



## Climate change brings needed rain to Africa

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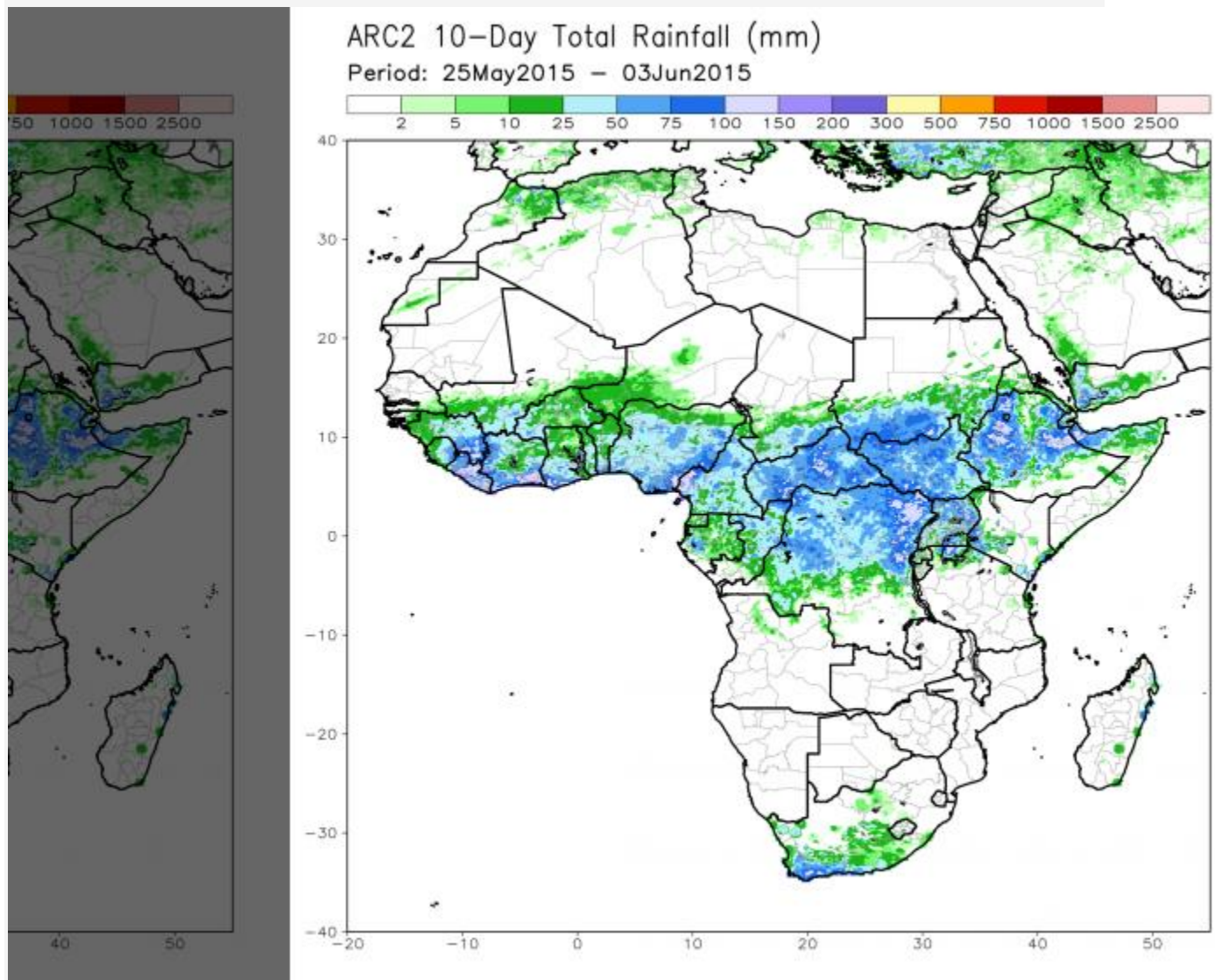
Climate change has been going on since the beginning of time, but has been the source of intense debate in recent years. In the case of the Sahel area of Africa, climate change means 4 more inches of desperately-needed rainfall per year than in the past, according to a new [study](#) by climatologists in the Journal Nature Climate Change. The main cause of the increase is rising greenhouse gas emissions, it finds.

The Sahel is an area about four times the size of Texas that stretches across Africa along the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. Past droughts in the area that killed thousands prompted the Live Aid concert in 1985 to fund relief efforts.

Some climate experts say this and other positive effects of CO2 emissions are too often ignored.

“[Benefits are] certainly underreported. Scientists have known for 15 years that the Sahel was greening up and desertification was reversing there,” Pat Michaels, former president of the American Association of State Climatologists, and a director at the CATO Institute, told FoxNews.com.

He also noted that the Sahel area may be getting more tree and plant coverage due in part to the fact that plants have an easier time growing with more CO2 in the atmosphere.



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NOAA satellite map shows total rainfall across the Sahel area of Africa between May 25 and June 3 2015. (NOAA)

But the study's authors say that although there are some benefits, people should still worry about climate change and cut emissions.

"The effects of climate change are already evident around the world, and it's imperative that we reduce carbon emissions to avoid the risks of much worse impacts in future," Rowan Sutton, study co-author and *director* of Climate Research at the UK National Centre for Atmospheric Science, told FoxNews.com.

“There have been temperature rises leading to increases in heat waves around the world, and related rises in evaporation from the soil that increases the risk of drought even where rainfall amounts haven't changed,” he said.

Global temperature has risen about 1.7 degrees over the last century but there has been virtually no warming for the last 17 years, according to [NASA](#)'s data.

Experts disagree about how bad warming will be. Climate models have historically [overestimated](#) global warming, but the U.N. [predicts](#) that the globe will warm between 2.5 to 5.5 degrees over the next century and that warming in that range would cause the world's GDP to be about [1.1% lower in the year 2100](#).

Climate experts who are relatively less worried about warming said this new paper is “a welcome change of tone” because it was willing to point out a benefit of warming, but they are still skeptical of the study.

“The skill of climate models in predicting regional rain is so poor that I do not put much stock in claims of trends towards either more or less rain,” Richard Tol, a leading expert on the economics of climate change at the University of Sussex in the U.K., told FoxNews.com.

The study calls for follow-up work to be done, noting that, “it will be important to repeat our study with other climate models, including at higher resolution.”

Study co-author Buwen Dong also argues that the costs of warming outweigh the benefits even though his study found additional rainfall in drought-stricken Africa.

“The increases in rainfall will have been beneficial to some people in the short term, but at the same time the rise in temperatures can lead to more frequent heat waves and damage to crops,” he said.