

Good harvest forecast for the 2016/2017 growing season

KEY MESSAGES

- The increasingly intense monsoon activity since the second dekad of July has helped create good conditions for the pursuit of farming activities and offset the negative effects of the reported pockets of drought in certain areas at the beginning of the season. However, heavy downpours have caused flooding problems and property damage, and led to losses of human lives in certain areas.
- The ongoing usual lean season is marked by average to good cereal availability. Millet and sorghum prices are on par with the five-year average and maize prices are slightly above-average. Prices for animals in livestock markets are above the five-year average and terms of trade are in favor of pastoralists.
- In general, households are experiencing a normal lean season, with access to at least two meals a day. The social programs mounted by the government and its partners, particularly cereal sales at subsidized prices and cash transfer programs, are helping to mitigate the effects of the lean season on the country's most vulnerable households.

CURRENT SITUATION

The 2016/2017 agropastoral season is marked by an early to normal start of the rains in all parts of the country. Cumulative seasonal rainfall totals for the period from April 1st through August 20, 2016 ranged from 233.6 mm with 14 days of rain in Baraboulé, in Soum province, to 832 mm with 51 days of rain in Pô, in Nahouri province. In general, these cumulative rainfall totals were close to or above-normal (compared with the average for 1981 through 2010) in most parts of the country with the exception of certain parts of the Eastern, Southwestern, Cascades, Hauts-Bassins, and Boucle du Mouhoun regions, where there were reports of small rainfall deficits. However, such deficits are not significantly affecting crop growth and development.

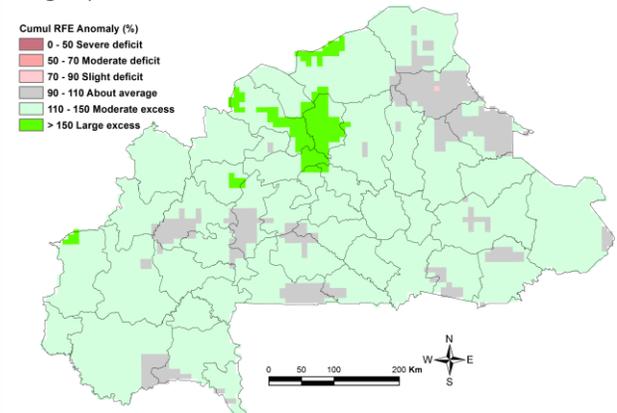
Subsequent downpours created numerous flooding problems, causing property damage and resulting in a number of human fatalities in several locations. Assessments conducted by CONASUR (the National Emergency Assistance and Rehabilitation Agency) in late July 2016 put the total number of flood victims at 3,636, with 2,636 people left homeless, mainly in the municipalities of Markoye (500), Dargo (573), Kaya (163), Ouagadougou (2000), and Piéla (400). In addition, more than 1,200 hectares of crops were damaged by the August floods in parts of the Boucle du Mouhoun region.

Most likely estimated food security outcomes for August 2016



Source: FEWS NET

Cumulative rainfall anomalies (RFE) compared with the 2006-2015 average (1st dekad of April – 2nd dekad of August)



Source: FEWS NET

Farming activities are making normal progress with the reported good rainfall conditions. However, there are large differences in planting rates and the progress of crop maintenance work from one province to another. While, in general, the current growing season seems to be making better progress than last season, it is still reportedly lagging slightly behind schedule in certain parts of Nayala, Kossi, Sourou, Nounbiel, Sissili, and Sanguié provinces.

There is average to good cereal availability on all markets. Cereal supplies are relatively good and deemed to be about-normal. Most market supplies at this time are coming from trader inventories, which are still at relatively good levels. On the other hand, on-farm inventories are steadily shrinking and account for less than 30 percent of market supplies. Cereal demand is close to normal for the lean season.

Market prices for staple foodstuffs are relatively affordable for most households at this time. Maize prices are above the five-year average by 13 percent on wholesale markets and seven percent on retail markets. In contrast, prices for millet and sorghum are relatively stable.

The physical condition of livestock has improved with the good availability of pasture and water. Pastoralists not previously forced to sell off their animals at bargain prices are benefiting from current price levels above the five-year average. Prices for small ruminants (male sheep and goats) and bulls, for example, in major livestock markets (Djibo, Dori, and Gorom-Gorom) in pastoral areas are above the five-year average by approximately 20 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

In general, poor households are experiencing a normal lean season and following more or less their usual strategies for obtaining food. Current available supplies of wild plant foods such as the leaves of baobab trees are helping to improve their diet. Their sources of income include sales of poultry and firewood, market gardening activities, and sales of small ruminants. The social programs mounted by the government and its partners such as cereal sales at subsidized prices and cash transfer programs are also helping to mitigate the effects of the lean season on the country's poorest households.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The present situation has not affected the assumptions used by FEWS NET as basis for developing the most likely scenario for the period [from June 2016 through January 2017](#).

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2017

Based on the status of the growing season and the good condition of crops, there should be a favorable outcome for the current season. This brighter outlook could encourage farmers and traders to put their remaining cereal stocks up for sale on the market, which would help improve cereal availability and facilitate staple food access for poor households.

With a good end-of-season as predicted in seasonal rainfall forecasts (PRESAS), national cereal production is expected to surpass the five-year average. In addition, this year's market gardening activities scheduled to get underway in mid-October will, no doubt, be ramped up in view of the good water availability. This could generate substantial amounts of income for these farmers.

Thus, there could continue to be Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels of acute food insecurity in all parts of the country between now and the end of the outlook period in January 2017.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The food security update is a monthly report on current conditions and changes in the projected food security outlook for this country. It updates FEWS NET's Food Security Outlooks. Learn more [here](#).