

MAURITANIA Remote Monitoring Update

The residual effects of the pandemic and stock depletion are limiting households' ability to meet their food needs

KEY MESSAGES

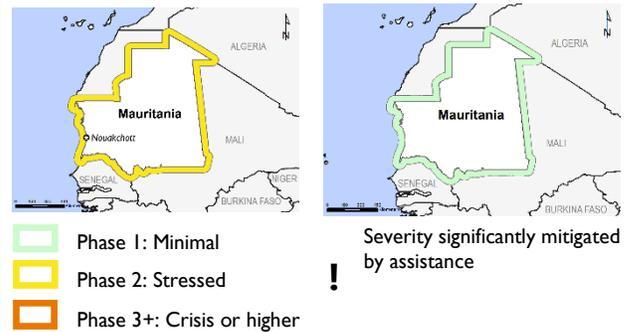
- Food supply to markets continues declining during this period, with seasonal reductions in trade flows from Mali and Senegal to consumer markets in non-coastal areas of the country. Due to the worsening health situation from COVID-19 since mid-May, further restrictions have been reinforced, including an extension of the curfew. This has resulted in a slowing of goods supplied to the agropastoral and rainfed areas. Yet, the resumption of economic activities in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou has allowed adequate food supply to urban markets.

- In the transhumance areas, located in the western agropastoral area and in the north of the country, the seasonal scarcity of pastures leaves unsatisfactory pastoral resources during this period. Typical transhumance movements from northern deficit areas to southern areas in search of pasture continue to be observed. In addition, typical movements toward Senegal, Mali, and Guinea are being seen with a gradual return expected to begin between July and August, as pastures regenerate and water sources become replenished in the respective herders' territories. In addition, demand for livestock feed remains average to above average and could gradually reach its peak in July with an optimal start to the growing season. This demand will then decrease with the regeneration of the grass cover and the availability of beneficial water sources for livestock.

- Depletion of food stocks at the household level and the decline in poor households' purchasing power from residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic stem from decreased income from migrant remittances and the informal sector. This will limit poor households' access to adequate and sufficient food until September 2021. Despite the expected improvement in pastoral conditions due to the onset of the rainy season, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity will be observed overall in rainfed areas, agropastoral areas, and areas surrounding urban centers.

- Between October 2021 and January 2022, expectations of crop production from the next growing season will substantially improve food consumption conditions and households' livelihoods in the agropastoral (MR07), rainfed (MR09), and Senegal River valley areas. The cold off-season harvest for rice and vegetable production, usually starting in November, will allow households in these areas to access agricultural labor and thus improve their income levels. Pastoral areas will see increased availability to fodder and water sources, thereby promoting improvement in animals' physical condition and milk production. Poor households in the pastoral, rainfed agropastoral, and valley areas will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity during the projection period.

Projected food security outcomes from June to September 2021 (left) and from October 2021 to January 2022 (right)

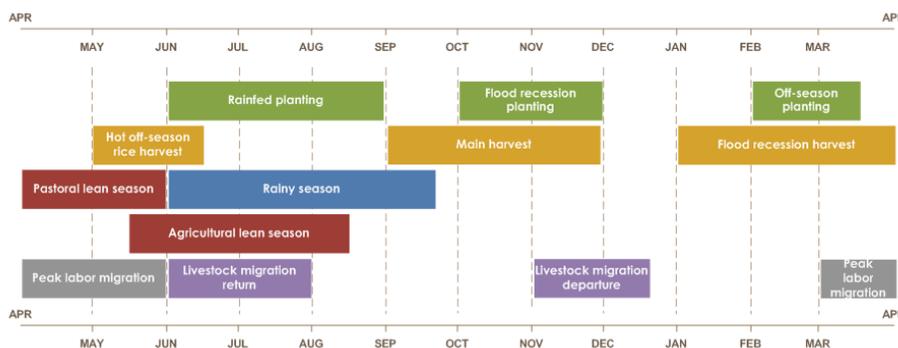


Source: FEWS NET

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.

AREA	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
<i>National</i>	<p>Although the spread of infection from imported cases of COVID-19 is under control, the curve of infections is on the rise, with an increasing number of cases from community transmissions following the discovery of the Alpha and Beta variants. As of June 22, the country has recorded a total of 20,415 confirmed cases, including 19,447 recoveries, 482 deaths, and 415 active cases with an average fatality rate of 2 percent. Following the emergence of the abovementioned variants, the curfew was moved up from 2am to midnight, and land borders remain officially closed. The government launched a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in March, in which 145,000 people have already been vaccinated, equivalent to 0.03 percent of the country’s total population. The campaign is currently prioritizing healthcare workers and at-risk individuals over the age of 50. Economic recovery of activities is gradually returning to normal.</p> <p>However, apart from health concerns, the current period coincides with a general seasonal increase in food prices (local rice, imported rice, wheat, and milk powder) due to below-normal food supply and speculative actions perpetuated by economic operators anticipating increased transport costs and global price fluctuations. Additionally, artisanal fishing activities have slowed down due to the significant departure of foreign fishermen to their countries of origin, particularly from Senegal. With the expected organic break in July and August, the availability of seafood in the markets will be below average. Income from fishing activities will be reduced for fishing households.</p> <p>The informal sector remains negatively impacted by the pandemic with a notable drop in activity levels, which reduces income for poor households.</p> <p>For the most part, seasonal migrants to the country’s urban centers, as well as to other countries, despite the resumption of economic activities, are seeing a limited economic options due to the residual effects of the pandemic. This, in turn limits remittances, especially in the Gorgol, Guidimakha, and Assaba areas.</p> <p>Because of affluent households’ financial difficulties resulting from the pandemic, demand for agricultural labor is low for field preparation activities. This negatively impacts poor households’ income, thus reducing their ability to financially access markets.</p>	<p>With average harvests from the upcoming growing season, replenished food stocks will ensure adequate food access at the household level. Supply flows from Mali, Senegal, and Morocco, as well as food imports returning to normal, will strengthen food availability at the market level. Food prices for the projected period are therefore expected to be near the seasonal average.</p> <p>In urban areas, despite the gradual recovery of economic activities, the residual effects of the pandemic will continue to limit the supply of jobs from the informal sector, resulting in a slight drop in income. However, the resumption of activities in mining areas, particularly in the regions of Inchiri and Tiris Zemmour, will provide daily labor opportunities for poor households. Additionally, the government is encouraging the promotion of employment in the artisanal fishing sector by implementing a policy of nationalizing boats and facilitating financing access in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, thereby improving poor households’ purchasing power.</p>

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

PROJECTED OUTLOOK TO JANUARY 2022

With the favorable rainfall forecasts, the upcoming growing season will be similar to last year's. This bodes well for a normal start to the growing season with good production of dry cereals, particularly millet and sorghum. However, given the overall decline in household incomes, the demand for agricultural labor for field preparation activities will be below average, impacting incomes for poor households in agricultural and agropastoral areas. Additionally, the favorable outlook for the rainy season will improve water levels in reservoirs and natural basins, promoting adequate access to water resources and pastures for pastoral households. Yet, flooding risks in the Senegal River valley areas may occur, limiting household production capacity.

During this period, households in almost all areas mainly resort to market purchases to satisfy their energy and food needs. In the Kaédi and Aleg markets in the rainfed area, sorghum and millet prices remained stable compared to May 2020. Conversely, the price of local rice has increased by 17 percent in the markets of Aleg, Kaédi, and Boghé compared to May 2020. The price of imported rice is also following the same trends, with an increase of 14 percent compared to May 2020 in the same markets. In Nouakchott, prices are slightly down compared to the same period last year. A slight increase is observed in the price of imported products, notably imported rice (14 percent), oil (10 percent), sugar (25 percent), and milk powder (7 percent) compared to May 2020. These increases are explained by a decrease in supply flows from Mali. Additionally, tightened restrictions, including an extension of the curfew period, continue to influence sea and land transport costs. Moreover, unfavorable maritime conditions observed in May disrupted the flows at the ports of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, which created tension on prices.

Pastoral areas are experiencing typical seasonal developments, characterized by a scarcity of fodder resources in transhumance areas. This is noticeable in the western agropastoral area and pastoral transhumance area, as well as in the northern regions of Tiris Zemmour and Adrar, where the milk supply has lessened. However, with the end of the hot off-season in May, opportunities to access crop residues, particularly rice straw, are available in pilot rice fields in the Trarza, Brakna, and Gorgol regions. Herds are currently migrating via the north-south corridors, with livestock (mainly camels and cattle) crossing to Mali and southern Senegal in search of pasture and for calving. The supply of market livestock is satisfactory, with good availability in the rainfed and agropastoral areas and markets in urban centers. Livestock prices are increasing in the Aleg, Boghé, and Kaédi markets. Small ruminant prices in these markets are up 9 percent, 18 percent, and 20 percent, respectively, compared to May 2020. This is due to celebrations for the month of Ramadan as well as the upcoming Tabaski holiday, which lead consumers to make early purchases, affecting livestock prices. This is amplified by demand from Mauritanian, Senegalese, and Malian brokers who are anticipating significant price increases for small ruminants as Tabaski approaches.

In an effort to assist vulnerable populations during the 2021 lean season, the Mauritanian government and its partners have established a response plan that includes targeted food assistance and free food distribution throughout the country between April and September 2021. The food ration for the free distribution includes 50 kilograms of wheat in rural areas, 50 kilograms of local rice in urban areas, and five liters of oil for both areas. This operation will be a single distribution covering one month's food consumption at the beginning of the lean season for 1,244,088 people, or 27 percent of the country's total population. It will target households most impacted by COVID-19 and the 2020 floods.

The depletion of family stocks, coupled with increasing basic food prices, hinders adequate access to sufficient food, especially in rural areas. Additionally, the reduction in employment opportunities as a result of the overall slow economic recovery and the decline in remittances are contributing to increased difficulties for poor households' food access, even in the face of a national level gradual recovery of activities since February/March 2021. Despite the 2021 lean season response plan established by the government and its partners, poor households will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity from June through September 2021.

Between October 2021 and January 2022, the availability of pastoral resources and water sources from the expected normal onset of the rainy season in July 2021 will yield improved food consumption. Livelihoods for livestock-raising households will be eased by the availability of milk and meat. The expected harvests from the 2021-2022 growing season will significantly improve food consumption levels and the replenishment of household stocks in agropastoral and rainfed areas and in the Senegal River valley. As a result, consumption and livelihood protection conditions for poor households will have improved. These households will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes from October 2021 to January 2022.

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 about our work [here](#).