El SALVADOR, HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA
Remote Monitoring Update

December 2019

Average Postrera harvests will contribute to the food reserves of vulnerable populations

KEY MESSAGES

- The poorest households engaged in subsistence farming will be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity until May 2020, due to losses of Primera crops caused by drought and the depletion of maize reserves. However, households in a limited number of communities will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

- The coffee harvest has begun in the coffee-growing areas of the region, creating temporary jobs that provide income that will mainly be used to satisfy basic food and non-food needs. Some of the poorest households that were unable to harvest grains or find local jobs earn money by selling firewood or extracting sand or stone for construction.

- Rainfall patterns from the end of September until the start of December enabled crops to develop correctly and it is estimated that average harvests will be obtained from Postrera crops (maize, beans and sorghum) in the various production areas, except where planting has been significantly delayed.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2019 and January 2020 (left) and February to May 2020 (right)

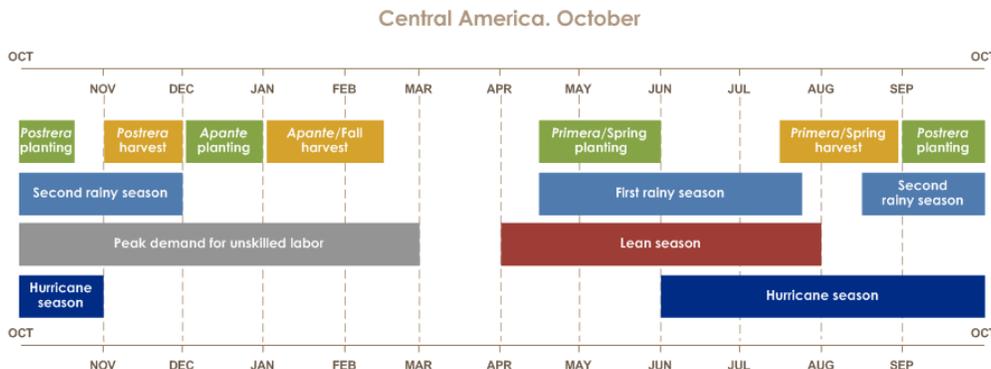| Phase 1: Minimal |
| Phase 2: Stressed |
| Phase 3+: Crisis or higher |

! Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance

Source: *FEWS NET*

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. 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.

- Grain supply in the markets from national production and imports is steady. Grain prices are in line with seasonal trends, albeit higher than last year. The highest prices are for beans in Honduras and Nicaragua. However, the Postrera harvest, which is expected to be average, starts in December and will reverse the trend.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: *FEWS NET*

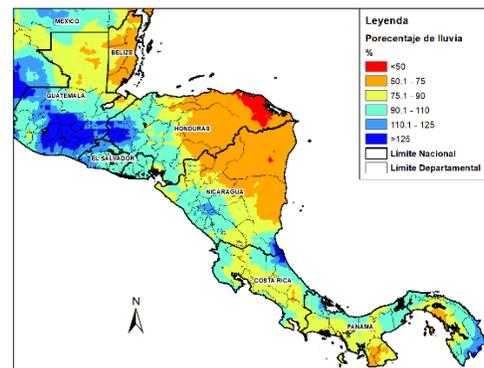| COUNTRY	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
Regional	• In some production areas, irregularities in the second rainy season have caused delays, which could mean below-average Postrera harvests in the affected areas. • In some areas, Primera and Postrera crop losses mean farmers must seek alternative sources of local employment (extraction of firewood, logging, sand or stone extraction, fishing and hunting) or work harvesting coffee in coffee-growing regions or in cities. • Low international coffee prices have exacerbated the situation facing small producers, in some cases resulting in the replacement of productive activity.	• Grain prices may rise from the first quarter of 2020, affecting access to food in poor households. • The current drop in river levels may worsen or they may disappear altogether, along with underground sources, resulting in water shortages for human consumption and agricultural production, mainly in Honduras. • The lean season is expected to start early, since crop losses mean poor households will need to resort to the market for longer than normal.

PROJECTED REGIONAL OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2020

Rainfall from September 1 to November 25 and the evidence identified in field surveys indicate normal development of Postrera crops (maize, beans and sorghum). As such, average harvests are expected, especially in the areas influenced by the Pacific basins (Figure 2). The harvest runs from the second half of December 2019 to the second half of January 2020.

According to probability forecasts of cumulative rainfall derived from the 60th Central American Climate Forum, average rainfall is expected throughout most of the region for the December 2019 to March 2020 period. This should favor the growth of basic grain crops in the Apante season, which has already begun in some areas of central Honduras and the North Atlantic regions of Nicaragua. These crops will be harvested in February and March 2020, replenishing the markets in the region and helping stabilize prices.

From March 2020, households that no longer have food reserves will use their income from work harvesting coffee and sugarcane and other activities to buy food. Most poor households will be able to meet their basic food needs, but will encounter difficulty accessing basic non-food goods. Some areas in the region will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Pockets of households in isolated communities may encounter difficulties acquiring food and will need to use negative coping strategies, finding themselves in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Figure 1. Precipitation anomaly as a percentage (%) of the historical average (1981–2010), from September 1 to November 25, 2019

Source: *United States Geological Survey (USGS)/FEWS NET*

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING

In remote monitoring, a coordinator typically works from a nearby regional office. Relying on partners for data, the coordinator uses scenario development to conduct analysis and produce monthly reports. As less data may be available, remote monitoring reports may have less detail than those from countries with FEWS NET offices. Learn more here.