

Improvement in pastoral conditions with the resumption of the rains

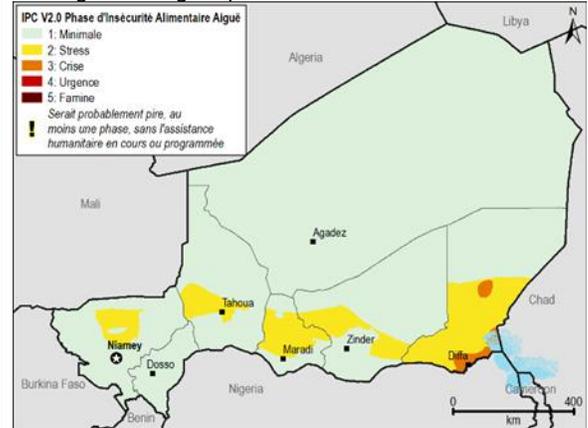
KEY MESSAGES

- The overall resumption of the rains in August is maintaining good agro-climatic conditions. According to government farming services, as of August 10th, 12,277 out of 12,384 or 99 percent of farming villages had planted crops. This is bolstering employment opportunities for poor households and, thus, helping to keep acute food insecurity at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels, which will continue to be the case through at least January 2018.
- However, millet and sorghum prices on reference markets of Maradi and Zinder are reportedly up from last year and above the five-year average by more than 25 percent due to the contraction in supply with the fall-off in imports from Nigeria. This is continuing to limit food access for market-dependent households in structurally deficit areas and poor urban and peri-urban environments.
- The good progress of the rainy season is producing new pasture growth and good water levels in animal watering holes in pastoral areas. This is helping to significantly improve milk production and the livestock body condition and, thus, to keep food insecurity at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels for most households in the pastoral zone.
- The continuing security problems and their effects on household livelihoods and the local economy will prolong the current Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity in the Diffa region through January 2018. Poor households in areas without access to food assistance will continue to feel the effects of the conflict, with food consumption gaps and a high risk of contracting diarrheal diseases during the rainy season.

CURRENT SITUATION

The growing season is going normally as predicted by agro-climatic forecasts. The good rainfall activity in August helped ensure the definitive start of the agropastoral season across the country. According to agricultural statistics bureaus, as of August 10th, 99 percent of farming villages had completed crop planting activities underway since May 1st. Crops are making normal progress, with most crops in the height growth stage and local sightings of crops in more advanced seed setting stages in parts of the Dosso and Maradi regions. This is driving the pursuit of seasonal livelihood activities helping to improve household purchasing power and staple food access. However, high prices are limiting food access to smaller than average amounts of cereals. For most poor households, this gap in their food access is being bridged by food assistance from the government and its partners through distributions of free food rations or cereal sales at subsidized prices.

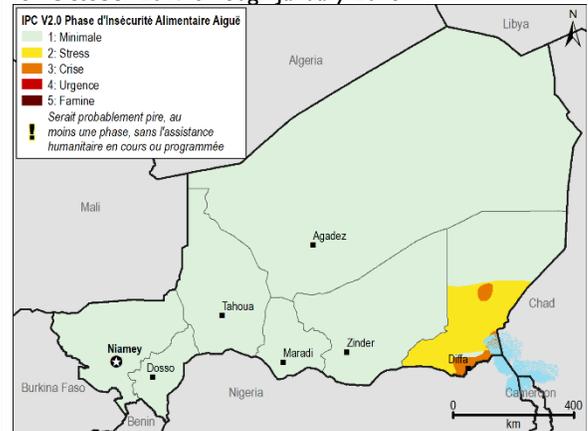
Figure 1: Most likely estimated food security outcomes for August through September 2017



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. [IPC-compatible](#) analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

Figure 2. Most likely estimated food security outcomes for October 2017 through January 2018

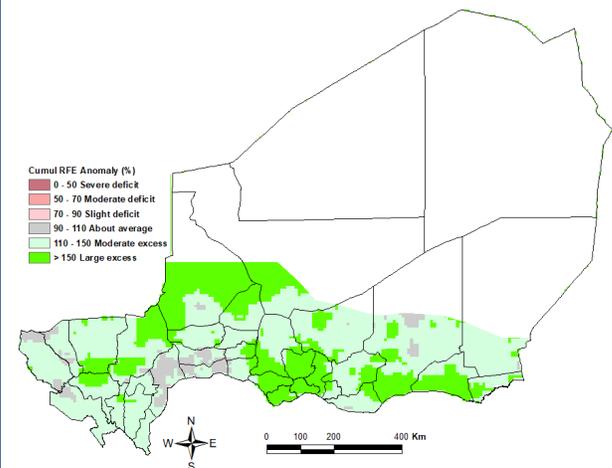


Source: FEWS NET

The definitive start of the rainy season in August has helped significantly improve the condition of pastures and food availability for livestock. Animals are being watered at well-filled surface watering holes. The result is an improvement in the livestock body condition and milk production from the past few months. There is still a below-average demand for exports to Nigeria (their main destination) on account of the continued depreciation in the value of the Nigerian naira against the CFA franc. An examination of June prices for livestock shows sharp drops in the prices of male goats in Torodi, male sheep in Nguigmi, and cattle in Nguelkolo putting them more than 30 percent below the five-year average.

There are still approximately 250,000 displaced persons in the Diffa region as a result of the ongoing security crisis. These populations are facing disruptions in their main livelihoods, namely maize and pepper production and fishing activities in the Lake Chad area. Most of these households are unable to meet their food needs and remain largely dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Figure 3. Cumulative RFE anomalies for the period from April 1st through August 10th, compared with the 2006-2015 average



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

The slowdown in cross-border trade as a result of the restrictive measures imposed by the Nigerian government is reducing staple food availability on practically all reference markets. In general, prices for the most widely consumed cereals (millet and sorghum) were stable between June and July though high, at levels above the average for the lean season. Low supply and high demand have reportedly driven millet and sorghum prices in Maradi and Zinder up sharply, putting them more than 25 percent above figures for July 2016 and the five-year average. These high price levels are continuing to limit food access for market-dependent households, particularly in structurally deficit areas and urban and peri-urban environments.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The most likely scenario [for the period from June 2017 through January 2018](#) as established by FEWS NET has not changed.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2018

Based on the good progress of the 2017-2018 growing season, there are good cereal, pasture, and cash crop production prospects and normal income-earning prospects for poor households. This positive situation is in line with normal seasonal trends and bodes well for a good harvest, translating into adequate food access for all households by October 2017 and, thus, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity through at least January 2018.

In spite of the relief efforts mounted by the government and its partners, poor and displaced households in the Diffa region will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity through at least January 2018 on account of the continuing civil conflict and the limited access of certain households to humanitarian assistance.

ABOUT this update

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET's Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).