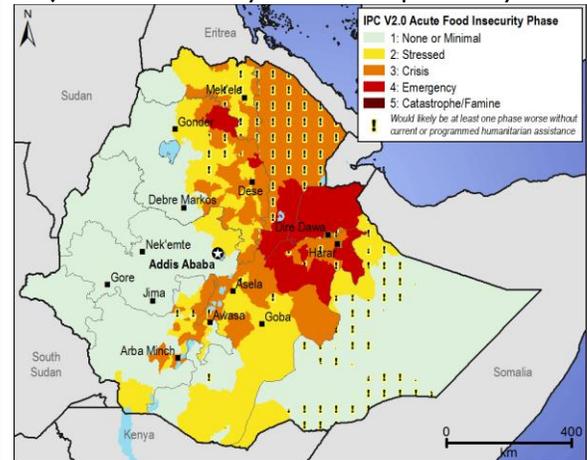


*Belg prospects improve with heavy rainfall in April, but Emergency likely to continue*

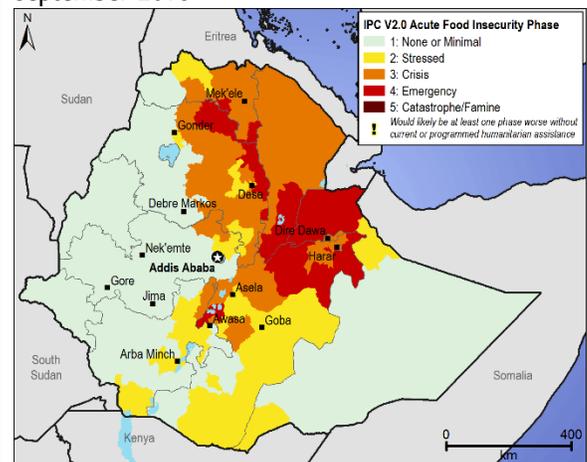
**KEY MESSAGES**

- More than 10.2 million people require emergency food assistance in 2016, following El Niño-induced drought in 2015 that resulted in very poor *Belg* and *Meher* harvests, significant livestock deaths and reductions in livestock productivity, and reduced household access to food and cash income. Worst-affected areas include Wag Himra, East and West Hararghe, and pastoral areas in Shinile and southern Afar, where Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes will continue through at least September 2016.
- Following the late onset and poor performance of *Belg* rainfall throughout March, rainfall since early April has significantly improved and reduced rainfall deficits. Although late planting will delay harvests in SNNPR, national *Belg* harvests are expected to be average to slightly below average. Additional rainfall during the next few weeks will recharge water sources, improve browse and pasture, allow land preparation/planting of *Meher* crops, and favor development of cash crops.
- National-level admissions of malnourished children under five-years old to Therapeutic Feeding Programs (TFP) in February 2016 increased 14 percent compared to January 2016, and 47 percent compared to February last year. Without substantial increases in humanitarian assistance, increases in acute malnutrition are likely through the peak of the lean season in September 2016.
- Current contributions to the humanitarian appeal for food assistance have only funded approximately half of identified needs, while Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) transfers also typically end in June. In the absence of additional funding, assistance will cease just as needs begin to peak between June and September.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2016



Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2016



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. To learn more about this scale, click [here](#).

**CURRENT SITUATION**

- Following the late onset and poor performance of *Belg* rainfall throughout March, rainfall since early April has significantly improved and reduced rainfall deficits. Although harvesting will be late in SNNPR due to the late start-of-season, national *Belg* harvests are expected to be average to slightly below average. Additional rainfall during the coming weeks will recharge water sources, improve browse and pasture, allow land preparation/planting of *Meher* crops, and favor development of cash crops such as coffee and chat.
- The *Belg* planting window is now over and area planted is expected to be near normal. Planting in Amhara and central Oromia was generally on time, but the delayed start of seasonal rainfall led planting in SNNPR to be delayed by two to

three weeks. Unlike other areas, *Belg* planting in Tigray started much earlier than normal, taking advantage of unseasonable rains from November through January. However, a lack of rainfall in South Tigray has led to poor crop conditions and prospects for locally below-average production. In cash-cropping areas of East and West Hararghe in Oromia, no *Belg* planting has taken place due to inadequate moisture, and cash crops are reportedly in poor condition. Otherwise, seasonal progress to date and forecasts for average to above-average rainfall indicate that *Belg*-production in SNNPR, Amhara, and central Oromia will be average or slightly below average.

- Increased seasonal rainfall has improved water availability to some extent, although emergency water trucking interventions are still underway in many areas hardest hit by dryness in 2015. Additional days of good rainfall could further recharge water sources and improve the water situation. However, better pasture and browse regeneration will require additional weeks of rainfall. Currently, overall livestock body conditions remain below normal in the highly drought-hit areas, resulting in some livestock deaths in parts of East and West Hararghe of Oromia and Sitti and Fafan Zones of Somali Region. In an effort to alleviate the critical feed shortages, emergency feed distributions are now underway in some zones, although the coverage is limited.
- In pastoral areas of Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region, additional rainfall continues to improve pasture and browse availability, which is expected to encourage households who had migrated livestock away from the zone to return. Nevertheless, improvements in livestock productivity remain unlikely during this rainy season due to the absence of conceptions during the very dry *Belg* and *Kiremt* seasons of 2015 that resulted in massive livestock death.
- Prices of cereals are either stable or increased slightly compared to the last few months, and are much higher than last year. For example, sorghum prices in March 2016 are 24 and 33 percent higher than at the same time last year in Dire Dawa and Bedeno markets in eastern Ethiopia. The recent stability in cereal prices in the affected areas is partly due to the impact of the ongoing relief food distributions, and the decline in household purchasing power due to below-average income. Due in part to high casual labor supply, both wage labor opportunities and wage rates are declining in East and West Hararghe and parts of SNNPR. Cash income from sales of chat, livestock, livestock products, and coffee has also declined. In central and southern Somali, and agro-pastoral areas of southern Oromia, prices of staple foods are either stable or declining, and prices of export camels in southern Somali are showing slight increases largely attributed to the good performance of the 2015 *Deyr* rains.
- Overall admissions into Therapeutic Feeding Programs (TFP) have been rising since January this year in Konso, parts of East and West Hararghe, and Southern Tigray. For example, admissions for Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in February 2016 in Ofla woreda of South Tigray showed an increase of 22 percent over that of January 2016. In SNNPR, TFP admissions in February increased 5 percent compared to the preceding month, and 21 percent compared to the same month last year. At the national level, TFP admissions in February 2016 are about 47 percent higher than the same month last year.
- The Ethiopian National Meteorological Agency (NMA) has indicated the likelihood of normal to above-normal rainfall over northeastern and southern areas of the country, which may trigger flash flooding in isolated places. The Federal Government issued a Flood Alert recently to encourage areas at risk to take measures to reduce the impact of flooding. Since April, flash floods have occurred in many areas causing some casualties and damage to assets and infrastructures. As soils become saturated with continued rainfall, increased flooding appears to be highly likely.
- Following very poor *Belg* and *Meher* harvests in 2015, FAO reports that approximately 1.7 million households are in need of seed assistance for *Meher* planting, which should last from April through July. Approximately 600,000 households have received or will receive seeds with the funding currently available, but another 1.1 million households remain untargeted, due to a \$55 million funding gap. Households unable to plant normal levels are *Meher* crops could face limited improvements in food access after September.

## UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

- The current situation has not affected most of the assumptions used in the [Ethiopia Food Security Outlook for February to September 2016](#). However, the following assumptions have been updated:
  - *Belg* harvests in SNNPR are likely to be delayed from June to July, delaying household access to own-produced crops and harvest labor.

- In South Tigray, *Belg* production is likely to be below average, reducing household access to food and labor income from harvests.
- No *Belg* production is expected in East and West Hararghe of eastern Oromia as they failed to plant *Belg* crops.
- Improvements to livestock body conditions will likely take longer than expected because of delays in pasture regeneration in Afar and Northern Somali.

## PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2016

- ***Belg*-producing areas of Southern Tigray (South Tigray) and eastern Amhara (South and North Wello, North Shewa):** Improved food access from own production is unlikely in Southern Tigray as the prospect of the current *Belg* harvest is poor. This, together with rising prices of staples and low cash income, will keep the areas in either **Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4)** through September. On the contrary, *Belg*-producing areas in South and North Wello and North Shewa of Amhara will experience improvement in food access from June 2016 onwards. This is due to the anticipated near-average *Belg* harvest in June and improved cash incomes from livestock sales, thus an improvement from **Crisis (IPC Phase 3)** to **Stressed (IPC Phase 2)** is expected between June and September.
- **Non *Belg*-dominant areas of Eastern Amhara, Eastern and Southern Tigray, Eastern and Central Oromia:**
  - In Wag Himra, and mid- and low-altitude areas of East and West Hararghe, no improvement in both cash income and food from own sources is foreseen in the coming months. Poor households in these areas are likely to remain in **Emergency (IPC Phase 4)** through September.
  - Lowland areas of eastern Amhara (lowlands of north and South Wello, parts of North Gondar along the Tekeze catchment) are likely to face increasingly large food consumption gaps and an associated deterioration of nutritional outcomes during the peak of the June to September lean season. During this period, these areas are likely to move from **Crisis (IPC Phase 3)** to **Emergency (IPC Phase 4)**.
  - In eastern and southern Tigray, most parts of Eastern Amhara, some areas along the Tekeze and Abay River catchment, and some low and midland areas of Arsi, West Arsi, North and East Shewa of Oromia, no improvement in access to cash income or food is anticipated over the next five months. There will be, however, improvement in availability of water for human consumption and some improvement in livestock conditions as availability of water and pasture improve with continued rainfall. Still, households are likely to face significant food consumption gaps and will be in need of emergency food assistance. These areas will therefore continue to be in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3)** through September.
- **SNNPR: lowlands of Sidama, GamoGofa, Wolayita, Hadiya, Kembata Tembaro, Guraghe, Silte and Halaba:** Livestock conditions will improve as the good *Belg* rains enhance water and pasture availability. However, a full recovery to normal milk production levels is unlikely over the short term. This is true especially in the Rift Valley areas of the region where feed shortages have been critical. *Belg* harvest prospects look normal, even if it will come somewhat late, prolonging the lean season. Although harvesting of sweet potato has already started in some of the areas, it will be inadequate to fill major food gaps. Given the exhaustion of food stocks from previous harvest, declines in income from labor and expected increases in staple food prices, these areas are likely to stay in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3)** through June 2016. However, *Belg* growing areas expect improvement with the start of fresh but late harvest in July, improving their food security to **Stressed (IPC Phase 2)** through September.
- **Pastoral areas of Afar and Sitti Zone of northern Somali Region:** In central and northern Afar, poor households will remain in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3!)** until May 2016. Starting in June, improvements in livestock body conditions and seasonal increases in prices of livestock are likely to result in a slight improvement in food access and to improve food security outcomes to **Crisis (IPC Phase 3)** in the absence of assistance. Poor households in southern Afar and Sitti Zone of Somali are likely to continue facing substantial food consumption gaps and **Emergency (IPC Phase 4)** outcomes until at least September.

### ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET's quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work [here](#).