone 3	**SC649, SC719, SC526, SC665**	Rice, soybeans	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com
Niger, Taraba, Kaduna, Bauchi, Kano, Adamawa, Kwara, Plateau, Nasarawa, Kogi	Zone 4	**SC651, SC419, SC719, SC649**	Rice, soybeans, sorghum	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com
Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Gombe, Borno	Zone 5	**SC555, SC419, SC651**	Rice and soybeans	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com
Plateau, Kano, Bauchi, Nasarawa, Taraba	Zone 6	**SC419, SC719, SC555, SC651**	Rice, soybeans, sorghum	**Seed Co Nigeria · All states and FCT / Abuja** +2348039925236 seedconigeria@seedcogroup.com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ISSUE NO 01

ZAMBIA

SEED·CO

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EL NIÑO

And how to prepare for the 2026/27 farming season



El Niño does not cancel the season it changes the odds. The farmers who plan early, choose the right hybrid for their region and conserve every millimetre of moisture are the ones who still harvest.

SEED CO AGRONOMY TEAM · ZAMBIA SEASONAL ADVISORY · 2026/27 SEASON
AGRO-ECOLOGICAL REGIONS I, II & III

Understanding El Niño

Why this season needs a plan

El Niño is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon associated with unusual warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. It can significantly influence weather patterns across Southern Africa.

With seasonal climate outlooks indicating an increased likelihood of El Niño conditions during the 2026/27 growing season, farmers need to begin preparations early. Although forecasts will continue to be updated, the possibility of challenging rainfall conditions makes early planning and the adoption of resilient farming practices essential.

The right seed, the right agronomy and the right timing are what turn a difficult season into a survivable one.

Everything in this advisory can be actioned before the first rains fall. Start with variety choice; it is the single decision that carries the most drought risk with it, then work through the eight field actions that follow.

Start with the seed

Climate-resilient maize hybrids

Selecting the right seed is one of the most effective ways of reducing drought risk. Seed Co has developed climate-resilient maize hybrids that have demonstrated good drought tolerance and wide adaptation across Zambia's major agro-ecological regions.

DROUGHT-TOLERANT HYBRIDS FOR 2026/27

SC719 SC657 SC647 SC555 SC561 SC419

Forecasted rainfall

Table 1

Farmers should select varieties suited to their specific production environment. Use this as your guidance when selecting the right variety for your zone

Northen Belt	Central Transition	Southern Belt
Northern, Luapula and Muchinga, and the northern parts of North Western.	Copperbelt, Central and Eastern, and the southern parts of North Western	Southern, Lusaka and Western, and the southern parts of Central and Eastern
Normal to above normal rainfall	**Normal to above-normal during OND and NDJ, changing to normal to below-normal from DJF**	**Below Normal**

FIELD ACTION 01 · SPREAD THE RISK

Do not rely on a single maize variety.

Farmers in Agro Ecological Regions II and III in particular should plant a combination of **early, medium and late-maturing** Seed Co varieties. Staggered maturity spreads production risk and reduces the likelihood of total crop failure when rainfall distribution becomes erratic.

BEFORE YOU BUY

- **Buy certified seed only.** Recycled seed loses vigour and yield exactly when the season gives you no margin.
- **Know your region.** A hybrid that performs in Region III may run out of season in Region I.
- **Plan the whole field.** Decide your early / medium / late split before you reach the depot.

Field actions

Preparing for the 2026/27 season

01

Plant early with first effective moisture

Timely planting is critical during an El Niño season. Plant soon after receiving the first effective rainfall of approximately **30–40 mm**. Early planting gives crops an opportunity to establish before prolonged dry spells and allows them to make better use of available soil moisture.

02

Retaincrop residues

Crop residues should be retained in the field rather than burned. Crop stover helps conserve soil moisture, improve water infiltration, reduce evaporation, protect the soil from erosion and gradually improve soil organic matter, an important component of conservation agriculture.

03

Minimise soil disturbance

Conservation farming practices such as **ripping and planting basins** help improve rainfall infiltration, reduce runoff and preserve soil structure. These practices enhance the ability of soils to retain moisture and support crops throughdry periods.

04

Maintain the recommended plant population

Excessively high plant populations increase competition among plants for limited water and nutrients. Follow recommended plant populations so that individual plants have adequate access to the soil moisture and nutrients that are available.

05

Maintain good field hygiene

Weeds compete with crops for water, nutrients and sunlight. Keeping fields weed-free throughout the season is particularly important under moisture stress, because it ensures available soil moisture is used by the crop rather than by unwanted vegetation.

06

Monitor weather forecasts

Regular access to seasonal and in-season weather information supports timely decisions on planting, fertilizer application, irrigation and other critical field operations. Make weather monitoring part of routine farm management download the **Seedney App** for daily forecasts.

07

Seek agronomic advice

Climate uncertainty should not be faced alone. Seek guidance from **Seed Co Agronomists**, use the Seedney App, follow Seed Co's social media platforms and consult Government agricultural extension officers.

+

Reliable, timely technical information

canmake the difference between cropfailure and a successful harvest. If you are unsure about a variety, a spacing or a fertilizer decision this season, ask before you plant not after.

THE THREE THAT COST NOTHING

Keep the stover.
Free mulch,free moisture, better infiltration.

Kill the weeds early.
Every weed you leave is drinking your crop's water.

Watch the forecast.
Daily outlooks on the Seedney App shape every field decision.

Conclusion

A difficult season, not an impossible one

Climate change continues to make agricultural production increasingly unpredictable. However, proactive planning, informed decision-making and the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices can significantly reduce production risks.

While El Niño presents serious challenges, it also provides an opportunity for farmers to strengthen their resilience through improved genetics, conservation agriculture, water management and sound agronomic practices.

> With the right seed, the right agronomic practices and timely management, farmers can improve their chances of achieving successful harvests even under difficult climatic conditions.

Ready to support farmers

Talk to a Seed Co agronomist

Preparing for an El Niño season starts with the right seed choice. Visit your nearest Seed Co agent or dealer to access certified varieties suited to your production environment. Representatives can help you match a hybrid to rainfall expectations, maturity period and local growing conditions.

Climate uncertainty should not be faced alone; reliable, timely technical information is what separates a failed field from a harvested one.

OUR AGRONOMISTS WILL ADVISE YOU ON

- Variety selection
- Plant population
- Fertility management
- Conservation farming
- Harvest management

SEED CO - Growing Prosperity Together

Visityour nearestSeed Coagentordealer for certified, drought-tolerant varieties matched to your agro-ecological region ahead of the 2026/27 season. Download the Seedney App for daily weather forecasts and agronomic guidance.



SEED CO / REGIONAL GROWING GUIDE

ZAMBIA

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

El Niño positioning: higher risk of a hot, dry and poorly distributed rainfall season.

OCTOBER 2026 / COMPLETE TABLE



Regions / towns	Seed Co Zone	Agro-ecological region / zone	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contact
Southern, Western & Eastern valleys – Chirundu, Sinazongwe, Luangwa	2	Zone 1	**SC303, SC419, SC555, SC647**	Horticultural crops	**David Chandalala · Southern, Western** +260979772014 david.chandalala@seedcogroup.com **Martin Munga · Eastern** +260979567519 martin.munga@seedcogroup.com **Franklin Nkala · Lusaka / Chirundu, Luangwa** +260966378004 franklin.nkala@seedcogroup.com
Southern, Western, Lusaka & Eastern – Choma, Kaoma, Petauke, Chisamba	3	Zone 2	**SC303, SC419, SC555, SC647, SC657, SC719, SC608**	Soybean: SC Spike; vegetables	**David Chandalala · Southern, Western** +260979772014 david.chandalala@seedcogroup.com **Franklin Nkala · Lusaka** +260966378004 franklin.nkala@seedcogroup.com **Martin Munga · Eastern** +260979567519 martin.munga@seedcogroup.com **Simon Kalenga · Central / Chisamba** +260 966330141 simon.kalenga@seedcogroup.com
Eastern, Central & Lusaka – Chipata, Mkushi, Chibombo	4	Zone 2	**SC419, SC555, SC561, SC647, SC657, SC719, SC608**	Soybean: SC Spike; vegetables	**Martin Munga · Eastern** +260979567519 martin.munga@seedcogroup.com **Simon Kalenga · Central** +260 966330141 simon.kalenga@seedcogroup.com **Franklin Nkala · Lusaka** +260966378004 franklin.nkala@seedcogroup.com
Copperbelt, Muchinga & North-Western – Mpongwe, Solwezi, Mpika	5	Zone 3	**SC419, SC561, SC647, SC657, SC719, SC727, SC608**	Soybean: SC Spike; vegetables	**Clement Silwimba · Copperbelt** +260979663713 clement.silwimba@seedcogroup.com **Kabika Mumbuwa · Muchinga** Phone: confirmation needed kabika.mumbuwa@seedcogroup.com **Augustine Musonda · North-Western** +260979515191 augustine.musonda@seedcogroup.com
North-Western, Luapula & Northern – Mbala, Mwinilunga, Mporokoso, Nchelenge	6	Zone 3	**SC419, SC561, SC647, SC657, SC719, SC727, SC608**	Soybean: SC Spike; vegetables	**Augustine Musonda · North-Western** +260979515191 augustine.musonda@seedcogroup.com **Clement Silwimba · Luapula** +260979663713 clement.silwimba@seedcogroup.com **Matthews Kandela · Northern** +260977963276 mathews.kandela@seedcogroup.com



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ISSUE NO 01

MOZAMBIQUE

SEED·CO

GUIDE TO FARMING SUCCESSFULLY DURING EL NIÑO

El Niño Forecast



El Niño will not fall evenly across Mozambique. The south dries, the north floods, and the centre swings between the two, so the right decision in Gaza might be the wrong one in Niassa.

SEED CO AGRONOMY TEAM · MOZAMBIQUE RAINFALL OUTLOOK · 26/27 SEASON
OCTOBER 2026 - JANUARY 2027

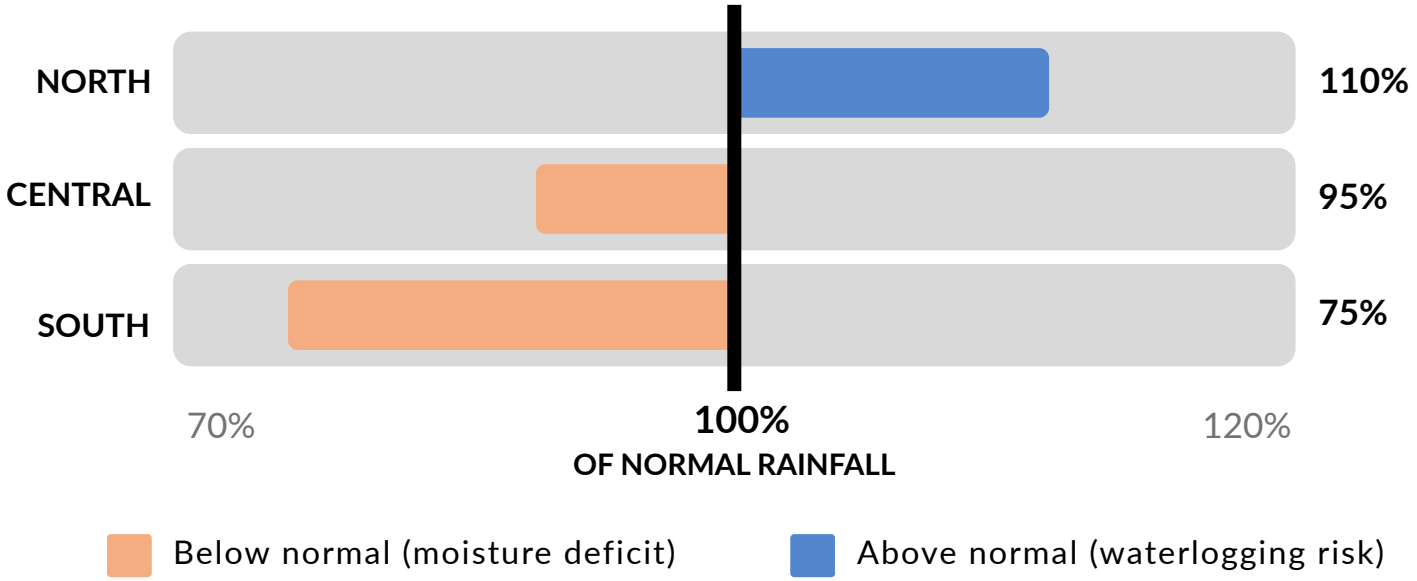
Climate forecasts indicate an increased likelihood of El Niño conditions during the coming season. Across much of Southern Africa, El Niño is typically associated with below-average rainfall, higher-than-normal temperatures, delayed onset of rains, and prolonged dry spells. These conditions can significantly affect crop production if farmers are not adequately prepared.

El Niño does not mean there will be no rainfall, or that production is impossible. It means rainfall arrives unevenly, excessive in some areas and well below average in others.

To minimise the risk of crop losses, protect your investment and safeguard household food security, use high quality certified seed and agricultural technologies matched to your own district's outlook, not to the national picture.

Rain outlook by region

Share of normal seasonal rainfall



Bars measure the distance from normal seasonal rainfall, not the total. A short bar is a small departure; the direction tells you which way the season leans.

Expected Challenges

Six risks to plan around

A delayed onset of the rainy season shortens the growing season.

Lower seasonal rainfall and longer dry spells reduce soil moisture.

Poor germination and crop failure; lower yields under moisture stress

Higher temperatures increase pest and disease pressure

Reduced water availability for livestock and irrigation

Lower household income and increased food insecurity

Three Regions, Three Strategies

SOUTH

DRIEST OUTLOOK

WHAT TO EXPECT

The districts below are expected to be among the most affected by irregular rainfall associated with El Niño, with the deepest moisture deficit in the country.

MOST AFFECTED DISTRICTS

GAZA Mapai · Massangena · Chigubo

INHAMBANE Mabote · Massinga · Jangamo

WHAT TO PLANT

Diversify beyond maize. Seed Co climate-resilient alternatives can still deliver a harvest in a short, unreliable season.

SESAME **SORGHUM** **PEARL MILLET**

CENTRAL

UNEVEN & UNRELIABLE

WHAT TO EXPECT

Close to normal in total, but that total arrives badly distributed. Uneven rainfall and prolonged dry spells are likely to reduce crop productivity across these districts.

MOST AFFECTED DISTRICTS

MANICA Machaze · Macossa · Tambara

SOFALA Chemba · Caia · Marromeu

TETE Changara · Mágoè · Mutarara · Doa

ZAMBÉZIA Morrumbala · Nicoadala · Inhassunge

WHAT TO PLANT

Early maturing varieties that finish before the dry spells bite, backed by drought tolerant alternative crops.

EARLY MATURING MAIZE **SESAME** **PEARL MILLET** **SORGHUM**

NORTH

NORMAL TO ABOVE NORMAL

WHAT TO EXPECT

The opposite problem. Near to above normal rainfall raises the likelihood of localised flooding, waterlogging and a higher incidence of crop disease; so drainage, not drought tolerance, is the priority.

MOST SUSCEPTIBLE DISTRICTS

NAMPULA Angoche · Moma **CABO DELGADO** Montepuez · Chiúre · Ancuabe

NIASSA Cuamba · Mandimba · Marrupa · Maúa

WHAT TO PLANT

Seed Co late maturity varieties well adapted to local conditions, paired with proper field drainage and good agricultural practice.

LATE MATURITY MAIZE

Best agronomic practices

Seven recommendations

PRACTICE 01

Plant early

Prepare land before the rains begin so planting can take place immediately after effective rainfall. Early planting lets crops take full advantage of the soil moisture that is available.

PRACTICE 02

Choose draught tolerant varieties

Select certified Seed Co varieties adapted to your agro ecological region. Early maturing and medium maturity options both perform better under moisture stress and reduce production risk.

PRACTICE 03

Use certified seeds

High-quality certified seed gives better germination, vigorous plants, strong early growth, uniform establishment and improved yield potential.

Avoid poor quality recycled seed; reduced vigour, reduced yield.

PRACTICE 04

Conserve soil moisture

Moisture conservation becomes critical in an El Niño season. Practise minimum tillage where appropriate, retain crop residues as mulch, control weeds early, and improve water infiltration through good land management.

PRACTICE 05

Apply fertilizer efficiently

Use fertilizer according to soil test recommendations wherever possible.

- Apply basal fertilizer at planting.
- Split top dressing applications.
- Avoid excessive nitrogen during severe moisture stress.
- Ensure balanced crop nutrition.

PRACTICE 06

Maintain correct plant population

Avoid overcrowding in dry seasons. Recommended spacing allows crops to use available soil moisture more efficiently while maximising yield potential.

PRACTICE 07

Monitor pests and diseases

Higher temperatures favour certain insect pests and diseases. Regular scouting helps identify problems early and apply timely control measures.

Ready to support farmers

Preparing for an El Niño season starts with the right seed choice. Visit your nearest Seed Co agent or dealer to access certified varieties suited to your production environment. Representatives can help you match a hybrid to rainfall expectations, maturity period and local growing conditions.

OUR AGRONOMISTS WILL ADVISE YOU ON

- VARIETY SELECTION
- PLANT POPULATION
- FERTILITY MANAGEMENT
- DISEASE MANAGEMENT
- CLIMATE SMART PRACTICES
- HARVEST MANAGEMENT

El Niño seasons present challenges. The right varieties, conserved moisture, efficient nutrition and expert advice are what turn a difficult season into a survivable one.

Do not hesitate. Visit your nearest Seed Co outlet, contact our team, and buy your certified Seed Co seed today. Invest in quality and secure a more productive, resilient and successful farming season.

At Seed Co, we remain committed to helping farmers grow successful crops, whatever the season brings.

SEED CO - Growing Prosperity Together

Find your nearest Seed Co outlet or dealer for certified seed and district-level guidance ahead of the 2026/27 season.



Written by Pita Paulino

Product Development & Agronomy Officer - Seed Co Mozambique

SEED CO / REGIONAL GROWING GUIDE

MOZAMBIQUE

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

El Niño positioning: rainfall patterns vary by location, with some areas facing heavy rainfall and others prolonged dry periods.



OCTOBER 2026 / COMPLETE TABLE

Regions / districts	Seed Co Zone	Agro-ecological region / zone	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contact
Maputo & southern Gaza – Maputo, Boane, Namaacha, Chókwè, Xai-Xai	1, 2 & 3	R1 - Inland Maputo & South Gaza; semi-arid, high drought risk	**SC303, SC419, SC555, SC547**	Cowpea, groundnut, sorghum, vegetables under irrigation	**Dercia Chuquelane · Maputo** +258 879208002 dercia.chuquelane@seedcogroup.com **Pita Paulino · Gaza** +258 842038745 pita.paulino@seedcogroup.com
Southern coastal – Marracuene, Manhiça, Bilene, Maxixe, Inhambane	1, 2 & 3	R2 - Coastal South	**SC303, SC419, SC555, SC547**	Cowpea, groundnut & vegetables	**Dercia Chuquelane · Maputo** +258 879208002 dercia.chuquelane@seedcogroup.com **Pita Paulino · Gaza, Inhambane** +258 842038745 pita.paulino@seedcogroup.com
Northern Gaza & western Inhambane – Massingir, Chicualacuala, Chigubo, Mabote	2 & 3	R3 - Central/North Gaza & West Inhambane	**SC303, SC419**	Sorghum, pearl millet, cowpea, groundnut	**Pita Paulino** +258 842038745 pita.paulino@seedcogroup.com
Manica & western/central Sofala – Chimoio, Manica, Gondola, Sussundenga, Dondo	2, 3 & 5	R4 - Medium-altitude Central	**SC419, SC547, SC555, SC719**	Beans, sorghum, groundnut, cowpea	**Graca Mustafa · Chimoio, Gondola, Sussundenga** +258 841002996 graca.mustafa@seedcogroup.com **Rudo Massona · Manica** +258 849822818 rudo.massona@seedcogroup.com **Prince Virai · Sofala** +258 841001496 prince.virai@seedcogroup.com
Coastal/lowland Sofala & Zambézia – Beira, Buzi, Dondo, Quelimane, Pebane	1, 2 & 3	R5 - Low-altitude Sofala/Zambézia	**SC303, SC419, SC555, SC547**	Rice where water is available, cowpea, groundnut, vegetables	**Prince Virai · Sofala** +258 841001496 prince.virai@seedcogroup.com **Kiara Dimande · Zambézia** +258 841003527 kiara.dmande@seedcogroup.com
Zambezi Valley & southern Tete – Tete, Moatize, Mutarara, Chemba	2, 3 & 5	R6 - Semi-arid Zambezi Valley & Southern Tete; high heat/drought risk	**SC419, SC555, SC719**	Sorghum, pearl millet, cowpea, groundnut	**Inacio Andrigo · Tete, Moatize** +258 841003526 inacio.andrigo@seedcogroup.com **Prince Virai · Sofala / Chemba** +258 841001496 prince.virai@seedcogroup.com No specific representative supplied for Mutarara.
Medium-altitude Zambézia, Nampula, Tete, Niassa & Cabo Delgado	2, 3, 4 & 5	R7 - Medium-altitude northern/central zone	**SC419, SC555, SC665, SC719**	Beans, groundnut, sorghum	**Kiara Dimande · Zambézia, Niassa, Cabo Delgado** +258 841003527 kiara.dmande@seedcogroup.com **Binchua Chaual · Nampula** +258 849825302 bincha.chaual@seedcogroup.com **Inacio Andrigo · Tete** +258 841003526 inacio.andrigo@seedcogroup.com **Lucrecia Alfredo · Ulongué** +258 849833233 lucrecia.conrado@seedcogroup.com
Coastal Zambézia, Nampula & Cabo Delgado – Angoche, Nacala, Pemba	1, 2 & 3	R8 - Coastal northern zone	**SC303, SC419, SC555**	Cowpea, millet, groundnut, rice	**Kiara Dimande · Zambézia, Cabo Delgado** +258 841003527 kiara.dmande@seedcogroup.com **Binchua Chaual · Nampula** +258 849825302 bincha.chaual@seedcogroup.com
Northern Cabo Delgado / Mueda Plateau – Mueda, Macomia, Nangade, Muidumbe	2, 3 & 4	R9 - Northern interior Cabo Delgado	**SC419, SC555, SC665**	Cowpea, groundnut, sorghum, beans, millet	**Kiara Dimande · Cabo Delgado** +258 841003527 kiara.dmande@seedcogroup.com
High-altitude Zambézia, Niassa, Angónia & Manica	3 & 5	R10 – High-altitude/high-potential zone	**SC547, SC555, SC719**	Beans, sorghum	**Kiara Dimande · Zambézia, Niassa** +258 841003527 kiara.dmande@seedcogroup.com **Lucrecia Alfredo · Angónia / Ulongué** +258 849833233 lucrecia.conrado@seedcogroup.com **Graca Mustafa · Chimoio, Gondola, Sussundenga, Macate** +258 841002996 graca.mustafa@seedcogroup.com **Rudo Massona · Manica, Vanduzi** +258 849822818 rudo.massona@seedcogroup.com **Prince Virai · Catandica, Guro** +258 841001496 prince.virai@seedcogroup.com

SEED CO KENYA ADVISORY · AUGUST 2026

PREPARING FARMERS FOR EL NIÑO



A season of too much water, arriving after a season of far too little.

The Seed Co family extends warm greetings to all Kenyan farmers. As the country braces for the El Niño phenomenon, it is vital to understand the challenges ahead and prepare accordingly. El Niño is widely recognised as a season of **above normal rainfall**, affecting crops, livestock and human activities across many regions. In Kenya, **eighteen counties** have already been flagged as high-risk areas, facing severe flooding that threatens infrastructure and crop production.

18	90%	30%	3.3m
counties flagged as high flood risk	crop losses in some areas from the dry spell since March	of seed lost, per the Chief Administrative Secretary	Kenyans may face starvation due to failed harvests

Why this season is different

Drought, then deluge

This year's El Niño comes after a prolonged dry spell that began in March, leading to devastating crop losses of up to 90 percent in some areas. Against this backdrop, Seed Co has mobilised its agronomy team to train lead farmers nationwide, focusing on best maize farming practices **before, during and after** the rains.

SEED CO RESPONSE

60,000 lead farmers trained, with an estimated impact on 300,000 farmers nationwide.

El Niño seasons bring **excess rainfall, waterlogging and heightened disease pressure**. Farmers must adapt by selecting maize varieties suited to their ecological zones and altitudes, and by getting water off the field before it sits on the crop.

The rainfall calendar

August 2026 — first quarter 2027

Weather forecasts indicate a season that builds slowly, peaks hard and then lets go gradually. Plan your planting, your drainage and your storage against this calendar.

Aug – Sep 2026	DRY TO NEAR AVERAGE	Mostly dry or near-average conditions. The El Niño signal is intensifying, but heavy rains are not yet widespread. **This is your preparation window;** drainage, land preparation and seed purchase.
October 2026	ABOVE NORMAL	Onset of the short rains season, with above-normal rainfall expected countrywide. Early and ultra-early varieties planted now stand the best chance of escaping the peak.
November PEAK MONTH	HEAVY · FLOOD RISK	The projected peak: widespread heavy downpours with flooding risks in **Western, Coastal and Central Kenya**. Trenches and ridges must already be in place before this month arrives.
December 2026	HEAVY, EASING	Heavy rains continue, though slightly reduced. Disease scouting and waterproof storage become the priorities as the earliest crops approach harvest.
Jan – Mar 2027	LINGERING WET	Wet conditions are expected to linger into the first quarter. Grain moisture management and secure storage determine how much of the harvest actually reaches the market.

Eighteen counties are already flagged as high risk. In a flood season, drainage not drought tolerance, is the first decision on the farm.

Western, Coastal and Central Kenya carry the highest November exposure. Farmers in these areas should treat October as the last practical month for earthworks.

What the season demands

Three pressures to manage

01 · EXCESS RAINFALL

Water must be moved off the field quickly. Standing water suffocates roots and stalls nutrient uptake at exactly the wrong growth stage.

02 · WATERLOGGING

Saturated soils reduce germination and root development. Ridging and trenching protect the plant population you paid for.

03 · DISEASE PRESSURE

Warm, wet conditions favour foliar disease. Scout regularly and act early rather than treating a crop that is already lost.

Choose the variety for your zone

The Seed Co Kenya portfolio

Seed Co offers a wide portfolio across different maturity groups. Africa's largest seed house has the capacity to offer a complete portfolio for all zones in Kenya the task for each farmer is to match maturity to altitude, zone and flood exposure.

SC 301

ULTRA-EARLY

Matures quickly, helping farmers **escape peak floods**. The first choice where November exposure is highest.

Fastest maturity group

SC Duma 403

DROUGHT TOLERANT

A superior drought-tolerant variety, **widely adaptable** to varying conditions across zones.

Wide adaptability

SC 419

IMPROVED EXECUTIVE

An improved executive variety delivering high yields within **90 to 100 days**.

40 bags · 90–100 days

SC 555

STABILITY · STORAGE

Known for stability, excellent grain size and long shelf life — ideal for both **green mealie and post-harvest storage**.

Long shelf life

SC 657

MEDIUM ZONES

For medium zones such as **Western, Central Rift and Nyanza**, offering very high yields.

45 bags per acre

SC Tembo

HIGH-RAINFALL TEMPERATE

Super-executive genetics for **Mt. Kenya, Meru, Tharaka and parts of Embu**, with long, dense cobs.

58 bags per acre

Grain that keeps

In a wet season the harvest is only half the job. Grain size, shelling quality and shelf life decide how much of the crop survives the months of humidity that follow the rains.

Match the variety to the store you have, not only to the field you plant.



MATCHING MATURITY TO EXPOSURE

High flood exposure
Ultra-early and early:SC301, SC Duma 403, SC 419.

Medium zones
Western, CentralRift, Nyanza: SC 555, SC 657.

High-rainfall temperate
Mt.Kenya, Meru,Tharaka,parts of Embu: SC Tembo.

Five actions before the rains

Farmer preparedness checklist

- [ ] **Dig trenches and ridges**

  Channel excess water away from the crop. Earthworks must be finished before October, while the ground is still workable and machinery can move.

- [ ] **Favour ultra-early and early maturing varieties**

  Shorter maturity groups escape the peak floods of November. Where flood exposure is highest, speed to harvest is worth more than yield potential on paper.

- [ ] **Stagger your planting**

  Mix early and medium varieties across your fields to spread risk. A single planting date is a single point of failure in an unpredictable season.

- [ ] **Ready waterproof storage**

  Prepare storage facilities for harvested grain before the crop comes off the field. Wet season grain that is stored badly is lost as surely as grain left standing in water.

- [ ] **Work with local authorities**

  Communities should stay close to local authorities on flood alerts and dam monitoring. Early warning only helps the farmers who are connected to it.

El Niño presents significant challenges, but with Seed Co's resilient genetics and agronomic guidance, farmers can safeguard yields and strengthen food security. Preparedness today will ensure resilience tomorrow.

Seed Co remains committed to standing with Kenyan farmers through every season.



Written by A. Bakari

Agronomy & Product Development Department · Seed Co Kenya

SEED CO - Growing Prosperity Together

Visit your nearest SeedCo outlet or stockist for certified seed and zone level guidance ahead of the short rains. Speak to a Seed Co agronomist about variety selection, drainage and post-harvest storage for your area.

SEED CO / REGIONAL GROWING GUIDE

KENYA

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

El Niño positioning: wetter and warmer conditions with elevated flood risk, particularly during the short-rains season.

OCTOBER 2026 / COMPLETE TABLE



Region	Seed Co Zone	Agro-ecological region / zone	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contact
Coast	1	Lowland coastal	**301, 403, 555**	Soya beans, vegetables	**Paul Mwanzia** 0728512760 paul.mwanzia@seedcogroup.com
Lower Eastern	2 & 3	Lower midland dry	**301, 403, 419, 555**	Sorghum, vegetables, beans	**Paul Mwanzia** 0728512760 paul.mwanzia@seedcogroup.com
Upper Eastern	2 & 3	Upper midland dry	**301, 403**	Sorghum, beans	**Paul Mwanzia · Isiolo** 0728512760 paul.mwanzia@seedcogroup.com **Sam Kimani · Tharaka-Nithi** 0722667303 sam.kimani@seedcogroup.com
Mt Kenya	3, 4, 5 & 6	Midland wet	**301, 403, 555, 657**	Sorghum, wheat, vegetables, potatoes, beans	**Sam Kimani** 0722667303 sam.kimani@seedcogroup.com
Central Rift	5, 6 & 7	Highland warm wet	**555, 657, 679, 719**	Sorghum, wheat, vegetables, potatoes, beans	**Elijah Gacheru** 0724536365 elijah.gacheru@seedcogroup.com
South Rift	6 & 7	Highland cold dry	**555, 657, 719**	Sorghum, wheat, barley, vegetables	**Elijah Gacheru** 0724536365 elijah.gacheru@seedcogroup.com
Nyanza	4, 5 & 6	Lowland wet	**403, 555, 657, 679, 719**	Sorghum, vegetables, beans	**Zephaniah Ooga** 0725658930 zephaniah.ooga@seedcogroup.com
Western	5 & 6	Medium wet	**403, 555, 657, 679, 719**	Sorghum, vegetables, beans	**Juma Masika** 0728719163 juma.masika@seedcogroup.com
North Rift	6 & 7	Highland cold wet	**657, 679, 719**	Wheat, barley, beans, vegetables	**Paul Mwanzia · Marsabit** 0728512760 paul.mwanzia@seedcogroup.com **Elijah Gacheru · Turkana, West Pokot, Samburu** 0724536365 elijah.gacheru@seedcogroup.com **Juma Masika · Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu** 0728719163 juma.masika@seedcogroup.com


SEED·CO
EL NIÑO
is here — are you ready for the season?
Unpredictable rainfall can mean delayed rains, dry spells and increased heat stress. Don't leave your harvest to chance.
CHOOSE SEED CO
Choose climate-smart varieties
Plant when you receive effective rains of 30–50mm
Follow the recommended agronomic practices for a strong start
With the right seed and the right timing, you can prepare for the season and protect your yield.
CLIMATE SMART SEED
BRED FOR AFRICA
Seed smart. Plant smart.
Harvest better.
CHOOSE SEED CO

A MESSAGE TO TANZANIAN FARMERS FROM SEED CO TANZANIA

MORE RAIN, MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Preparing for the 2026 El Niño season, where above average rainfall is a chance to raise your yield, provided you plan for the water as well as the crop.



SEED CO TANZANIA · SOURCE: TANZANIA METEOROLOGICAL AUTHORITY · VULI SEASON · OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2026

El Niño is a natural climate phenomenon that occurs every two to seven years and usually lasts between nine and twelve months. It typically begins to develop between March and June, reaches its peak between November and February, and has its greatest impact on weather patterns during the following year.

Increased rainfall is an opportunity for higher yields and, at the same time, a risk of flooding, waterlogging, erosion and disease.

Its effects vary with intensity, duration, the time of year it develops, and how it interacts with other climate systems such as the Indian Ocean Dipole. Not every country experiences the same effects and even within Tanzania, the impacts differ from one region to the next.

What Is Expected in 2026

High probability · second half of 2026

Climate forecasts indicate a high probability of El Niño conditions developing during the second half of 2026. Although the exact intensity is still uncertain, farmers are encouraged to prepare early.

In Tanzania, El Niño is generally associated with above-average rainfall, particularly during the October–December Vuli season. While increased rainfall provides an opportunity for higher crop yields, it also increases the risk of flooding, waterlogging, soil erosion, nutrient leaching and outbreaks of crop diseases.

2–7
Years between El Niño events

9–12
Months a typical event lasts

Nov–Feb
When the event reaches its peak

Four Zones, Four Strategies

Regional recommendations for maize farmers

NORTHERN & COASTAL

ABOVE NORMAL - VULI

WHAT TO EXPECT

Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Tanga, Pwani, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Lindi, Mtwara and other coastal areas expect above normal rainfall during Vuli, an excellent opportunity for maize production.

WHAT TO PLANT

Early maturing hybrids. At about 90 days they reach grain filling before Vuli ends.

SC 419 SC 555

LAKE ZONE

INCREASED RAINFALL

WHAT TO EXPECT

Mwanza, Geita, Simiyu, Mara, Kagera, Shinyanga, Kigoma and **Tabora** also expect increased rainfall. The longer growing period the extra moisture creates is an ideal opportunity.

WHAT TO PLANT

High yielding medium to late maturing hybrids, exceptional under favourable moisture.

SC 657 SC 719

CENTRAL ZONE

NEAR TO SLIGHTLY ABOVE NORMAL

WHAT TO EXPECT

Dodoma and **Singida** expect near normal to slightly above normal rainfall; enough to plant on, but not enough to gamble a long season hybrid on.

WHAT TO PLANT

Early maturing hybrids, well suited where rainfall may still be variable.

SC 419 SC 555

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

SMALLER EL NIÑO EFFECT

WHAT TO EXPECT

Iringa, Njombe, Mbeya, Songwe, Rukwa, Katavi and **Ruvuma** expect relatively smaller El Niño effects this season.

WHAT TO PLANT

Continue with your preferred hybrid, consistently high yielding under the region's favourable conditions.

SC 719

Prepare for the challlenges

Excessive rainfall creates its own production problems

Flooding, waterlogging, erosion

Heavy rains cause poor crop establishment and nutrient losses. **Prepare drainage channels**, avoid planting in flood prone areas, and practise soil conservation; contour farming, mulching, and maintaining ground cover.

Fungal and bacterial disease

Wet conditions favour disease, including maize leaf blight. Plant disease tolerant hybrids, hold the recommended spacing, monitor fields regularly, and seek extension advice as soon as symptoms appear.

Weeds and insect pests

Both multiply rapidly in wet seasons. **Early weeding**, regular crop scouting and **Integrated Pest Management** will reduce crop losses and improve productivity.

DISEASE TOLERANT HYBRIDS

SC 719 SC 657 SC 555

RECOMMENDED PLANT SPACING

75cm between rows 30cm between plants

Prepare for the challlenges

1 **Harvest on time**

Harvest maize **immediately after physiological maturity** every extra day in a wet field is a day of risk.

2 **Dry to the right moisture**

Dry grain down to the **recommended moisture content** before it goes anywhere near a store.

3 **Store clean and ventilated**

Store in clean, **dry, well ventilated** facilities to protect the crop you have paid for.

Most importantly; continue following seasonal weather forecasts issued by the **Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA)** and plan your farming acvies accordingly.

The 2026 El Niño season presents both opportunities and challenges for Tanzanian farmers.

With the right seed, good agronomic practices and timely management, farmers can take advantage of the expected favourable rainfall while minimising production risks. Rain is an asset this season but only for the farmer who has drained the field and matched the hybrid to the zone.

SEED CO TANZANIA - Turn a Wet Season Into a Good One

Visit your nearest Seed Co distributor to get the perfect seed hybrid that match your zone's expected weather pattern or get in touch with your nearest Seed Co agronomist for further agronomic assistance.

TANZANIA

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

El Niño crop and variety placement by region, with reference rainfall bands.

OCTOBER 2026 / PANEL 1 OF 2



Region	Cities / towns / locations	Seed Co El Niño zone	Reference rainfall band	Maize varieties for El Niño	Other crops for El Niño	Regional team contact
Kagera	Bukoba, Ngara, Nyabugombe, Buseresere	5	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Erick Ng'oro** +255 759 317 011 erick.ngoro@seedcogroup.com
Mwanza	Mwanza, Magu, Misungwi, Sengerema	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Erick Ng'oro** +255 759 317 011 erick.ngoro@seedcogroup.com
Mara	Musoma, Bunda, Tarime	5	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Louis Rumisha** +255 745 344 098 louis.rumisha@seedcogroup.com
Simiyu	Bariadi	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Louis Rumisha** +255 745 344 098 louis.rumisha@seedcogroup.com
Shinyanga	Shinyanga, Kahama, Ushirombo, Uyovu[1]	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Frank Mazengo** +255 766 116 117 frank.mazengo@seedcogroup.com
Tabora	Tabora, Nzega, Sikonge, Urambo	4	900-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Frank Mazengo** +255 766 116 117 frank.mazengo@seedcogroup.com
Geita	Geita, Chato, Bukombe, Mbogwe	4	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Erick Ng'oro** +255 759 317 011 erick.ngoro@seedcogroup.com
Kigoma	Kigoma, Kasulu, Kibondo, Uvinza, Nguruka	5	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Mbayani Mollel** +255 769 551 306 mbayani.mollel@seedcogroup.com
Singida	Singida, Manyoni, Rungwa, Iramba, Mkalama	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Paschal Lusolela** +255 753 564 741 paschal.lusolela@seedcogroup.com
Dodoma	Dodoma, Kondoa, Kongwa, Mpwapwa	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Paschal Lusolela** +255 753 564 741 paschal.lusolela@seedcogroup.com
Manyara	Babati, Hanang, Kiteto, Mbulu, Simanjiro	5	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Paschal Lusolela** +255 753 564 741 paschal.lusolela@seedcogroup.com
Morogoro	Morogoro, Kilosa, Mikumi, Ifakara, Mahenge	2	750-1,000 mm	**SC 555, SC 419**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Eliya Kituye** +255 764 111 155 eliya.kituye@seedcogroup.com
Dar es Salaam	Dar es Salaam	1	500-750 mm	**SC 419, SC 403**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Eliya Kituye** +255 764 111 155 eliya.kituye@seedcogroup.com

SEED CO / REGIONAL GROWING GUIDE

TANZANIA

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

El Niño crop and variety placement by region, with reference rainfall bands.

OCTOBER 2026 / PANEL 2 OF 2



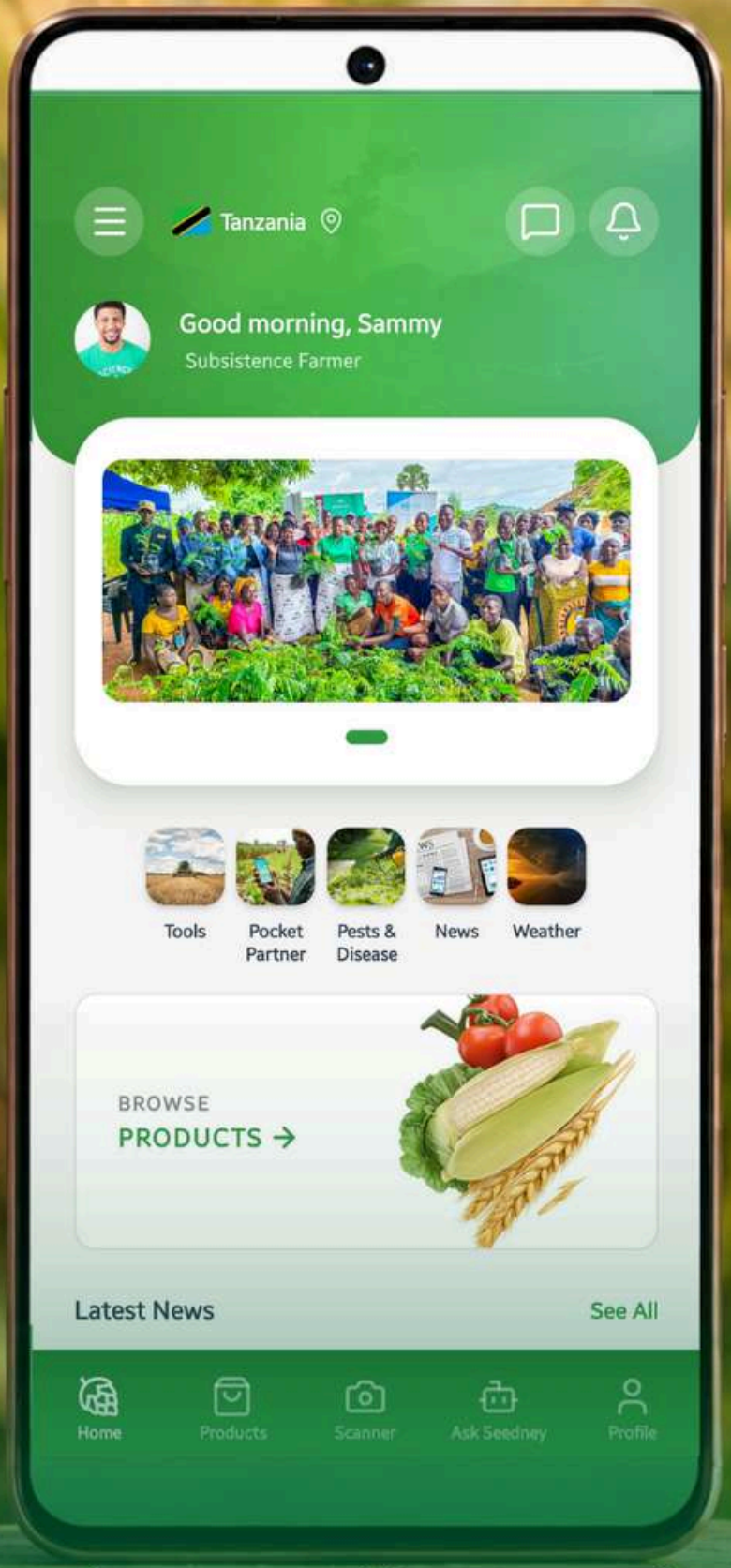
Region	Cities / towns / locations	Seed Co El Niño zone	Reference rainfall band	Maize varieties for El Niño	Other crops for El Niño	Regional team contact
Arusha	Arusha, Karatu, Monduli, Ngorongoro	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Hamidu Mhoji** +255 743 130 032 hamidu.mhoji@seedcogroup.com
Kilimanjaro	Moshi, Same	4	750-1,000 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Hamidu Mhoji** +255 743 130 032 hamidu.mhoji@seedcogroup.com
Tanga	Tanga, Korogwe	3	750-1,000 mm	**SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Hamidu Mhoji** +255 743 130 032 hamidu.mhoji@seedcogroup.com
Pwani	Bagamoyo, Kibaha, Kisarawe, Mkuranga, Utete, Kilindoni[1]	1	500-750 mm	**SC 419, SC 403**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Eliya Kituye** +255 764 111 155 eliya.kituye@seedcogroup.com
Lindi	Lindi, Kilwa Masoko, Liwale, Nachingwea, Ruangwa	2	500-750 mm	**SC 555, SC 419**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Eliya Kituye** +255 764 111 155 eliya.kituye@seedcogroup.com
Mtwara	Mtwara, Masasi, Newala	1	500-750 mm	**SC 419, SC 403**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Eliya Kituye** +255 764 111 155 eliya.kituye@seedcogroup.com
Katavi	Mpanda	4	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Yona Anganisye** +255 756 489 255 yona.anganisye@seedcogroup.com
Rukwa	Sumbawanga, Matai	6	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Yona Anganisye** +255 756 489 255 yona.anganisye@seedcogroup.com
Mbeya	Mbeya, Chunya, Kyela, Rungwe	5	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Remy Abraham** +255 765 342 578 remy.abraham@seedcogroup.com
Iringa	Iringa, Kilolo, Mufindi	6	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Juma Kaminyoge** +255 746 192 538 juma.kaminyoge@seedcogroup.com
Njombe	Njombe, Makambako, Ludewa	6	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Juma Kaminyoge** +255 746 192 538 juma.kaminyoge@seedcogroup.com
Ruvuma	Songea, Mbamba Bay, Tunduru	4	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657, SC 555**	Sunflower, vegetables	**Ayubu Bisaga** +255 762 556 222 ayubu.bisaga@seedcogroup.com
Songwe	Vwawa	5	1,000-over 2,500 mm	**SC 719, SC 657**	Vegetables	**Remy Abraham** +255 765 342 578 remy.abraham@seedcogroup.com



Written by Harry Nassary

Country Agronomist - Seed Co Tanzania

SEED·CO



Seedney

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THE HOME OF BUMPER HARVESTS

SEED·CO

GUIDELINES FOR EL NIÑO PREPAREDNESS

MATCH THE MATURITY TO THE SEASON

Varietal selection and agronomic advisory for Uganda's second rains, August - December 2026.

SEED CO UGANDA AGRONOMY

SOURCE: UNMA & REGIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOKS

SECOND SEASON · AUGUST – DECEMBER 2026

Multiple seasonal outlooks confirm that a moderate to strong El Niño is developing in the equatorial Pacific and is already suppressing 2026 rainfall over Uganda. Most of the country experiences a bi-modal rainfall paern, with the second season expected to run from August to December. The Uganda Naonal Meteorological Authority forecasts normal to below-normal, hoer-than-average condions through August, with the dry peak concentrated in July.

Our single most effecve lever is deliberate maturity diversificaon — spreading drought risk instead of concentrang it in one maturity group.

Seed Co Uganda's absolute advantage is a climate-smart, drought-tolerant porolio spanning early, mid and late maturity; a hybrid for every farmer, whatever their location and whatever the forecast does next.

What El Niño Means Here

Equatorial Pacific warming · Greater Horn of Africa

El Niño refers to the periodic warming of sea-surface temperatures in the equatorial central and eastern Pacific. It alters global atmospheric circulaon and typically **suppresses rainfall** over Uganda and much of the Greater Horn of Africa during the August– December second rainy season.

The second season is still expected to **begin in August**, but with high variability. The onset will be patchy, with dry spells between rainfall events, especially in the first half of the month. Temperatures will run **above average countrywide**, raising evapotranspiraon and moisture stress even where rainfall is close to normal.

Aug
Second season onset patchy, with dry spells between events

Jul
Dry peak concentrated inJuly,ahead of the season

Hot
Above-average temperatures countrywide raise moisture stress

The Outlook, Region by Region

Rainfall relave to the long-term normal

Western, Southwestern & Central Incl. Lake Victoria basin	**BELOW** NEAR ABOVE	Below normal rainfall and an early, deeper dry spell through July into August. The cale corridor is the first to dry out, the earliest-maturing genecs belong here.
Eastern & Northern	**BELOW** **NEAR** ABOVE	Near normal tending to below normal, with on and off showers weakening progressively toward the end of the season.
Mbale EASTERN	BELOW **NEAR** **ABOVE**	Isolated showers with intermient dry spells in early August; rainfall increases mid-to-late August, supporng planng. Watch for localised heavy storms later in the season.
Masindi MID-WEST	BELOW **NEAR** ABOVE	Near-normal rainfall overall but planng rains may not be consistent at the beginning of August. Confirm the onset before commi□ng seed.

Read the dial, not the calendar. Some areas may receive above normal rainfall later in the season. It is the **onset** and the **gaps between events;** not the seasonal total, that will decide whether your crop reaches maturity.

Diversify by Maturity

Match the hybrid to the length of yourplanngwindow

Giventhe uneven rainfall risk across Uganda's agro-ecologies, the single most effecve migaon is deliberate diversificaon across maturity classes, matched to each zone's expected planng-window length. Plant **at least two Seed Co variees from different maturity groups** — the weather is unpredictable, and your porolio should be too.

	SHORT WINDOW LONG WINDOW	
SC419	VERY EARLY MATURING	**Priority for greater Uganda.** An absolute advantage in escaping an early-season cut-off — reaches physiological maturity before moisture runs out. Anchor variety for the earliest-drying cattle corridors.
SC555	EARLY MATURING	**Performs across all regions of Uganda.** Drought tolerant and early maturing, with a deep stay-green characteristic that holds yield through late-season stress.
SC657	MEDIUM MATURING	**Mid to high altude** - Kapchorwa and eastern Uganda. Drought tolerant, with the same deep stay-green characteristic
SC719	LONG MATURING	**Kapchorwa and northern Uganda**, mid and high-altude areas. Combines drought tolerance with drought-escape characteriscs where effecve rains run longer.

The pairing rule - a very early hybrid (SC419) alongside an early or medium one (SC555, SC657), or a medium alongside a late (SC657 with SC719). Two maturity groups in the same season means one of them is always suited to how the rains actually behave.

Seven Actions Before the Rains

Mitigation and business continuity

1. **Plant on first effective rainfall**
   Defined as **30mm of rainfall over three consecutive** days. Not the first shower — the first effec□ve one.
2. **Plant two maturity groups**
   Very early **SC419** with early **SC555**, or medium **SC657** with late **SC719**. Be deliberately risk-averse.
3. **Rip wet or dry**
   Harness as much moisture as the profile will hold before the season starts.
4. **Practise conservation farming**
   Pot-holing, mulching and permanent ground cover particularly valuable for small scale farmers.
5. **Hold optimum plant population**
   Above 55,000 plants per hectare, competition for moisture rises sharply and the crop reaches permanent wilting point far earlier than a crop at optimum population.
6. **Buy inputs early, prepare land early**
   Complete land preparation before the onset of rainfall so nothing stands between effective rain and seed in the ground.
7. **Invest in irrigation where you can**
   Farmers with water bodies near their fields should treat irrigation as this season's highest return investment.



The 2026 El Niño is not forecast to be uniform or catastrophic but it does raise the risk of a shortened, hotter season in the west, southwest and central belt.

Prospects are somewhat beer, though sll uncertain, in the east and north. Seed Co's most direct lever is deliberate maturity diversificaon: **SC419** in the earliest-drying zones, **SC555** and **SC657** for greater Uganda, and **SC719** where effecve rains run longer. Plant early, and take monthly monitoring of updated forecasts seriously.

SEED CO UGANDA - A Hybrid for Every Window

Speak to your nearest Seed Co agent or stockist about matching maturity classes to your district's expected planting window before you buy this season's seed.

SEED CO / REGIONAL GROWING GUIDE

UGANDA

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

Seasonal outlook: most areas near-normal to above-normal rainfall, with warmer-than-average temperatures.



OCTOBER 2026 / COMPLETE TABLE

Region	Seed Co Zone	Agro-ecological zone	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contact
Eastern Highlands	6	1	**SC719, SC657**	Sugar beans, potatoes, wheat, barley, cabbages	**Philip Matombo · All Uganda regions** +255 766 906 831
Eastern Midland	4 & 5	2	**SC719, SC657, SC555, SC419**	Sugar beans, sunflower, groundnuts, sorghum	**Philip Matombo · All Uganda regions** +255 766 906 831
Northern	4 & 5	2	**SC719, SC657, SC555, SC419**	Sugar beans, sunflower, groundnuts, soybeans, sorghum	**Philip Matombo · All Uganda regions** +255 766 906 831
Mid Western	4 & 5	2	**SC719, SC657, SC555, SC419**	Sugar beans, sunflower, groundnuts, soybean, tobacco	**Philip Matombo · All Uganda regions** +255 766 906 831
Western Highlands	6	1	**SC719, SC657**	Tea, coffee & sugar beans	**Philip Matombo · All Uganda regions** +255 766 906 831
Central	4 & 5	2 & 3	**SC719, SC657, SC555, SC419**	Sugar beans, groundnuts & coffee	**Philip Matombo · All Uganda regions** +255 766 906 831



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Country Agronomist - Seed Co Uganda

YOUR 5-STEP SURVIVAL GUIDE · 2026/27 SEASON

BUMPER HARVEST OR BUST?

Warmer nights, unpredictable rains and dry spells that arrive without warning. Farmers who plan smart don't just survive a tough season they out-yield it.



SEED CO MALAWI | SOURCE: DEPT. OF CLIMATE CHANGE & METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES | 2026/27 SEASON

Every farming season comes with its own weather story. This time, the story is one of extremes. The Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services has confirmed that Malawi's weather patterns are shifting, with this winter recording more warm episodes than the cold snaps we are used to.

Forecasters are also flagging a strong El Niño influence heading into 2026/27, which for Malawi has historically meant one thing: unpredictability.

Sometimes it's rain that refuses to fall when your maize is flowering. Sometimes it's downpours so heavy they wash your fertilizer and topsoil clean off the field.

Malawi Has Been Here Before

Each time, the farmers who prepared came out ahead

2000/02	2004/05	2009/10	2015/16	2018/19	2023/24	2026/27
EL NIÑO	EL NIÑO	EL NIÑO	EL NIÑO	EL NIÑO	EL NIÑO	FORECAST

This is your chance to be one of the farmers who came out ahead.

Know Your Region, Know Your Risk

Weather stress does not hit every part of the country the same way

SOUTH — DOUBLE THREAT

Drought in some pockets, flooding in others, often in the same season, sometimes in the same district.

CENTRAL — MIXED BAG

Dry spells punctuated by sudden heavy downpours. Neither can be planned for in isolation.

NORTH — MOISTURE STRESS

Deals mainly with moisture stress, the classic El Niño signature for the region.

Wherever your farm sits, the response is the same: prepare early, plant smart, and protect what you grow.

The 2026/27 season will reward the farmer who prepared before the first effective rains, not the one who waited to see what the sky would do.

Your 5-Step Plan

Maximise your yield, whatever the weather does

1 Cast your net wide with the right seed

Recycled or traditional seed struggles when the weather turns unpredictable. Spreading your risk across a mix of maturity groups and crop types gives you insurance against whatever the season throws at you. Seed Co's climate smart range covers every angle:

MAIZE	**Kalulu** - ultra early	**Kanyani** - early	**Mbidzi** - early	**Mkango** - medium
	Njovu - late			
RICE	**Nerica 4** - upland	**Kilombero** - paddy		
SORGHUM	**SC XH102** - red	**SC Sila** - white		
SOYA BEANS	**Saga**	**Signal**	**Serenade**	
DRY BEANS	**Nua 45**			

2 Plant early, timing is everything

Don't wait and see. Get seed into the ground with the **first effective rains** so your crop has the best chance to mature before dry spells set in.

3 Harvest the water before it harvests you

Moisture management can make or break your season. **Mulching, swales and tied ridges** lock moisture into your soil during dry spells. Trenches and raised seedbeds protect your fields when the rain comes down hard and fast.

4 Don't put all your eggs in one basket

Hardy crops like **sweet potatoes, cassava, sorghum, rice and legumes** alongside your maize spread your risk and your income across the season.

5 Get ahead of pests and disease

Warmer nights and longer dry spells mean pest and disease pressure will likely be higher this season. Regular field scouting and early stocking of crop protection inputs will save you costly surprises later.

The Bottom Line

Difficult weather doesn't have to mean a difficult harvest

Farmers who plant early, choose the right seed mix, manage their water, diversify their crops and stay ahead of pests are the ones who protect their yields and their livelihoods no matter what the season brings.

Prepare early.
Farm smart.
Secure your harvest.

SEED CO MALAWI - Climate Smart Seed for a Season of Extremes

Talk to your nearest Seed Co stockist about building a seed mix across maturity groups and crop types before the first effective rains arrive.

SEED·CO

MALAWI

CROP & VARIETY PLACEMENT

Risk gradient: Southern/Eastern critical; Central moderate; Northern low.



OCTOBER 2026 / COMPLETE TABLE

Region	Districts	Risk tier	Seed Co Zone	Recommended maize varieties	Other crops	Regional team contact
Southern	Mulanje, Thyolo, Phalombe, Chiladzuro, Blantyre, Neno, Mwanza, Chikwawa, Nsanje	Critical	2 & 3	**301, 419, 449, 555, 657, 665**	Soya beans, common beans, sorghum, rice	**+265 999 416 119** **+265 884 616 119** benson.banda@seedcogroup.com
Eastern	Ntcheu, Balaka, Zomba, Mangochi, Machinga	Critical	2 & 3	**301, 419, 449, 555, 657, 665**	Soya beans, common beans, sorghum, rice	**+265 999 171 555** **+265 888 171 555** henry.maonga@seedcogroup.com
Central	Dedza, Lilongwe, Dowa, Ntchisi, Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Salima, Mchinji	Moderate	3 & 4	**301, 419, 449, 555, 657, 665, 719**	Soya beans, common beans, sorghum, rice	**+265 999 955 253** **+265 888 219 777** Waddingtone.lipenga@seedcogroup.com
Northern	Mzimba, Rumphi, Karonga, Chitipa, Likoma	Low	3 & 4	**301, 419, 449, 555, 657, 665, 719**	Soya beans, common beans, sorghum, rice	**+265 999 924 120** **+265 888 927 421** Adrian.mtambo@seedcogroup.com

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