FEWS NET
FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

AFGHANISTAN Remote Monitoring Update — April 2022

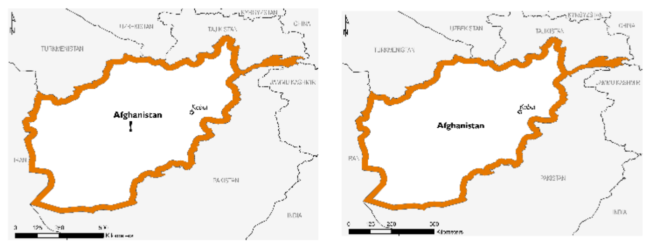
Despite seasonal progress, poor macroeconomy and drought will drive high assistance needs

KEY MESSAGES

- In April, many rural households in lower elevation areas are experiencing improved access to food and income from agricultural labor opportunities and livestock milk production. Poor households in urban areas are also experiencing seasonal improvements in income-earning from labor opportunities. Over the next three months, food availability will further improve throughout the country as the main harvests are collected. However, drought-impacted households and those who still have limited access to income due to the deteriorated macroeconomic situation will continue to face difficulty meeting their essential food and non-food needs.

- Cereal production in 2022 is likely to be below average at the national level due to below-average area planted and below-average water availability for both rainfed and irrigated crops. According to key informants, recent dry weather and above-average temperatures are leading to further stress on the rainfed wheat crop, with lower elevation areas in the north and northeast reporting significant crop damage. Irrigated crops in some downstream areas are also reportedly experiencing moisture stress but have reportedly not been impacted by significant crop damaged to date, while irrigated crops in upstream areas are generally in good condition. Given below-average planted area, below-average snowpack, and forecast below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures until the end of the season in May, wheat production is likely to be below-average at the national level, with the greatest concern for deficits in northern rainfed areas.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2022 (left) and June to September 2022 (right)



Phase 1: Minimal
Phase 2: Stressed
Phase 3+: Crisis or higher
! Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance

Source: *FEWS NET*

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

FEWS NET Remote Monitoring countries use a colored outline to represent the highest IPC classification in areas of concern.

- Livestock prices are generally above average and slightly higher than the same time last year, reflecting improved pasture conditions in April due to above-average temperatures, March precipitation, and early snowmelt. However, given forecast below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures, pasture conditions are likely to deteriorate rapidly in many areas in the coming months, which will likely lead to worsening livestock body conditions and reduced livestock prices in worst affected areas.

- With the start of harvesting around May/June in lower elevation areas and July/August in higher elevation areas, seasonal improvements in food availability alongside above-average income from poppy production are expected to improve outcomes to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in most rural areas. However, an atypically high share of the population is expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) due to the impacts of drought and persistent poor macroeconomic conditions. In the June to September period, area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to re-emerge in rural areas worst impacted by below-average crop and livestock production. In urban areas, the size of the population facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes is expected to decline in the May to September period alongside seasonal increases in income-earning which will support improved food consumption. However, area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist in many urban areas due to above-average prices and limited income-earning opportunities.

FEWS NET Afghanistan
afghanistan@fews.net
www.fews.net/afghanistan

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ZONE	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
National	• Typically, farmers plant spring wheat in late March and early April. This year, planting took place earlier in March in many areas, particularly in the northern, northeastern, and northwestern regions, largely due to early March precipitation and above-average temperatures in lower elevation areas since late January. According to key informants, overall planted area for wheat in the 2021/22 season is expected to be below average due in large part to increased poppy cultivation as well as due to farmers' early concerns about the precipitation season. • Dry conditions have prevailed from mid-March to mid-April. As of April 15, cumulative precipitation for the entire 2021/22 wet season was below average across most of the country, though near average in some eastern and central areas (Figure 1), and snowpack has been depleted atypically early in many basins. According to key informants, recent dry weather and above-average temperatures are leading to further stress on the rainfed wheat crop. According to satellite data, vegetation conditions across much of the northern rainfed belt are below average, with the northern and northeastern regions worst affected. According to key informants, irrigated crops in some downstream areas are also reportedly experiencing moisture stress but have not been impacted by significant crop damaged to date, while irrigated crops in upstream areas are generally in good condition. • March precipitation, early snowmelt, and above-average temperatures have facilitated early growth of pasture in many lower elevation areas. In April, pastoralists and agropastoralists moved livestock into spring grazing areas nearly a month earlier than normal. This has likely helped some households to reduce typical reliance on market purchases for fodder in April. Spring livestock births are reported to be generally similar to last year, supported by mild winter temperatures. With spring livestock births, the resumption of livestock milk production in lower elevation areas is supporting access to food and income from livestock products, improving households' dietary diversity. • In April, increased demand for agriculture labor has improved access to income, ending the lean season in most lower elevation areas. However, in higher elevation areas, demand for agricultural labor remains limited as these areas are still slowly transitioning from winter to spring. In areas where poppy is harvested (almost all over the country but especially in Helmand and Kandahar provinces), key informants report that associated labor opportunities have increased significantly since the beginning of April. Wages for	• According to international forecasts, precipitation in May 2022 will most likely be below average. Cumulative precipitation for the spring season (March to May 2022) and for the entire winter wet season (October 2021 to May 2022) is expected to be below average across most of the country. Above-average temperatures are most likely to persist across the country through at least September 2022. • Pasture conditions are expected to improve as is typical through around May, supported by the remainder of the precipitation season. However, given early depletion of snowpack and forecast below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures, pasture conditions will likely deteriorate rapidly and atypically early following this. Northern areas will likely experience the worst pasture conditions. In areas badly impacted by poor pasture conditions and water resources, livestock body conditions will likely deteriorate. In these areas, many livestock will not calve, kid, or lamb normally, preventing typical herd size increases. • Seasonally high availability of milk and income from the sale of livestock and livestock products will continue to improve food access for rural households through around September in lower elevation areas and will increase beginning around May in higher elevation areas, lasting throughout the projection period. • Given below-average planted area, below-average snowpack, and forecast below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures until the end of the season in May, wheat production is likely to be below-average at the national level, driven primarily by deficits in rainfed production, which accounts for around a quarter of domestic wheat production, on average, according to historical data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

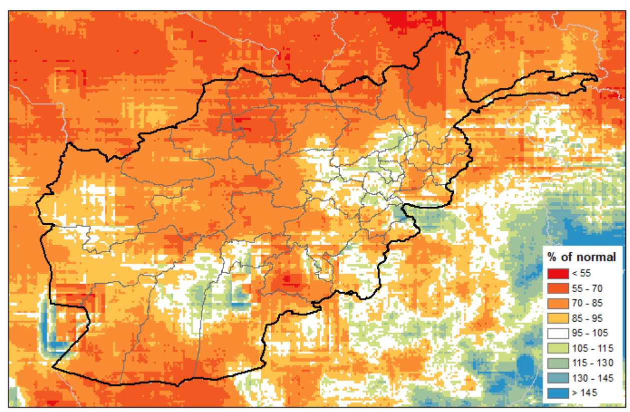
	poppy harvesting (which lasts for a period of roughly three weeks to one month) are often several times higher than in other sectors, and many communities have become dependent on income from this sector. In urban areas, demand for labor has also continued to increase as is typical in the spring, though remains below average. • After depreciating from mid-June 2021 to January 2022, the Afghani (AFN) recovered from February to April, likely at least partially due to Taliban selling high amounts of foreign currency. According to data from WFP, the exchange rate improved from 105 AFN/USD in January to 84 AFN/USD by the third week of April, recovering 19 percent of its value and reaching levels similar to the period before the Taliban takeover in August 2021. However, the financial sector remains in crisis, and Afghan businesses continue to face difficulty making and receiving payments for services. This has increased reliance on informal financial services, such as the Hawala system. • Despite export restrictions announced by Kazakhstan in April, key informants in Afghanistan report no disruptions to typical wheat importation to date. • After declining somewhat in early 2022 alongside recovery of the local currency, prices of key staple food commodities have continued to increase in recent months despite continued currency depreciation, likely due to rising global prices and transportation costs. According to data from WFP, monthly average prices of wheat flour (low quality) in March 2022 were 31 percent higher than the same time last year. • Humanitarian assistance continues to be scaled up on a monthly basis and is being distributed in urban and rural areas across the country. According to a non-representative mobile phone survey conducted by WFP from March 5 to April 3, one in five households (21 percent) reported receiving humanitarian food assistance in March. In some regions—such as the west—assistance reached as many as two in five households (43 percent). According to WFP reporting, 18 million people (around half of the national population) are being targeted with assistance under a variety of food, nutrition, and resilience programs in April. According to WFP reporting throughout the month of April, WFP has resumed assistance distributions in Kabul after a period of two weeks, has partially resumed distributions in Kandahar after having been suspended since January 2022, and has resumed distributions in Ghor. • According to a nutrition SMART survey conducted by UNICEF and partners in the five main cities in January and February of 2022, prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) among children (6–59 months) as	Irrigated wheat production is now expected to be below average due to below-average area planted and some reductions in yield in downstream irrigated areas. In rainfed production areas, greatest concern currently exists for the northern and northeastern regions, where key informants report expectations that the wheat crop will be around half of normal levels in localized lower elevations worst impacted by high temperatures in April. However, more information will be available in the coming months, following assessments by partners on the ground planned for May. • Second season crop production is expected to be below average due to below-average irrigation water availability. • Poppy production—and associated income from poppy sales and labor opportunities—is expected to be significantly above average due to increased cultivated area—with as much as 80 percent of agricultural area in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar planted with poppy this season according to key informants—and significantly above average prices. • The exchange rate is now expected to remain generally stable through at least September, supported by the Taliban's currency auction mechanism. • Fuel prices are expected to increase along with rising global prices. Transportation costs are therefore expected to increase. • Given that Afghanistan is among the closest and best export markets for Kazakhstan and Pakistan, Afghanistan is expected to import normal amounts of wheat from these countries despite high global demand resulting from the war in Ukraine. However, export prices are likely to be above-average in these countries. • Prices of wheat grain and wheat flour are likely to follow seasonal trends, peaking around June before declining through around August due to increased supply from the main season

	measured by weight-for-height z-score (WHZ) and/or oedema was recorded at 7.2 percent in Herat and 5.2 percent in Kandahar, in line with “Alert” levels according to IPC thresholds. GAM prevalence was recorded at 4.9 percent in Jalalabad, 4.7 percent in Kabul, and 4.0 percent in Mazar-e-Sharif, on the border of “Acceptable” and “Alert” levels according to IPC thresholds. • Most poor households have depleted food stocks and remain highly dependent on market purchases prior to the start of the harvest. Although access to food and income from labor opportunities—including related to poppy production—and from livestock production have increased, many poor households are likely unable to meet their basic needs due to significantly below-average income-earning and above-average prices. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely widespread across most of the country, with worst-affected households likely to be those who have lost their main sources of income, those worst affected by drought in the previous season, returning undocumented migrant workers, and households worst impacted by natural disasters including recent floods and landslides.	harvests. However, prices are expected to remain above average and increase further relative to average levels through at least September, driven by rising global prices of energy and cereals as well as below-average national production. • Access to labor opportunities will increase seasonally through around May, though remain below average due to poor macroeconomic conditions. • Income from remittances will likely remain above average due to increased need in the country. However, many households dependent on remittances from Iran will likely experience below-average income from remittances due to increased labor migration to Iran which is increasing competition for labor opportunities that are already constrained due sanctions and poor economic conditions in Iran.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2022

In lower elevation rural areas, further seasonal improvement in access to income from labor opportunities—including from significantly above-average poppy production—and improved access to food from own production from the main harvests beginning around May/June, are expected to improve area-level outcomes to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in most areas. However, an atypically high share of the population is expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) due to the impacts of drought and persistent poor macroeconomic conditions. Households who experience significant losses in crop and/or livestock production and households who have otherwise lost their primary livelihoods or income sources are likely to be worst affected. In the June to September period, area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to re-emerge in areas worst impacted by below-average crop and livestock production, with the greatest concern for northern and northeastern areas.

Figure 1: Winter wet season performance (October 1, 2021 – April 15, 2022), cumulative precipitation as percent of normal, CHIRPS final data



Source: USGS/NOAA

In higher elevation rural areas where livelihood options are more limited, any poor households who have food stocks remaining will likely exhaust them by May. Poor households typically sell some of their livestock to purchase food between May and the start of their main harvests. Though livestock prices are near average, purchasing power is generally below average due to above-average food prices, and many poor households’ resources are likely constrained. However, households who keep livestock will benefit from improved milk availability beginning around May and seasonally higher demand for labor in the spring will also support improved access to income in the coming months. Around July/August, the start of the main harvest will improve availability of food from own production, with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes expected to improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in many higher elevation areas around this time.

In urban areas, the population facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes is expected to decline in the May to September period along with some seasonal increases in income-earning which will support improved food access. However, area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist in urban areas due to significantly below-average purchasing power driven by above-average prices and limited income-earning opportunities.

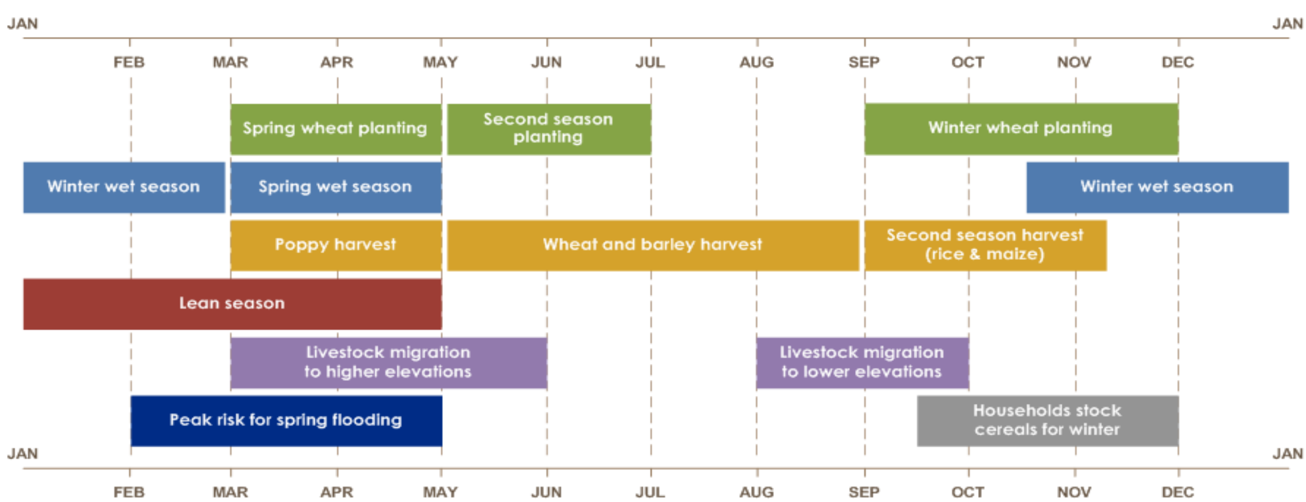
In both rural and urban areas, many poor households will continue to benefit from significantly scaled up humanitarian assistance. In addition, some households will benefit from the government safety net programs. Worst-affected households not receiving assistance are expected to engage in extreme coping and face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, with particular concern for drought-affected areas, urban areas, and highland areas where livelihood options are more limited and where access constraints are more common. As is typical, a seasonal increase in the prevalence of diarrhea and other seasonal diseases and acute malnutrition and mortality is expected through September, though levels are expected to be higher than normal due to the reduced health system capacity and increased food insecurity in the country.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario:

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Localized rural areas	Drought conditions result in significantly below-average crop and livestock production in the spring	Poor households in affected rural areas would likely not experience normal seasonal improvements in access to food and income from crop production, labor, and livestock. Some agricultural households may harvest little or nothing. Livestock production could be significantly reduced, and many pastoralist households would likely engage in atypically early livestock sales at lower prices, reducing income earned for the season. Area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes would likely persist in these areas.
Nationwide	Remittances significantly decline from current levels	This would reduce remittance-dependent households' purchasing power. Additional households would be expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes characterized by engagement in damaging livelihood coping strategies or food consumption gaps.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET*

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA) in at least one province. indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA in at least one province. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2022

Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2022

Source: *FEWS NET*

Recommended Citation: FEWS NET: Afghanistan Remote Monitoring Update, April to September 2022: Despite seasonal progress, poor macroeconomy and drought will drive high assistance needs. April 2022.

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING
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