

Rising cereal prices are negatively affecting food access for poor households

KEY MESSAGES

- The growing season across the country is making average to good progress. The above-average cropping rates, farm input assistance, and good rainfall outlook through the month of September bode well for average to good levels of crop production in all parts of the country.
- There are still adequate cereal supplies on markets around the country. Prices in southern farming areas are near or below-average and are still 15 to more than 30 percent above-average on markets in the Gao and Timbuktu regions.
- Limited market access with the rising price of cereals in rice-growing areas and the Gourma area of the Gao and Timbuktu regions, localized areas of the Inner Niger River Delta, and the Western Sahel is prompting households to atypically scale up their recourse to wage labor, borrowing, and cutbacks in nonfood spending, which will keep them in the Stressed (IPC Phase 2) phase of food insecurity through the end of September 2017.
- The approximately 7,355 members of poor households hard hit by the July floods (OCHA, August 2017) are having difficulty meeting their food and nonfood needs on account of the loss of their livelihoods. Accordingly, they will be facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security conditions through the month of October.

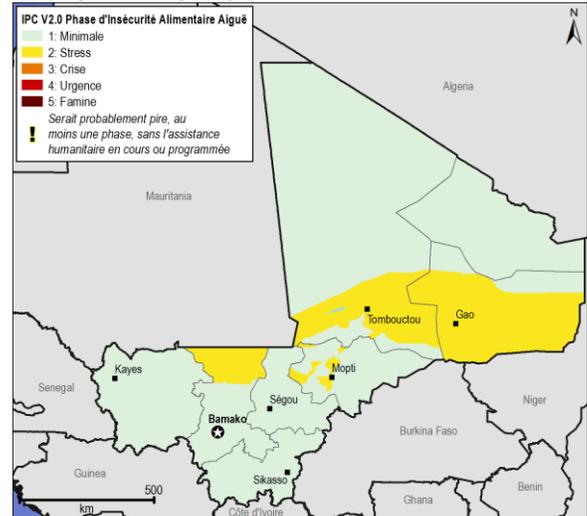
CURRENT SITUATION

Progress of the growing season

In general, the growing season across the country is making average to good progress with the normal to above-normal rainfall activity. Larger than average areas have been planted in crops with the timely start of the growing season and the farm input assistance furnished by the government and its partners. Crop maintenance work is providing average food and income-earning opportunities for poor households.

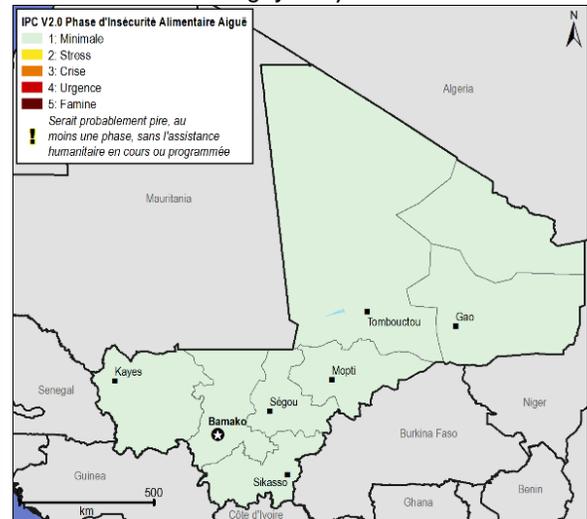
Pastoral conditions are improving with the replenishment of watering holes and the growth of fresh pasture. In general, there are above-average (2001-2010) levels of plant biomass production, which is helping to promote the physical recovery of livestock and what are deemed to be generally average to good levels of milk production for human consumption. Animal health conditions are stable and the vaccination campaign against major animal diseases continues.

Figure 1 Most likely estimated food security outcomes for August through September 2017



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2 Most likely estimated food security outcomes for October 2017 through January 2018



Source: FEWS NET

These maps show relevant acute food insecurity outcomes for emergency decision-making. They do not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity.

Flooding

The heavy rains in July-August caused damage to productive assets, homes, storehouses for cereal crops, and livestock herds in the Ségou, Koulikoro, Timbuktu, and Gao regions. The resulting destruction of livelihoods is negatively affecting the ability of area households or an estimated 7355 persons to adequately meet their food needs during the current lean season.

Markets and prices

In general, there are still average market supplies of cereals in spite of the seasonal contraction in supplies. The persistent security problems are disrupting the flow of trade in the northern and central reaches of the country. Ongoing government-subsidized sales and harvests of off-season rice crops are improving food availability. Millet prices are close to or below the five-year average in crop-producing areas in the southern part of the country but are 19 percent above-average in Timbuktu and 11 percent above-average in Gao and Mopti. The 42 percent above-average prices in Rharous are limiting the food access of poor households in that area.

Livestock markets are doing a brisk business with the growing supplies of animals at this time of year for the approaching Feast of Tabaski. Prices are improving, fueled by the physical recovery of livestock and the growth in demand since last month. Prices for female goats are on par with the five-year average in Goundam in the Timbuktu region, above-average by 10 percent in Gao and 17 percent in Kidal, and 12 percent below-average in Rharous and 22 percent below-average in Bourem. Terms of trade for goats/millet have improved by approximately five to 10 percent since last month. They are close to the five-year average in Douentza, Kidal, and Goundam and more than 20 percent below-average in Timbuktu, Rharous, Ansongo, and Bourem, which is limiting food access for pastoral households on local markets.

Humanitarian operations

There are continuing distributions of free food assistance to approximately 900,000 food-insecure recipients and distributions of farm inputs (seeds, fertilizer, and animal feed), farm equipment, and herd-building assistance (2500 head of livestock) to approximately 2,500,000 recipients as part of the National Response Plan for the period from June through September 2017 being implemented by the Food Security Commission (*Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire*) in conjunction with the WFP, ICRC, and ECHO, mainly in the Timbuktu, Gao, Ménaka, Taoudenit, Kidal, and northern Mopti regions. These provisions and farm inputs are limiting the recourse of recipient households to negative coping strategies and helping to rebuild livelihoods severely damaged by successive crises.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS: The current situation has not affected the assumptions used by FEWS NET in establishing the [most likely scenario for the period from June 2017 through January 2018](#).

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2018

Poor agropastoral households in the southern part of the country are experiencing a normal lean season with the help of their average incomes from normal sources giving them average food access at near or below-average prices. Accordingly, they will continue to experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels of food insecurity through the end of September. However, households stricken by floods between July and August 2017 and poor households in the Koulikoro and Mopti regions facing an earlier than usual lean season with the premature depletion of their food stocks from 2016 are atypically resorting to wage labor, cutbacks in nonfood spending, and borrowing in order to meet their food needs, which will keep them in the Stressed (IPC Phase 2) phase of food insecurity through September. The expected availability of green crops as of September and the main harvest in October will help give households average food access, which, as a result, will experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity through January 2018.

Poor agropastoral households in riverine areas of the Gao and Timbuktu regions and pastoral households in the Gourma area are atypically scaling up their recourse to wage labor, unusual sales of livestock, cutbacks in nonfood spending, and borrowing in order to improve their market access. Accordingly, this will keep them in the Stressed (IPC Phase 2) phase of food insecurity through September 2017. The average availability of green crops, wild plant foods, and milk and ongoing humanitarian assistance programs will limit their recourse to negative coping strategies. By October, the availability of home-grown crops and crops from in-kind wage payments and the improvement in terms of trade for livestock/cereals will help bring household food insecurity back down to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels through January 2018.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The food security update is a monthly report on current conditions and changes in the projected food security outlook for this country. It updates FEWS NET's Food Security Outlooks published three times a year. Learn more [here](#).