Seasonal Climate Prediction (SCP) for Oyo State in 2026: Implications for NIHORT Research and Production

The Oyo State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development launched the 2026 farming season and tractorisation subsidy programme on 9 March 2026. A key highlight was the public presentation of the 2026 weather forecast for various local government areas in Oyo State by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet).

During the presentation, NiMet released the downscaled Seasonal Climate Prediction (SCP) for Oyo State, providing essential insights for agricultural planning in 2026. As NIHORT works to enhance food production and build climate resilience, integrating this forecast into its research and production activities is vital.

Key Highlights of the Seasonal Climate Prediction

1. **False onset**: Localised rains anticipated in January–February. These are unsuitable for planting or field establishment, though planning for field activities may begin. A waiting period of 10–15 days after confirmed onset is recommended before commencing planting.
2. **Dry spells**: A 15-day dry spell is forecast from late March into early April.
3. **Onset of rains**: Expected from mid-April to early May.
4. **Little dry season and August break**: Likely in June–July and July–August.
5. **Temperature trends**: Hotter conditions in January–March; milder in April–May; cooler following rain onset.

Implications for NIHORT

National Horticultural Research Institute is located between Ido Local Government Area (onset around 17 April, cessation around 25 November; 222 rainy days; 1,344 mm rainfall) and Ibadan Northwest Local Government Area (onset around 16 April, cessation around 26 November; 224 rainy days; 1,375 mm rainfall), NIHORT must consider the following for its research and production:

1. Align crop trials with predicted onset and cessation dates, including tests of drought-tolerant varieties.
2. Adopt and promote climate-smart practices, such as mulching and scheduled supplementary irrigation, to mitigate intermittent dry spells.
3. Optimise land preparation to align with the predicted climate, incorporating SCP data for soil fertility management.
4. Educate farmers on practical, technical steps for climate-resilient horticulture.

By integrating the SCP into its research and production strategies, NIHORT will boost horticultural productivity, strengthen food security, and foster resilient agricultural systems across Oyo State.

NIHORT