AFGHANISTAN Food Security Outlook October 2015 to March 2016

Decline in labor opportunities will reduce food access for poor households during lean season

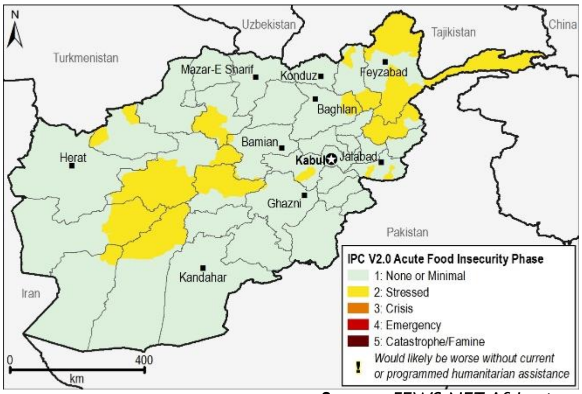
KEY MESSAGES

- Market and household stocks have improved from last year, with a more favorable wheat harvest, better livestock prices, and increased fruit harvest. However, due to reduced income from limited labor opportunities, and continued conflict-related displacements, much of the country will be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with the start of the winter.

- As the lean season begins in February, poor households in the Western-Central Highland Agropastoral, Northeastern Highland Agropastoral, and South-Central Mixed Farming livelihood zones will enter Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through the remainder of the outlook period.

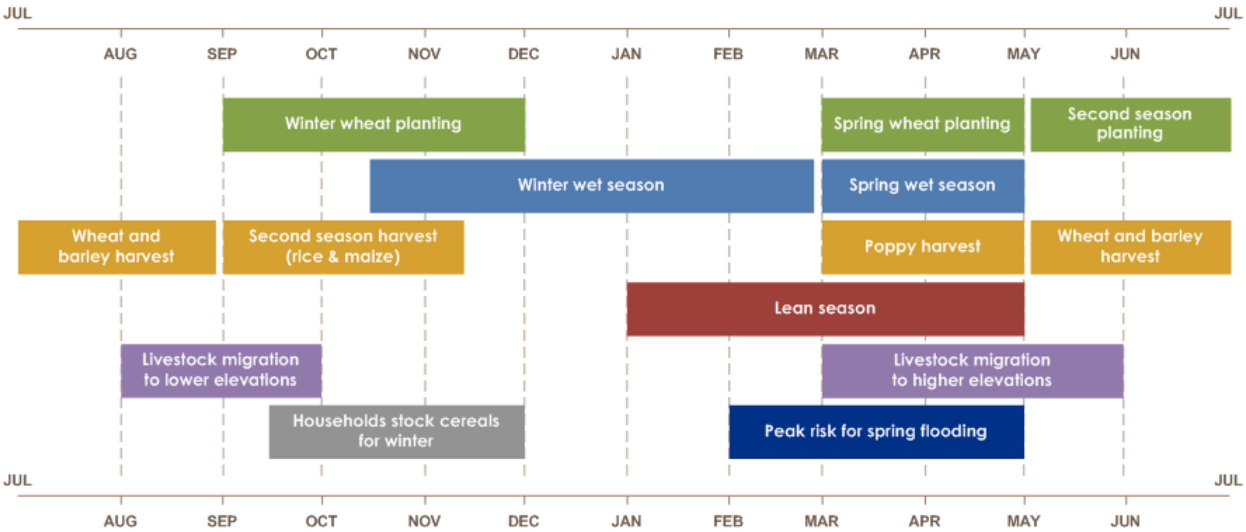
- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to flee their homes due to conflict. Newly displaced persons who have lost key sources of income are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the lean season and will rely heavily on external assistance.

Figure 1. Current food security outcomes, October 2015



Source: *FEWS NET Afghanistan*

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET Afghanistan*

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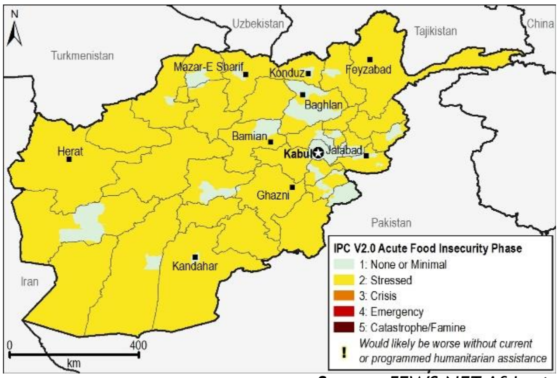
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

Total 2014/2015 wheat harvests were greater than the previous season, but reamined below the five-year average. Improved national grain and fruit production, as compared to the previous season, have eased economic access to the primary staple foods of wheat and wheat flour. During the period of high demand for agricultural labor for the May to August harvests, daily agricultural labor rates, which poor and landless households rely upon, declined in some parts of the country. This decline in wages was due to reduced employment opportunities in other sectors, which increased the supply of agricultural labor. However, households who depend on sharecropping (*dekhani*) earned more food in-kind than last year, especially in rainfed areas.

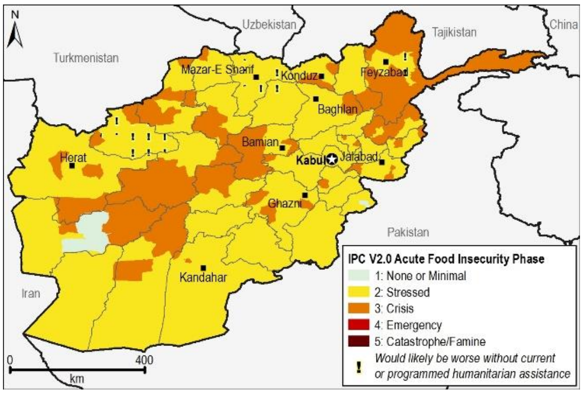
Near-average precipitation during the October 2014 to May 2015 wet season improved soil moisture and the availability of water for irrigation of second crops, including maize, rice, cotton, and horticultural cash crops such as fruits and nuts, which constitute important sources of income throughout the country. However, some areas, including Kunduz and Hilmand Provinces, received significantly below-average precipitation (Figure 4). In some higher-elevation areas of the central highlands, including areas of Bamyan and Ghor Provinces, below-average temperatures reduced the availability of pasture and fodder for livestock. However, pasture conditions in the rest of the country were average to above average this year due to the favorable quantity and timing of precipitation. Good pasture conditions and water availability in most of the country facilitated animal health and good body conditions, which led to above-average livestock prices. Continued precipitation during the remainder of October and November is important for winter wheat planting.

Figure 2. Projected food security outcomes, October to December 2015



Source: *FEWS NET Afghanistan*

Figure 3. Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2016

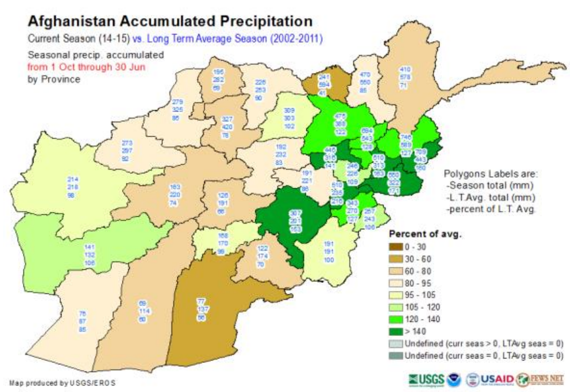


Source: *FEWS NET Afghanistan*

Activities of the Taliban and other insurgent groups have led to increased displacement during 2015, with an estimated 170,000 people displaced this year through August, according to UNHCR. Although displaced households are experiencing major disruptions to normal livelihood activities, reports of restricted physical access to food have been limited to very localized areas and for no more than a few days.

Despite the improved grain harvest, September wheat prices remained higher than the five-year average in the majority of reference markets, with the exception of Kabul, which is supplied primarily by imported wheat flour from Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Although remaining above five-year averages, prices are, in general, lower in 2015 than 2014. Wheat grain and wheat flour prices in main cities are 4.5 percent lower than this time last year, but reamin 11.7 percent above the five-year average of September prices. Despite a 14 percent depreciation of the AFN to the USD since January of 2015, prices have remained lower in 2015 than 2014 due to near average domestic production and lower wheat prices in Pakistan and Kazakhstan in comparison to last year.

Figure 4. October 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 accumulated precipitation, compared to 2002-2011 average

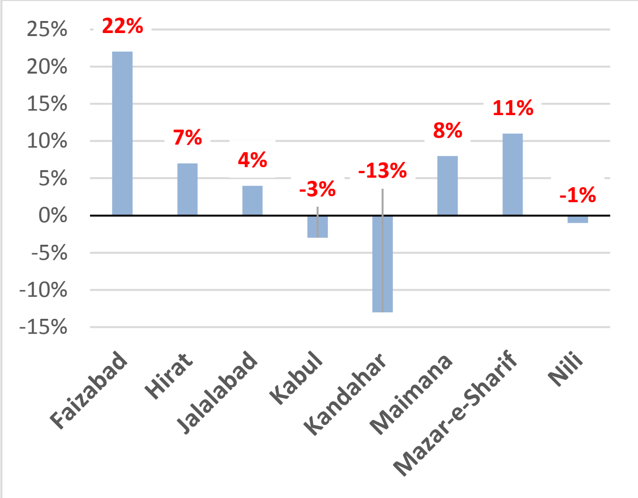


Source: *U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)/FEWS NET*

Similarly, the current average retail price of Low Quality Rice is 6.2 percent lower compared to this month last year, while remaining 2.4 percent higher than the five-year average of September prices. The current average price of High Quality Rice is 9 percent lower than this month last year, but 9.1 percent above the five-year average. Vegetable oil prices are 4.7 percent lower than this time last year, and 5 percent below the five-year average.

The price of sheep has varied across markets in relation to the five-year average of the same month (Figure 5). Market prices were near average (-5% to +5%) in Jalalabad, Kabul, and Nili, while prices were below average in Kandahar, and above average in Faizabad, Hirat, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Maimana. Of these increases, the most signigicant was seen in Faizabad, where September's price was 21.8 percent above the September five-year average. Meat demand in many parts of the country seasonally increased since the spring, in anticipation of Eid Qurban in late September.

Figure 5. Sheep prices compared to the five-year average (one year old female)



Source: *WFP*

Households have started purchasing grain stocks for winter, especially in the central highlands and northeastern highlands. Market purchases are expected to peak in October and November.

The wage labor to wheat terms of trade (ToT) compared to the five-year average of the same month have deteriorated in both Faizabad (-25.8 percent) and in Nili (-9 percent). This has contributed to a lower purchasing power for poor households who rely on labor wages for market purchases during the lean season.

In **eastern Afghanistan**, including Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar Provinces, the total output of the wheat harvest in May and June was below the five-year average. Despite this, and in part due to favorable vegetable and fruit production, wages remained stable and typical during the October winter wheat harvest, second crops' harvest, and main grain harvest. The Indian monsoon rains, which take place between June and August, were weaker than last year, which resulted in a reduction in cropped area lost to flooding. The ongoing vegetable and fruit harvests have been generally average in terms of income from market sales and produce available for consumption. Early indications for the maize harvest, primarily in October, indicate average to above-average production. Maize is primarily grown as a second crop after wheat, and it serves both as grain for human consumption and to store as fodder and silage for livestock during the winter. The rice harvest in Qarghaee and Alingar Districts of Laghman Province, Behsud, Kama, Mazeena, Aska Mena, and Khewa Districts of Nangarhar Province, and Watapur District of Kunar Province has started normally this year, likely as a result of good availability of water for irrigation. As the vast majority of households have sufficient and seasonally normal access to food and income sources; this area is currently classified in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity. However, exceptions include internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have been displaced by conflict; many of these households are likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

In **southern Afghanistan**, wheat production during the May to June harvest was below the five-year average in Kandahar, Zabul, Daykundi, and Uruzgan Provinces. Overall production of horticultural products is reported to be slightly above average, but prices for most of these products are below average. As a result, income from horticultural production in this region is near average. The pomegranate harvest has begun in Kandahar Province, and is reported to be average to above average, with prices similar to last year. Labor wages and demand in this province are currently average, due to land preparation in October and November for poppy cultivation. Cross-border trade is functioning normally, with higher-value horticultural crops being exported to Pakistan, and wheat, wheat flour, rice, vegetable oil, sugar, and other necessities being imported. Normally functioning markets and incomes are facilitating normal physical and financial access to food for most households, who are engaged in seasonally normal livelihood activities. The southern region is currently estimated to be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity. The major exception to these conditions are the recently displaced households, many of whom are likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

In **northwestern Afghanistan**, including Samangan, Balkh, Jawzjan, Saripul, Faryab, and Badghis Provinces, poor households who depend on rainfed crops or farm labor for food and income have harvested more grain this year than last year. Continued agricultural activities, including the start of land preparation for winter wheat and barley, have kept wages and labor demand similar to previous months. However, as in most of the country, labor wages have been below the five-year average. Favorable pasture conditions since the spring, subsequent average livestock health and body conditions, and September's Eid Qurban have all contributed to above-average prices in September. The good harvest has meant that even households that usually depend on sharecropping (*dekhani*) are able to rely primarily on their own stocks of wheat. With normal income and continued household level grain stocks, the area is currently classified in Minimal (IPC phase 1) acute food insecurity. Exceptions include conflict-displaced IDPs in Balkh (Mazar-i-Sharif, Nahri Shahi and Dihdadi), Sar-i-Pul (Kohistanat and Sayyar), Samangan (Aybak), Jawzjan (Shiberghan), Fayab (Maymana, Dawlatabad, Qaysar, Pushtun Kot and Almar), and Badghis (Ghormach) Provinces.

Similarly, in **northeastern Afghanistan**, in Takhar, Kunduz, Badakhshan, and Baghlan Provinces, the May to July wheat harvest was below the five-year average, but better than the previous year, and supported near-average labor wages. Weeding began in the spring, in March and April, and agricultural labor wages have been seasonally higher since the start of weeding. Good pasture conditions, and livestock prices higher than the five-year average, have also increased incomes. The income from sale of the second harvest cash crops such as rice, potatoes, flax, and maize, as well as tree fruits, has been normal this year. However, remittances from domestic labor migration to the cities are below normal. Additionally, income from remittances from Iran is below average, due to the depreciation of the Iranian rial (IRR) against the Afghanistan afghani (AFN) and broad disruptions to the Iranian economy. Furthermore, with continued displacement disrupting livelihoods, northeastern Afghanistan is currently classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity.

Conflict-induced displacement in Afghanistan

According to UNHCR, as of September 2015 the total estimated number of IDPs was 1,013,553. From January to August of 2015, over 170,000 persons were newly displaced. Following the deterioration of security and increase in military operations and hostilities between the armed groups and Afghan military forces, displacements in the northern, northeastern, eastern, and southern regions have increased. As of July 2015, the largest populations of newly displaced IPDs are residing in Faryab, Kunduz, and Nangarhar Provinces. During the annual voluntarily repatriation period, which took place from January to August this year, 50,763 individuals have returned to Afghanistan, mostly from Pakistan and Iran, with the assistance of UNHCR. Many displaced people have lost their normal livelihoods, and encounter few employment opportunities in their places of displacement. Many of these people are food insecure, and will face greater difficulty in accessing adequate food with the onset of winter.

Pastoralist populations during the winter

Due to adequate precipitation in most areas in 2015, pastoralists are generally finding sufficient pasture available for their livestock. Livestock prices increased in September due to Eid, during which pastoralists have a strong market for selling animals. No major shocks affecting food security outcomes for pastoralist populations are currently observed or expected.

Winter labor opportunities

With the onset of winter, labor opportunities seasonally decrease throughout the country; construction reduces from peak-season employment by nearly 60 percent, and agriculture reduces by 80-90 percent. This is compounded by the fact that few employment opportunities are currently available in other sectors, resulting in income-earning deficits for the majority of the population. The seasonal decline leads some to migrate to Iran and Pakistan in search of income opportunities. With ongoing political instability and reduced employment opportunities, the number of people engaging in seasonal labor migration to neighboring countries, gulf countries, and Europe is expected to increase above normal during the scenario period.

The nutritional context of Afghanistan indicates significant vulnerability to shocks affecting food access. The June 2015 National Nutrition Surveillance System indicated Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) prevalence of 9.6 percent, (boys 11.4 percent, girls 8.6 percent), and Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence of 21 percent (boys 22.1 percent, girls 19.9 percent). Micronutrient deficiencies are common in Afghanistan, with the following prevalences reported in the 2013 NNS:

Micronutrients Deficiency	Children Age 6 – 59 Months	Women Age 15 – 49 Years
Iron	26.1	24
Iron Deficiency Anemia	44.9	40.4
Zinc	15	N/A
Vitamin A	50.4	11.3
Vitamin D	81	95.5
Iodine for Children Age 7 – 11 Years	29.5	40.7

Assumptions

- Imports of wheat flour from Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan will continue at a seasonally normal rate, but the prices will be higher than last years due to the depreciation of the Afghanistan afghani against the other currencies. Imports from Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan will be adequate to supply markets.

- Remittances sent by domestic labor migrants and civil servants will be below-average during the outlook period. However, remittances from the Persian Gulf countries are expected to remain stable.

- According to NOAA and USGS, temperatures will be above normal during the outlook period. Therefore, it is assumed that the early winter months will neither be severely cold, nor receive excessive snow.

- The short-term precipitation forecast remains above normal; as a result, a timely onset of the October to June wet season is expected.

- Given that winter temperatures will not be atypically low, winter livestock deaths in January and February will not exceed their normal range.

- Land preparation for winter wheat planting is expected to be above normal given the above-average precipitation and above-average temperature. As a result, demand for labor for land preparation and sowing of winter wheat, barley, and poppy from October to December will be relatively high. However, given the high supply of labor due to a lack of employment opportunities in other sectors, labor wages are not expected to rise with the high demand.

- Military operations and civil insecurity are expected to decrease during the winter months of December to February, as is typical. However, conflict will likely continue to displace some households, and possibly disrupt the functioning of markets. Households already displaced will have difficulty finding new sources of food and income.

- The World Food Program (WFP) and other local and international humanitarian partners are expected to complete winterization programs before the onset of winter, improving poor households' food stocks during the outlook period.

- Both the May to June winter wheat harvest and the June to July spring wheat harvest in lowland areas are expected to be near-average.

- Afghan refugees currently living in Pakistan and Iran will remain in camps or among host populations in those countries.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Normal market functioning is expected, due to favorable harvests above last year's levels, contributing both to household stocks and market availability. This will increase the availability of food in markets for households reliant on market purchases during the winter months. Furthermore, increased livestock sales leading up to Eid Quarban in late September will assist some households in accessing food through market purchases. Winter crop planting from October through December will progress at normal levels, providing normal-level wage earning opportunities. However, wage rates for this labor will be slightly lower than the five-year average, due to lack of employment opportunities in other sectors, increasing labor supply for farm activities. Furthermore, overall remittance levels will be lower than average, further reducing purchasing power. While it is expected that households will consume less quantity, and a less diverse diet, during the February to May lean season, this year's consumption will be slightly better than last year's due to greater stocks and better economic access. As a result, while it is expected that acute malnutrition rates should increase seasonally with the lean season, they will increase less drastically than last year.

Food security outcomes will regress from Minimal (IPC Phase 1) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) for much of Afghanistan as the winter months begin. As the lean season begins in February, newly displaced persons, households in extreme northern

Badakhshan and the Wakhan Corridor, and households in the central highlands who have seen decreased income-earning opportunities, are expected to degrade to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) for the remainder of the outlook period.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Livelihood Zone 15: West-Central Highland Agro-Pastoral

Current Situation

Livelihoods in this high altitude, mountainous zone are based on a mixture of rainfed and irrigated agricultural production. Most of the settled population engages in mixed agriculture, producing wheat, potatoes, and barley, in addition to keeping livestock. Typically, people in this zone transport goods for sale to local markets where local traders then transport them to regional markets. However, market access is limited during the winter months of the outlook period, due to excessive snowfall which blocks transporation routes to and from Kabul and Hirat.

This year's wheat production was above last year's in most parts of this zone; however, the zone continues to have a deficit of around 10,000 MT, in part due to the drought-affected 2013-2014 harvest. As a result of good accumulated rains, water and pasture availability have improved. Subsequently, pasture conditions, and livestock health and body conditions have also improved. No significant health problems have been reported, except minor incidents seen in some areas of the zone. Food prices in this zone have decreased from 5 to 15 percent, but remain 5 to 20 percent higher than the five-year average.

The recent September and October wheat harvest was estimated to be near average; rainfed wheat production has improved substantially in comparison to the below-average 2011 wheat harvest. Potato production, which is a major source of food and income for many households in this livelihood zone, was above average in September due to good soil moisture. Following a colder than average spring, favorable pasture conditions during the summer ensured good livestock body conditions, leading to somewhat favorable livestock prices. September livestock prices were 10 to 15 percent higher than last year.

Labor wages during the wheat and potato harvests were average to above-average. However, income from agricultural production was below average, given market disruptions caused by continued conflict. Income from remittances from Iran has also decreased in recent years: remittances are currently 10-20 percent lower than in 2014. This is due in part to changes in migrant worker trends, with fewer migrant workers choosing to work in Iran. In this zone, some people have joined the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and Afghanistan National Police (ANP) which are stable sources of income for some households. Despite adequate supplies from their own harvest, with continued displacement and few income-earning opportunities outside of agricultural labor, this area is currently classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Assumptions

- Incomes will decrease with the onset of the winter, as a result of lower remittances from migrant laborers, and decreased domestic labor opportunities. However, a normal level of handicraft production will occur during its seasonal November to February peak.

- Households will sell a near average number of livestock to support the stocking of food and other cash needs.

- Income from formal employment with the ANA, ANP, and civil servant sectors will be normal. Government safety net programs and community social support will continue during the winter at seasonally usual levels.

- Livestock feed prices will increase in February and March, as is seasonally expected, but the increase will not be prohibitive to households purchasing fodder for livestock.

- The remainder of the potato harvest is forecasted to be above-average, which will provide adequate potatoes for household consumption. Additionally, the prices of potatoes are expected to stay near current levels, further providing income for producers.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Recent findings indicate that in a normal year own food production in this zone provides around six months of staple food for poor households. As a result of average grain production, it is expected households will have near normal stocks for the lean season. However, as the winter months begin, income-earning opportunities will sharply decrease. Many households will be unable to purchase non-food necessities, and as a result this area is classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December. As the lean season carries on, the area is classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3). A small number of households who have limited sources of income and continue to depend heavily on remittances from Iran will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) with the start of the lean season.

Livelihood Zone 17: Northeastern Highland Agro-Pastoral

Current Situation

Most households in the Northeastern Highland Agropastoral livelihood zone rely on livestock as the key source for food and income. Wheat is the staple crop and is cultivated both as rain-fed and through irrigation.

There was an increase in the area planted under wheat cultivation during 2014/2015 season, as a result of a timely distribution of precipitation, improved irrigation systems, and access to small scale loans. Moreover, control over diseases contributed to overall crop quality. While there was localized flooding, the extend of land damaged was minimal.

The regular spring rains led to good pasture conditions, which resulted in seasonally improved livestock health and helped maintain livestock prices stable to last year, yet above the five-year average. The current wheat and wheat flour price is 5-8 percent above last year's, while livestock prices remain stable. Although a seasonal increase in labor takes place during the harvest, agricultural labor wages were down 5-10 percent in comparison to last year. The majority of poor households are now more dependent on civil service occupations, including ANA and ANP, rather than labor migration to Iran, which has become an unstable source of income.

Conflict remains the main concern in this zone, leading to new displacements both within the zone and to surrounding areas. Displaced populations will likely have reduced physical and economic access to food.

Households are currently well supplied, either from own food production or payment in-kind (*dekhani*), and have started to make purchases in October for additional winter stockpiling. Income for these market purchases are funded in part by the sale of livestock; however, livestock sales are lower than average, given the increased livestock deaths from last winter. With few income-generating opportunities, and reduced incomes from lower labor wages and decreased remittances, the majority of households in this livelihood zone are currently classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

The National Nutrition Survey reported a GAM prevalence of 9.3 percent and SAM of 3.2 percent in Badakhshan Province, which comprises a large portion of this livelihood zone.

Assumptions

- Money changers will continue to operate during the winter to transfer money from ANA and ANP employees, civil servants, and migrant laborers to households in this livelihood zone.
- The wheat stocks of better-off households will be sufficient to sell to poor households, who rely on market purchases during winter months. However, better off households will sell at seasonally high prices for profit.
- Due to livestock losses from last winter, household stocks of livestock products like *quroot*, ghee, and dried meat will be below normal this winter. Livestock sales will also be below-average; however, overall income from livestock sales will be nearer average given above-average livestock prices.
- The unemployment rate is high in this zone, limiting the ability of poor households to make cash purchases. During the outlook period, many poor households are likely to rely on credit for necessary market purchases of food and non-food items.
- With increasing security problems in this livelihood zone, as well as in other parts of the country, an increasing number of IDPs are likely to gather in more secure areas of the region.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

With normal income and good local production, poor households are expected to be stocked with staple foods, primarily wheat and wheat flour, to last through the upcoming lean season. However, prices of wheat grain and wheat flour are expected to be slightly above the five-year average during October and November. As a result, some households' stocks will be inadequate for the winter lean season. Furthermore, the availability of dried meat and dried milk products like *quroot* will be below-normal during the winter months, and poor households are likely to have limited animal protein sources, fewer milking animals, and little to no stock of dried products. Some assistance is expected to be provided, preventing significant deficits in food consumption for many poor households. Households are expected to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through December 2015, but enter Crisis (IPC 3) towards March as the lean season carries on.

Livelihood Zone 12: South-Central Mixed Farming

Current Situation

The South-Central Mixed Farming zone is relatively populated and mountainous. A number of staple crops are grown here, including wheat, sugar, beats, and vegetables. However, market access is limited given the rough terrain, extreme winters, poor road networks and insecurity. Insecurity is the largest market disruption in this zone. This zone also houses a high number of IDPs, estimated around 500,000.

Wheat production was favorable, with production 12 percent above average in areas such as Helmand. Additionally, cereals, fruits, and pulses are available in adequate quantities. Due to poor 2015 rains, however, there was a slight decline in cultivation of rain-fed areas and pasture conditions, impacting livestock body conditions and milk production.

Food prices in comparison to last year have decreased in this zone between 5 and 15 percent, but remain 5-20 percent above the five-year average, varying according to commodity and geographic location. The increase in food prices has most significantly impacted poor households who work as daily labor, and households in the south who tend livestock. In districts where insecurity is high, there have been reports that food flows are unstable and have accounted for price hikes of up to 30 percent. Furthermore, TOT for both labor to flour, and livestock to flour, have been deteriorating, in comparison to the five-year average.

In 2015, there was a 19 percent decline in the cultivation of poppy, according to a survey by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and Afghanistan's Ministry of Counter Narcotics. This has negatively impacted the incomes of the local population that relies on poppy cultivation as a main cash crop.

Assumptions

- It is expected that the level of employment in the ANA and ANP (currently 10 percent of the zone's population) will continue for the October 2015 to March 2016 outlook period, providing steady income to some households in this region.
- Money changers will continue to operate during the winter to transfer money from ANA and ANP employees, civil servants, and migrant laborers to households.
- Agricultural labor demand from nearby, irrigated areas is expected to be above-average due to the expected good availability of irrigation water. However, given the increase in labor supply, labor wages are not expected to rise with the increase in demand.
- Targeted households will continue to benefit from humanitarian assistance programs, such as food vouchers.
- Domestic migration, primarily to larger cities in Afghanistan, is a key source of income for some households. These remittances are likely to continue at near current levels.

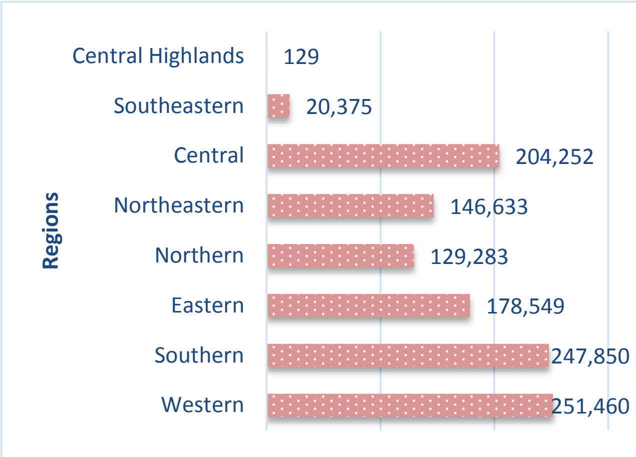
Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

With the start of the winter months, households will be reliant on food stocks and market purchases. Due to pasture and fodder availability, livestock prices are likely to remain stable and near their five-year averages. Households who sold livestock in September will likely purchase cereals at prices lower than current levels. This should allow both households who sell livestock and landless households to purchase stocks for winter at a time of year when prices are more favorable. However, as the winter months begin income-earning opportunities will sharply decrease, reducing the income available for these purchases. Many households will be unable to purchase non-food necessities, and as a result food security outcomes in this livelihood zone are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December, but will degrade to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) starting with the lean season in February.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Despite favorable grain and fruit harvests, conflict continues to put pressure on food security. In October, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Untied Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that over 1,178,530 people were currently displaced, the majority due to conflict (Figure 9).

Figure 9. IDPs in October 2015, by region



Source: *UNHCR and UNOCHA*

Levels of displacement due to conflict are assumed to remain stable over the winter months of December to February, as conflict seasonally decreases across much of the country. As IDPs are often in unfamiliar environments, many have not established new livelihoods in camps or among their host population. Furthermore, after December, rural labor opportunities decrease and competition for urban labor opportunities increases. With limited ability to replace lost sources of income, the newly displaced tend to rely heavily on external assistance and are especially likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from the October 2015 to March 2016 outlook period.

In the spring of 2015, around 107,451 households were affected by natural disasters, mainly flooding. Many of these households have since re-established livelihoods, apart from the approximately 15,000 households who lost their agricultural land and houses. Food security outcomes for these households are likely to remain in Stressed (IPC phase 2).

The recent major insecurities in Kunduz province displaced around 2,000 households to the neighboring provinces of Baghlan, Takhar, Badakhshan, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Kabul. The following is an update on persons displaced from Kunduz:

Balkh province: 149 displaced families have vacated Haji camp and returned to Kunduz, leaving Haji camp vacant. The return was organized by civil society. Three displaced families have moved to the Mazar transit center. IDP assessments and assistance are ongoing in the Mazar city area: 5 assessment teams are currently working, although assessment remains difficult given the scattered nature of IDP settlements.

Badakhshan province: WFP assistance is ongoing and 650 new petitions have been submitted. A Badakhshan OCT meeting was held in Fayzabad on October 20th with the aim of establishing assessment teams for IDP re-verification.

Baghlan province: Highway security is good with only a few pockets of insecurity in the Baghlan-e-Jadid district. Inter-agency assessments and assistance are ongoing, with a focus on Pul-e-Khumri city.

Samangan province: On October 19, ACF provided cash assistance for 31 Kunduz IDP families staying in Aybak city.

Takhar province: Large scale assistance is ongoing, with a focus on two ongoing assessments: one for the Kunduz IDPs and the other for Khwajaghar district IDPs. However, there is a major bottleneck is data entry of assessment results. Two NGOs, Mission East and Concern Worldwide, provided staff to help UNHCR and implementing partner NGOs with data entry. Delayed data entry is resulting in delayed provision of food assistance. UNHCR noted protection concerns in the two IDP compounds of Baghi-Shirkat and Bish-Bator. The newly displaced tend to rely heavily on external assistance and are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the October 2015 to March 2016 outlook period.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 1: Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
East-central mountainous agropastoral livelihood zone	An excessively cold winter with temperatures well below average and above average snowfall volume	If the winter turns to be exceptionally cold, conditions for livestock may deteriorate, leading to excess livestock mortality. Poor health of livestock limits the availability of milk through March, and heavy snowfall limits market access for food purchases, limiting the ability of market purchases to make up for the shortfall in livestock production.
Nationwide, but particularly market-dependent and landless households	An additional, sharp increase in wheat market prices due to relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Afghanisan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) is ending in the last week of October 2015.	A sudden and unexpected increase in imported wheat and wheat flour prices in the region would limit access to food for households who rely on market purchases. The number of households who purchase wheat or wheat flour tends to be particularly high from October to December, as households purchase wheat stocks in preparation of winter months where market access is limited.
Nationwide	Security deterioration	If conflict intensifies during harvest time in larger areas of the country, it could prevent farmers from collecting harvest, decreasing market supplies.
Nationwide	Above average precipitation and temperature.	Above average temperatures and precipitation could lead to increased risk of flash floods. This would result in damaged to agricultural production.
Urban Areas	Pakistan and/or Iran forcibly repatriate Afghan refugees	If Iran and Pakistan forcibly repatriate Afghan refugees, then urban food security outcomes would likely deteriorate as the supply of casual labor increases along with the demand for external wheat supply.
Nationwide/ the LHZ 12, 15 and 17	Seasonal changes with high prevalence of pneumonia and some other infectious disease from December 2015 to March 2016	During the winter season an increase in the prevalence of some infectious disease e.g. pneumonia are typical throughout the country, and could affect the nutritional status of children.
Nationwide/ the LHZ 12, 15 and 17	Unstable and insecure situation during the outlook period	An unstable security situation could further displace people impacting food security and nutrition.
Nationwide/ the LHZ 12, 15 and 17	Annual break on continuation of nutrition services from January to Mid-February 2016	During the handover and takeover process of nutrition services among current and the new implementing NGOs at the beginning of each year, a break in the continuation of nutrition services could affect malnutrition prevalence.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes over a six-month period, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes those assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. Typically, FEWS NET reports the most likely scenario.