

Most areas have received above normal rainfall, except for parts of southern Malawi

KEY MESSAGES

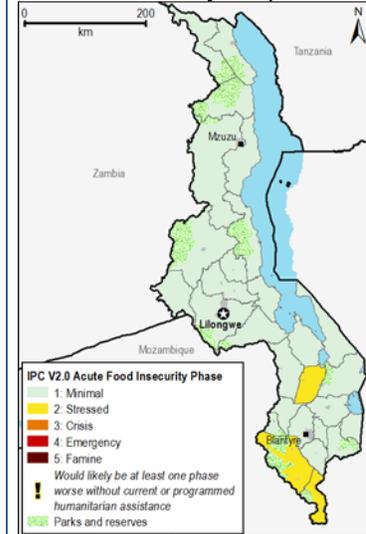
- Malawi has registered an average start of agricultural season in line with international and local forecasts. In most parts of the country rainfall has been normal tending towards above average. According to the [DCCMS bulletin released on December 12th](#), for the last dekad of November and first dekad of December, most parts of Malawi have so far received above normal rainfall from 50 to 200 mm with the exception of the Lower Shire in southern Malawi which registered some rainfall deficits.
- In the presence of assistance that is planned, funded, and likely, FEWS NET expects Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) outcomes in Nsanje and Balaka between December 2017 and March 2018. In Chikwawa and Mwanza districts, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected between now and January 2018, but once assistance begins in these areas, outcomes will improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) from February to March.
- Average retail prices for maize in registered an atypical decline in November of 6 percent in the 12 FEWS NET monitored markets. This price decrease comes at a time when market demand typically increases due to increased demand as the lean season begins across the country. However, due to a slightly above average production in 2016/17 and exceptionally high levels of maize imports, household and local maize availability is good.

Current Situation

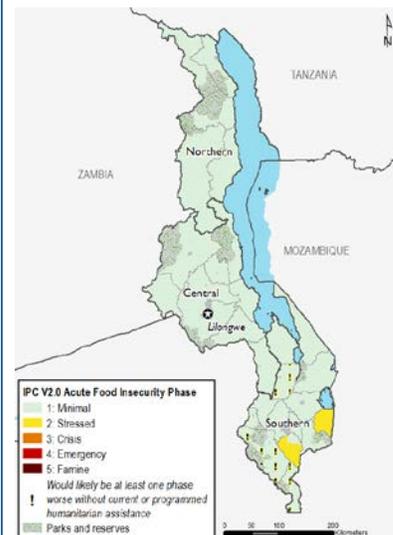
Seasonal Progress

- The start of the rainfall season for Malawi has been in line with International and local forecasts. In most parts of the country rainfall has been normal tending towards above average. According to the [DCCMS bulletin released on December 12th](#), for the last dekad of November and first dekad of December, most parts of Malawi have so far received above normal rainfall from 50 to 200 mm with the exception of the Lower Shire in southern Malawi which registered some rainfall deficits. Current farming activities are planting, weeding and fertilizer application.
- In the month of December rainstorms have caused infrastructural damage and caused some deaths in some parts of the country such as Rumphi and Nkhatabay in northern Malawi, Lilongwe in central Malawi, Mangochi and Chikwawa in southern Malawi. The DCCMS is warning of more stormy rains that may likely cause damage and localized flooding which may negatively affect agricultural production and other livelihoods activities.
- According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water

Current food security outcomes, December 2017 to January 2018.



Projected food security outcomes, February – May 2018.



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.

Development, the 2017/18 Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) will target 900,000 out of the 3 million farmers countrywide for subsidized inputs. Current reports are showing that most targeted households received their coupons in November and have accessed inputs.

Crop Pests/Fall Armyworm

- Recent media reports indicate that the Fall Armyworm (FAW) has impacted crop production in Malawi. Details about the impact assessment are currently not available. **During a recent multi-stakeholder, preparedness, coordination, and partnership meeting in Johannesburg from November 30 – December 1, 2017, one of the many topics discussed was field scouting and how this technique can be used to determine FAW infestation rates, but that these rates do not directly translate to crop yield impacts.** With very little data about the 2017/18 FAW assessment in Malawi, it is difficult to know what kind of impact this may have on acute food insecurity.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Several assumptions discussed in the FEWS NET Malawi Food Security Outlook for October 2017 - May 2018 have been updated.

In the October 2017 Outlook, FEWS NET’s integrated maize price projections indicated that national average prices would remain significantly below the five-year average but will register some increases following seasonal trends between October 2017 and March 2018. However, prices have remained stable and lately even started registering slight decreases. Contrary to expectations, lifting of the maize export ban and ongoing ADMARC purchases have not had much impact to spur price increases as anticipated earlier.

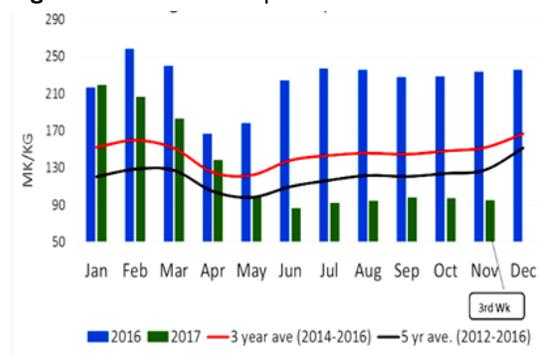
A FEWS NET assessment in November 2017 showed that with the commencement of the main agricultural season, very poor and poor households were able to access adequate quantities of labor and wages ranged from average to above average. The improvement in labor availability was attributed to peak demand for agricultural activities such as land cultivation, planting, weeding, and fertilizer application. Another factor is that there is less pressure on the labor market this year in comparison to previous year when labor availability was low, food prices were above normal, and there were more households scrambling for limited labor opportunities.

Table I. Maize retail prices (MK/kg) by market.

Market	31-Oct-17	13-Nov-17	23-Nov-17	30-Nov-17	Monthly change
Karonga	95	90	88	88	↓ -7%
Rumphu	83	83	85	85	↑ 2%
Mzimba	68	72	68	68	↔ 0%
Mzuzu	75	72	70	70	↓ -7%
Nkhamenya	72	75	80	73	↑ 2%
Mponela	70	70	70	70	↔ 0%
Mchinji	81	76	76	74	↓ -9%
Mitundu	77	77	77	73	↓ -4%
Chimbiya	72	72	73	70	↓ -2%
Liwonde	107	107	107	103	↓ -3%
Mwanza	113	113	113	110	↓ -3%
Lunzu	107	103	100	100	↓ -6%
Mulanje	123	123	123	120	↓ -3%
Chikwawa	100	100	95	95	↓ -5%
Nsanje	107	107	113	107	↔ 0%
Average	90	89	89	87	↓ -3%

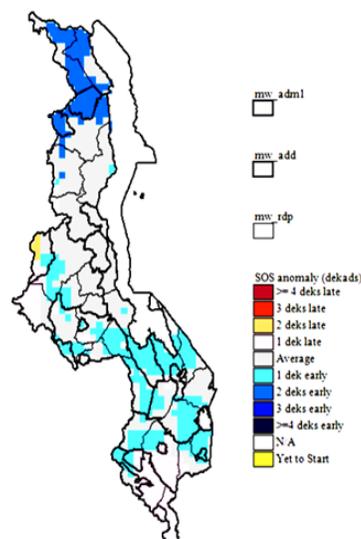
Source: IFPRI Monthly Maize Market Report Nov 2017

Figure I. Nominal maize price trend.



Source: WFP mVAM Malawi Weekly Price Update, 27, November 2017

Figure 2. Start of season anomaly (compared to average) 2017 season, as of dekad 1 of December 2017.

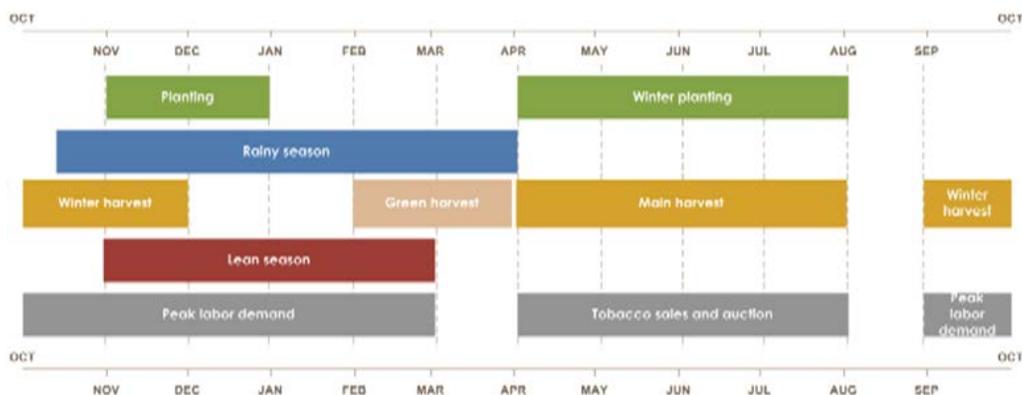


Source: DCCMS

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2018

In the presence of assistance that is planned, funded, and likely, FEWS NET expects Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) outcomes in Nsanje and Balaka districts between December 2017 and March 2018. In Chikwawa and Mwanza districts, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected between now and January 2018, but once assistance begins in these areas, outcomes will improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) from February to March. A normal to above normal 2017/18 production season is expected and with this, food availability is expected to be normal as well. GAM prevalence during the outlook period are expected to remain well below the WHO threshold of >5 percent.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

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](#).