



**Famine Early Warning  
Systems Network**

# **Mozambique Food Security Update**

**29 April 2003**

## **Highlights**

- The main 2002/03 rainy season has come to an end in most of the country. The season has been marked by erratic rains, with long dry spells and periods of intense rainfall brought by tropical storms. For the season as a whole, rainfall totals have been above normal in the north, normal to below normal in the center, and well-below normal in the south.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has not yet released its preliminary harvest estimates, but yield forecasts indicate production may be above normal in north, below normal in the center and well below normal in south. Because the most productive regions of the country will have a good harvest, total national maize production figures may mask severe regional disparities. A lack of markets for surpluses in the north *and* a growing number of people requiring emergency food aid in the south are both likely in the coming months. As usual, maize is not expected to move from the north to the south because of the high transport costs.
- The World Food Program has extended its Emergency Operations in Mozambique through June 2003 and has increased its number of target beneficiaries to 650,000 people. Food distributions to date have not reached targeted levels, mainly due to resource constraints and lack of capacity among implementing partners. Most of the food aid has been distributed through Food-for-Work programs, but more free food distributions are likely as the food security picture worsens in the south, where the production has been extremely poor. Tete and Gaza provinces had the largest number of beneficiaries in March.
- The WFP/FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission has begun. The Mission will verify production estimates and evaluate the food supply. The National Vulnerability Assessment Committee will begin the next round of assessments in mid-May. It will carry out a household survey in 27 districts most seriously affected by the emergency, examining the nutritional status of children and the short-term food security outlook.
- Retail maize prices have continued to decline in major urban centers. Producer prices have declined very sharply in recent weeks in the main production zones, a trend that is likely to continue as the harvest gets underway. While declining maize prices will help consumers in urban areas and near production zones, similar price drops are not expected in most drought-affected zones in the south where marketing networks and purchasing power remain very weak. Food aid distributions should be monitored closely in the central regions, nearer the productive zones, to avoid creating disincentives for producers.

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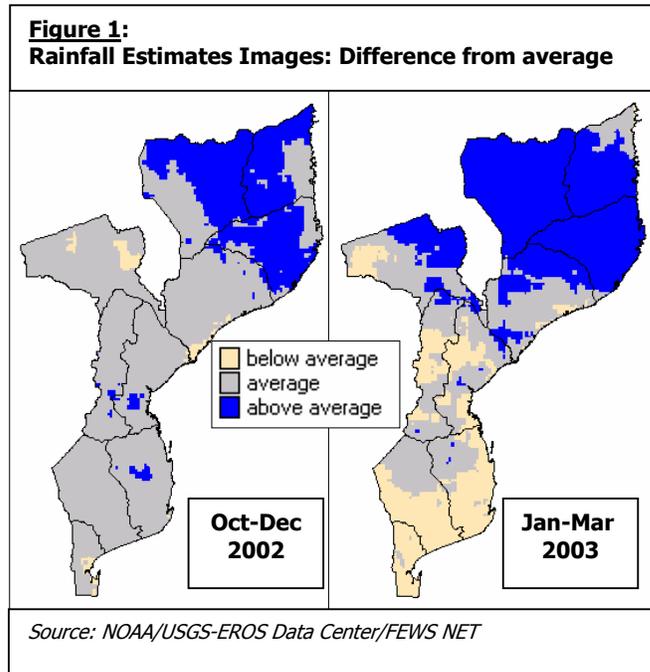
*This monthly bulletin is produced by FEWS NET in collaboration with its partners, including the Early Warning Department (DAP) and the Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER), the National Institute of Meteorology (INAM), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP).*

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## Review of the 2022/03 rainy season

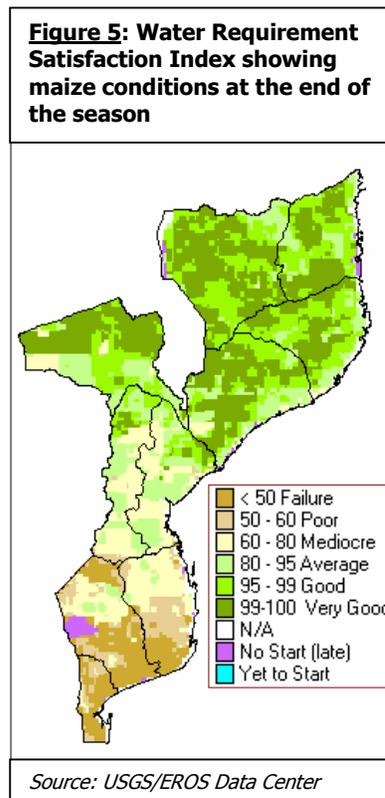
As the main rainy season comes to an end, it is useful to review the performance of the rains and assess the likely impact on crop production. In general, the cropping season 2022/03 has been



characterized by above normal rainfall in north, normal to below normal rains in center and below normal rains in south. The two images on the left show the first half of the season was fairly normal in most of the country, but the second half of the season was below average in the south and part of the central region. For the season as a whole, two major features emerge:

Insufficient rains since December in the southern region and some of the central region led to a severe drought and negative impacts on agricultural production.

Two tropical storms brought excessive rains during the season. Tropical depression Delfina dumped huge amounts of rain on the north and caused severe flooding in January. The central and southern regions were severely affected by cyclone Japhet in March.

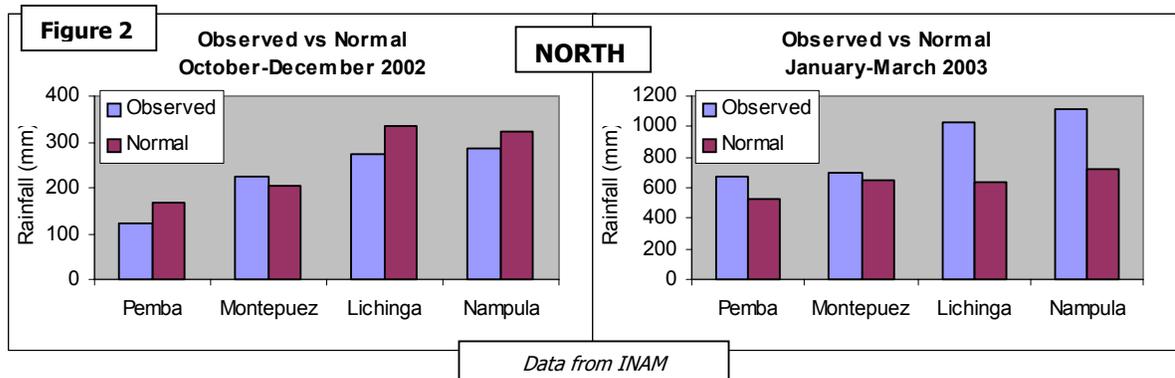


Rains brought by the cyclone improved soil moisture for new planting and brought relief for standing crops such as cassava but came too late for most first season crops. Beira city and its outskirts have been affected repeatedly by low pressure systems. One such system brought more than 470mm of rain between 26-28 March, causing at least three deaths and leaving about 15,000 people homeless.

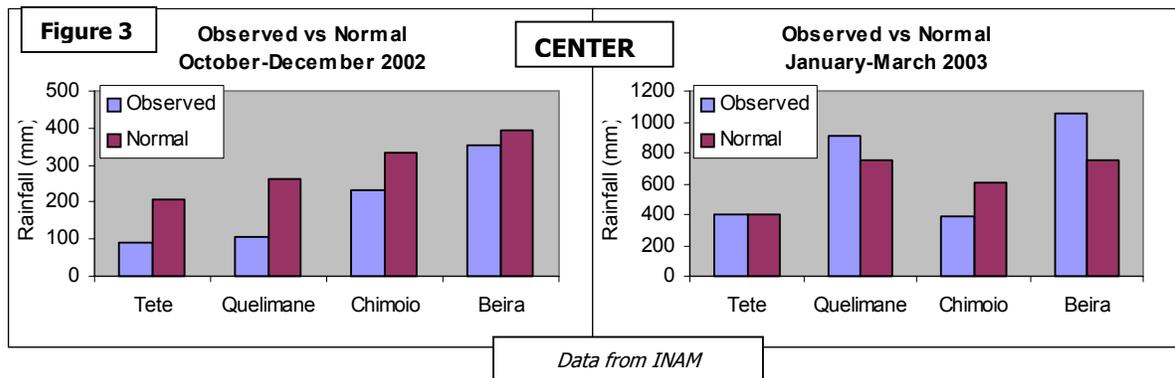
### The end of season Water Requirement Satisfaction Index

The satellite-derived Water Requirement Satisfaction Index (WRSI) provides an indication of a specific crop's potential performance based upon the availability of water and the plants' requirement during the growing season. **Figure 5** shows the status of maize at the end of the 2002/03 cropping season.

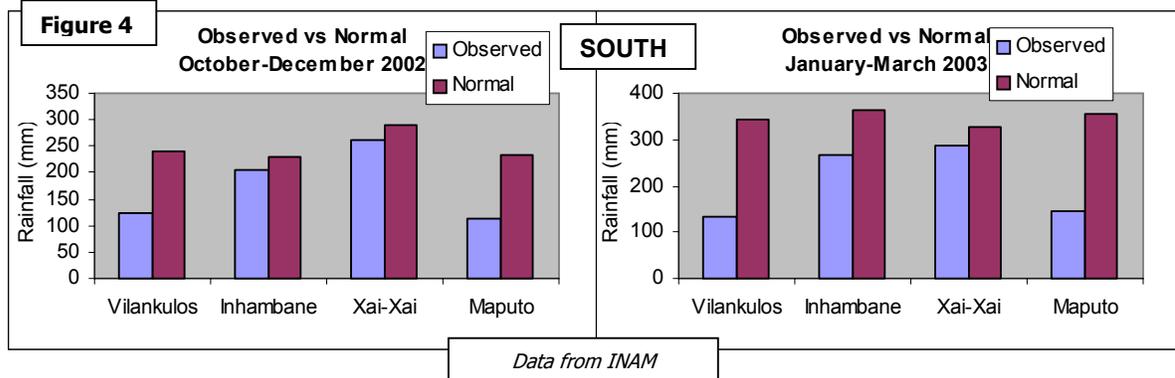
The spatial distribution is consistent with analyses released by FEWS NET and the Ministry of Agriculture. In a recent publication, the Early Warning Unit from the Ministry of Agriculture anticipates in the case of maize, for instance, 92 percent of the potential yields will be realized in the north, 42 percent in central region and only 19 percent in south. (The Ministry of Agriculture has not released the preliminary production estimates for the current season, but has estimated maize yields based on the water satisfaction index (WSI).)



In most of the north, rains started normally during December 2002. Cumulative rainfall in the second half of the season was above normal, in large part due to tropical depression Delfina that hit at the start of 2003. Crops were inundated in the districts of Moma, Angoche, Mogincual and Mogovolas and transportation infrastructure was affected. Despite the problems caused by the flooding, a very good harvest and sizeable surpluses are expected in most of the northern region.



A normal start to the season was followed by a dry spell of 20 to 30 days in Zambézia, Manica and Tete and a long dry spell of 40 days in Sofala province. Southern Sofala, Manica and Tete were seriously affected by drought. Tropical cyclone Japhet (2-6 March) brought some relief to the drought stricken areas but also brought some localized flooding and wind damage to crops and fruit trees.

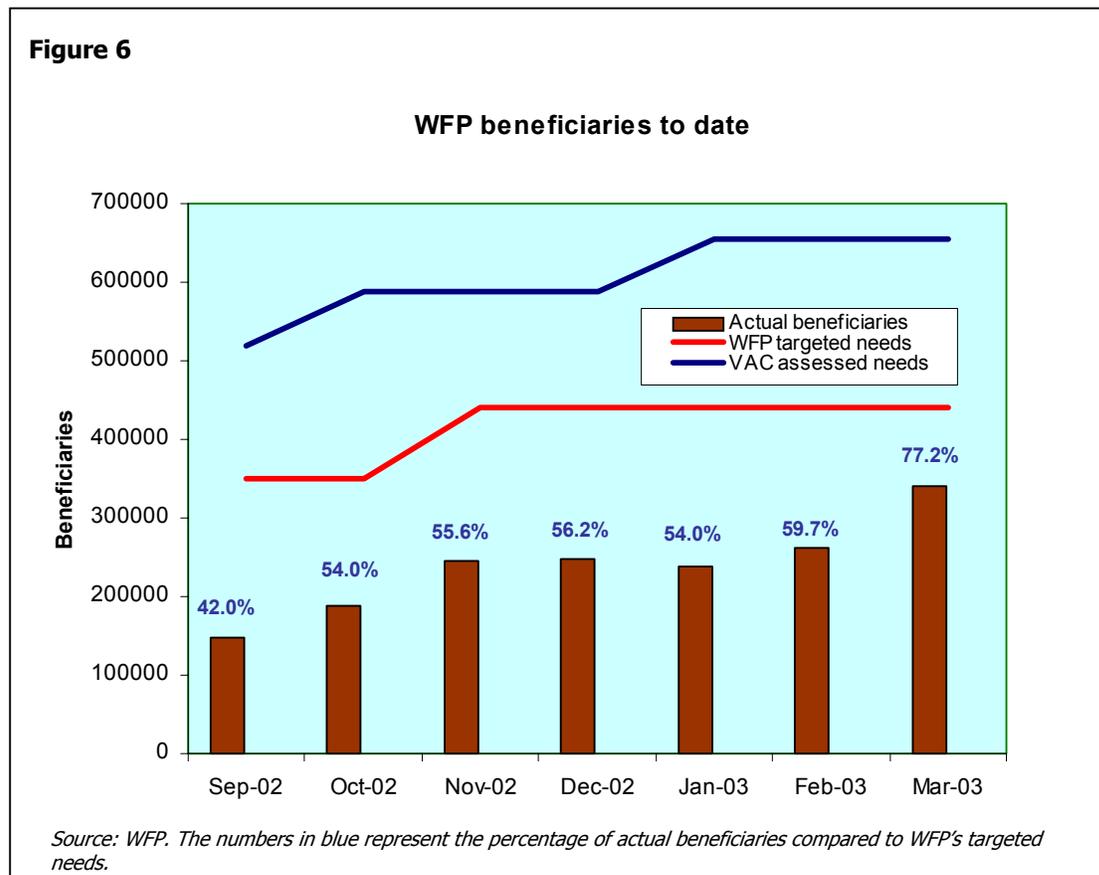


In Inhambane and Gaza, rains started in the last dekad of October followed by a long dry spell of 30 to 40 days that seriously affected the first planting. Maputo registered a slow start with insignificant rains, and that pattern continued throughout the entire season. At the Maputo station, the current season's rainfall from October-January was the lowest since modern records started in 1951/52. Heavy rains in February and March in some areas improved the condition of pasture and cassava and second season planting, but were too late for most first season crops.

## Response to date: WFP's EMOP extension and distributions

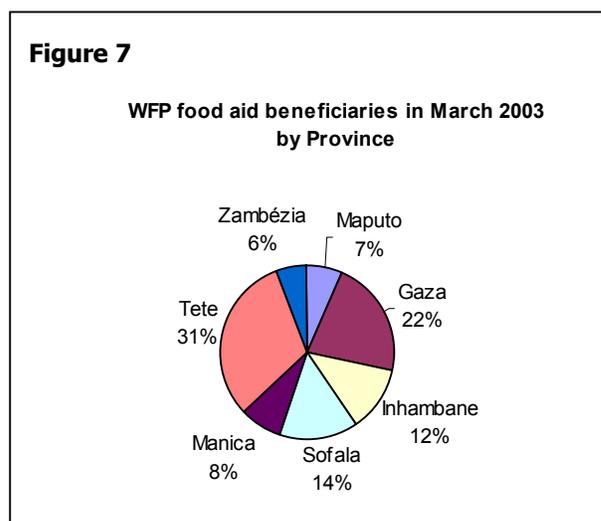
Pockets of severe food insecurity persist in parts of southern and central Mozambique as a result of the continuing drought. In response to the crisis, WFP has extended its Emergency Operation (EMOP) from April until June 2003. Despite the absence of an emergency appeal from the Mozambican Government, a letter of understanding between WFP and the Government has been signed permitting the extension. The needs are expected to continue after June, and WFP is making efforts to ensure there is no break in the pipeline after the expiration of the current EMOP. If resources are available from donors, they hope to complete the pipeline with local purchases from northern Mozambique. Last year, WFP purchased 30,000 MT within Mozambique for programs in Mozambique and neighboring countries.

**Targeted beneficiaries:** From July to October 2002, WFP had planned to meet the emergency food needs of 350,000 people. This number increased to 440,000 from November to March 2003. WFP's targeted needs have been below the number assessed by the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (blue line on Figure 6), because WFP expected the government, NGOs and other donors to contribute to meeting the needs through separate channels. In fact, very little food has been distributed outside the WFP network. Due to the worsening food security situation, WFP plans to increase their targeted number of beneficiaries between April and June 2003 to the level assessed by the VAC (650,000).



Distributions to date: As shown on Figure 6, WFP distributions to date have fallen below their targeted number of beneficiaries. The percentages in blue show the actual number of beneficiaries per month compared to the WFP target. The percentage has increased from less than 50 percent in September 2002 to nearly 80 percent in March 2003.

It should be noted, however, that these percentages are based on WFP's planned beneficiaries, not the total number of people in need according to the VAC.



Food aid distributions have been constrained by a lack of food resources, the requirement to mill genetically modified maize, and limited capacity and resources among implementing partners.

As shown on Figure 7, in March 2003, over 50 percent of the total WFP beneficiaries were in Gaza and Tete provinces. Food distributions have doubled to over 100,000 beneficiaries in Tete in the past three months, after deaths were reported in remote parts of the province in January. The number of beneficiaries in Gaza has also increased recently after field reports indicated a complete crop failure and increasing food insecurity. WFP has been slowly increasing the percentage of Vulnerable Group Feeding (free food),

although more than 90 percent of the total beneficiaries have been reached through Food For Work programs to date.

Other organizations are also providing small amounts of food relief. United Methodist Church has distributed 75 tons of rice to about 12,000 families in Gaza and Inhambane provinces. NGOs are facing difficulties mobilizing resources because of the lack of an emergency declaration or appeal from the government.

## Vulnerability Analysis: Crop and Food Supply Assessment and Household Food Security and Nutrition to begin

### Crop and Food Supply Assessment

As requested by the Government of Mozambique, WFP and FAO (with participation by FEWS NET and other observers) will carry out a mission from April 28 to May 16 to evaluate the crop and food availability until the next harvest. The Mission will confirm the estimates of crop yields and total production. The mission will visit the following districts:

Province	Districts
Maputo	Moamba, Boane, Matutuine, Manhiça and Magude
Gaza	Chicualacua, Mabalane, Chókwe, Manjakaze, Chibuto and Bilene
Inhambane	Funhalouro, Govuro and Vilankulos
Sofala	Dondo, Nhamatanda and Buzi
Manica	Manica, Gondola, Sussundenga, Barue, Guro and Tambara
Zambézia	Nicoadala, Namacurra, Alto Molócue, Mocuba, Maganja da Costa and (Morumbala or Milange)
Tete	Chiuta, Moatize, Cabora Bassa, Angónia, Changara and Magoe
Nampula	Nampula- Rapale, Mogovolas, Nacala-Velha, Momba, Ribaué, Mossuril and Monapo
Cabo Delgado	Pemba-Metuge, Ancuabe, Meluco and Montepuez

## Vulnerability analysis

The national Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) is leading the third round of assessments in the areas most affected by food insecurity, beginning in mid-May. This assessment will be carried out through a survey of approximately 5,000 households in 27 districts. The sample will assess the nutritional status of children and the overall food security situation in the most affected areas. It will assess response to date and prospects for the next 6-9 months and recommend adjustments to interventions as necessary. Food security indicators (coping strategies, consumption patterns, sources of income) and nutrition data (anthropometric measures and demography) will be analyzed in an integrated form. Results are expected in early June. The districts to be visited include:

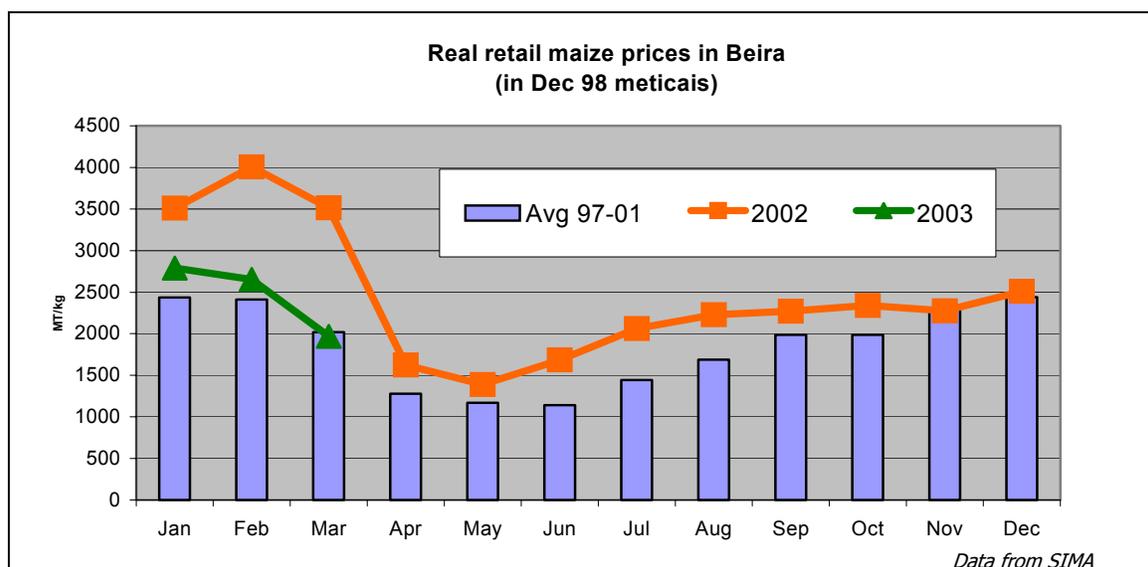
Province	Districts
Maputo	Marracuene, Magude, Matutuine
Gaza	Chicalacula, Mabalane, Massangena Massingir and Chigubo
Inhambane	Funhalouro, Mabote, Govuro, Inhassoro and Panda
Sofala	Chibabava, Machanga, Maringue, and Muanza
Manica	Guro, Macossa, Machaze and Tambara
Tete	Chiuta, Cabora Bassa, Changara, Magoe, Moatize and Mutarara

## Market price update

Retail maize prices have been falling in major urban markets for the last few months. Prices in most markets have fallen to below 4,000 meticaís (Mt) per kilogram (approximately US\$0.16), except in Maputo where prices have remained above 5,000 Mt/kg. In comparison with the two previous years, retail prices are slightly higher this year in many places but prices should decline sharply in the next two to three months as the harvest begins in the major production zones. The price differential between Maputo and other urban markets has remained significantly higher in the last 12 months than in previous years. Two years of poor production in the southern Provinces may be contributing to the relatively higher prices in Maputo. While the decline in maize prices will help poor consumers in urban areas or near productive zones, similar price drops are not likely in the remote rural zones in the south most affected by drought, as marketing networks and purchasing power remain very weak.

When the effects of inflation are removed (using the Consumer Price Index), maize prices seem to be at normal seasonal levels unlike last season when prices remained higher than normal. An analysis of real maize prices in Beira, in the central region, shows that current prices are near the five-year average (1997-2001) when expressed in December 1998 meticaís (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8**



Producer prices have started to fall sharply in major production zones in the north in the last few weeks. The Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA) reports that prices have fallen below 2,000 Mt/kg in many central and northern markets. Prices in Gorongosa, Sofala fell as low as 960 Mt/kg before recovering to about 1,300 Mt/kg. These prices are lower than producer prices at the same time last season in many markets. Figure 9 shows price trends in Mutarara, Tete, near the border with southern Malawi. Prices in the first two weeks of April have fallen very sharply. SIMA reports food aid from WFP was distributed in Mutarara around the same time as the harvest was getting underway, contributing to the decline in producer prices. Careful monitoring of food aid deliveries will be necessary, especially in the central region nearer surplus zones, to avoid creating disincentives for producers.

As reported in previous *Food Security Updates*, there is concern that limited demand from Malawi for surplus production from the north and central regions will cause prices to fall precipitously and affect incentives for production next season. No firm plans to purchase surpluses in northern Mozambique for emergency programs elsewhere have been made, although several organizations may pursue this possibility in the coming months.

**Figure 9**

