

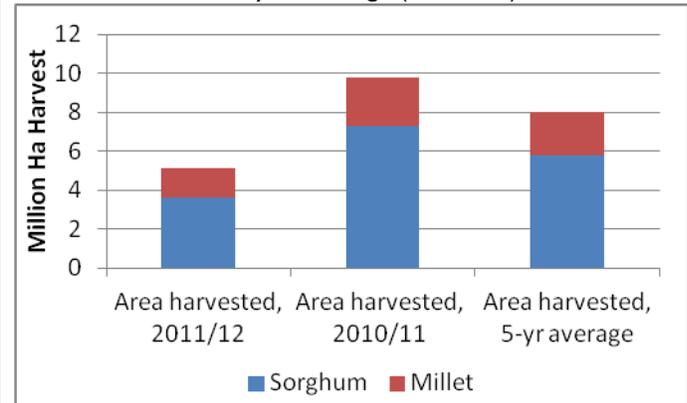
SUDAN Food Security Alert

December 2011

2011/2012 harvest will be significantly below normal due to poor rainfall and conflict

The preliminary findings of the November/December Sudan Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) indicate that 2011/12 crop harvests will be significantly below average, with 3.6 million hectares (ha) of sorghum expected to be harvested, less than half of last year's harvest (Figure 1). Poor production was driven by a more than 30-day delay in the start of the rains, below-average total rainfall, and early cessation of the rains. Cultivation and crop development were further impeded by intense conflict since June and September in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, respectively. Ongoing fighting and displacement continue to hinder the harvests in these typically surplus-producing areas. At a national level, household food stocks are expected to run out early, in March/April instead of May/June, leading to well above-average prices across markets. An early start to the lean season is expected in March/April, with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity in North and South Darfur, and parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. In some conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, deterioration to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels is expected beginning in March 2012, due mainly to restrictions on trade, movement, and humanitarian access to IDP populations (Figure 2).

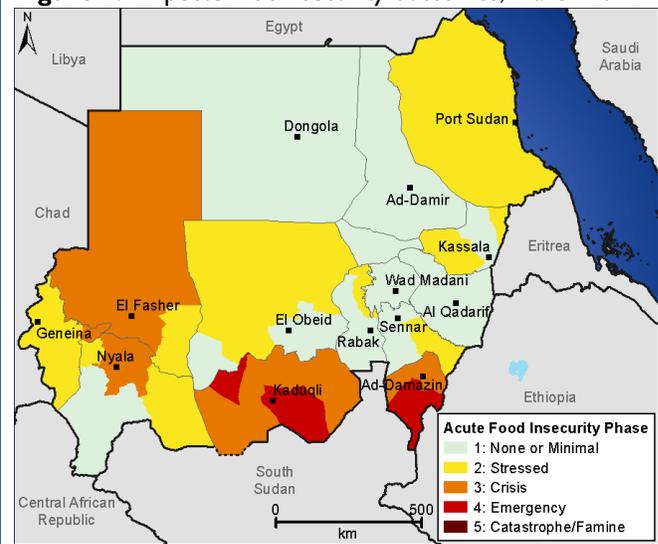
Figure 1. 2011/2012 sorghum and millet harvests, compared to 2010/2011 and five-year average (million ha)



Source: FMOA/FEWS NET

The overall 2011/2012 harvest in Sudan is projected to be similar to the poor harvest in 2009/10, which resulted in a food deficit of 2 million MT. Production of sorghum, the staple food for the majority of poor households in the central and eastern regions, is of most concern. Approximately 8 million ha of sorghum were cultivated this year, which represents 15 percent and 12 percent less than last year's area planted – a good year – and the five-year average, respectively. Of the total area planted for sorghum this year, only 45 percent is expected to be harvested (Figure 1). In the semi-mechanized areas of Kassala and Al Qadiriya, part of Sudan's 'grain basket,' only 2 percent and 35 percent, respectively, of the area planted is expected to be harvested this year, though households in these areas have better food availability than in other areas of the country due to considerable carryover food stocks from last year.

Figure 2. Expected food security outcomes, March 2012



Source: FMOA/FEWS NET

Millet is the main staple food for most households in Darfur and some western parts of Kordofan. Of the total area planted for millet this year (2.7 million ha), only 55 percent is expected to be harvested. The millet harvest is expected to be particularly poor in northern parts of North Darfur and North Kordofan states. Furthermore, severe damage to both sorghum and millet crops is occurring in parts of east and central Sudan and northern Darfur due to atypical and early seasonal livestock migration patterns in many areas due to the poor rainfall. Early migration to areas of limited pasture is exacerbating poor crop prospects as well as increasing tension between cattle herders and farmers.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) issues alerts to prompt decision-maker action to prevent or mitigate potential or actual food insecurity. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

The poor harvest is likely to maintain above-average food prices, with peak prices to occur during the extended lean season (March-August 2012). Cereal prices are already exceptionally high at this time of year, when prices normally begin to decline with incoming harvests. The price of sorghum (faterita variety) in November was SDG 110 – 160 per sack compared to SDG 60 – 90 per sack last year. The sharp increase in cereal prices in North Darfur has triggered a supply of grain to move from Om Durman market in central Sudan to some markets in North Darfur, a rare trade flow given high transport costs. Though the government plans to import cereals from international markets, mostly wheat for urban markets, imports are not expected to reduce sorghum or millet prices significantly.

Although food stocks from last year's good harvest may mitigate some of this season's shortfalls, household and trader food stocks are likely to begin to run out in early 2012. Given reduced food access for poor households due to expected high staple food prices, food security is likely to begin to deteriorate during the first quarter of 2012, with an increase in the size of the food insecure population from 3.2 million at present to 4.2 million during the first quarter of 2012. FEWS NET will continue to monitor the harvest progress, trade flows to deficit areas, and price trends in key areas of concern.