



FEWS NET overviews

For an analysis of food security in West Africa and Sudan, see the back page

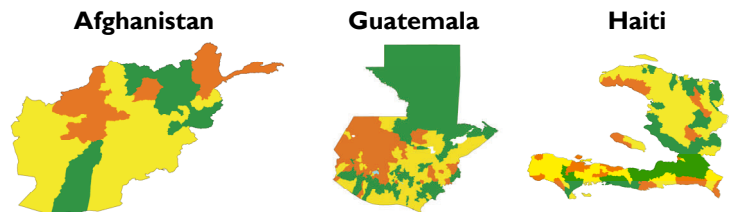
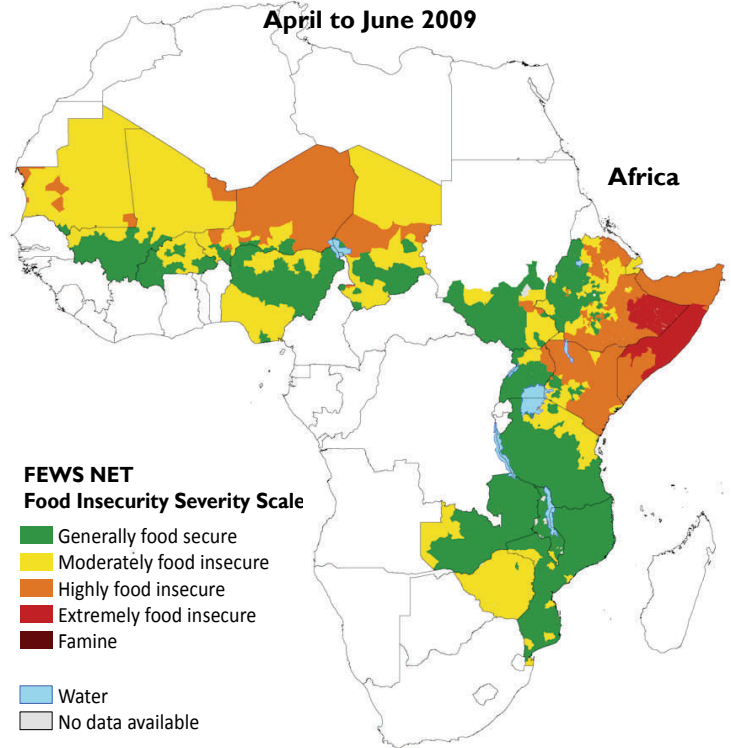
ETHIOPIA: As expected, the current *belg* hunger season is particularly severe and will be longer than normal this year. In addition to high food prices and a poor *belg* harvest last year, the season failed this year in the north, and southern *belg* crops are expected to have a meager harvest 1-2 months late. In pastoral areas, the bad performance of the *gu* season means that the July-September dry season is likely to be exceptionally harsh. Forecasts for rainfall during the main cropping season and in northern pastoral areas are below-normal, particularly in areas of the east where production was poor this year, raising concerns that a serious food crisis could emerge in Ethiopia over the next year.

KENYA: Many areas of Kenya have experienced four consecutive below-normal seasons. The 2009 long rains have been weak, and the harvest in marginal cropping areas is expected to be very poor for the second consecutive harvest. In the "grain basket", two weeks without rain has raised concerns, and livestock mortality is on the rise in Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, and Kajiado. Food security conditions in urban, pastoral, and marginal agricultural areas will deteriorate due to drought and high maize prices through the hunger season until November. The food insecure population is expected to rise from 2.5 to 2.9 million by November.

MAURITANIA: Food security in Mauritania is likely to decline slightly between now and December, particularly in urban areas. Political instability and global economic conditions restrict trade and labor opportunities in urban areas, and 130,000 urban poor are currently food insecure. The forecast for the country suggests slight to moderate rainfall deficits between July and September. If the harvests and pastures are poor, households may engage in livestock and labor migration sooner and longer than normal. High food insecurity will continue through December among poor producers, pastoralists, and urban households without these options.

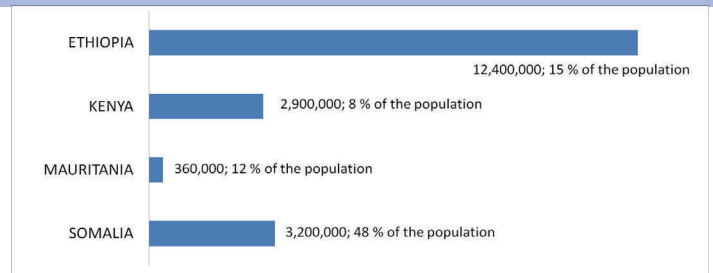
SOMALIA: Following a harsh 2009 *jilaal* (dry) season, the *gu* season has been below-normal, though better than some recent years. Conditions are particularly poor in northern pastoral areas, where drought threatens 700,000 households. *Gu* crops benefited from late-season rains and should be near-normal in Bakool, Hiran, Gedo, and Middle Juba, where a significant *gu* harvest is typically expected. Food prices remain high and conflict in the central region has increased in intensity. High and extreme food insecurity is expected to continue nationwide.

Current estimated food security conditions

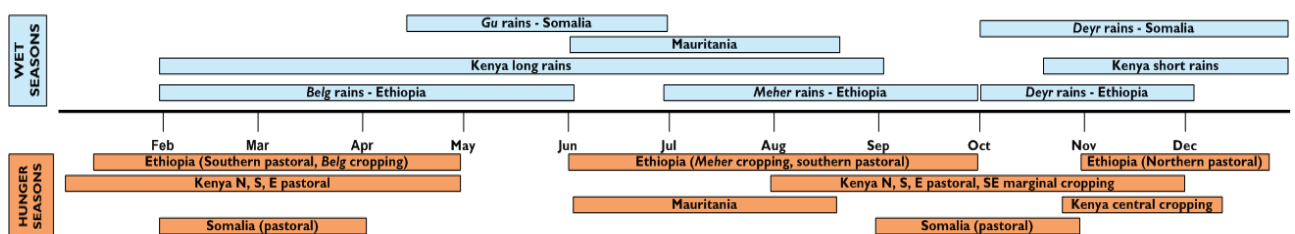


These maps show the highest estimated severity of food insecurity in each area, based on the latest assessment and monitoring data, as well as baseline data and analysis.

Selected food insecure populations



Critical events timeline



Short term dryness in Sahelian and Sudanian zones

In spite of significant pre-season rains, a suppressed inter-tropical front has prevented moisture from moving northward at its normal rate, causing a weak and delayed start of season in southern Niger, parts of Chad, northwest Central African Republic and central and southern Sudan (Figure 2).

The largest deficits remain in Sudan, where most of the southeastern cropping areas have received less than half of their average precipitation since May 1st. The May and mid-June rainfall anomalies could delay June planting in some of the Sahelian June-September cropping areas further to the north, making crops more vulnerable to the typical July-August dry spell and delaying access to green crops until mid-September. These rainfall anomalies also have negative implications for pastoral households, especially those in Kapoeta, where the April-July rains are critical for pasture development and grazing before animals start moving to long distance grazing areas in October.

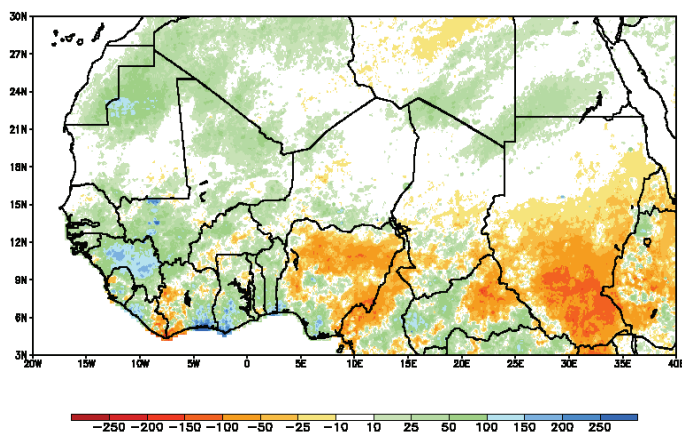
Rainfall deficits in northern Nigeria are approaching only half of their average for this period, and in some areas the season is 1-2 dekads late, particularly in northern areas of Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Jigawa, Katsina, and Zamfara states. These deficits may be reversed if heavy, consistent rainfall begins by the first dekad of July. However, early rains encouraged many farmers in the north to sow in advance of the normal start of season, and failure of the first sowing in localized areas is possible. Middle and wealthy households may increase planted area of cowpea to compensate for the shortened season. The poorest households, however, will pay a high price for low-quality seeds at this time of the year, reducing planted area and yield per hectare and thereby increasing food insecurity in these areas through December.

The July to September rains, which typically comprise 80 percent of the Sahel's annual rainfall, could offset the poor rains seen thus far in many areas. However, seasonal forecast models from the African Centre for Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD) predict above-average rainfall in the southern coastal countries of West Africa from July to September. This trend tends to correlate with below-average rainfall in the Sahel. Slight to moderate rainfall deficits are predicted for Mauritania, Senegal, and parts of western and central Mali, Niger, and Chad.

Several areas have started the season well. Mali has maintained steady precipitation throughout the early days of the season, and precipitation remains above normal nationwide. Rainfall deficits in northeastern Cameroon along the border with southern Nigeria are not considered to be significant, as this is one of the wettest areas of Africa. Furthermore, rainfall in the past few weeks in both the Central African Republic and Chad has increased soil moisture and slightly reduced precipitation deficits.

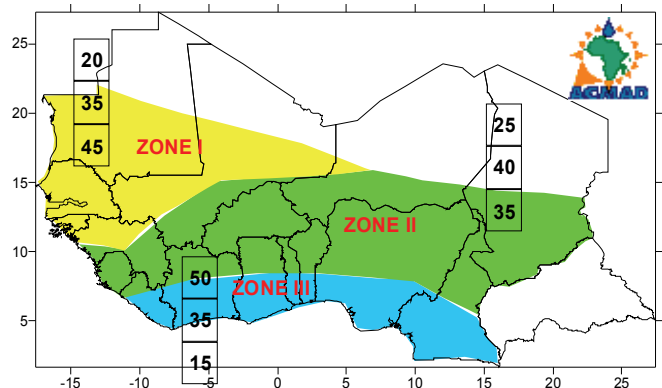
After several consecutive good harvests, an average harvest should be sufficient to maintain relative food security in most areas through December 2009. During this time, food insecurity is likely to be worse than normal in southern Sudan, northeastern Nigeria, pastoral areas of Chad, and agro-pastoral and pastoral areas in Mauritania.

Figure 1. Satellite-derived image of precipitation anomalies (mm) based on NOAA/CPC RFE climatology method, May 1- June 20, 2009.



Source: NOAA

Figure 2. ACMAD's Consensual Forecast for July through September 2009. Zone 1 is likely to have rainfall deficits. Zone 2 is expected to be normal with slight, localized deficits, and zone 3 is likely to have above-normal rainfall.



Source: ACMAD