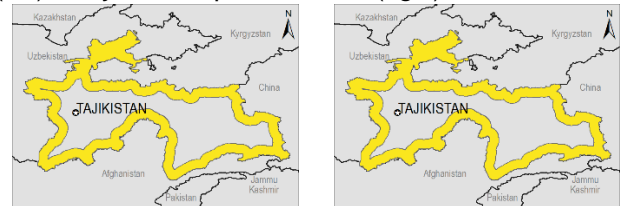


Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity persists through the lean season

KEY MESSAGES

- The Tajikistani Somoni has depreciated consistently against major international currencies since the start of 2015, losing nearly one-third of its value against the U.S. dollar (USD). The depreciation has increased the price of many imported foods including vegetable oil, sugar, and wheat flour.
- According to the National Bank of Tajikistan, remittances were 33 percent lower in 2015 than in 2014. Lower remittances have contributed to the weakening of the Somoni and deteriorated household purchasing power. As a result, many poor households are classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through at least September.
- Although El Niño typically drives increased precipitation over much of Central Asia including Tajikistan, cumulative precipitation during the October to April wet season has so far been below average in comparison to the long-term (2002-2011) mean.

Estimated food security outcomes, February to May 2016 (left), and June to September 2016 (right)



Highest estimated level of food insecurity in significant areas of concern using [IPC 2.0](#) Area Reference Tables:

- Phase 1: Minimal
- Phase 2: Stressed
- Phase 3+: Crisis or higher

Severity significantly mitigated by assistance

Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. To learn more about this scale, click [here](#).

ZONE	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average price for wheat flour in December was 20 percent above the five-year average, due in part to the depreciation of the Somoni. • The Somoni has been depreciating against foreign currencies since January 2015. In mid February, the value of the Somoni was 32 percent lower against the USD than in January 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of remittances from Tajikistani migrant workers in the Russian Federation will likely remain below average through the outlook period. • High prices for imported wheat flour are expected to continue through at least September given the low value of the Somoni.

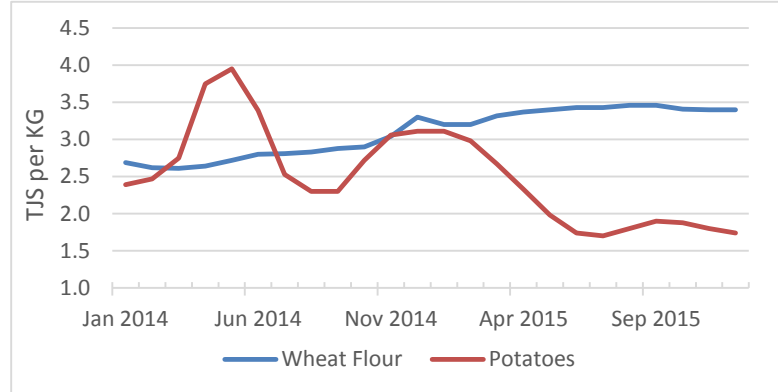
Projected Outlook through September 2016

Total precipitation through February for the October to April wet season has been similar to the amount received during the 2014/2015 wet season, but below the long-term (2002-2011) average. Despite being below long-term averages, precipitation has so far been sufficient to support the normal development of winter crops. The U.S. Geological Survey anticipates average precipitation for the remainder of the wet season, which will facilitate the continued normal development of winter and spring crops. However, above-average near-surface air temperatures are also expected to persist, which may deplete soil moisture and negatively affect the production of wheat and cotton, ultimately reducing yields.

In 2015, only 270,000 metric tons (MT) of raw cotton, the main cash crop and a major source of foreign reserve earnings, were produced. This was 27 percent lower than 2014 production. Decreased production is attributed to the lower global cotton price, which motivated farmers to plant other crops, as well as the higher price of inputs such as fertilizers and irrigation water. While overall production was below average, cotton fiber exports in 2015 were estimated at 108,000 MT, 25 percent above last year's exports.

The Somoni has depreciated consistently against foreign currencies since the start of 2015, losing nearly one-third of its value against the USD since January 2015. The depreciation has increased the price of many imported foods including vegetable oil, sugar, and wheat flour. The national average price of first-grade wheat flour was stable between November and December 2015, but remains 20 percent higher than the five-year average.

Figure 1. The national average wheat flour and potatoes prices per kilogram from January 2014 to December 2015



Source: [Agency on Statistics/ FAO GIEWS](#)

However, the price of potatoes has decreased further in December and is currently 20 percent lower than both the 2014 and five-year average (Figure 1). The price for potatoes was very high at the beginning of the 2014/2015 marketing year, motivating farmers to put more area under cultivation for the 2015/2016 season. As a result, the price decreased significantly prior to the start of the harvest in September and continues to remain low. Potatoes are the main cash crop for households living in mountainous areas such as Rasht Valley and farmers are expected to earn a below average income as a result.

Remittances have decreased throughout 2015. This decrease is due to a combination of factors. First, there is a slowing of economic activity in the Russian Federation, the main destination of Tajikistani labor migrants, lowering the number of work opportunities available. Secondly, the decline reflects stricter regulations for entrance to the Russian Federation for labor migrants. Lastly, the depreciation of both the Somoni and the Russian ruble (RUB) against international currencies has lowered the amount of money remitted in terms of USD. As a result, fewer Tajikistani migrants are currently in the Russian Federation: According to the Russian Federation's Federal Migration Service, the number of Tajikistani labor migrants decreased from 999,000 in January 2015 to 861,000 in January 2016.

Most households will have adequate access to food and near normal incomes through September, including during the ongoing (January to April) lean season. However, many poor households will face difficulty paying for all basic food and non-food needs. A World Bank survey conducted in late 2015 reported that the per capita income of the bottom 40 percent of Tajikistanis decreased by roughly 20 percent. Fifty percent of households reported reducing food consumption in order to be able to pay for non-food needs, including utilities and health care. Households that rely on markets to access food will be affected by higher food prices, and this impact will be aggravated for households where the main source of income is remittances. As a result, poor households are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through at least September.

As of February 2016, FEWS NET shifted from regular, monthly reporting on Tajikistan to periodic, special reporting. Currently, analysts monitor the food security situation in the country and draft reports as needed to provide early warning or in-depth analysis of drivers of food insecurity.

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](#).