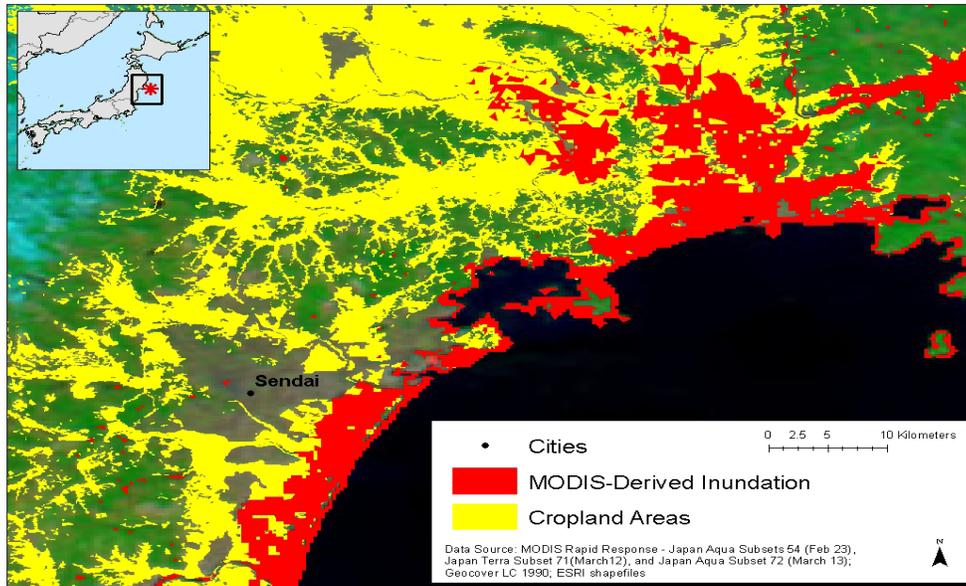


March 18, 2011

Tsunami in Japan Unlikely to Impact Global Rice Situation

Tsunami Inundation and Croplands near Sendai, Japan (March 11, 2011)



No Immediate Impact on Rice Production...

On March 11, the northeast coast of Honshu island was hit by an earthquake and then tsunami, inundating 1.5 percent of Japan's total rice area. There was no immediate impact on production as rice was harvested last fall. Of the total cropland area shown in yellow, around half is rice fields. It is too early to tell the extent to which salinization and infrastructure damage will affect this year's planting, which begins in late April. Increased planting elsewhere in the country, however, could offset any production loss in the impacted area.

No Impact on Trade Expected...

An escalation of rice imports is unlikely as Japan holds sufficient stocks, currently the highest in a decade. All imports are based on fixed WTO commitments that largely go into government stocks held throughout the country. Small quantities of stocks are exported as food aid. Large domestic supplies and a structured import regime would suggest little or no impact on the global rice situation.

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