ZAMBIA
FOOD SECURITY UPDATE
SEPTEMBER 2004

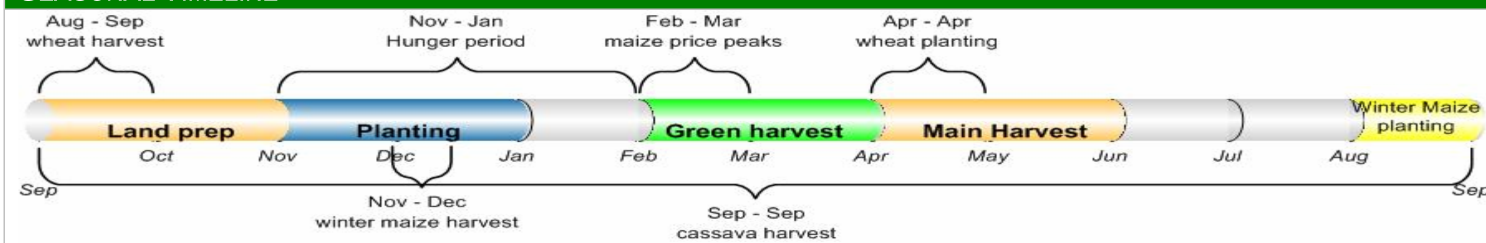
ALERT STATUS:
NORMAL
WARNING
WATCH
EMERGENCY

CONTENTS

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Foot and mouth disease has broken out and is spreading to non-endemic areas of the Southern and Central provinces of Zambia. Despite a good crop harvest in 2003/4 season, pockets of food insecurity still exist. The distribution of relief food to the flood affected areas of western Zambia has been too slow, despite adequate information and availability of food aid. This could hinder affected household's winter production, thereby increasing their vulnerability. Due to current marketing inadequacies, most farming households are facing low maize prices, placing them at increased risk of engaging in meaningful crop production in the coming season.

SEASONAL TIMELINE



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CURRENT HAZARD SUMMARY

- Most maize grown by small-scale farmers in the last season remains unsold as the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) nears completion of its initial planned purchases, which are only 6 percent of the total harvest.

- The distribution of relief food to the flood affected areas of western Zambia has been slow as the government did not release funds for logistical support on time.

- There is a serious outbreak of foot and mouth disease in major livestock areas of Central and Southern provinces. Increased resources are required to vaccinate and control the movement of livestock in order to contain the outbreak. The ban on livestock movement has reduced supply of meat on the market in parts of the urban areas that has led to sharp increases in the price of meat.

FOOD SECURITY SUMMARY

Food security in the country remains relatively good, with only isolated cases of food shortages and requests for food aid. There are localized areas that are food insecure due to low production in food and non-food crops resulting from poor land terrain, floods and damage of crops by wild animals. These areas include Southern province (Siavonga), Western province (Sesheke, Kalabo and Shangombo), Northwestern (Chavuma and Zambezi), Eastern province (Chama) and Lusaka province (Luangwa). Now that the harvest level is known, a livelihood-based assessment is required in these areas to ascertain the household food security situation in these areas.

The production surplus and the high food stocks at national and farm levels will guarantee low prices and therefore access to food for the majority of the population. This situation will remain as such until the hunger period from November to January. Market access for farmers remains a problem. Since most agricultural production is by small-scale farmers who largely depend on income from the sale of current crops, the lack of an immediate market will adversely affect their production plans in the coming season. The most affected farmers include those in areas not easily accessible and those that are far away from FRA buying depots.

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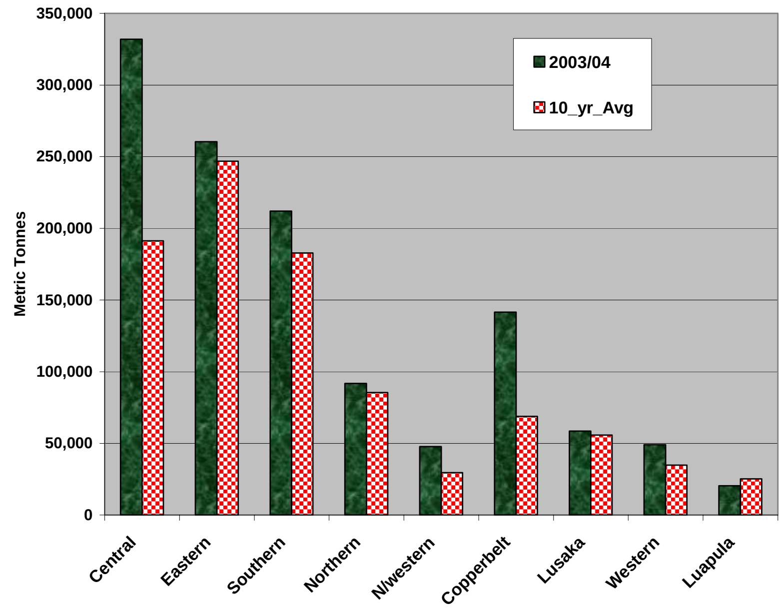
CURRENT FOOD AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS

In the 2003/04 season a total of 631,080 hectares were planted to maize, compared to 699,276 hectares in 2002/03. This represented an 11 percent decrease from last season but only a 0.3 percent decrease from the recent 10-year average. The increase in yield resulted in a marginal increase in maize production from 1,207,202 MT in 2002/03 to 1,213,601 MT in 2003/04.

Compared to 2001/02 season, the country's maize production in the 2002/03 and 2003/04 agriculture seasons has increased by about 100 percent. The increase in maize production country-wide is attributed to favorable rainfall and improved distribution of maize seed and fertilizer resulting in a general rise in the national yield rate. The national yield rate for maize in 2003/04 was 1.9 MT per hectare, representing a 19 percent increase from the recent 10-year average and 13.5 percent increase over last year.

Similar to other years, in 2003/04, maize production was highest in Central, Eastern, and Southern provinces. Moderate production took place in and Northern and Lusaka provinces, while Western, Northwestern and Luapula provinces produced the least (see Figure 1). In all the major producing areas, production in 2003/04 exceeded the most recent past 10-year average, except in Luapula province.

Figure 1: Maize Production in 2003/04 by District



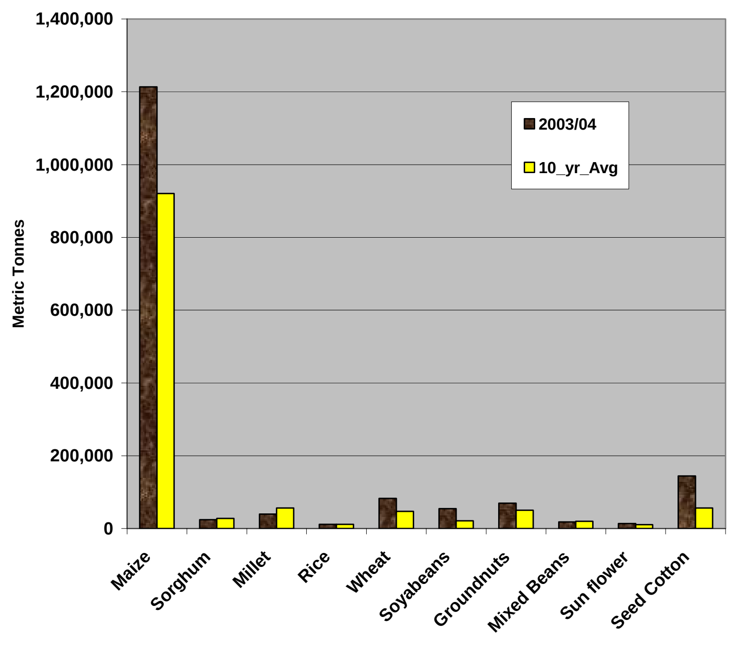
2003/4 HARVEST PERFORMANCE

Maize continues to be the dominant cereal crop in the country (see Figure 2). Maize consumption still averages one million MT a year. National production has surpassed the national demand in the last two seasons.

Sorghum and rice production has remained steady in the last 10 years. Millet production has declined this year below the 10-year average. The only other cereal that has shown an increase in production is wheat.

This year's production of soybeans and groundnuts has surpassed the 10-year average, while sunflower has only shown a marginal increase. Mixed beans in 2003/04 season fell marginally below the 10-year average, while seed cotton almost doubled.

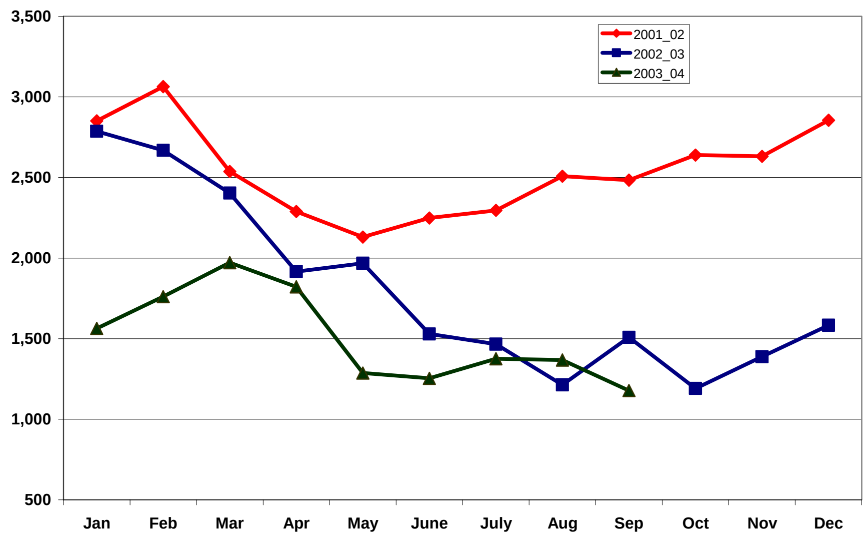
Figure 2: Production of Selected Crops in 2003/04 Season



CURRENT FOOD ACCESS

Following two consecutive good harvests in the 2002/03 and 2003/04 seasons, maize prices remain lower than the 10-year average. Figure 3 illustrates this by comparing the trend of nominal prices in a relatively bad year (2001/02), and relatively good years of 2002/03 and 2003/04 in Lusaka Urban, which is a major marketing center.

Figure 3: Real Retail Price Trend for Maize in Lusaka Urban

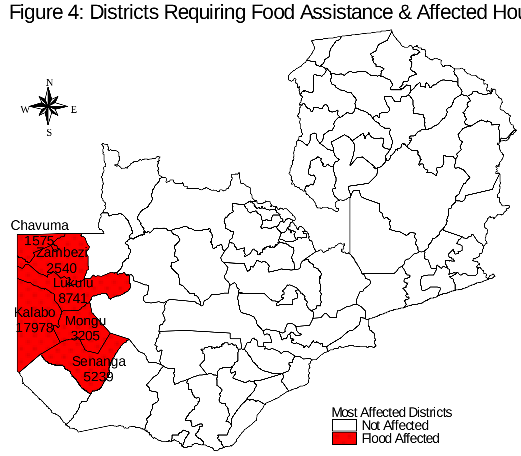


The pattern exhibited in Lusaka Urban is characteristic of most markets across the country. Figure 3 illustrates the impact of increased household and national stocks on prices. Although the low prices are expected, their level has been uncharacteristically lower than most years and has remained so longer into the post-harvest period. The abundant food stocks are also illustrated in the ongoing maize purchase program and the level of planned exports also reflect the abundance of stocks.

The official National Food Balance Sheet has estimated the carry-over maize stocks held by traders, millers, FRA, WFP and Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) from the previous marketing year at 170,735 MT. With total maize production of 1,213,600 MT in 2003/4 and carry-over stocks of 170,735 MT, the total national supply of maize is 1,393,336 MT against a national demand of 1,208,336 MT. This leaves a marketable surplus of 185,000 MT. Of this surplus, 11,000 MT have been sold to the regional WFP and a further 50,000 MT is planned for export to Angola by the FRA. Currently, Zambian traders (including FRA) are bidding for two regional tenders, one for 70,000 MT by the Malawi National Food Reserve Agency and one for 3,021 MT by World Food Program for relief purposes in Malawi. Meanwhile, the FRA has continued to purchase last season's' maize from small-scale framers and by September 24 had purchased 58,144 MT out of the planned 61,000 MT.

DELAYED ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD AFFECTED AREAS OF WESTERN ZAMBIA

Figure 4: Districts Requiring Food Assistance & Affected Households



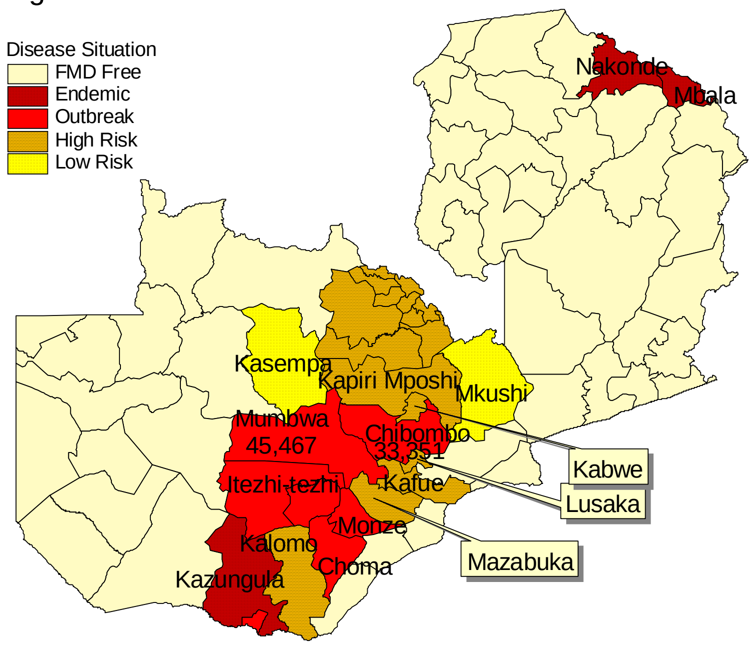
Three months after verifying the need to send relief food to flood affected districts of Western Zambia, the progress has been rather slow. Although by first week of September, the pre-positioned food had already reached the districts (150 MT of maize per district with Zambezi and Chavuma sharing that amount), redistribution of that food to target areas (Figure 4) had only been completed for Chavuma and Zambezi Districts and partially done for Lukulu. This was attributed to the slow release of funds for logistical support by the government. Funds to distribute food to the target populations in Mongu, Senanga, Kalabo and Lukulu were only released during the third week of September. This followed additional calls from Lukulu for food assistance. The Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) has not sent any additional food to these areas outside what had been pre-positioned. The DMMU has made an appeal to cooperating partners to assist with logistical support if more food is to be sent to these areas.

Among the non-food responses, WHO announced that child vaccinations, which had been suspended during the flood period, resumed during the child health week promotion in July. FAO indicated that there is a cattle disease control program in Western Province trying to address the issue of Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) disease. In addition, the Danish International Development Agency has been funding the current CBPP vaccinations in that area. There is still need for a similar program to be implemented in Northwestern Province. The water and sanitation problems identified during the flood impact assessment require follow up actions that have yet to occur. The DMMU has requested feedback from donors concerning assistance in these areas.

SPECIAL FOCUS: SERIOUS OUTBREAK OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

The foot and mouth disease, which is endemic in Kazungula District (Southern Province) and Northern Province Districts of Nakonde and Mbala, has spread to new areas of Southern and Central Provinces. These areas also have significant cattle populations. Annual vaccinations in endemic areas had kept the disease contained for the past few years. The new outbreak was first reported in Namwala/Itezhi Itezhi area of Southern Province in early July and is attributed to infection from a herd of buffaloes during communal grazing (part of the district is located in a national game park). The disease has since spread to other parts of Southern and Central Province as depicted in Figure 5. Over 200,000 cattle are at risk of contracting the disease in the outbreak areas. Neighboring areas such as Lusaka, Kabwe and the Copperbelt, which are the major markets for animal sales, are currently at very high risk of the infection.

Figure 5: Foot and Mouth Disease Situation



Source: Veterinary and Livestock Department / Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

In view of this serious outbreak, the Department of Veterinary and Livestock Development has, effective September 9, placed a ban to livestock and livestock product movement from Southern and Central provinces. Although, a livestock movement ban was in place in Namwala and Itezhi Itezhi districts (the first outbreak areas) in July, laxity in the enforcement had resulted in illegal movement of animals out of these areas, which led to the spread of the disease to the other districts within two months. In addition to the ban, livestock in affected areas are being vaccinated. However, the program is limited in coverage. For example, out of an estimated cattle population of 95,000 in Namwala District, only 25,000 animals were vaccinated. For effective control of the disease, all the animals in the district should be vaccinated. This is especially important as small-scale farmers practice communal animal grazing and livestock use common water points, which exacerbates the spread of the disease.

Although actual number of animal deaths as a result of this disease is not alarmingly high (unlike that from CBPP which has reduced cattle population in the last eight years), the greatest impact is the economic loss (mainly income) by households in affected areas. In addition, there is direct impact following the death of young animals (mortality and morbidity of the disease is highest in young animals), which results in loss of milk and meat as well as reduced productive performance. The fact that a ban on livestock movement (including cattle, goat, sheep and other cloven footed animals, both domestic and wild) implies that households who heavily depend on income from livestock sales especially in low crop producing areas (valleys) of Southern Province have been significantly affected. In order to effectively control the disease, there is need for increased resources into the program for both enforcing the livestock ban as well as for vaccination exercises. Had effective control been implemented when the disease was first reported in Namwala, it would not have reached to this alarming level and would have been less costly.