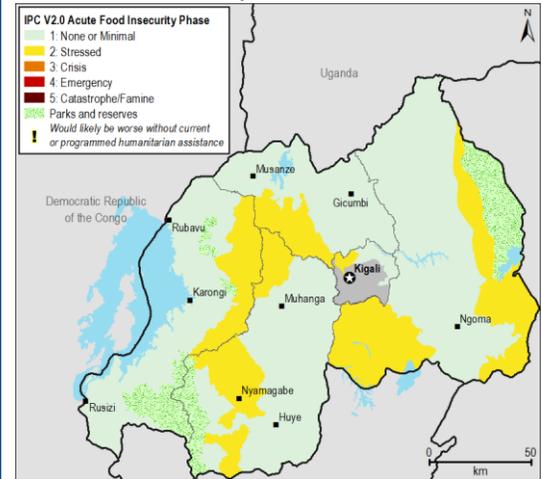


Food security to improve in January with Season A harvests

KEY MESSAGES

- Poor households in the Eastern Semi-Arid Agro-Pastoral Zone, Eastern Congo Nile Highland Subsistence Farming Zone, and Bugesera Cassava livelihood zones currently face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity due to increased market dependence during the lean season, above-average food prices and below-average wages.
- Despite erratic rainfall in September, Season A planting continued in October and harvests are expected to be near average, except for cassava crops. Below-average cassava production is expected due to the spread of Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) in Bugesera.
- Food security is expected to improve across the country starting in January 2015, as harvesting begins. Season A harvests will replenish household food stocks, stabilize staple food prices and increase income earning opportunities for the poor.

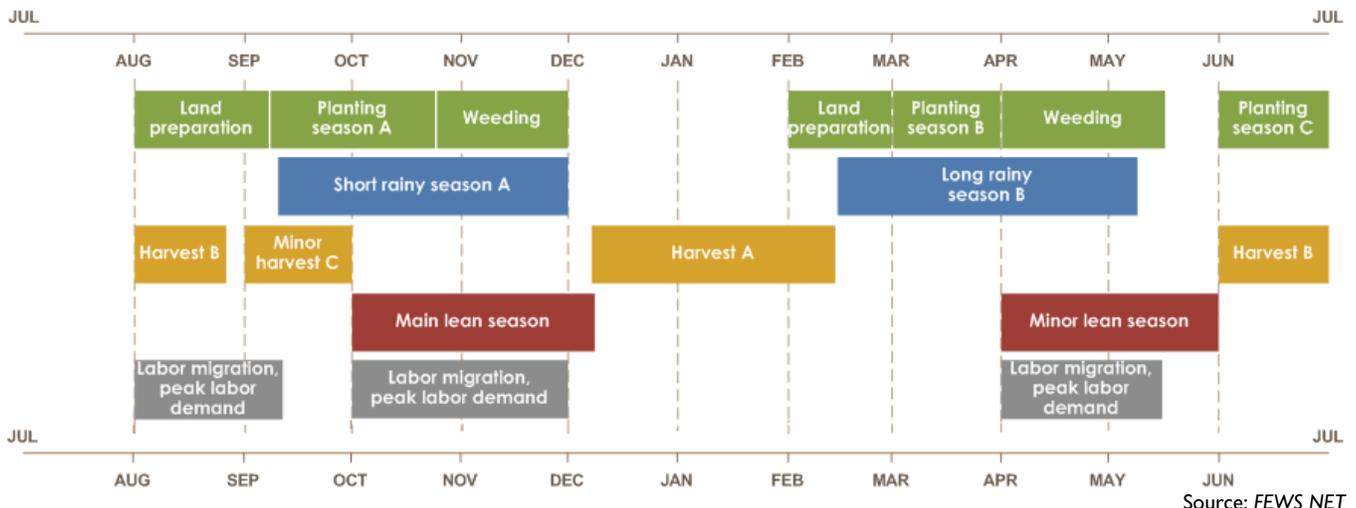
Current food security outcomes, October, 2014



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. Visit www.fews.net/IPC for more on this scale.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

- **Access to food for the poor is constrained during the October to December main lean season when poor households are largely dependent on markets to meet food requirements.** Earlier than normal depletion of Season B food stocks this year has added additional strain on poor households’ capacity to meet essential food and non-food needs. Staple food prices generally remained stable in September. However, prices for some commodities, particularly cassava and sweet potato, remain 15 to 20 percent higher than last year. These crops are a primary source of food during the lean season because they act as bridge crops before Season A harvests become available in December. Current income levels are generally insufficient to offset increased expenditure on food and some poor households, particularly in the Bugesera Cassava, Eastern Congo Nile Highland Subsistence Farming and Eastern Semi Arid Agropastoral livelihood zones, have increased sales of small animals in order to meet food needs. Poor households in these areas currently face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity.

- **Season A planting is almost complete across the country.** Rainfall deficits of up to 60 millimeters in September prevented germination of maize and beans crops planted in August and interrupted planting. However, above-average rains in late September improved soil moisture and enabled crop recovery. Maize, beans, and cassava are the main Season A crops. Constrained access to seeds and other inputs reduced area planted in some areas.

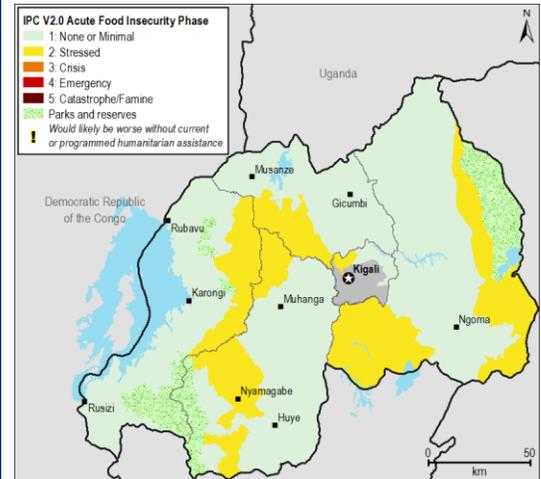
- **Dry marshland conditions in June and July compromised Season C vegetable crop performance and reduced yields in September/October.** Vegetables harvested in Season C only contribute about five percent of annual production, but sales of Season C crops are an income source for many poor households. Due to below-average harvests, poor households earned less than they typically do from vegetable sales in September and October.

- **An outbreak of Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) destroyed over 15,000 hectares of cassava crops in Bugesera since the end June reducing supply of cassava to markets and milling factories.** A major staple crop for the poor, crop losses have reduced food availability, particularly for households in Kamonyi, Muhanga and Ruhango districts. Farmers in areas affected by CBSD uprooted crops in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

- **Increased labor supply this season has depressed on-farm wages.** Daily wages in September were 15 percent lower than last year.

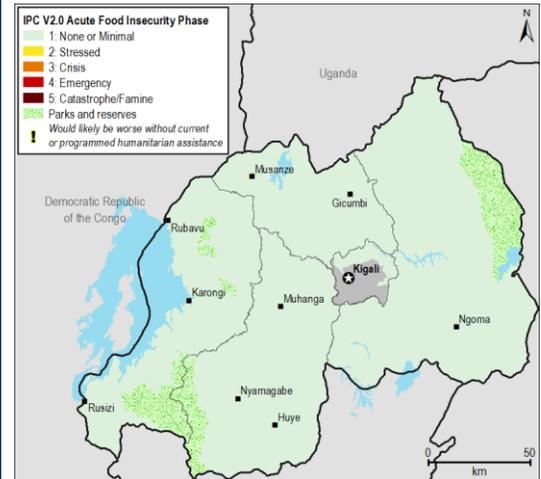
- **Agricultural labors in the West continued to migrate East for jobs on larger farms.** Labor migration is common during the lean season but the number of labors so far this year has nearly doubled compared to last year, according to estimates from district authorities. The upsurge in labor migration suggests increased strain on poor households to meet essential food and non-food needs.

Projected food security outcomes, October to December 2014



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2015



Source: FEWS NET

These maps represent acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making, and do not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. Visit www.fews.net/IPC for more on this scale.

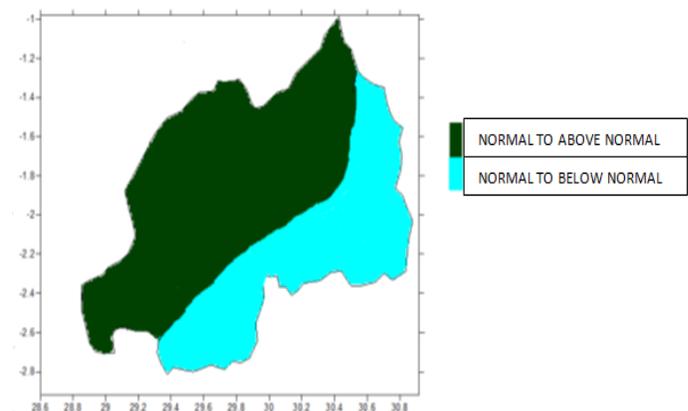
- **Government safety net programs continued to provide labor opportunities for the poor.** Twenty-one thousand laborers employed by the Rural Sector Support Project (RSSP) and the Land Husbandry Water Harvesting and Hillside irrigation (LWH) Project and 140,000 people under the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program earn 1000 Rwandan Francs (RWF) per day for the poor. The Vision 2020 Umurenge Program operates in 240 sectors country-wide and covers all districts.
- **The decline in prices of major staple foods continued in September.** Increased imports from Tanzania and Uganda—a strategy to offset supply-side constraints of Season B production deficits—caused a 5 to 20 percent drop in prices since August. However, prices remain higher than last year, reducing household access to food. Poor households are most vulnerable to price shocks during the October to December main lean season when market dependence peaks and wages are lowest.
- **Livestock body conditions continued to improve with increased water and pasture availability.** Early rains in August and normal cumulative rainfall in September improved pasture and water availability for livestock in agropastoral areas in Kirehe, Kayanza, Nyagatare, and Gatsibo districts; increasing livestock productivity.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for October to March 2015 is based on the following national-level assumptions:

- **Season A Production:** Average production is expected despite erratic rains in September that interrupted planting and seed germination. Crops recovered with good favorable rains in October and normal crop growth is expected. Staggered harvests may occur in some areas due to delayed planting. Below-average cassava production, however, is assumed due to damage caused by Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) in Bugesera.
- **Rainfall performance will vary across the country.** Based on forecasts from the Rwanda Metrological Agency, average to above-average October to December rainfall is assumed for northern and western Rwanda (Figure 1). Rains in the eastern part of the country are expected to be normal to below normal.
- **Agricultural labor availability will follow seasonal trends.** Labor demand and wages are expected to decline in November and increase again during the harvest period from December to January. Labor demand and wages are expected to stabilize during the post-harvest period through March.
- **West to east labor migration is expected to continue through the lean season and during harvests.** Poor households will continue to seek better labor opportunities by migrating east where farm sizes are bigger.
- **Imports from Tanzania and Uganda** will continue stabilizing maize and rice prices, particularly in Kigali and Eastern Province, until Season A harvests begin in December and increase domestic supplies to markets.
- **Export of cassava and Irish potato to Burundi and DRC will behave normally despite reduced** cassava production and net domestic supply to markets.
- **The prevalence of CBSD in Kamonyi, Muhanga and Bugesera districts is likely to spread as current control mechanisms (uprooting the affected plants) are ineffective.** So far, an estimated 20 percent of cassava plants have been affected.

Figure 1. Rwanda rainfall forecast, October to December 2014



Source: METEO Rwanda

- **Livestock prices are expected to decline seasonably between October to November as sales and supply to markets increase during the lean season.** Prices will increase again as Season A harvests begin in December and livestock sales decline.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

During the peak of the lean season, access to food and income typically declines for poor households across the country. Most households will still be able to meet food needs until green consumption begins in December when food security outcomes are expected to improve country-wide. Most households will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) from October to March 2015. Poor households in the Bugesera Cassava, Eastern Congo Nile Highland Subsistence Farming and Eastern Semi-Arid Agro-Pastoral livelihood zones, will face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity until December. Increased food availability and access associated with Season A harvests in December/January will improve food security of poor households to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) from January to March 2015.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Eastern Semi-Arid Agro-Pastoral Zone

Current Situation

- **In the Eastern Semi-arid Agro-Pastoral area, food security remains Stressed. Most poor households are market dependent and income levels are low.** Food insecurity is worst in the Mahama, Mpanga, and Nasho sectors of Kirehe District and in the Ndego, Murama and Kabare sectors of Kayonza district.
- **On-farm labor wages declined due to increased labor supply this lean season.** Poor households are currently earning income from agricultural activities especially seasonal planting. Daily wages range between 500 to 700 RWF are 25 percent below average. Some households boost income with petty trade, sales of animals, and fishing, especially in Kirehe district.
- **Staple food prices remain high despite increased imports from Tanzania.** Increased imports from bordering Tanzania have mitigated severe price shocks but prices still remain above the 2-year average. Staple food prices in Nyakarambi and Kabarondo markets of Kirehe and Kayonza districts remain above average.
- **After poor rains disrupted planting in September, crops recovered in October with improved rainfall.** Some crops were affected at germination stage by soil moisture deficits due to rainfall interruption.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for October 2014 to March 2015 for the Eastern Semi-Arid Agro-Pastoral zone is based on the following zone-level assumptions:

- Staple food prices are expected to remain stable and increase only slightly through the lean season from October to December. Imports will contribute to keeping prices stable. When season A harvest become available in January, prices will decline. Downward price trends will continue through March, although they are likely to remain above the two-year average.
- Based on forecasts for normal to below-normal October to December rainfall, production in this area is likely to be below-average.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The cumulative impact of successive poor harvests in 2014 has reduced coping capacity of poor households during the October to December lean season. Above-average staple food prices and depressed wages has further weakened purchasing power of poor households, at a time when they are the most market dependent. These households will therefore remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through December. Food security outcomes will improve from January to March, during the Season A harvest and post-harvest period.

Eastern Congo Nile Highland Subsistence Farming Zone

Current Situation

- **Season A planting continued through October providing labor opportunities for the poor. Casual labor is the main income source.** Participation in tea plantation activities especially in Nyaruguru and Nyamagabe districts is also helping the poor earn income. However, above-average prices and earlier than normal market dependence this year has increased household spending on food. Income levels have not kept pace with household needs.
- **Generally, staple food prices increased in September and are likely to continue increasing during the October to November lean season.** Unlike other areas where imports have mitigated price shocks, prices in this livelihood zone increased between 10 to 25 percent from August to September and are between 10 to 37 percent higher than last year. Cassava, an important bridge crop increased by 58 percent compared to last year in Bugarama market in Rusizi, and the price of maize is 38 percent higher than last year in Congo Nile market in Rutsiro district.
- **Labor migration from the Eastern Congo Nile Highland Subsistence Farming Zone to eastern areas of the country continues.** Nearly half of the current labor migration from west to eastern parts of the country comes from this zone, driven mainly by smaller land ownership in the west. Sixty-six percent of the households in this zone own less than 0.5 hectares (Ha) compared to 63 percent of households who own land of greater than 0.5 hectares (Ha) in the east according to Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSA 2012). Labor migration this year has increased compared to previous years due to relatively low wages in the west and increased reliance on market purchase to source food. This increased migration has reduced the number of laborers available to carry out household farming activities.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for October 2014 to March 2015 for the Eastern Congo Nile Highland Subsistence Farming Zone is based on the following zone-level assumptions:

- **Agricultural labor demand will increase in during the December to January harvest period.** Above-average labor supply will likely depress wages. Labor demand will again rise with harvest in December to January.
- **Season A harvests could extend through February due to staggered planting.** Season A harvests may be delayed by one month due to interruptions in planting in September.
- **Labor migration** from the west to eastern parts of the country are expected to continue from October to February, strengthening capacity of poor households to buy food.
- **The prevalence of CBSD will likely spread in Kamonyi, Muhanga and Bugesera** as current control mechanisms (uprooting the affected plants) are ineffective. Cassava production in these areas is expected to be below-average.
- **Staple food prices** are expected to remain relatively stable with slight increases through the lean season from October to December. Increased supply of staple food commodities to markets from Season A harvests will put downward pressure on prices from January to March. However, prices will likely remain higher than last year and above-average.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Poor households will remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity through December as income levels are insufficient to cover household food requirements. Food security outcomes are expected to improve in January, when Season A harvests become available improving access to income earning opportunities and food. From January to March, food security outcomes for poor households will improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1).

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK**Table 1:** Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	Dry spells and/or persistent rainfall anomalies through December	Rainfall deficits will negatively affect crop development and would likely lead to below average Season A harvests. Production deficits would likely prevent expected improvements in food security related to harvests and poor households in areas of concern would remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) throughout the scenario period.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes over a six-month period, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes those assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. Typically, FEWS NET reports the most likely scenario. To learn more about this approach to scenario development, visit www.fews.net/scenario_development.