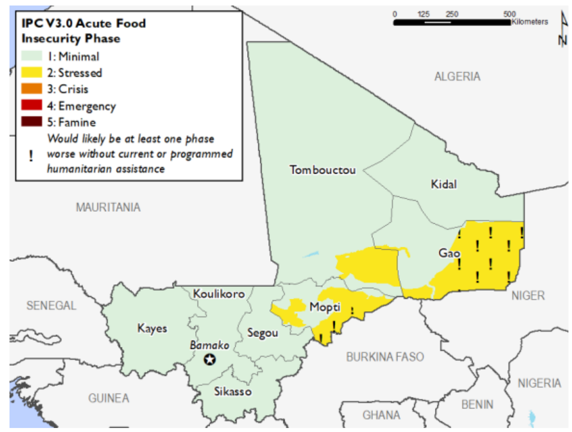
MALI Food Security Outlook — June 2019 to January 2020

Limited household access to food in some areas due to conflict

KEY MESSAGES

- The 2019–2020 agricultural season has begun in Mali, thanks to the onset of rains at the end of May. Agricultural production prospects are up 10 percent from 2018 and 25 percent from the five-year average. The average to above-average harvests expected in October 2019 will support a good supply of cereals to markets.
- The supply of cereals to markets throughout the country remains sufficient, despite the occasional disruptions to flows in insecure areas. Cereal prices, which are generally similar to slightly above average, are supporting poor households' access to food.
- The early lean season in the Gao and Tombouctou river valley and in places in the Inner Niger Delta, as well as declining incomes, are leading poor households to resort to negative coping strategies to meet their food needs. As a result, households' food security will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!), with humanitarian assistance needed from June to September for the most affected areas to prevent the situation from worsening.

Current food security, June 2019



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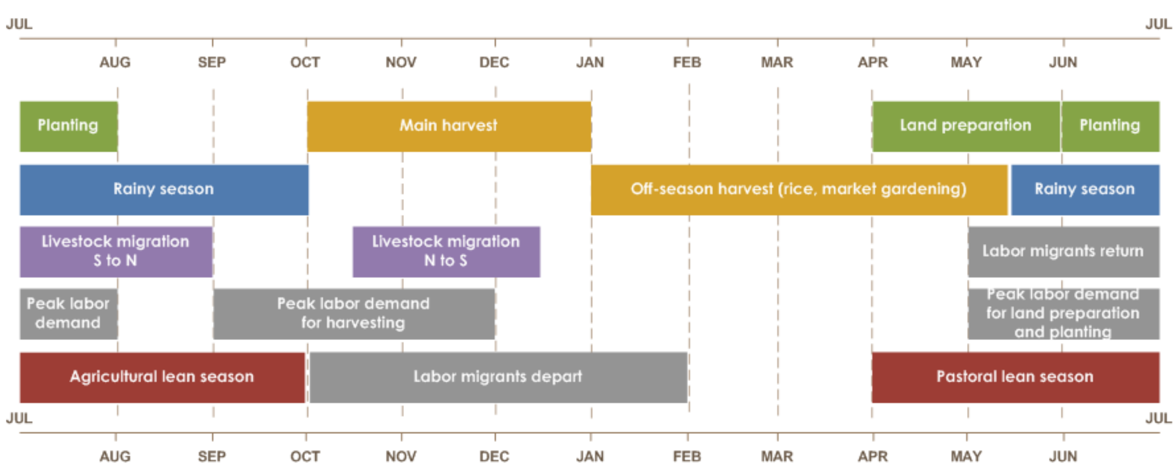
- The average to above-average harvests expected in October 2019, as well as the observed decline in prices and improved terms of trade between livestock and cereals, will improve household access to food. As a result, most households in the country will experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity between October 2019 and January 2020. As regards displaced households and flood victims, the aftermath of the degradation of their livelihoods will continue to be a burden, therefore leading to Stressed (IPC Phase 2), or worse, food security.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET*

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NATIONAL OVERVIEW

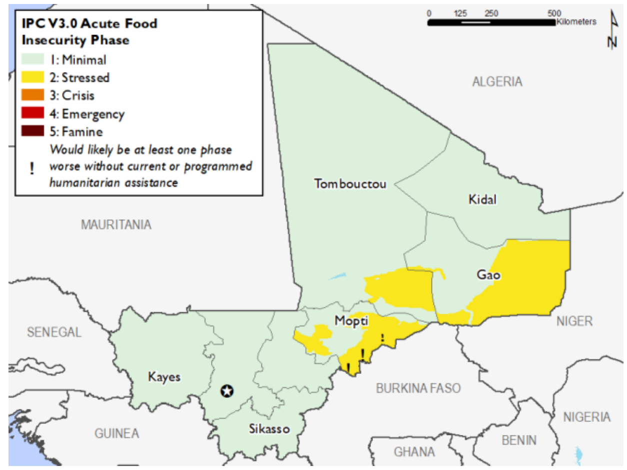
Current situation

Agricultural production

The 2019–2020 agricultural season has begun in the agricultural areas in the south of the country, thanks to more or less significant rainfall. Total rainfall in Mali as of 30 May was generally below average, except in places in the regions of Ségou and in the north of the country. Clearing fields, transporting or spreading manure and ongoing sowing provide average opportunities for poor households engaged in these activities to generate income and produce food. The off-season rice crops in village-level irrigation schemes and flood recession crops in lakes and ponds in the Tombouctou and Mopti regions are growing normally. The average to above-average harvests expected from June to July will improve food availability in these areas. Cereal production forecasts for the upcoming season are 25 percent higher than the five-year average and 10 percent higher than in 2018/19 (National Council of Agriculture). The continuing subsidy for agricultural inputs and equipment and hydro-agricultural developments, as well as the forecasts of average to above-average rainfall, are a positive indicator of average to above-average agricultural production in the country.

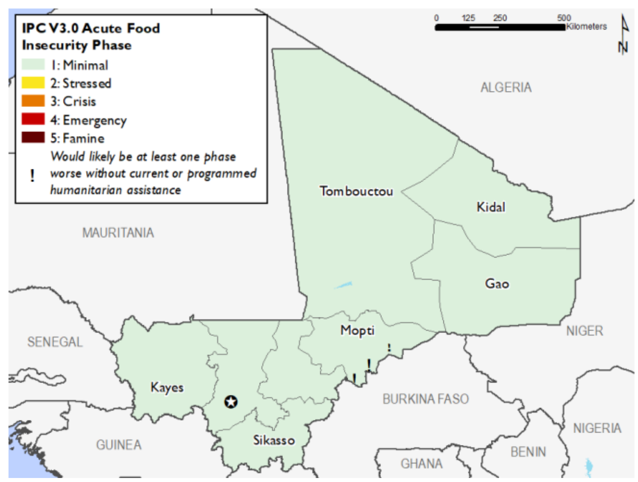
New pasture growth and the replenishment of watering holes are under way, particularly in southern agricultural areas, thanks to the level of rainfall recorded. This is helping to improve the physical condition of livestock and livestock production. The pastoral lean season is still under way in the northern pastoral areas and in the Western Sahel band, awaiting the onset of rains. In southern agricultural areas, herds are being moved to winter grazing areas. Disruptions in herd movements are being observed in areas of community conflict along the Burkina Faso and Niger border strip.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2019



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, October 2019 to January 2020



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Fish production

Fish catches were considered average to above average across the country. Collective fishing activities and the lifting of bans have helped to increase the size of catches compared with the previous month. Average income from this activity is improving fishing households' purchasing power and food supply. Fishing households are currently returning to shore from their usual fishing grounds.

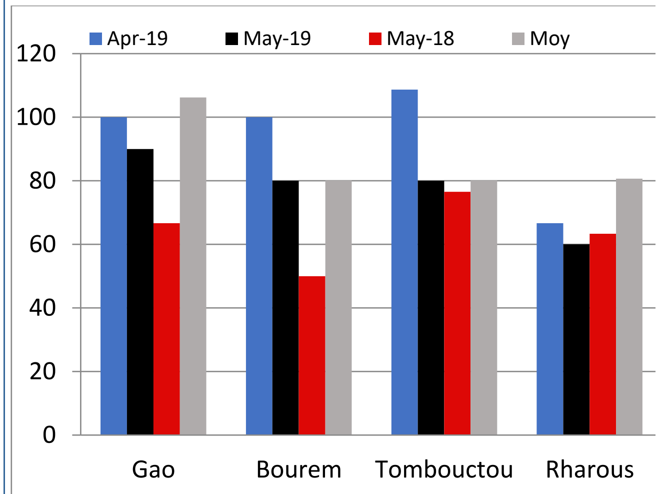
Markets and prices

The availability of cereals at markets across the country remains adequate, despite a sharper than average seasonal drop in supplies, thanks to the good production levels in 2018. Sales subsidized by the National Produce Board (OPAM) and current off-season rice harvests are helping to increase supplies compared with the previous month in the areas concerned. At the end of May, the price of the main cereal crop (millet) in all markets in the regional capitals was stable compared with the previous month. Compared with the five-year average, millet and sorghum prices at the end of May increased by 17 percent in Kayes and 9 percent in Gao, remained stable in Tombouctou and Kidal and fell in the other markets of the regional capitals, by 21 percent in Ségou and 6 percent in Mopti. These price levels are supporting average household access to markets.

Livestock supplies are increasing as usual during the lean season, with the influence of the Eid-al Fitr holiday also playing a part in this increase. Supply is generally average for the period due to average livestock conditions, which are not encouraging significant destocking. Demand is increasing due to religious holidays and exports to neighboring countries. However, a decline in exports compared with an average year has been reported in the Gao and Mopti markets due to insecurity, which is limiting market access for wholesalers.

The price of goats, which is the animal most commonly sold by poor households, decreased by 20 percent in Rharous and 8 percent in Gao, remained stable in Tombouctou and increased by 22 percent in Nara, 15 percent in Mopti and 9 percent in Bourem, compared with the five-year average (Figure 1). Terms of trade between goats and cereals decreased by 15 percent in Gao and 26 percent in Rharous, remained stable in Bourem and Tombouctou and increased by 23 percent in Mopti, 16 percent in Nara and 7 percent in Ménaka, compared with the five-year average. The deterioration in the terms of trade is reducing pastoralist households' ability to access food. The average to above-average availability of off-season cereal crops and products from in-kind remuneration intended for land preparation for the new agricultural season, in addition to the similar to slightly above-average price of cereals, are enabling households in agricultural areas to access food without undue difficulty. In some pastoral areas, the deterioration in the terms of trade between goats and millet compared with the average is reducing poor households' ability to access markets.

Figure 1. Terms of trade between millet and goat (kg/animal)



Source: *FEWS NET*

Food consumption

Food consumption is following its usual trend of deterioration. However, the early depletion of stocks and high dependence of poor households in the poor production areas of the Niger Delta and the Gao and Tombouctou river band are causing unusual deterioration due to the use of strategies to reduce food spending, which is negatively affecting their food consumption. The same is true for displaced households, who are in a situation of deprivation that is limiting their adequate access to food outside ongoing humanitarian assistance. The poor or borderline food consumption score should be close to the average for the period and higher than the March average of 14.7 percent, according to the National Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN) for the last four years. As for food diversity, it is minimal in this lean season, due to rationing in poor households. The hunger index is expected to be higher than the 8 percent moderate to severe hunger score of February 2019 (ENSAN, February 2019), due to the use of atypical adaptation strategies.

Population movements

The usual return of able workers to their home areas for the new agricultural season continues but remains limited in conflict areas, due to the persistence of incidents. The average to above-average cash and in-kind earnings sent or reported will improve households' purchasing power during this lean season. Insecurity in the country's northern and central regions has led to unusual population movements. At the end of April 2019, approximately 106,164 displaced people were counted by the Commission on Population Movements, including 43.9 percent in the Mopti region alone, where population arrivals from Burkina Faso were also reported. The resulting loss of property increases their vulnerability to food insecurity. Returns of Malian refugees continue to be recorded throughout the country, particularly in the Tombouctou and Mopti regions, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) estimate being more than a thousand people.

Security

The security situation continues to be marked by ongoing security incidents that are negatively affecting the socioeconomic environment in Mali's northern and central regions, reducing poor households' employment opportunities and incomes compared with the average. Loss of property and looting associated with these security incidents are damaging livelihoods for households in the affected areas, particularly in Ménaka and the Mopti regions. The resulting difficulties in implementing humanitarian assistance have prevented it from achieving its expected effectiveness for households in need, increasing the hardship that they experience and limiting the rebuilding of their livelihoods, which are vital to meeting their needs.

Humanitarian assistance

The national response plan currently being prepared provides for monthly food assistance in the form of half and full rations from June to September for 1,055,380 people throughout the country, 77.3 percent of whom are in the Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti and Tombouctou regions. Support in terms of agricultural inputs for the new agricultural season (seeds and fertilizers), and support for farmers in the form of animal feed and ongoing veterinary care will relieve beneficiary households of the burden of adopting negative coping strategies. Support for displaced, returning and repatriated populations will continue throughout the scenario period.

Assumptions

The most likely food security scenario from June 2019 to January 2020 is based on the following underlying assumptions regarding trends in nationwide conditions:

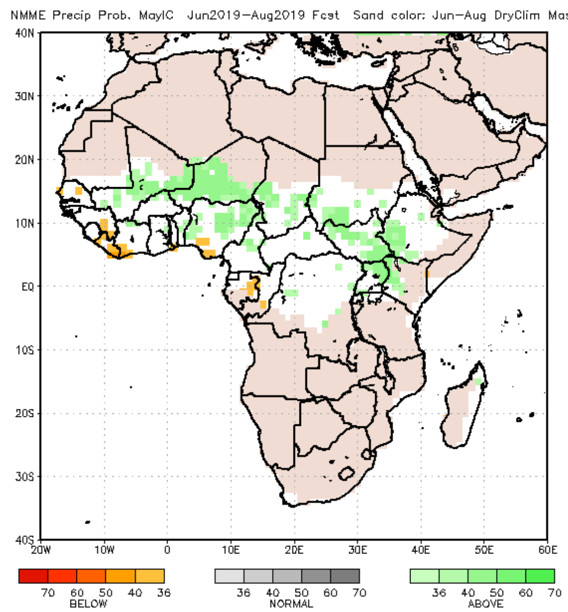
Agricultural and pastoral production

Rainfall/river flooding: The consensus forecasts of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD) of May 2019 indicate that average to above-average cumulative rainfall is likely in Mali, particularly in the central and northeast areas, where a surplus is expected. A good distribution of rainfall over time and throughout the country is needed to ensure a good level of agricultural production for the current growing season. The same applies to flows of the various rivers serving Mali in the Niger and Senegal river basins.

Locust invasions: According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Desert Locust Bulletin (FAO.org/ag/locusts), small-scale breeding will take place south of the Atlas Mountains, in Algeria and Morocco, but locust numbers will remain low. Limited breeding may continue in northern Mali. Unconfirmed reports have been received from nomads, travelers and local populations of the presence of immature and mature solitarious adults mixed with last instar solitarious larvae in the north of the country at three sites in the Tilemsi Valley, west of Aguelhoc (1927N/0052E). In the future, low numbers of locusts will persist in parts of the Adrar des Iforas. No significant developments are likely.

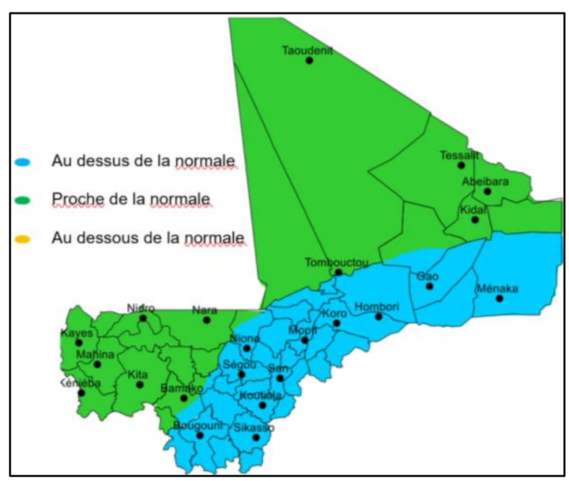
Agricultural production: Favorable forecasts on climatic factors (rainfall and floods), as well the continuing national agricultural input subsidy program of 50 percent of the market price (of seeds and fertilizers) and hydro-agricultural development program, both government initiatives, provide hope for average to good cereal production in the country. The same is true for recession crops in the Tombouctou and Mopti lakes area, where the marked rise in water levels in 2018 will increase the area available for cultivation. Average to above-average harvests are expected in August/September for flood recession crops, October/November for millet, sorghum and seasonal maize, and December/January for rice. Support in terms of agricultural supplies, particularly in the northern regions, by the FAO, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as part of resilience-building programs, will strengthen beneficiary households' productive capacities. However, conflicts that limit access to fields for some households in the central areas of the country will further reduce below-average production expected in October 2019 in these areas.

Figure 2. Precipitation forecast May to July 2019



Source: *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/North America Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME)*

Figure 3. Precipitation forecast July to September 2019



Source: Mali Météo

Agropastoral lean season: The agropastoral lean season that is beginning will be normal for most of the country's population owing to average household access to food thanks to the good harvests in 2018 and cereal prices at markets. However, poor households' dependence on markets for one to two months longer than usual in the poor production areas of Gao, Mopti and Tombouctou, which are experiencing a drop in income compared with the average, will lead to an earlier lean season, by one month or more, than in a normal year. The average availability of green crops (legumes, vegetables, maize, etc.) from September onward will put an end to the lean season for households.

Animal production: The normal pastoral lean season in most agropastoral areas is conducive to a normal recovery of livestock production (milk, butter and meat), thanks to the usual restoration of livestock conditions from June to July. Production will peak around August and September. However, the recurrence of community conflicts in the border strip with Niger in the Ménaka region and with Burkina Faso in the Mopti region will limit adequate access to certain routes. This may adversely affect the proper feeding of herds and consequently income and the availability of animal products for pastoral households.

Livestock movements: Herds concentrated in usual dry season areas will begin returning to winter pastures with the arrival of rains in June/July. Livestock movements will remain disrupted in areas of community conflict as adequate access to some pastoral rangelands will be impaired.

Fish production: Fish catches, which are abundant during this period, will decline as usual from June to September due to higher water levels in rivers. Fish production will remain above average, thanks to the good reproduction levels of 2018. From September onward, catches will increase as usual, thanks to the drop in water levels. Production prospects for the fishing season will be average to above average, thanks to the expected average flooding.

Other livelihood activities

Migration and population movements: The arrival of the rains in June/July marks the return of the workers for the new agricultural season, who had previously left in search of earnings for their households. Average to above-average income reported in June or sent during workers' time away will allow households to prepare for the new agricultural season and improve their access to markets, especially in areas of declining agricultural production, where departures have been earlier than usual.

Agricultural and non-agricultural labor: The normal types of agricultural labor, from preparing land for harvest to small trades, will continue in the country from June to October. The average earnings from these activities will help to improve the purchasing power of poor households dependent these sources of income. However, labor income will decline due to expected reductions in production in the areas affected by community conflicts in Mopti and the unstable security situation that limits job opportunities for laborers (in construction, the small trades sector, etc.) in the country's northern and central regions.

Markets and prices

Cereal prices: The good availability of cereals across the country will contribute to a good supply of cereals to markets from June to January. The usual seasonal drop in supplies from June to August will be followed by the usual increase from September onward, thanks to destocking by both traders and farmers. Cereal prices will follow the normal seasonal trend of a smaller than usual increase in June until the next harvest in October 2019. According to the FEWS NET price projection system, cereal prices will be near or similar to the average in the main markets. The good availability of cereals across the country will be sufficient to meet the increase in demand from the month of fasting in June without causing any significant price increases.

Livestock prices: Similar to below average livestock prices in pastoral areas and average to above-average prices in southern agricultural areas are expected to improve as a result of the recovery of livestock conditions which will help improve the physical condition of livestock, as well as the increased demand in the months of Ramadan and Tabaski and from neighboring countries, particularly in the southern agricultural areas throughout this scenario period. Disruptions in household market access in the Ménaka and Mopti areas affected by community conflict and the willingness of the households concerned to make emergency sales will reduce the price level to below the average in these areas. The terms of trade between goats and millet will generally be near to above average from June to December.

Other key factors

Institutional purchases: Institutional purchases for national food security stock will be roughly 2,000 tons of maize and are ongoing. The amount of purchases will be lower than usual due to the decline in the number of people requiring aid in the country and the current level of stocks. These institutional purchases, which will mainly support the widely available maize supplies, are not expected to have a significant impact on overall market prices.

Security situation and population movements: Security disruptions continue in the northern and Mopti regions, where community conflicts have reached high levels despite ongoing negotiations and military patrols. According to FEWS NET, the security situation will continue to be marked by localized disruptions in the regions of Gao, Kidal, North Ségou, Tombouctou, and particularly in Ménaka and Mopti, where community conflicts are frequent. The deterioration of livelihoods and human deaths caused by these conflicts will continue to negatively affect people's lives in the areas concerned. At the end of April, the number of displaced people was estimated at 106,164 across the country, most of which are staying with host families and in camps in Mopti. The development of such displacements directly relates to the security situation, for which negotiations are ongoing.

Humanitarian assistance: The national response plan developed by the Government in collaboration with technical partners provides food assistance and resilience building for approximately 450,000 people identified by the Cadre Harmonisé workshop from June to September. The same will apply to households displaced as a result of conflict. Support in terms of agricultural inputs for the new growing season, and support for farmers in the form of animal feed and veterinary care provided by the Government and its partners is under way and/or planned. Support for reintegrating returning and repatriated populations will continue throughout this scenario period.

Nutrition: The deterioration of the nutritional situation typically begins in April (with the depletion of food stocks, rising food prices, the prevalence of diseases such as malaria, acute kidney injuries, etc.) and reaches its peak during the lean season (June to September). The most recent Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey carried out in July/August 2018 revealed a global acute nutrition (GAM) prevalence rate based on a weight-for-height of 10 percent (95 percent confidence interval (CI): 9.1–11.0). This is comparable to the result of the previous SMART survey conducted in August 2017, which was 10.7 percent (95 percent CI: 9.8–11.6). The regions of Bamako (GAM: 10.5 percent (95 percent CI: 7.8–14.0)), Ségou (GAM 11.2 percent (95 percent CI: 8.9–14.0)), Ménaka (GAM: 13.5 percent (95 percent CI: 10.8–16.7)), Tombouctou (GAM: 12.5 percent (95 percent CI: 10.1–15.4)) and Gao (GAM: 14.2 percent (95 percent CI: 11.6–17.3)) are in a serious nutritional situation, with GAM prevalence rates that exceed the World Health Organization (WHO) critical threshold and are consistently serious or critical in the Tombouctou and Gao regions. The prevalence of GAM is expected to remain within the typical seasonal limits for each region until December 2019. The mortality rate of 0.31 [0.30–0.32] per 1,000 is not expected to change significantly.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The good availability of cereals from the previous agricultural season and the similar to slightly above-average trend of cereal prices helps provide most households with average access to food without undue difficulty, thanks to average incomes from usual activities. The current Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity is expected to continue for most households in the country from June to January 2020.

However, the early lean season resulting from the early depletion of stocks for some households in the areas of the Niger Delta and the Gao and Tombouctou river band is forcing poor households to adopt atypical coping strategies for this time of year, such as agricultural labor, livestock sales and loans from relatives and friends. The already high poor food consumption score for 8.5 percent of households in the area according to the February 2019 ENSAN is expected to fall further and be above average for the period and near the four-year average for September, which is about 15 percent. Poor households and displaced poor people that are unable to meet their food needs without adopting negative coping strategies and/or depending on aid experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) food insecurity with humanitarian assistance needed to avoid Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from June to September. The same will apply to poor households affected by flooding, who will have difficulty meeting their food needs and adequately managing the degradation of their property. The usual deterioration in the GAM rate will be at levels typical for most areas throughout the country for the period, except in the anomaly areas mentioned above, where it will be higher than the median of the last five years, which is 10.7 percent.

From September, the availability of low first harvests, wild products, animal products, payments in kind from the harvest and the fall in cereal prices will allow households to meet their food needs and reduce the use of atypical coping strategies.

The poor or borderline food consumption score for 29.8 percent of households and the very high hunger index should improve and be almost average for September. Improving food availability and minimizing the use of negative coping strategies will help reduce the prevalence of malnutrition, which will be almost average for the period. Households' average access to their own production, thanks to large harvests and falling food prices, means most will experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity from October to January. Poor flood-affected households and displaced people who are struggling to rebuild their livelihoods will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity from October to January 2020.

AREAS OF CONCERN

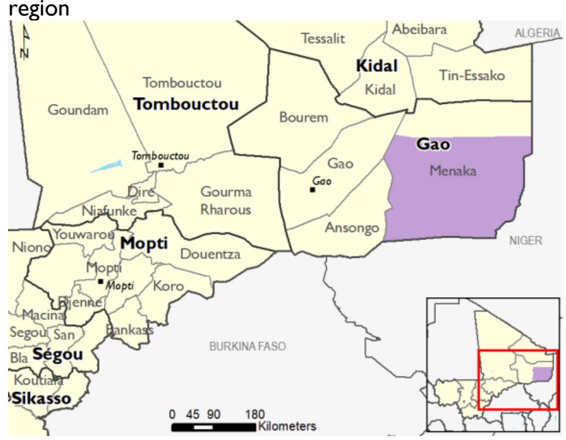
Livelihood zones 2 and 4: Northern livestock farming area, Ménaka region

Current situation

Pastoral conditions: The pastoral situation is characterized by a normal lean season thanks to the average availability of pastures, despite deficits in some areas. Unusual movements of livestock toward the Kidal region are being observed, linked to insecurity in the Ménaka region. Livestock are in moderate to poor condition overall due to the usual degradation of pastures and drying up of watering holes. Animal health is relatively stable overall.

Markets: Cereal supply is sufficient thanks to continued flows from Gao, Niger and Algeria, despite security incidents. Millet prices in the area's main markets are stable compared with last month. Compared with the five-year average, they are up 10 percent in Gao, Bourem, 14 percent in Ansongo and 15 percent in Ménaka. This increase in food prices, although low, has a negative impact on poor pastoralists' access to food. The terms of trade between goats and millet are almost stable compared with last month. Compared with the five-year average, they are down 15 percent in Gao, up 7 percent in Ménaka and stable in Bourem.

Figure 3. Map of livelihood zones 2 and 4 in Ménaka region



Source: *FEWS NET*

Sources of income: Migrant remittances to households are continuing and helping improve household purchasing power. Although labor, transport, straw sales and brokering activities are continuing, they are providing generally below-average incomes due to the unstable security situation, which is reducing labor opportunities for poor households. Stable or even increasing livestock prices might seem favorable to above-average incomes, but the low number of livestock will only provide incomes close to or similar to the average.

Security situation and population movements: The security situation is still characterized by banditry on the main roads, conflicts between armed groups and intercommunity conflicts, all of which disrupt the movement of people, goods and market supplies. Security incidents are continuing and still resulting in unusual movements of people. According to the Commission on Population Movements, by the end of April 2019, 8,969 displaced persons in the Ménaka region and 15,064 in the Gao region had been registered. These displaced persons require assistance with food, money, shelter and non-food items.

Humanitarian assistance: Various partners are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food and non-food items to 40,243 people from displaced households and host populations alike. Ongoing cash and vouchers and even in-kind assistance will improve households' access to food and limit their use of negative coping strategies to address their deteriorated livelihoods.

Assumptions:

The most likely food security outcome in the northern farming area from June 2019 to January 2020 is based on the following specific assumptions:

- **Market supply and cereal prices:** The usual supply markets (Gao, Niger, Algeria) should continue supplying cereals to markets, despite security disruptions on the main roads. The usual increase in consumption demands for pastoralist households preparing to return to winter grazing areas will be observed from June to July. Likewise, food prices will show the usual increase to a near-average level and should be stable from June 2019 to January 2020.

- **Farming incomes/Animal production:** Animal produce – mainly milk and dairy products – which usually decreases during the lean season, is expected to improve from July to January thanks to livestock conditions recovering due to average to above-average rainfall. Improved pastures and the replenishment of watering holes to average or above-average levels from July to January will be conducive to satisfactory livestock feeding. Improvements in animals' physical condition due to better living conditions will raise livestock prices higher than last month, especially given the demands for the Eid-al Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays. However, overall income from animal sales and animal production will remain below average due to successive years of crisis, which have reduced livestock capital, particularly for very poor households.
- **Migrant remittances:** Migrants are going away for longer than usual due to the decline in local income opportunities on account of the unstable security situation. This should mean that income from these sources will increase, compared with a normal year. Above-average in-kind payments from June to September will improve cereal availability at the household level. In November/December, migrants will increase their remittances, which will be near-average, to take advantage of falling food prices and build up stocks.
- **Terms of trade:** Stable, below-average cereal prices will lead to a slight improvement in the terms of trade between goats and millet, but this will not benefit poor households because the decline in livestock capital will reduce overall pastoral income. This trend will continue until September thanks to the recovery of livestock conditions and the increase in livestock prices following the demands of Eid al-Adha.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

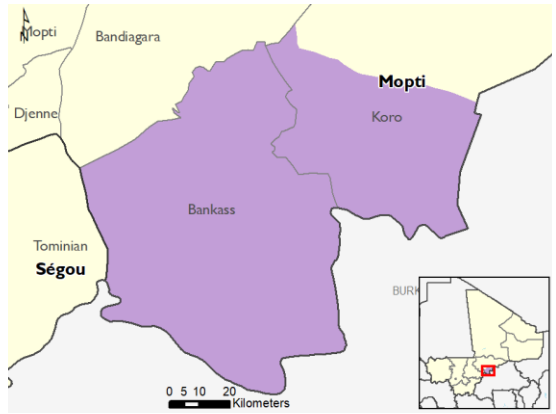
The overall decline in income due to the decline in work opportunities and below-average pastoral income will limit poor households' access to food in the area. Poor households unable to adequately meet their food and non-food needs will make atypical use of migration, livestock sales, reduced non-food and food expenditure or even reduced meal sizes. The already-poor food consumption score reported for 83.1 percent of households in Ménaka in the February 2019 ENSAN is expected to deteriorate significantly more than in a normal year. The low availability of milk and dairy products and the ongoing use of rationing as a coping strategy will contribute to this deterioration. Rising livestock prices linked to demands for the Eid-al Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays will increase pastoral income, but this will not benefit poor households with few or no livestock for sale. Thus, poor households (particularly displaced households) with declining incomes and that are dependent on migrant remittances and food assistance will only be able to meet their food needs through external support. As a result, households will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) and in need of food assistance to avoid entering Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from June to September.

From October to January, the average availability of dairy products, wild products, green crops and the beginning of the decline in cereal prices will support average access to food among poor households. Improved food consumption and reduced atypical coping strategies will put poor households in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity from October to January. As for displaced households, they will remain food insecure – Stressed with the need for food assistance (IPC Phase 2!) or worse – throughout the period, but as they will not account for 20 percent or more of the population in the area, the area's classification phase will not change.

Livelihood zone 9: Sorghum/millet hub in Bankass and Koro

These are the communes in Bankass and Koro affected by community conflicts, which have experienced significant declines in agricultural production as a result of these conflicts.

Figure 4. Map of livelihood zone 9 in Bankass and Koro



Source: *FEWS NET*

Current situation

Preparations for the new agricultural season, such as cleaning operations and manure transportation, are under way in the zone. These activities provide food and income opportunities to the poor households that depend on them. These operations are severely disrupted in places in northern Koro and Bankass due to the security situation that is limiting movement in the area.

Despite access disruptions, market supplies are still sufficient in all markets. Cereal prices are down by 6 percent in Koro and by 15 percent in Bankass compared with the average. This is supporting average household access to food. However, goat prices are about 15 percent higher in Koro and 22 percent higher in Bankass than the five-year average. The physical difficulties in accessing markets due to insecurity are not allowing people to take advantage of the average opportunities to sell animals locally at prices significantly lower than the usual prices for the period. Also, the unusual destocking drive to limit losses through theft/looting is lowering animal prices, which is reducing income from the sale of livestock.

The agricultural lean season that is beginning is being severely felt by displaced and host households, who are experiencing early stock depletion due to the decline in agricultural production in 2018 caused by security incidents that hindered farming operations (planting and harvesting), stock losses due to fire in barns, and harvests.

As for the security situation, there continue to be incidents involving repeated attacks by armed groups and improvised explosive devices on the various roads. Socioeconomic disruptions, loss and/or degradation of property and loss of human life are negatively affecting household livelihoods in the zone. The ensuing displacement of people is limiting households' ability to adequately meet their food and non-food needs and their access to basic social services. This has, in turn, already raised the prevalence of disease and malnutrition above the critical WHO threshold of 10 percent (10.8 percent GAM, December 2018). At the end of April 2019, the number of displaced persons was estimated at 26,195, which is 56.1 percent of the region's displaced persons.

Food and non-food humanitarian assistance by the Government and humanitarian agencies to displaced households and host populations is continuing in the zone. It is the main source of food for some households that had to leave everything when they were displaced. Labor activities, which are the main source of income for these displaced persons, provide only limited income due to limited employment opportunities. The state and humanitarian partners (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP)) are continuing their program for screening and treating malnutrition cases throughout the zone. This, in addition to relatively average access to food, is helping to limit deterioration of the nutritional situation in the zone.

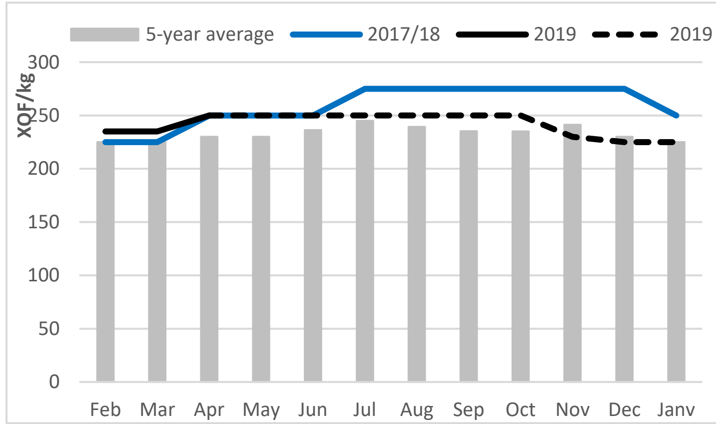
Assumptions

The most likely food security outcome in the Bankass and Koro conflict zone from June 2019 to January 2020 is based on the following specific assumptions:

- **Security:** The security situation will continue to be characterized by attacks and robberies in the zone, despite the efforts of the Government, its partners and community leaders. The situation will remain disrupted throughout the scenario period, although there may be a decline in intensity as a result of current negotiations.
- **Economic activities:** Difficulties in the movement of people and goods, as well as the resulting displacement of persons, will prevent the resumption of normal activities. This will reduce household income in the areas affected to below average. The decline in critical labor force opportunities for poor households will reduce the contribution of labor to poor households' income during the June to August period. The destruction and looting of property will negatively affect household livelihoods, which will experience a 14 percent protection deficit from July to September according to the Outcome Analysis of March 2019.

- **Cereal prices:** The downward trend in cereal prices relative to the average in the zone's main markets will continue, despite security disruptions. However, the difficulties of physical access to markets linked to insecurity that will be observed during the period and the above-average demand in these areas will contribute to price increases from June to September, although they will not be as significant as usual. Millet prices will remain almost average or below average. The availability of the first harvests at the end of September will start the seasonal decline in prices until January 2020.

Figure 5. Projection of millet prices in Gao from June 2019 to January 2020 XOF/kg



Source: *FEWS NET*

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The early stock depletion by one to two months or more will make households in the area more dependent on markets than they would be in a normal year. The overall reduction in income due to the lack of local employment opportunities associated with insecurity will lead poor households to resort to atypical coping strategies, from unusual departures to safer areas in search of agricultural work, to borrowing food and cash from friends and relatives, and significant reductions in non-food expenditure. Worsening food consumption resulting from rationing and a preference for the cheapest foods will raise the poor consumption score above the median level of September, which is 24 percent. As usual, malnutrition will worsen due to the worse-than-average lean season and the high prevalence of waterborne diseases related to the rainy season. It will be above the prevalence rate measured by the December 2018 SMART survey, which recorded the GAM rate as 10.8 percent and the severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate as 2.6 percent. From June to September 2019, poor households without livelihood protection – particularly displaced households and those unable to meet their food needs – will be Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) with current humanitarian assistance that is helping to avoid entering Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

The availability of harvests from September to January (although low compared with the average), as well as the price drops that will be observed, will improve households' access to food through their own production, products from local solidarity shops and in-kind payments. Below-average incomes from the sale of agricultural products will increase household purchasing power over the period. Food consumption is expected to show its usual improvement and be close to the median score for the period thanks to the reduction in food coping strategies and the improvement in food diversity that will be observed. Consequently, poor households in the zone – particularly displaced households living in camps – will find themselves in the Minimal phase with the need for external support (IPC Phase 1!) from October to January.

Other areas of concern

The early lean season resulting from early stock depletion and longer-than-usual market dependence due to the decline in agricultural production in 2018 and the overall decline in income due to insecurity, will negatively affect the ability of poor households to meet their food needs in the localized areas of the Niger Delta Mopti (Djenné, Mopti circles), Tombouctou (Gourma Rharous, Diré), Gao (Bourem, Gao, Ansongo) river band. Despite increased food prices, which will remain close to or slightly above the average 5 to 10 percent increase from June to September, overall incomes will decline, thereby reducing poor households' ability to access food. The atypical use of labor, borrowing and preference for the cheapest food to meet their food needs during this lean season will make households Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from June to September 2019. The same will be true of households that will be affected by the floods from July to September across the country. From June to September 2019, very poor households that do not reach the 20 percent threshold required to classify the entire zone will find themselves Stressed and in need of humanitarian assistance (IPC Phase 2!) to avoid Crisis (IPC Phase 3) due to the severe deterioration in their livelihoods and their increased use of negative coping strategies, particularly among displaced persons living in camps.

The harvests from September onward will put an end to the agropastoral lean season as households' own production will be available and food prices will fall, which will facilitate household access to food. Improved consumption and reduced use of coping strategies will put the majority of households in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity from October 2019 to January 2020.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

Possible events over the next six months that could change the most likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	Delayed and/or inadequate onset of rains in July–August	A delay in the onset of the rains would prolong the pastoral lean season more than usual, which could increase the risk of higher mortality due to deterioration in animal condition and, as a result, income. Similarly, the resulting delay in planting crops would adversely affect the cereal production anticipated for September.
National	Pest damage to crops from June to September	Significant damage by grain-eating birds and armyworms to rainfed crops from June to September might reduce cereal availability in agricultural zones and lead to higher cereal prices. Higher prices would reduce poor households' access to food.
Northern and central Mali	Heightened market disruptions due to ongoing insecurity	Heightened insecurity would further impact economic recovery in affected areas, negatively impacting household incomes and livelihoods and market supply in the area, and increasing the vulnerability of poor households to food insecurity.
National	Insufficient rainfall or an early end to the rainy season in August or September	Insufficient or early rainfall would negatively affect the level of agricultural production and pastoral conditions, thereby exposing households to food insecurity. The resulting decline in the cereal supplies may trigger a rise in prices, which would negatively impact households' market access.
National	Flooding due to heavy rains or marked rise in river levels from July to September	Damage to crops and capital equipment in affected areas from July to September might negatively affect household livelihoods and reduce households' ability to adequately meet their food needs.
Northern and central regions	Humanitarian food support for households in food difficulties	Increased support covering at least 25 percent of the needs of the majority of poor households in anomalous areas would improve the food situation, which would help safeguard fragile livelihoods that are under pressure.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario. To learn more, click here.