



GIEWS Country Brief Mozambique

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- National cereal production in 2017 forecast to increase moderately, on account of wetter conditions, but localized production decreases expected in areas affected by dry spells and floods
- Maize prices remained high, but declined in recent month in anticipation of 2017 harvest
- Food insecurity peaked in early 2017 following impact of 2016 drought, while effect of Cyclone Dineo in February 2017 heightened food assistance requirements in southern parts

Cereal production expected to increase in 2017

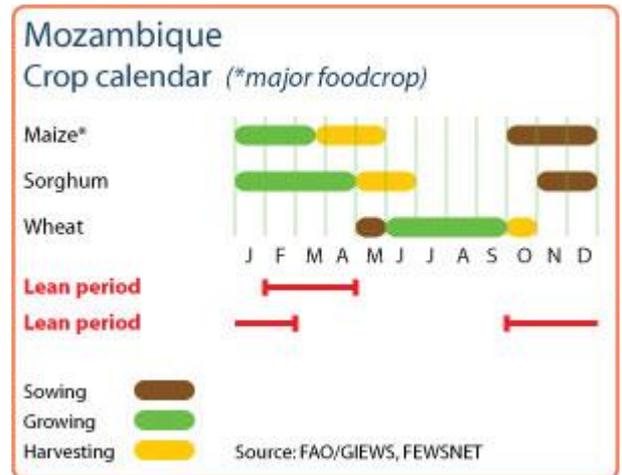
Harvesting of the 2017 cereal crops is expected to begin soon in southern provinces and gradually progress further north. Production prospects at the national level are overall favourable, mostly owing to the wetter conditions this season that are expected to boost yields compared to the dry weather-reduced levels in 2016. However, flooding in southern and central parts, as well as dry weather in the north, which mostly affected coastal areas in Cabo Delgado, are expected to constrain outputs in these parts.

In the south, the passing of Cyclone Dineo in February resulted in the loss of an estimated 29 173 hectares of crops in Inhambane Province, while in addition nearly 136 000 cashew and coconut trees, an important source of income for farming households, were destroyed. In the large maize-producing northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula, cumulative rainfall levels between October 2016 and February 2017 were below average. Although the rainfall deficits are not expected to result in significant crop losses, the reduced seasonal precipitation is likely to constrain yields.

Overall, national cereal production is expected to increase this year, with lower harvests likely in the areas affected by floods and dry spells.

Cereal import requirements increase, following lower 2016 harvest

The modest decrease in the 2016 cereal output, mainly on account of lower maize and rice harvests, resulted in a small increase in the import requirement for the 2016/17 marketing year (April/March), with an estimated drawdown in stocks also



Mozambique
Cereal production

	2011-2015 average	2015	2016 estimate	change 2016/2015
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	1 559	1 877	1 794	-4
Rice (paddy)	339	357	328	-8
Sorghum	246	222	240	8
Others	51	55	52	-5
Total	2 195	2 511	2 414	-4

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

helping to compensate for the reduced domestic output. Despite larger external requirements, the monthly import rate of maize grain from South Africa, the main source of cereals, has been lower than the previous year. This mostly reflects the sharp depreciation of the national currency (metical) against the South Africa rand in 2016, which pushed up import costs. By early 2017, the currency had stabilized, prompting an increase in the monthly import rate.

Tighter cereal supplies and currency depreciation sustains higher prices

Despite moderate price declines in most markets in January and February 2017 in anticipation of the harvest, the overall tighter domestic maize supply situation and inflationary pressure from the currency depreciation has contributed to sustaining generally higher year-on-year maize prices. Furthermore, prices spiked in the southern market of Chokwe to nearly double their year earlier values as of February 2017, due to the impact of Cyclone Dineo, which destroyed crops and infrastructure, causing temporary food supply shortfalls. The national year-on-year inflation rate stood at 21 percent in February 2017.

Food security conditions expected to improve in 2017

A Government-led assessment at the end of 2016 estimated that approximately 2 million people are in need of food assistance until the start of the main harvest, with the impact of Cyclone Dineo inflating the figure by 89 000 for Inhambane Province.

The impact of the previous year's drought on 2016 food production, and consequently households' food supplies, was the main driver of intensified food insecurity conditions in 2016/17. The most affected provinces are Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala, Tete and Zambezia, where the recent assessment found that over 15 percent of the population have poor food consumption levels. Cyclone Dineo, which affected about 0.55 million people, aggravated food security conditions further and the impact on the 2017 harvest in the affected districts of Inhambane Province is expected to prolong stressed conditions in these areas; the United Nations in Mozambique, in support of the Government, released a Flash Appeal, requesting USD 3.31 million to provide food assistance to 89 000 people, while nearly 18 000 households who lost crops are earmarked to receive seed assistance. In addition, conflicts in localized parts of the centre between the Government and an armed opposition group, Renamo, resulted in displacements and impeded humanitarian access. However, an agreed ceasefire in January 2017 has now improved access for humanitarian agencies.

At the national level, food security conditions are expected to improve from April, as households access new supplies from the 2017 harvest, while the recent decrease in maize prices has eased food access constraints.