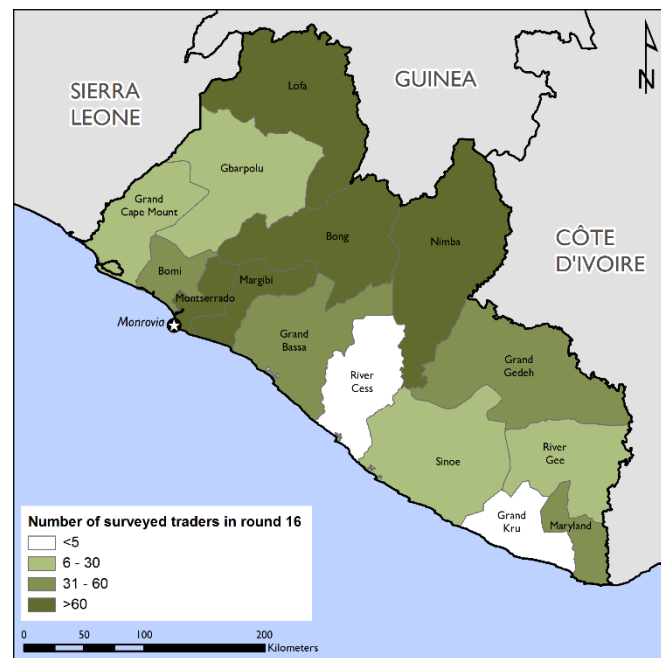


Between November 2014 and December 2015, FEWS NET worked with Mobile Accord (GeoPoll) to conduct sixteen rounds of SMS-based trader surveys in [Liberia](#) and [Sierra Leone](#) on the status of market activities and operating costs. Liberia and Sierra Leone are FEWS NET remote monitoring countries. In remote monitoring countries, analysts typically work from a regional office, relying on a network of partners for information. As less data may be available, remote monitoring reports may have less detail than FEWS NET presence countries. The SMS-based survey results serve to corroborate key informant and partner reports on market activities and serve as inputs to [FEWS NET's integrated food security analysis on the impacts of the Ebola outbreak](#). The first round of data collection identified a sample of traders to monitor fundamental market characteristics (Table 1). During the second through sixth rounds, the survey focused on market activities, while the subsequent rounds inquired about both market and agricultural activities. Data was collected on a bi-weekly basis for rounds 2-6 and on a monthly basis thereafter.

KEY MESSAGES

- This report provides a summary of findings from a FEWS NET trader survey using a SMS-based platform through GeoPoll during the week of December 7th, 2015 (sixteenth round of data collection). The sample includes 685 small to large-scale traders across 15 counties in Liberia (Figure 1).
- Thirty-one percent of respondents were cassava traders and 26 percent were local rice traders, followed by imported rice (22 percent) and palm oil traders (21 percent).
- During the week of December 7th, 26 percent of survey respondents reported that the most important market in their area operated at reduced levels (Figures 2 and 3). However, only nine traders reported market closures.
- Thirty-one percent of traders indicated that market supplies of main commodities were lower than the previous month (Figure 4).
- High transport costs was the most frequently cited reason for reduced market supplies compared to the previous month (Figure 5).
- Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated that the current primary agricultural activity is harvesting (Figure 9). Fifty-three percent of respondents reported that agricultural activities were normal and on time (Figure 10).
- Thirty-four percent of respondents reported less agricultural wage opportunities compared to normal at this time (Figure 8). Thirty-four percent of traders reported that their cash crop sales were lower than the previous month (Figure 7).

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of survey sample



Source: FEWS NET

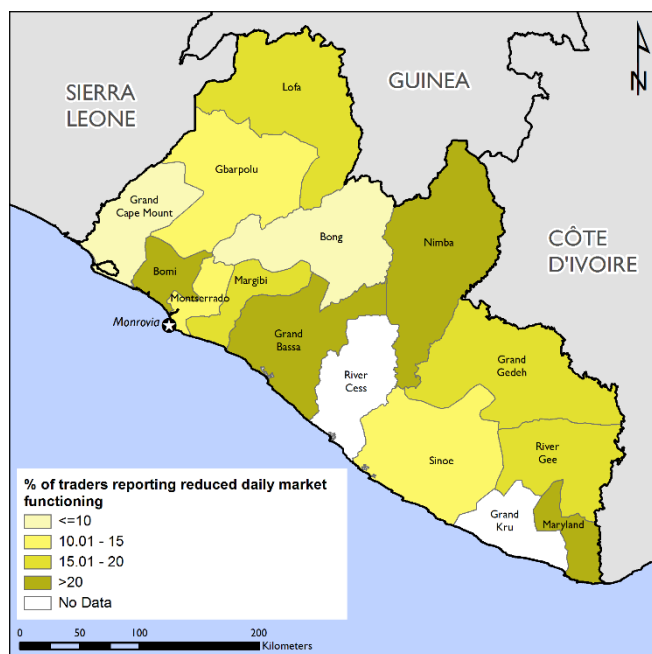
Table 1. GeoPoll SMS-based survey timeline

Round	Week	Survey Focus	Sample size
1	Nov 3, 2014	Identify sample of traders and their characteristics	594
2	Nov 17, 2014	Current market activities	463
3	Dec 8, 2014	Current market activities	519
4	Dec 22, 2014	Current market activities	404
5	Jan 5, 2015	Current market activities	325
6	Jan 19, 2015	Current market activities	293
7	March 2, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	500
8	March 30, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	500
9	April 27, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	499
10	May 25, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	435
11	June 29, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	383
12	July 24, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	347
13	Aug 24, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	317
14	October 5, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	165
15	November 2, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	250
16	December 7, 2015	Current market and agricultural activities	685

Future monthly data collection is planned through January 2016

Source: FEWS NET

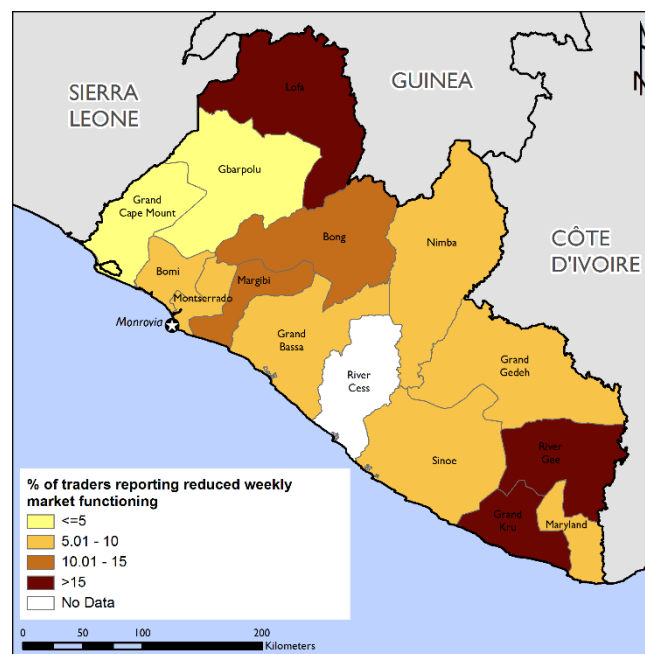
Daily and weekly market activity - week of December 7th, 2015

Figure 2. Percentage of traders reporting reduced or closed daily market functioning

Source: FEWS NET

Table 2. Frequency of traders reporting reduced or closed daily market functioning

Daily market functioning status	Frequency
Open and normal activity	343
Open and reduced activity	110
Closed	4

Figure 3. Percentage of traders reporting reduced or closed weekly market functioning

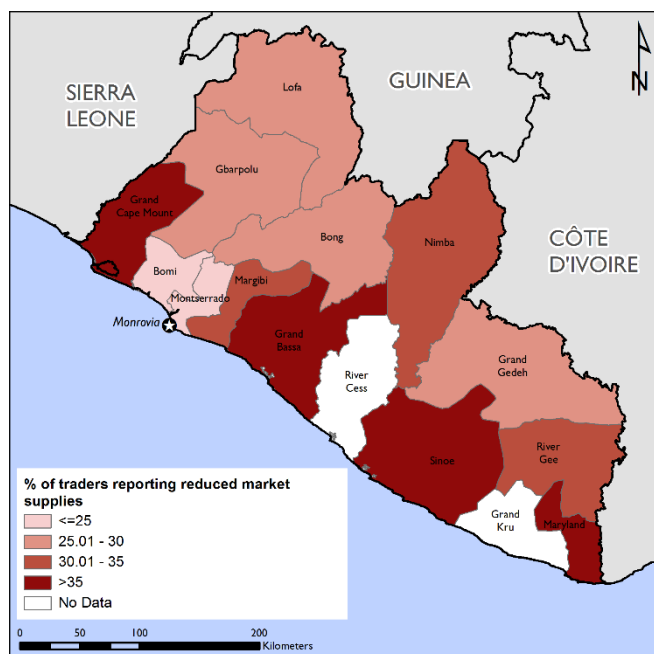
Source: FEWS NET

Table 3. Frequency of traders reporting reduced or closed weekly market functioning

Weekly market functioning status	Frequency
Open and normal activity	158
Open and reduced activity	65
Closed	5

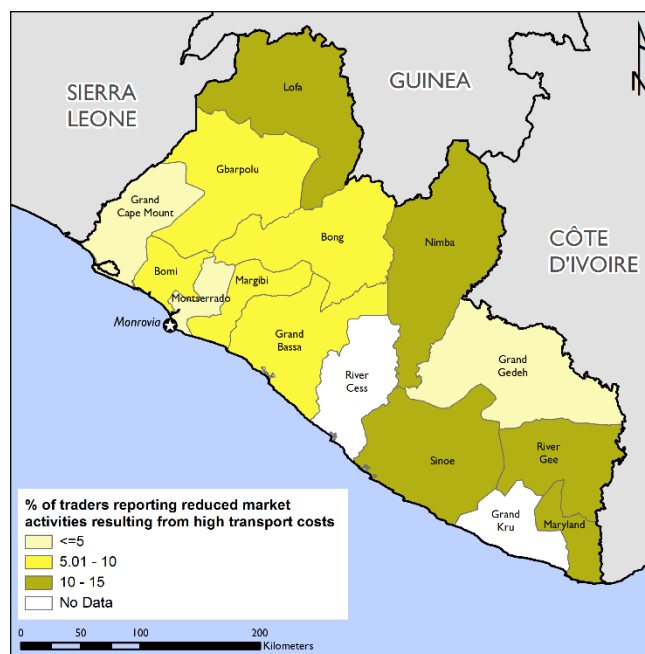
Market supplies - week of December 7th, 2015

Figure 4. Percentage of traders reporting reduced market supplies compared to the previous month



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 5. Percentage of traders reporting reduced market supplies compared to the previous month resulting from high transport costs



Source: FEWS NET

Table 4. Percentage of traders reporting inadequate food availability on markets, reduced market supplies, and reduced cash crop sales during the week of December 7th

County	Responses	Reported inadequate local food availability	Reported decline in market supplies ¹	Reported reduced cash crop sales ²
*Bomi	35	34%	23%	34%
*Bong	74	22%	28%	27%
Gbarpolu	18	33%	28%	44%
Grand Bassa	41	29%	51%	41%
Grand Cape Mount	21	14%	38%	48%
Grand Gedeh	60	28%	28%	42%
*Lofa	76	29%	29%	37%
*Margibi	63	25%	33%	43%
Maryland	44	34%	45%	43%
*Montserrado	138	22%	21%	22%
*Nimba	76	25%	33%	30%
River Gee	16	31%	31%	31%
Sinoe	18	17%	50%	22%
Total	658	26%	31%	34%

* denotes areas with highest cumulative number of Ebola cases during the 2014/15 outbreak

**Grand Kru (4) and *River Cess (1) had insufficient response levels

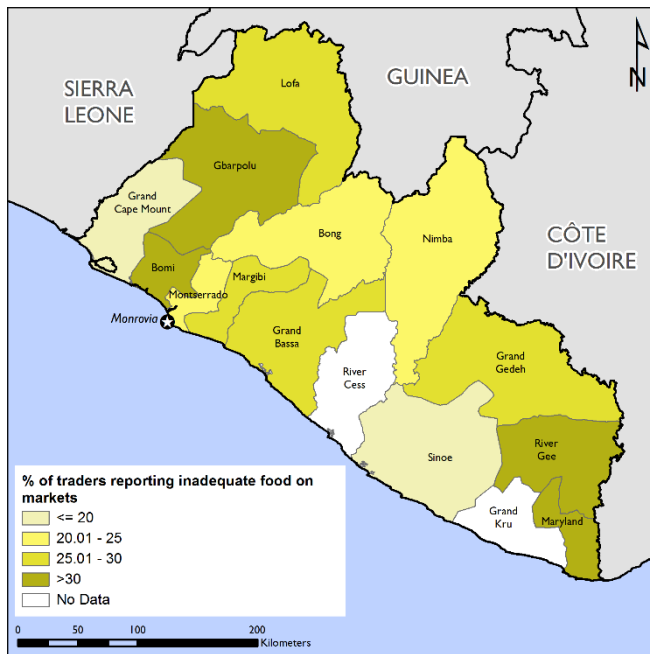
¹ Compared to the previous month; includes palm oil, cassava, and rice

² Compared to the previous month; cash crops considered include coffee, cocoa, and rubber

Source: FEWS NET and Ebola cases from [WHO](http://www.who.int)

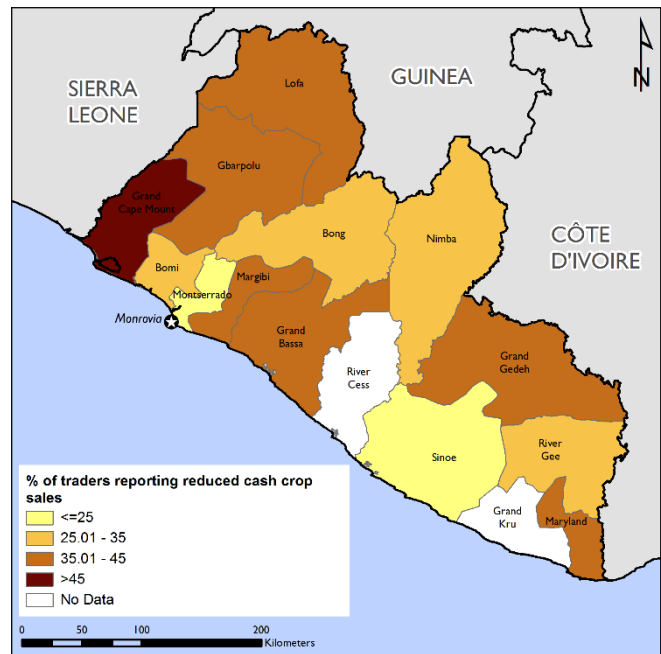
Staple food and cash crop market dynamics - week of December 7th, 2015

Figure 6. Percentage of traders reporting inadequate food availability on markets



Source: FEWS NET

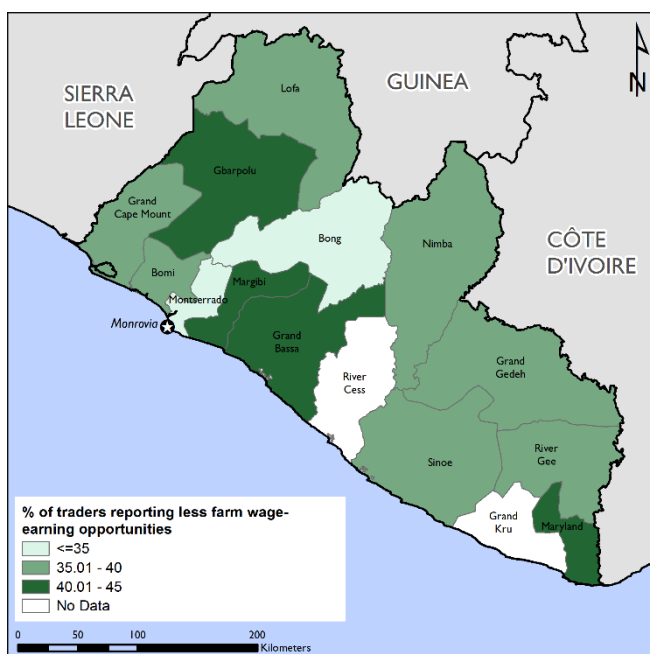
Figure 7. Percentage of traders reporting reduced cash crop sale opportunities compared to the previous month



Source: FEWS NET

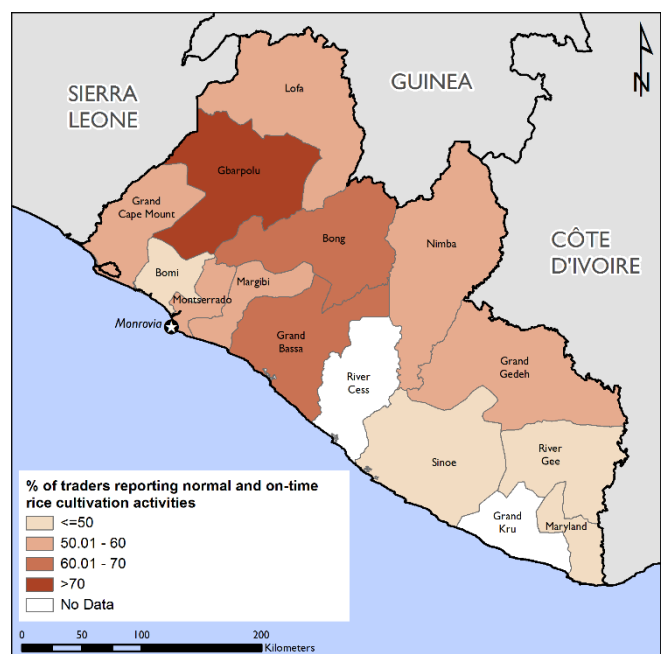
Wage opportunities and rice cultivation status - week of December 7th, 2015

Figure 8. Percentage of traders reporting less opportunities to earn wages on farms compared to normal at this time



Source: FEWS NET

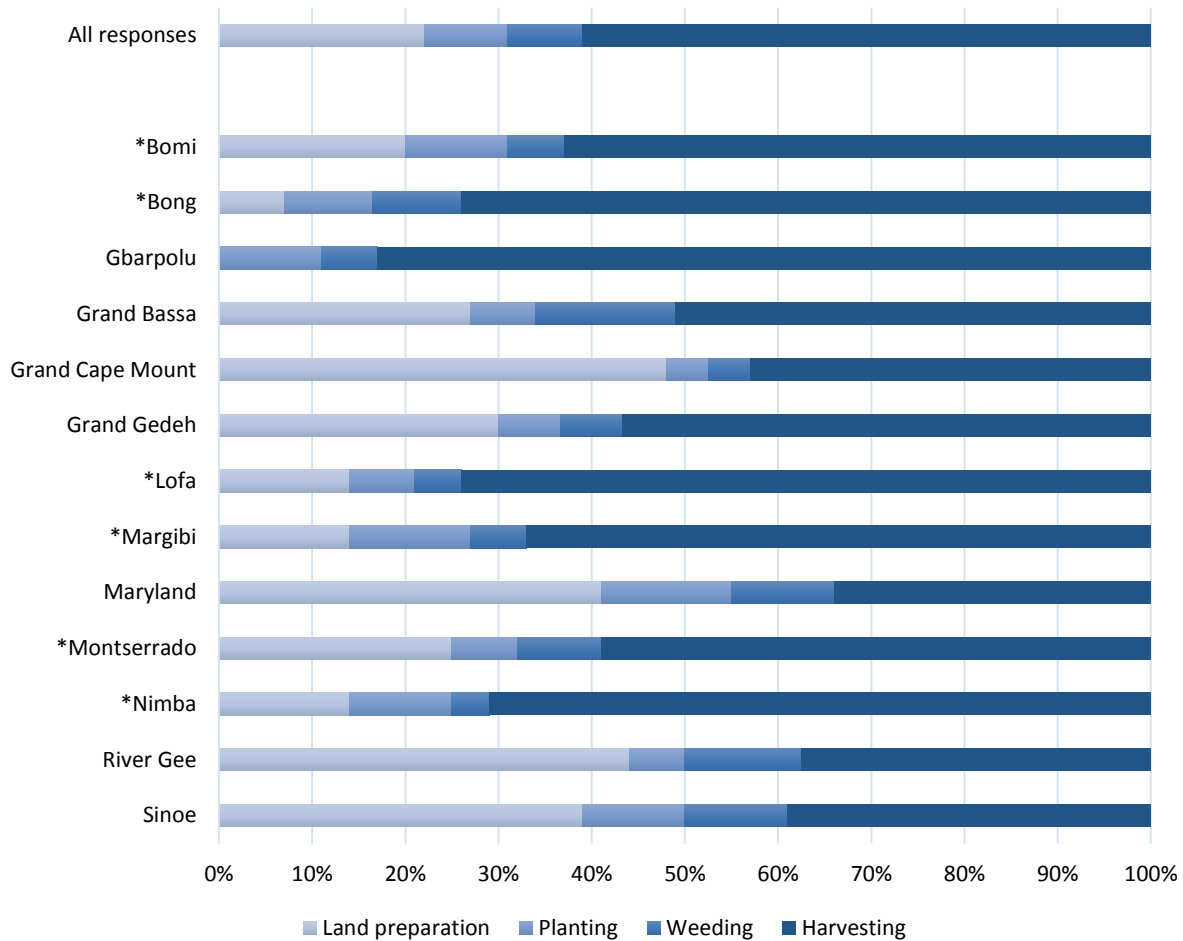
Figure 9. Percentage of traders reporting normal and on-time rice cultivation activities



Source: FEWS NET

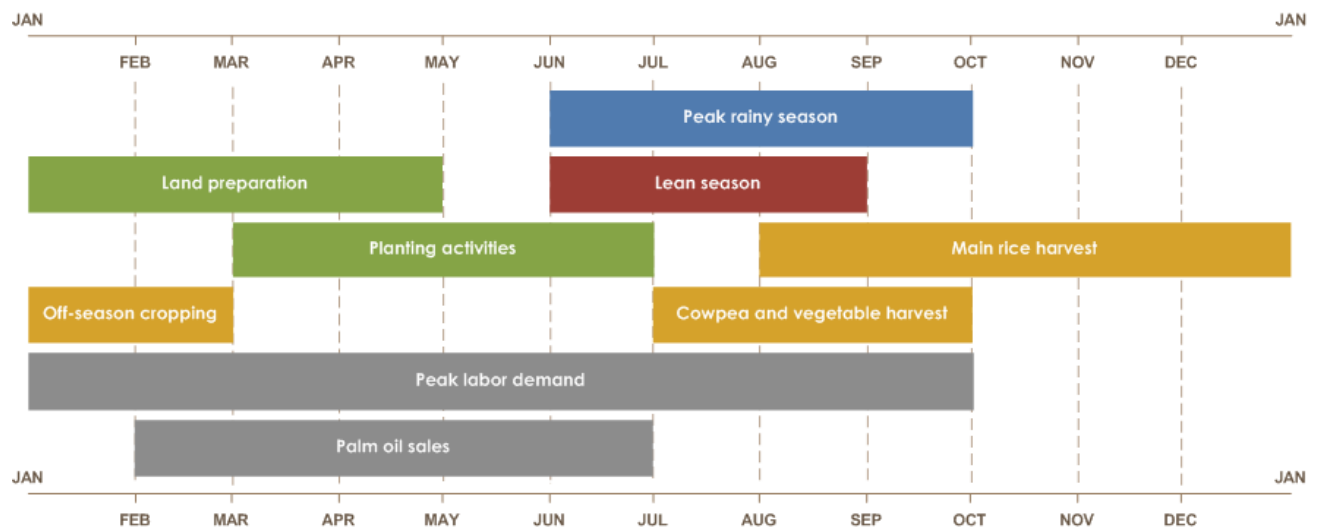
Current rice cultivation activity - week of December 7th, 2015

Figure 10. Reported stage of the current rice cultivation activity



* denotes areas with highest cumulative number of Ebola cases during the 2014/15 outbreak
 ** Grand Kru (4) and *River Cess (1) had insufficient response levels
 Source: FEWS NET and Ebola cases from [WHO](http://www.who.int)

Figure 11. Seasonal calendar for a typical year in Liberia



Source: FEWS NET