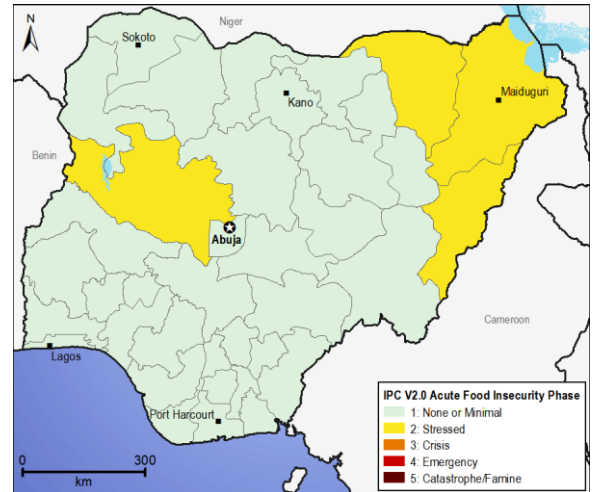


*Stressed food insecurity in central Niger state and northeast conflict areas*

**KEY MESSAGES**

- The main harvest of major crops (cereals, tubers, and pulses) is underway. The harvest prospects are generally good in most areas, due mainly to an increase in the area under cultivation and access to inputs across the country, and has improved household food availability, diversity and access. Consequently, most of the country will experience Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between October and December.
- Localized areas of the north-central zone were affected by prolonged dry spells since May, hindering crop development. Similarly, the Boko Haram conflict in the northeast has constrained farming activities and increased population displacements. The below average harvest in these areas, coupled with low carryover stocks, is leading to Stressed acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) during the October to December period for these areas.
- Boko Haram conflict in the northeast has intensified in rural areas of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. The conflict has displaced significant portions of the population, disrupted normal market and trade behaviors, and restricted agricultural activities. Households affected by the conflict in Borno/Yobe states have less resilience to cope and will face Crisis food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) during January to March 2014.

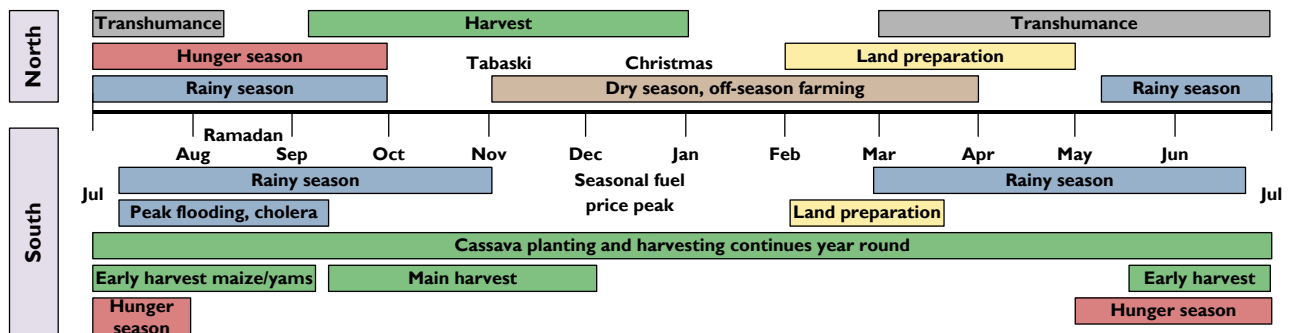
**Figure 1.** Current food security outcomes, October 2013



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/foodinsecurityscale](http://www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale) for more on this scale.

**SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR**



Source: FEWS NET

**NATIONAL OVERVIEW**

*Current Situation*

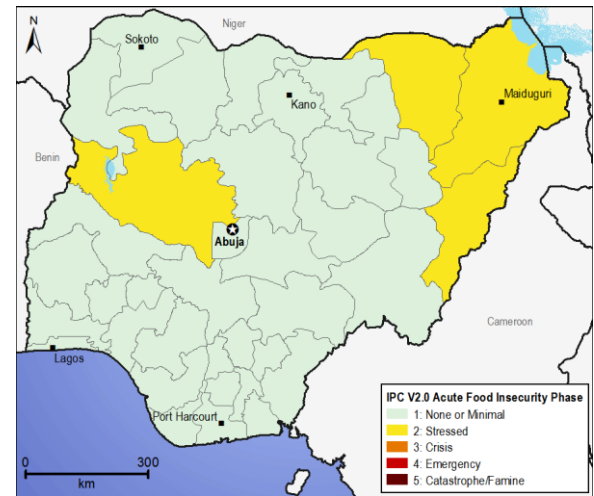
The main harvest is underway across the country for tubers (cassava and yam), cereals (millet and maize) and legumes (groundnut and cowpea). This has improved food access in most areas since September, increasing food availability, diversity and access, and impacting food prices on urban and rural markets. Long cycle crops such as millet, sorghum and rice will be harvested in November and December in the north.

Although cumulative rainfall has been seasonably average for much of Nigeria, the season is characterized by intermittent dry spells across the country, with more prolonged dryness in the north-central areas and the southwestern zone of the country. In the central states the dry spells between May and early August delayed crop growth and development, causing crop damage in some areas during the early planting period. The dry spells persisted in the western axis of the country through mid-October. This has impacted maize, millet, sorghum and cowpea production in the affected zones, including Niger, Kwara and Kogi states in the north-central of the country, Zamfara and Sokoto states in the northwest, and Oyo and Osun states in the southwest. However, the impacts are thought to be most significant in Niger state.

With the threat of drought over many areas during the growing season, other areas were affected by localized floods that slightly impacted the otherwise favorable harvest in parts of Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kogi, Sokoto, Bauchi and Gombe States in the north and in Delta, Cross River, Annambra, Ebonyi and Imo states in the south. According to recent reports from OCHA, Zamfara, Kogi and Bauchi states are the worst affected by floods. The seasonal flooding during the growing season affected more than 81,500 people this year across the country. Almost 8,000 have been displaced and about 6,500 houses were damaged. As of mid-September, nineteen deaths have been recorded and 2,217 farmlands have been destroyed by floods. The scale of damage in flood-affected areas across the country is still less than what was experienced last year, though, and has had a much less significant impact.

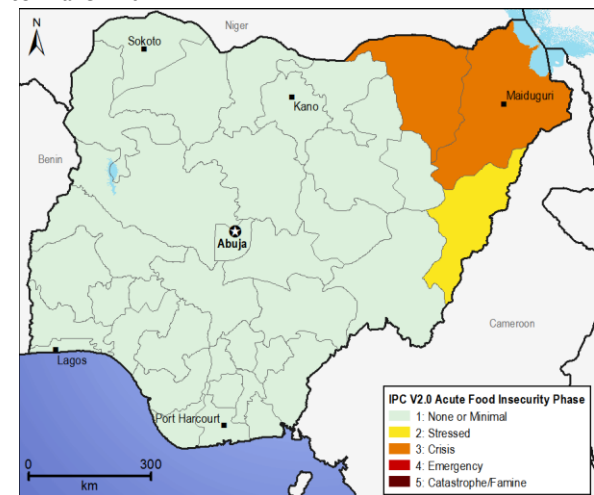
The preliminary findings from the annual agricultural survey on smallholder agricultural production, jointly conducted by the National Agricultural Extension, Research and Liaison Services (NAERLS), Ahmadu Bello University, and government agencies, indicate the country has recorded a marginal to significant increase in tuber and cereal production at a national level compared to last year. The increase is attributed to a combination of factors, including an improved access to inputs through the government’s agricultural transformation agenda and the increase in the area under cultivation by subsistence farmers towards the expansion of own production to guard from food insecurity and large scale farmers, increasing revenue prospects. Estimates of increases for major cereals such as rice, millet, maize and sorghum are: maize (20 percent), sorghum (five percent), millet (three percent), and rice (35 percent) up from last year. Similarly, cowpea, groundnut, and cotton production are also higher than last year by eight, four, and seven percent, respectively. Total production for millet, sorghum, maize, and rice, the most important crops in the north and central areas, is estimated at around 24.25 million tons. Yam and cassava production, the most important staples in the South, are estimated at 38 and 53 million tons, up from 2012 by 15 and 13 percent, respectively. These conclusions are generally consistent with the findings of the joint CILSS/FAO/FEWS NET/Government pre-harvest assessment conducted in Nigeria in mid-October.

**Figure 2.** Projected food security outcomes, October to December 2013



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 3.** Projected food security outcomes, January to March 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/foodinsecurityscale](http://www.fews.net/foodinsecurityscale) for more on this scale.

The price of major cereals such as maize, millet and sorghum is declining or has remained stable on most markets in September relative to August. However, prices of cereals are higher than last year and five-year average price levels on most markets monitored, making market purchases for poor households slightly more difficult. On Dawanau market, the major cereal market in West Africa, maize and millet prices have declined by 21 and 13 percent respectively in September, relative to August. However, maize and millet prices are 6 and 14 percent, respectively above last year, and 5 and 25 percent, respectively, above the five-year average, on the same market. As the harvest of tubers such as yam and potatoes intensifies, yam prices have remained stable in September relative to August, on Mile 12 market, in Lagos. However, yam price is above last year's level by 25 percent on the same market, due mainly to the below average production last year. Similarly, gari price follow the same trend on Bodija market and remained above last year and five-year average price levels. The high prices can likely be attributed to low carryover stocks from last year due to widespread flooding with a below-average harvest.

Boko Haram conflict is persisting in northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states where a state of emergency has been declared since mid-May. The displacement of populations has been impacting the outlook for the main harvest. Civil insecurity has escalated in September compared to previous months in localized rural areas in Borno and Yobe states, the epicenter of the Boko Haram conflict, hampering food inflow to the affected areas. A recent preliminary joint assessment report by the UN agencies (OCHA, FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS) in collaboration with the Nigeria Red Cross Society and the Government through the State Emergency Management Agency/National Emergency Management Agency indicates that about six million persons have been affected by the Boko Haram related conflict in the northeast zone and most are within the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states under the state of emergency. More than four million of those affected are in Borno state, the operational center of the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009.

### *Assumptions*

The most likely scenario during October 2013 to March 2014 period is based on the following national-level assumptions:

- **The main harvest:** Due to the favorable growing season in most areas, the overall main harvest of cereals, tubers and pulses will be good across the country. Exceptions are localized areas affected by floods, and dry spells as well as the persisting conflicts in the northeast zone. In these areas production will be below average.
- **Access to food:** The current food price decline for major staple foods also increases food access by poor households that are market dependent. Due to the average production this year and affordable food prices in most areas, the majority of households are likely to meet basic food needs through the next lean season in July. Exceptions are localized areas affected by flooding, dry spell and civil insecurity, where household food stocks will not carry them as far through the consumption year as normally expected, and households will resort to market purchase for consumption needs earlier than normal.
- **Food stocks:** Food stocks for the consumption year will likely be at normal levels for much of Nigeria due to good harvest prospects for the current year in most areas. However, stocks will be below average in areas affected by conflict, dry spells and flooding, and compounded by the low carryover stocks from below-average production last year. Similarly, poor households who took on debt over the last consumption year due to low production caused by excessive flooding throughout much of the country will use this season's harvest to repay their loans, depleting their own food stocks earlier than usual.
- **Food/Livestock prices:** Food prices will likely continue to decline through the end of the main harvest, following the seasonal tendency. In the second half of the outlook period (January to March), prices will slowly increase as food stocks start to decline and trade demand increase, and remain higher than the five-year average. Livestock prices will continue to increase from October to December, due to the Tabaski and Christmas festivities. Livestock prices will then decline slightly but within normal levels and will remain relatively favorable for the pastoralists through March/April 2014, due to prolonged pasture and water availability and good livestock body condition.
- **Dry season activities:** Fishing and irrigation agriculture (rice, maize, cowpea and vegetables) will begin as normal in December when water levels recede. Given this year's generally average cumulative rainfall, the dry season activities are expected to be average in most areas and will last until April 2014, as is normally expected.
- **Trade:** Cross border trade activities will increase throughout much of the country between December and February after the main harvest is concluded and traders begin to replenish their stocks, which are lower than usual because of the food production shortfall last year following widespread flooding. Industrial demand in Nigeria will also begin as food processing companies, poultry farmers and malting companies begin to procure maize, sorghum and millet.

- **Transhumance:** Pastoralists will begin their seasonal migration southward as normal in March/April 2013.
- **Disease epidemic:** Incidences of water-related disease, including cholera, diarrhea, and malaria, are expected at normal levels between November and December, and to decline again beginning in January as the season become more dry. These diseases will expose affected populations to increased health-care related expenditures and increased malnutrition, especially among children under the age of five.
- **Fuel subsidies:** Will remain at status quo levels.

#### *Most Likely Food Security Outcomes*

The ongoing main harvest is expected to replenish food stocks and improve food availability for most households following the three month lean season. Most households across the country will experience Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) through the end of December. Exceptions are households that were impacted by localized flooding, dry spells or persisting conflict. They will have substantial harvest deficits and be unable to engage in their normal livelihoods activities, meaning they are only able to meet their basic food needs through December and will experience Stressed acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2).

During the second half of the scenario period (January to March 2014), an increase in dry season activities will increase income earning opportunities, purchasing power, and food access. Coupled with the harvest of late maturing crops such as millet, sorghum, cowpea and groundnut in areas affected by dry spells, most households in the affected area will have access to more food and income and will experience Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between January and March 2014. However, many poor households in northeast areas of the country affected by the persisting civil conflict since 2009 have suffered displacements, experienced losses to their productive assets and have below average harvest, limited income and reduced resilience to cope. They will face Crisis acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) between January and March 2014.

## AREAS OF CONCERN

### **NE millet and cowpeas livelihood zone in northern areas of Borno and Yobe states**

Poor and very poor households in this livelihood zone are predominantly subsistence farmers and cultivate mainly millet and sorghum as staple crops, and also consume maize as a major substitute. They also cultivate cowpeas during the main season as cash crops, and during the dry season activities they also cultivate rice, sorghum and vegetables. Between December and April many households engage in fishing activities. Animal husbandry of small ruminants, such as goat and sheep, is also a common practice. Households in this area engage in petty trade and casual labor work within and outside the zone as part of their livelihoods. Additionally they sell own crops (staple and cash crops), wild foods and livestock to access more income for food and non food expenditures. In a normal year, own harvest will last until June before they will resort to markets to access food normally.

#### *Current Situation*

Conflict in northeast Nigeria is persisting and the state of emergency remains. Population displacements to neighboring states, as well as to neighboring countries, also continue. Boko Haram insurgents have intensified attacks in rural areas. Between late September and early October, there were several attacks on schools in Yobe state, resulting in the deaths of more than 40 students. There were also attacks in rural areas in Borno state, killing and displacing many others. Between May 14<sup>th</sup>, when the state of emergency was declared in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, and September 30<sup>th</sup> 2013 almost 1,300 deaths due to violence were reported in the region ([Nigeria Security Tracker](#)). The rise in reported deaths indicates that the violence appears to have intensified over the last few months. Consequently, security measures and population displacement have intensified, limiting food flow and trade activities in the area. The borders with Chad, Cameroon and part of Niger near northeastern Nigeria also remain officially closed due to the persisting conflict and below average but informal trade activities continue within the conflict-affected areas.

Production prospects in the zone have been reduced due to the persisting security situation, as well as the poor distribution of rain in September. Many poor households have already reverted to the sale of productive assets to cope with their food security situation, limiting their productive ability during the cultivation season. The persistent conflict in the region has also been disrupting this year's cultivation season directly, with Boko Haram spreading more and more into rural areas with the increase of military presence in urban centers. The second major staple in the area – sorghum is yet to be harvested,

impacted by the early cessation of the rain in September, limiting food access. Similarly, cowpea, an important cash crop in the area, is at vegetative stage, delayed growth and limiting income. Effects of the early cessation of rain appear to be less pronounced on millet crops, which are already at the harvest stage of development.

Because of the security conditions, traders are evading the area, limiting typical market activities and food supply. However, household and market food stocks are gradually increasing as the main harvest begins, increasing food access. Stocks are lower than normal for both staples and cash crops, due to below average harvest in the area. On Damasak market, an assembly market in the area, cereal prices for maize, millet and sorghum declined in September, ranging between two to 19 percent lower compared to last month, though prices remain above the five-year average. This likely points to increasing stocks from new harvest production in the area. Staple food prices remained stable on Maiduguri market, the major market in the zone, when they would be expected to start declining. Prices are above last year's level by about 11 to 32 percent, a likely indication of restricted food flow to urban markets. High food prices, coupled with limited income levels will continue to constrain food access by poor households.

Livestock body conditions are generally good at this time due to pasture and water availability. Livestock supply is below normal and demand has increased slightly due to the Tabaski holiday, increasing prices compared to previous months. However, prices of sheep and goats are below levels seen during the same time for the last two years. An average goat and sheep would sell for NGN10,000, and NGN30,000, respectively, on Damaturu market during the Tabaski festive season. This year's prices are lower than the last two years by 20 percent and 16 percent for goats and sheeps, respectively, on the same market.

Below average trade activities for both livestock and crops continue to limit income and purchasing power of poor households. Market related casual labor opportunities, such as the loading/off-loading of transported goods and market security jobs, are constrained, limiting income. Continued security measures and reduced economic activities restrict income levels, reducing household food access through market purchases.

#### *Assumptions*

Due to the difficulty of collecting information and data from this conflict zone, this most likely scenario as outlined below is based on limited information from government and FEWS NET field enumerators. The assumptions used in this scenario are the following:

- **The growing season/harvest:** The poor distribution of rainfall in September and continued security situation will negatively impact crop production in the area compared to normal levels, particularly for sorghum and cowpea harvests.
- **Pests:** According to the [FAO's Locust Watch](#), no significant developments are forecasted for the area. Therefore, normal levels of pest attacks on crops are expected during rainfed and dry season agricultural activities.
- **Timing of agricultural activities:** The main harvest activities for early maturing millet and legumes will be delayed by about two weeks in October and continue through November. Long cycle/late maturing varieties of sorghum, millet and cowpeas will be harvested between November and December.
- **Off-season activities:** Off-season activities, which include fishing and dry-season farming, will begin normally in December. A seasonable start to dry season harvests in Yobe in April with average production is expected. Due to increased security measures and Boko Haram conflict in rural areas of Borno state, dry season production will be below-average in that area. Similarly, fishing in Yobe state is expected to occur at normal levels, with reduced levels expected in Borno state.
- **Pasture and water availability:** Pasture and water availability will be at normal levels due to the seasonably average cumulative rainfall. Pasture and water conditions will remain stable during the first several months of the dry season (October to December) and will then decline through April, following the normal seasonal trend.
- **Transhumance:** Pastoralists movement into the zone will likely be below normal. This is due to the persisting conflict across the zone. Pastoralists will likely move to Niger, Chad and Cameroon to evade the civil insecurity. Others will divert to different zones within the country in the north and southern areas. This will reduce livestock numbers and increased prices, limiting meat and milk access. Consequently, market supply will generally follow normal seasonal trends but will be below average due to the conflict in the zone.
- **Livestock demand:** Livestock demand from within and outside the zone will be slightly below average due to the effect of conflicts in the zone. A seasonable increase in livestock demand for the Tabaski holiday was seen and will also be seen during the end of year holidays (Christmas). From January to March demand will follow normal seasonal decline at levels below average.

- **Cereal supply:** Supply will follow seasonal trends but will be below average throughout the scenario period. Supply will increase during the main harvest between September and December and will gradually decline through March. Market supply will be below normal due to the below average harvest and low trade activities in the area.
- **Food prices:** Prices will decline during the harvest in October through December but will remain above average through the season due to the limited supply. Prices will then increase after the harvest, further limiting food access.
- **Household food stocks:** Household stocks will be depleted two to three months early, in January/early February, due to below average harvest, limited carry over stocks, and atypical level of indebtedness. Cash and in-kind debts are usually repayed with the new harvest, further depleting household stocks this year.
- **Conflict/displacement:** Civil insecurity relating to Boko Haram conflict, as well as the effects of the state of emergency, will continue at status quo levels. Due to the civil insecurity, population displacements will continue at status quo levels, to areas within the zone as well as to neighboring zones within Nigeria and neighboring countries. The official border closures with Chad, Niger and Cameroon will persist due to the continued conflict within the zone.
- **Trade flows/cross border activities:** Due to the effects of the persisting conflict and the state of emergency, below-average trade flows for both cereals and livestock are expected from within the zone as well as from the rest of the country or neighboring countries (Niger, Chad and Cameroon).
- **Household food demand:** Cereal demand will remain above-average during the entire outlook period due to the effects of the below average harvest, limited carryover stocks from previous years and the persisting civil insecurity in the zone. However, food demand will be slightly lower during the harvest period (October to December) and will peak thereafter, from January to March as household food stocks deplete further.
- **Labor demand/supply/wages:** Casual labor demand will be below-average due to below-average harvest prospect, while labor supply will be above-average during the harvest period as poor household will resort to increased labor work. As such, labor wages will be below-average due to the low demand and increased labor supply. However, labor migration to urban centers in the northeast, will be weaker than normal due to security concerns. Consequently, wages for labor activities in these areas will likely be above average.

### *Most Likely Food Security Outcomes*

Most poor households in this zone, who were already facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity through September, will face difficulty in recovering from the previous lean season. Many households took on debt to carry themselves through the lean season, and will repay those loans with production from the current main harvest through December. Their situation is complicated by the below-average harvest this season, limited income opportunities and low purchasing power. This condition is further compounded by the low resilience of most households to food insecurity since 2009 due to persisting conflicts and relatively high food prices in the area. Most households affected by the persisting conflicts are unable to participate fully in their usual livelihoods activities. The harvest coming in between now and December will only allow them to meet their basic food needs during the October to December period and poor households in this zone are expected to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity.

The below average crop harvest and repayment of previous year's debts (food and cash) will lead to an early depletion of household food stocks and households will resort to market purchase to meet their food needs earlier than normal. The persisting conflict since 2009 will also lead to livelihoods disruptions in terms of population displacement, limited income earning opportunities, and limited government assistance. This will further limit food access for poor households between January and March. Many poor households will marginally be able to meet minimum food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets. Households will skip meals, and divert resources to access food. This will be slightly tempered by intense labor work for dry season activities, additional livestock sales, atypical levels of migration, and atypical sales of productive assets. This however, will not completely offset their difficulty in meeting their food needs and households will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity from January to March 2014.

### **NC-Niger River Floodplain Rice and Sorghum, in dry spell affected areas in Niger state**

In a typical year, most households in this area practice subsistence farming along major river floodplains and cultivate mainly rice, sorghum and millet as staple crops, as well as yam, cassava, cowpea, soybeans, melon, and sesame. Agropastoralists in the area also keep small ruminants such as goats and sheep. They engage in petty trade and casual labor

work within and outside the zone. Additionally they sell own crops, livestock, wild foods, crafts and firewood to access additional income for food and non food purchases through October to March period. In a normal year, own harvests will last until about June before they will resort to markets to access food by cash or credit. Debts are usually repayed after the subsequent harvest either in cash or in-kind.

### *Current Situation*

The onset of the rainy season, which began normally in April, was affected by cumulative rainfall deficits and poor rainfall distribution since May in the zone. This resulted in replanting and delayed crop growth and development. All cropping in the area was affected by the dryness, including that of staple cereals (rice, maize, millet, sorghum), and cash crops (melon and groundnut). This is causing harvest delays of about two weeks for most crops in the area.

Production prospects for the early green harvest of yam, millet, and maize, as well as melon and groundnut are below average in the area. The early green harvest of yams are smaller in size and of poor quality due to the impact of the dry spells. The harvest of melon, maize, early millet, groundnut, and cassava is ongoing. However, the ongoing harvest in the area is below average due to the poor rain accumulation and distribution, reducing household food stocks and their ability to sell food to earn income. Harvest of the long cycle crops (sorghum, late millet, rice, and groundnuts) will occur late in November to early January and will be below average.

The combined effects of poor production last year due to widespread flooding coupled with this year's dry spell means household stocks are lower in October despite the start of the harvest. Furthermore, households severely affected by flooding last year borrowed food and money from relations and better-offs to meet basic food needs, which they must now pay back with the new harvest underway. As such, low stock levels and the need to repay debts are limiting household access to food needs. Households are currently dependent partly on their own production and partly on intense labor work and the sale of small animals to access food.

Even as market stocks are gradually increasing, prices are still above last year and five-year average levels. Market stocks are slightly below average except for maize, which has been harvested and resupplied from the neighboring areas. The low market stocks are due to the effects of the relatively prolonged dry spells on crop development. Stocks will increase as the main harvest intensifies but will generally be below normal.

Prices of early millet, groundnuts, and maize, which are being harvested, remain similar to last year's levels at the same time. However, the price of rice, sorghum and late maturing millet, which are yet to be harvested and will be late by about two weeks due to the dry spell, are higher by 18, 40, and 24 percent, respectively, compared to last year's levels on Minna market.

Cash crops such as melon and groundnut are available on Bida and Minna markets, the major markets in the area. The supplies for groundnuts are slightly lower on both markets than last year. This is attributable to the dry spell impact in the area, reducing output during the early green harvest. At the same time, demand is higher for groundnuts in Bida area, relative to last year. This is attributable to increased groundnut industrial demand in the area. However, cowpea price declined by 30 percent, while the price of melon increased by 30 percent, relative to last year same time. This is due to high trader carryover stocks of cowpea from the previous year and increased melon demand and reduced supply this year.

Pastoral resources are below last year's levels due to the impacts of the dry spells in the area. However, the livestock body conditions are relatively normal for this time of the year and livestock/cereal terms of trade are favorable to the pastoralists, increasing income and food access. Average size goats sell for NGN8,000 on Bida market compared to NGN7,000 at the same time last year. The price of sheep remain similar. Livestock supply is relatively lower by about 30 percent compared to last year at the same time, likely due to the limited pasture availability and incidences of cattle rustling, as pastoralists divert their heads to the southern areas and as well as into Niger. Increased demand, transportation costs, and feed prices leading up to the Tabaski and end of the year holidays, have contributed to the high goat and cattle prices relative to previous months.

### Assumptions

The most likely scenario for October 2013 to March 2014 is based on the following assumptions:

- **Labor demand/wages:** Labor demand will increase seasonably as the main harvest peaks in November, and then again for off-season activities (fishing and irrigated agriculture) between December - March. Agricultural labor demand, and wages will be below average during October to December due to below average production.
- **Labor supply:** Supply will likely be above average in the area as households affected by the prolonged dry spells will resort to an atypical amount of labor work to access food.
- **Labor migration:** Casual labor migration to major cities such as Abuja, Minna, Lagos, and Kano will begin normally in January 2014, with remittances beginning to be sent home in February or March.
- **Livestock demand:** Livestock demand will increase between October - December due to Tabaski and Christmas holidays, with livestock prices higher than average. Between January and March 2014, livestock prices are expected to see a slight seasonal decline due to the reduced demand.
- **Pastoral conditions :** Pastoral biomass and water resources are below average in the area due to the prolonged dry spell and will deplete early in April, as opposed to May. Pastoralist movement will likely begin in January instead of March, leading to reduced livestock supply and increased livestock prices in the area, and limiting milk and meat availability at homestead.
- **Off-season farming:** Off-season farming activities, such as fishing and irrigated agriculture, will begin in December and will likely be slightly below normal due to the impacts of the dry spells on water levels in local ponds. Water levels in rivers and streams will deplete earlier in February, as against March/April, normally.
- **Main harvest:** The main harvest began in October, and will peak in November/December, increasing somewhat household and market stocks. Long cycle crops such as sorghum, late millet, groundnuts, and rice will be harvested between December and January. Harvest of most crops are delayed by about two weeks due to the prolonged dry spells. However, production of most crops will be below average mainly due to the impacts of the poor rain accumulation and dryness since May.
- **Industrial and trader demand:** Restocking for cereal crops such as maize, sorghum and millet by poultry farmers and food processors will begin in February and March as is normal, contributing to the market demand for cereals.
- **Land preparation:** Activities for the upcoming season will begin as normal in February/March, increasing income earning opportunities.
- **Household food stocks:** Poor household food stocks will deplete 2 to 3 months earlier than normal, as against July due to below average harvests in areas affected by the dry spell impacts, reducing food access. Many households in this area were also severely affected by flooding last year and took on debts to meet basic food needs, which they must now pay back with the new harvest underway, further limiting their household stocks.

### Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Despite the ongoing harvest, production prospects for the area are below normal when household stocks are already low in the absence of carryover stocks due to the below average harvest last year. Household access to food by way of own production is further limited by the necessity of poor households to repay loans from the previous consumption year during this harvest. Agricultural labor demand and wages will be below average during October to December period, decreasing household access to income, and thereby market purchase. Many households will resort to intense labor work, the atypical sale of livestock and crafts to meet only basic food needs from October to December and will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity.

As the main harvest concludes slightly late in December and January and the dry season activities begin, households will increase their food stocks and income. Between February and March, land preparation for the upcoming season will begin, increasing income earning opportunities. From January to March, households will be able to rely more on household stocks and market purchase to adequately access food. Typical income levels will aid in market access and in maintaining livelihoods. During this period households will access food and non-food needs without resorting to atypical coping strategies and they will experience Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) from January to March 2014.



## 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	Full withdrawal of fuel subsidy in January 2014	Increased transportation costs which would likely translate to increased food prices. This would especially reduce food access for urban poor households.
	Increase tariffs for energy/power supply	Increased prices of manufactured goods, below average production of local industries. Disengagement of skilled manpower.
NC-Niger River Floodplain Rice and Sorghum	Substantial quelea bird infestation in December and January during the dry season cultivation	This would cause substantial damage to crops, such as rice. This would reduce crop output and would reduce household access to food.
	Above average dry season activities in the area	This will lead to above average harvest and income earning opportunities. Increased food access and reduce malnutrition rates.
	Intensified civil insecurity in parts of the country	This will lead to limited trade flow into the area and increased food prices, and reduce income opportunities. This will also lead to increased livestock movement into the area causing farmer/pastoralist conflict and early depletion of pasture in the area.
NE millet and cowpeas livelihood zone	Level of conflict increases	This would further reduce trade, economic activities, cause food price increases, and cause expanded population displacements.
	Above-average dry season activities	This will improve food availability and access. Increase income and food access.
	Quicker retreat of water levels in ponds and streams than expected	This will lead to below average dry season production in the area. Water will dry off earlier and reduce fishing and irrigation activities in the area in February/March, rather than in April, normally.
	Civil conflict contained between January and March 2013, due to government efforts to create a bilateral border patrol with Niger	Food flow and trade will improve. Market supply will increase and prices will decline, improving household food access.

## 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.