AFGHANISTAN Food Security Outlook — October 2018 to May 2019

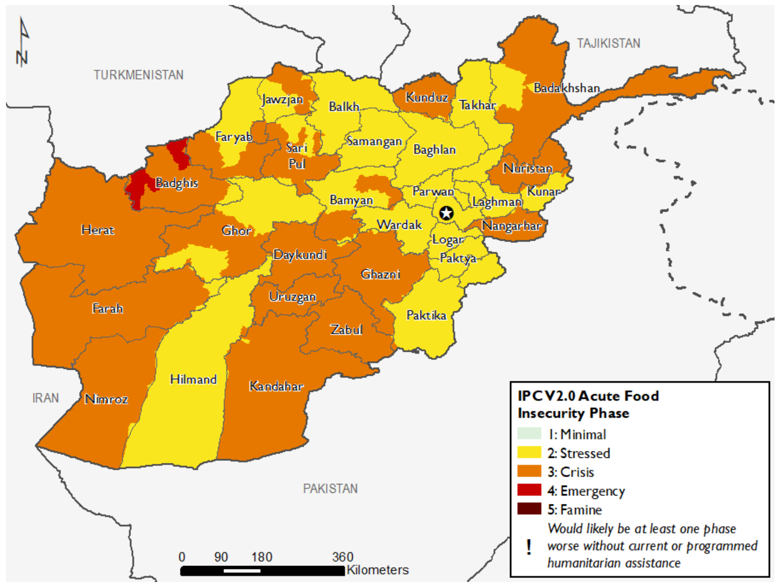
Emergency assistance needs are atypically high through the lean season across the country

KEY MESSAGES

- Due to drought and prolonged conflict, Afghanistan is experiencing its worst food insecurity emergency since the 2011 drought with an atypically high number of households in need of emergency assistance. The drought mainly affected rainfed wheat production and livestock pasture. Other agriculture products did not have as severe production losses, in part because households in some areas used irrigated water for second season and horticulture production.

- Most of the country is currently experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Areas worst affected by drought and conflict in Badghis are currently in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The number of households facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) will increase through the peak of the lean season in April with Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes anticipated in Badakhshan, Badghis, and Daykundi. At the peak of the lean season in early 2019, an estimated 6 to 7 million people will be in need of humanitarian food assistance.

Current food security outcomes, October 2018



Source: *FEWS NET*

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

- To date in 2018, the number of people displaced due to conflict continues to surpass displacement due to drought. IDPs have lost key sources of income and are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through May 2019. Humanitarian food assistance will be necessary through the upcoming winter to mitigate food consumption gaps, as employment opportunities and income during the October to March period are at a seasonal low due to snowfall.

- The national cereal production deficit is expected to be offset by imports, primarily from Kazakhstan and Pakistan, stabilizing market supply and prices. Nonetheless, during the winter months access to trade routes and main food markets will likely be restricted due to snowfall increasing food and fuel prices, which will likely further limit household's purchasing power. Due to the forecast weak El Niño, average to above-average precipitation is anticipated during the 2018/19 wet season, benefiting harvest prospects after the 2019 lean season.

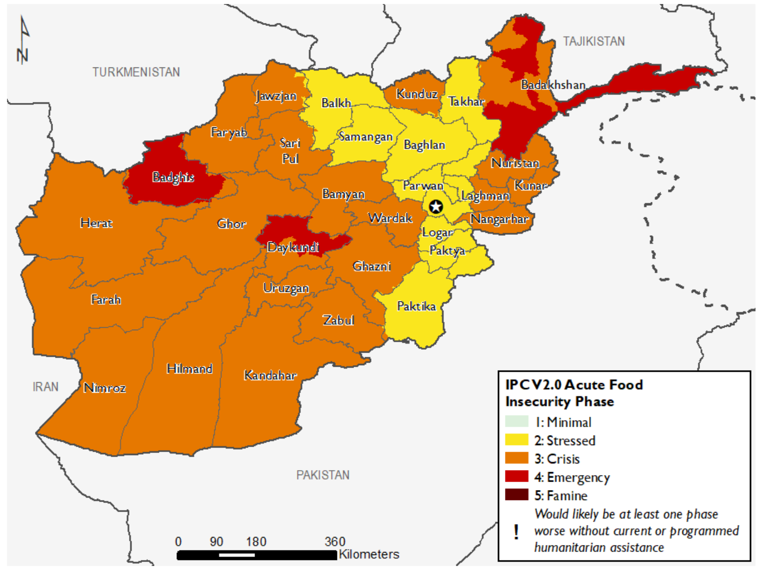
FEWS NET Afghanistan
fewsinquiry.afghanistan@fews.net
www.fews.net/afghanistan

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

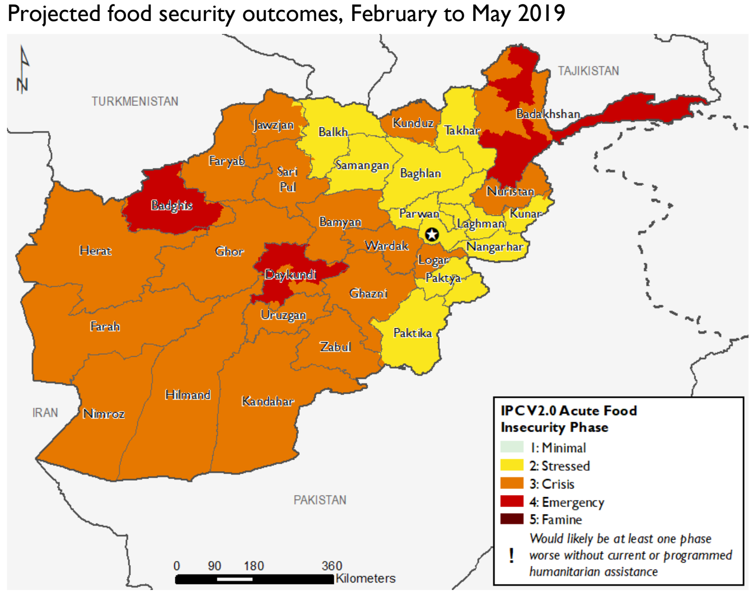
Agriculture Production: Drought has significantly affected rainfed wheat production across the country. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) reported the total wheat production for the 2017/18 agriculture season was just over 3.6 million metric tons (MT) (**Figure 1**). The estimated wheat deficit is about 2.3 million MT based on the needs of the total population. The deficit is expected to be filled, however, through intra-regional trade normal wheat supply and stable wheat prices will continue in markets across the country.

Projected food security outcomes, October 2018 to January 2019



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2019



Source: *FEWS NET*

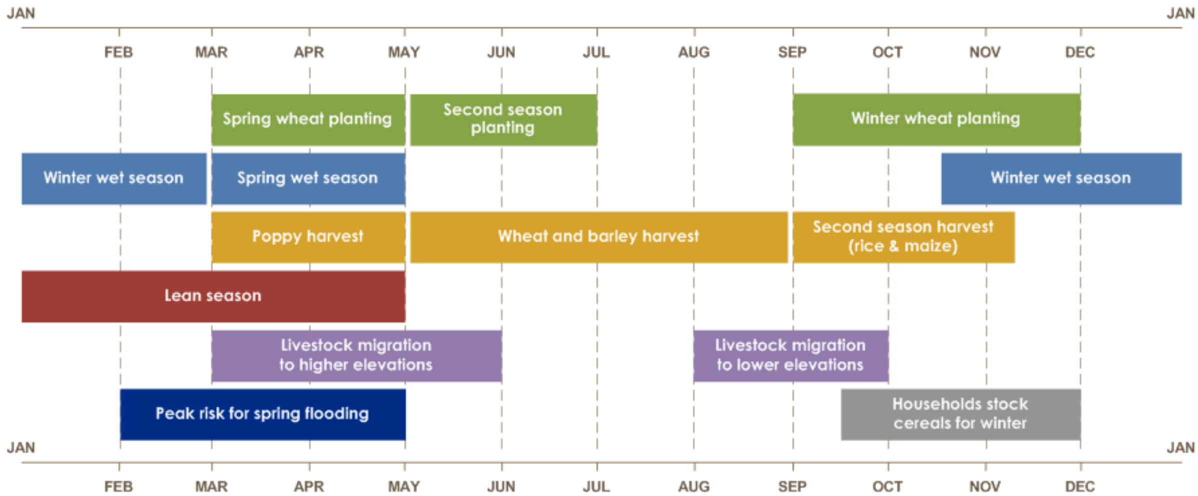
FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

Irrigated wheat production was not as severely impacted as rainfed wheat and the irrigated wheat harvest was only slightly lower than last year. Despite drought conditions across the country, other irrigated agriculture products including, orchards crops, melons, and watermelons were not significantly impacted. Owing to these crops' high profitability, farmers throughout the country paid for irrigated water. Above-average temperatures in the mid to lower elevated areas prevented frost during the flowering stage encouraging fruit development.

The ongoing average fruit and vegetable harvest will contribute to the overall average horticultural products harvest, as they are mainly irrigated crops, except localized areas of Kandahar. However, the potato harvest in the northeast and central highlands was below the five-year average. Early indications for the maize harvest, indicate average to above-average production. Maize is primarily grown as a secondary crop and serves both as grain for human consumption and as fodder for livestock to store for the winter. The rice harvest has started normally, due to the availability of irrigated water. Poppy cultivation was average due to the below average market price compared to last year, as 2017 was a record year.

Currently in areas where there was a harvest, poor households are consuming their own wheat, vegetables and livestock products along with purchased wheat flour, while drought affected households rely solely on market purchases for food. Many poor households typically depend on sharecropping (*dekhani*) for food, however with the drought they are unable to rely on this source. Land preparation has started for winter wheat planting in some areas for the 2018/19 harvest. These activities are limited with area planted not yet known. MAIL has started distribution of 10,000 MT of improved wheat seeds and 20,000 MT fertilizer in 34 provinces to almost 200,000 farmers to support planting. Other organizations such as FAO have also planned seed and fertilizer distributions.

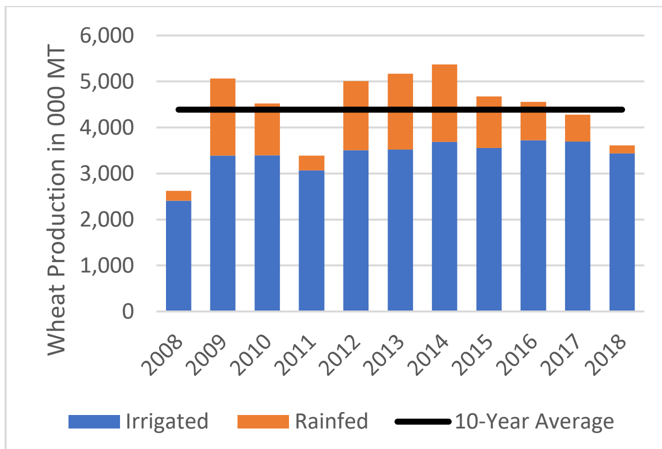
SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET*

Livestock: Livestock migration started atypically early in July as the availability of fodder, pasture land, and water for livestock significantly decreased due to the drought. Additionally, in some area's livestock movements are restricted due to social tensions between different groups, as well as political boundaries between government and nongovernment-controlled areas. Due to the drying of pastures and lack of fodder, livestock owners do not have available fodder to store over the winter. Livestock fodder is available in markets, but high prices restrict household purchase of fodder. Body conditions of sheep, goats, and other livestock have deteriorated with a significant decrease in milk production. Livestock prices started to decrease atypically early in September with price decreases seen across most major markets. Livestock prices on average in monitored markets are 11 percent below the same time last year, with the Faizabad market in the Northeast indicating the largest price decrease of 27 percent. As per field reports, sheep, goats, and other cattle were sold as a result of drought, even though they are high valued assets in poor households. Pastoral households are selling livestock at low prices significantly impacting household's ability to earn income and purchase food and fodder for the winter.

Figure 1. Wheat Production from 2008 to 2018 (000 MT)



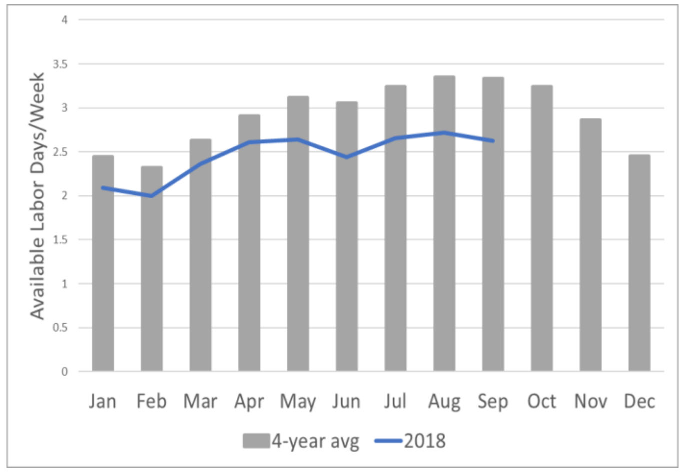
Source: Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Livestock

Income & Labor Opportunities: Currently, a daily wage laborer finds work 2 – 3 days a week and the available labor days atypically low with over a day less of work per week available compared to the past 4 years (**Figure 2**). Daily agriculture labor rates have decreased from the same time last year. Last year, a laborer would receive 400-500 Afghani (AFN) per day while this year the wage for the same work is 250 AFN. Field reports indicate labor wages in rural areas are lower than the reported wages in monitored markets, further restricting household income and purchasing power.

The repatriation of large numbers of undocumented Afghans from Iran and Pakistan has increased labor competition in rural areas and reduced employment opportunities in all sectors. Remittances for income from domestic labor migration from urban areas Afghanistan are below average. Also, remittances from Iran decreased due to the depreciation of the Rial (IRR) against the Afghani (AFN) and broad disruptions to the Iranian economy. In areas where poppy cultivation takes place and land preparation is underway, this is helping to provide some labor opportunities and income for households, even though it is below-average.

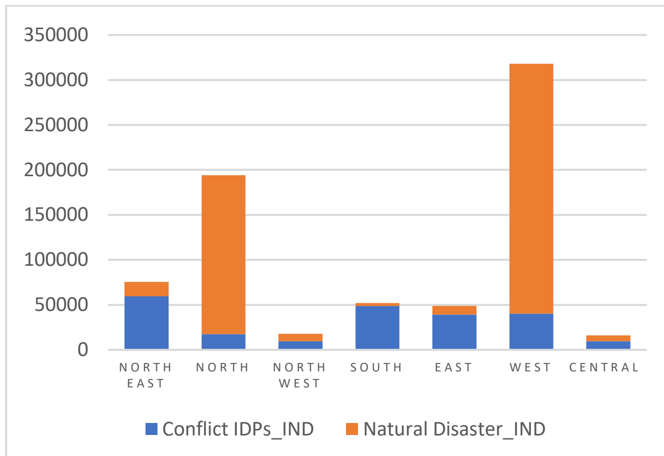
Macroeconomy: The macroeconomy has deteriorated following the disengagement of foreign militaries in the ongoing conflict leading to the continued decrease in investment into the country and in labor opportunities. Specifically, in 2018 the Afghani (AFN) was reached its lowest value against the USD in 15 years at 74 Afghani (AFN) per USD in September. This has negatively impacted imported basic good prices and destabilizing non-food prices. Although staple food prices are mostly stable, due to overall good regional supply.

Figure 2. National Average of Labor Availability in Days per week



Source: WFP

Figure 3. Conflict and Natural Disaster Displacement Trends by Region in 2018



Source: IOM_DTM

Markets, prices, and terms or trade: Cross-border trade is functioning normally, as high-value horticultural crops are exported to Pakistan while wheat, wheat flour, rice, vegetable oil, sugar, and other necessities are imported from Pakistan and other countries across Central Asia. Wheat imports are stable from Kazakhstan, the region's largest exporter and importer into Afghanistan. The cereal import requirement mostly composing of wheat for Market Year (2018/19) is forecast to be 8 percent higher than last year and more the 25 percent above the five-year average. Typical marketing channels for importing wheat and wheat flour from Pakistan and Kazakhstan are contributing to supply and price stability in wheat markets.

In September, wheat prices slightly increased in main markets, with slightly higher prices in remote markets. The average wheat flour price slightly increased since July due to a decrease in supply and negligible price increases in Pakistan. It should be noted the price of wheat does not largely fluctuate and will remain near the five-year average as the regional wheat supply remains stable. As a structurally food-deficit country with high dependence on market purchases of staples among poor households, Afghanistan is vulnerable to any sudden spikes in food prices, which have been reported at the local level in and around conflict areas.

The wage labor to wheat terms of trade (ToT), compared to the month on month five-year average has deteriorated most significantly in both Faizabad (-25.8 percent) and in Nili (-9 percent) markets and remains below the five-year average. In 2018 the average, the ToT in monitored markets decreased and in September was equal to the five-year average. This has contributed to the lower purchasing power for poor households relying on labor wages for market purchases.

Conflict: The withdrawal of most ISAF forces in 2014, resulted in an increase in insecurity and political instability in recent years. The conflict and security environment continued to degrade over the last few years as fighting between military, non-government armed groups, the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National police (ANP) increased. The number of fatalities increased in 2018 for civilians and all previous mentioned groups. The insecure environment has broad impacts on the ability of Afghans to maintain their normal livelihoods, leaving many to adjust frequently to new local realities that alter aspects of daily life such as labor opportunities, market access, access to field for farming and grazing land for livestock, and the ability to engage in temporary migratory labor.

Displacement: Continued insecurity and conflict is driving increased displacement in 2018, with an estimated 282,000 people displaced this year to date by conflict and over 220,000 people displaced by drought through end of October in Badghis, Ghor, and Herat Provinces, according to UNOCHA. Insecurity continues to significantly contribute to food insecurity across the country with some areas not under control of government, where the armed group in control will illegal tax farmers about 10 percent of their production. Most displacement from the drought is occurring in the Northwestern part of the country.

Displacement from both conflict and drought disproportionately affects poor households who rely on rainfed agriculture and labor for income to purchase staple foods. Displaced households are experiencing major disruptions to normal livelihood activities, reports of restricted physical access to food have been limited to localized areas. In many cases due to displacement households have left their farms unattended, small livestock such as sheep and goats, and other household assets.

Undocumented Returnees and Remittances: Over 15,000 documented individuals returned to Afghanistan mostly from Pakistan (13,051 individuals) and Iran (1,839 individuals) since the beginning of the year. However, over 687,000 undocumented returnees from Pakistan and Iran returned to Afghanistan in 2018 to date (October, 2018 IOM). Undocumented returns from Iran increased from more than 200,000 to over 535,000 between January and October 2018. During the same period in 2017, 235,000 undocumented returnees were reported. This is largely driven by recent political and economic challenges in Iran including the massive currency devaluation. The economic conditions in Iran and restrictions on Afghan workers by the Iranian government have restricted employment opportunities in Iran. Remittances from Iran is an important source of income for many poor households. The high number of returnees from Iran has decreased the quantity and frequency of remittances and therefore decreased the income of many households across the country. Households heavily reliant on remittances will likely be unable to fully replace this source of income with other employment activities.

Current Food Security Outcomes

Due to drought and severe reduction in rainfed wheat production, household food stocks are significantly below-average restricting household food consumptions as households plan for the winter months in many areas. Households with access to ground water and second season cropping have a below-average harvest, slightly mitigating the effects of the drought. Most poor households are currently relying on income from agriculture and non-agriculture labor as well as remittances from urban areas in Afghanistan or abroad to purchase food, although these sources of income are below-average.

Across the country many households have lost their source of livelihood assets or crops due to drought, conflict, natural disasters, and in some cases pests or disease. As a result, these households are employing coping mechanisms such as borrowing, using credit, consuming seeds, selling off assets, limiting the frequency and quantity of meals, and spending their savings to attempt to close their food consumptions gap. These households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity, particularly among drought affected households, recently displaced households, undocumented returnees, and poor households affected by the lack of labor opportunities and reduced purchasing power. Specifically, in Faryab, the impacts of the drought were not as severe as previously anticipated due to irrigated crops and the availability of agriculture labor opportunities in preparation for winter wheat with areas experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are present in areas of Badghis, having been affected by both conflict and drought restricting a household's ability to cope and access food, as they normally depend heavily on rainfed agriculture and livestock grazing. Across the country declining purchasing power, disruption of normal livelihoods due to drought and conflict, and poor rainfed staple performance during the most recent agricultural season will contribute to an increase in food assistance needs since as compared to 2011.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for October 2018 to May 2019 is based on the following assumptions:

- Based on the current forecast of a weak El Nino the onset of precipitation is anticipated to be erratic with cumulative rainfall for the season likely to be average to above-average. Therefore, cropping conditions are expected to improve with the possibility of flooding through the end of the rainy season over northern Afghanistan.

- Climate models indicate above-average temperatures are anticipated throughout the country through February 2019. Therefore, it is assumed the early winter months will not be severely cold.

- Seasonal access to markets will likely be limited during the winter from January to March but resume to normal in late March or early April when the snow starts to melt.

- Due to the likelihood of an El Nino, area planted is expected to average, with land preparation and agriculture labor demand close to the normal seasonal trend. Inputs for planting and agriculture tools households will likely be obtained through household coping strategies such as borrowing and according to conversations with officials, planned seed and fertilizer distributions from MAIL and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

- Imports of wheat flour from Kazakhstan and Pakistan are anticipated to meet Afghan market demands due to normal production and functioning of markets in the region. Domestic wheat flour prices will likely remain stable throughout this period with normal seasonal variation.
- As most grazing pastures did not regenerate normally, livestock body conditions will continue to deteriorate through April with prices expected to be significantly below average. Livestock deaths during the winter through February will likely be above-average.
- Imported food and non-food prices, besides wheat are anticipated to be slightly higher than average as the Afghani continues to depreciate against to the dollar.
- Remittances from labor migrants will likely remain stable from Persian Gulf countries; however, remittances will likely be below-average from Iran due to worsening economic conditions in Iran, high number of returnees, and devaluation of the Iranian Rial (RR) against the afghani (AFN).
- With the onset of winter, labor opportunities will likely seasonally decrease throughout the country. Demand for construction labor will also likely be half of usual peak-season employment and agricultural labor opportunities are anticipated to decline by 80-90 percent. This will most likely lead to high competition labor to due migrant returnees.
- Households with the ability cope are anticipated to use the following strategies: selling livestock, using credit, selling household assets, reducing the quantity and frequency of meals, sending household members to beg, and working for food.
- Military operations, civil insecurity, conflict and displacement will likely be similar or worse during the projection period driving further displacement, specifically leading up to the Presidential election, currently scheduled for late April 2019.
- The World Food Program (WFP) and other local and international humanitarian partners are expected to complete typical winterization programs before the onset of winter, improving household food stocks during the outlook period.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Across the country, the primary source of staple food and income are below-average as the rain-fed wheat harvest was severely impacted by drought. Even as market wheat prices and supply remain average, household purchasing power will likely continue to decrease as households have below-average incomes, normal livelihoods are disrupted, and displacement continues due to conflict and drought. Households heavily reliant on casual labor for income will likely continue to have lower incomes compared to past years, mainly due to the reduction in foreign and domestic investment and spending. Below-average livestock prices will likely continue to have a negative impact on agro-pastoral and pastoral households as they will likely have to sell livestock to purchase fodder at higher than normal prices to feed their remaining livestock.

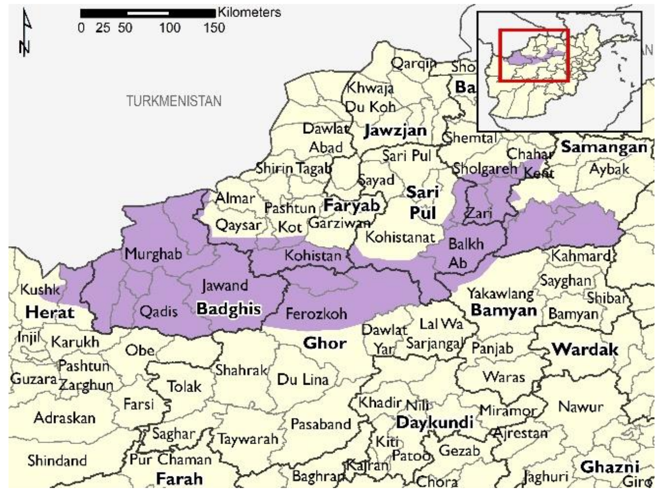
Many poor households in affected areas are likely to have limited capacity to sufficiently stock food prior to winter and will likely face difficulty meeting their basic food and non-food needs during early 2019 until spring agricultural activities begin and employment opportunities are available. Staple food stocks on average will last 3-5 months (December through March) across most of the country, which is atypical as stocks usually last through at least April. Poor households affected by the drought and below-average precipitation will deplete their stocks as early as September. Poor households in drought and conflict affected areas will use coping strategies to mitigate the impact of stock depletion atypically early likely through rationing food, among other strategies.

Due to the likelihood of a weak El Nino, area planted is expected to average, with land preparation and agriculture labor demand close to typical seasonal trends. Inputs for planting and agriculture tools will likely be obtained through seed and fertilizer distributions from MAIL, FAO, and other organizations and household coping strategies such as borrowing and. Livestock body conditions during early spring will likely return to normal increasing the availability of livestock products and income from the sale of livestock at average prices. Employment opportunities throughout most of the country has been negatively impacted and will likely remain below average in terms of availability and wages.

Conflict and political instability will continue to damage and undermine local economies, leading to further displacement and the disruption of livelihoods. Conflict and insecurity will likely further deteriorate household food security by damaging food stocks and inhibiting access to markets. Newly and recently displaced households will likely have difficulty finding sources of food and income.

Food consumption among poor households affected by drought, conflict, and below-average remittances will decrease through the end of lean season. These households will likely rely on credit purchase and/or in-kind payment form the villagers or negative coping strategies. These strategies will help households close their food consumptions gaps, but is anticipated to be insufficient. Livelihoods will also be negatively impacted through asset depletion during the lean season, but households will not deplete all their livelihood assets, saving some resources to participate in the next agriculture season. Seasonally and due to impacts of drought, the nutritional condition will likely deteriorate with atypically high levels of acute malnutrition in children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Figure 4. Reference map for Livelihood Zone 20



Source: FEWS NET

Due to the broad geographic distribution of labor markets, widespread conflict, poor harvest, and early depletion of food stocks food security outcomes throughout most of the country is expected to deteriorate from Stressed (IPC Phase 2) to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) with the onset of winter. At the peak of the lean season in March/April, there will be an estimated 6 to 7 million people in need of emergency food assistance. Poor households throughout the country, particularly in western areas are expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through May 2019, as well as newly displaced persons and many undocumented returnees. Households most severely affected by the dry conditions, insecurity, poor incomes, and depleted assets will likely face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes through the lean season particularly in Badakhshan, Badghis, and Daykundi Provinces. However, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are anticipated for in Kunar, Laghman and Nangahar for the February to May 2019 period as the winter ends earlier than in most parts of the country with the agriculture production activities beginning in February/March. Seasonally, labor opportunities will increase at the end of winter with spring wheat cultivation and labor wages will likely be seasonally average. At the same time, the normal availability of pasture areas will result in normal livestock migration at the end of winter and early spring.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Livelihood Zone 20 – Northwest Agro-Pastoral Zone

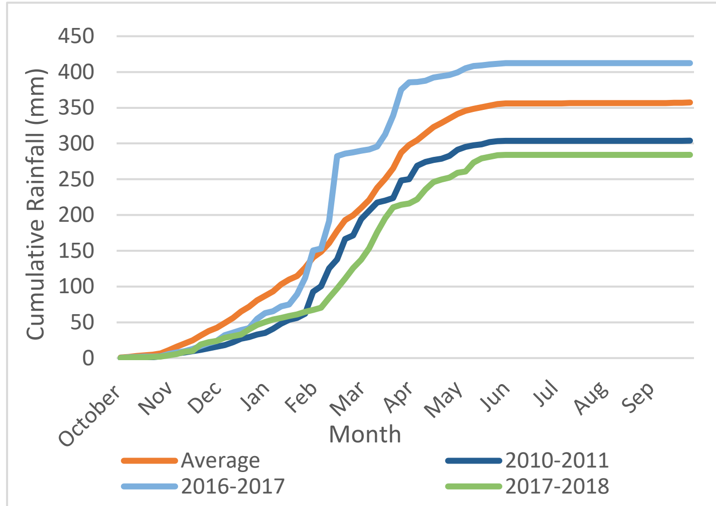
Current Situation

Overall agriculture production, but specifically rainfed wheat production was negatively affected by extended dry spells, localized drought (**Figure 5)**, and above-average temperatures. According to the Wheat Production Report from MAIL, wheat production was significantly below-average and last year's harvest across this zone. Market stocks are average and stable with normal imports from Kazakhstan. Crops sold for income, such as melons, watermelon, pistachio, and cumin (zeera), were negatively impacted by the drought, but in some areas, there was a better harvest due to the availability of paid irrigated water to orchard crops. Due to the devaluation of the Afghani (AFN) and seasonal trends, staple food and non-food prices will be higher than the same time last year. In Herat Market, low-grade and high-grade rice prices increased 15 and 12 percent respectively, compared to last year. Both qualities of rice are roughly 25 percent above the five-year average.

Pastoralists reported increased difficulty accessing forage for livestock due to drought and limited access to grazing lands as many areas are controlled by anti-government forces. Selling livestock is typical for August and September as pastoralist communities prepare for winter to buy fodder for their remaining livestock. Although this year, livestock sales increased 30 to 40 percent compared to last year. Along with preparing for winter, many drought-affected households have atypically sold their livestock for cash, to purchase fodder and feed, and the overall inability to properly care for the animals. Sheep prices (1-year-old, female) have decreased 17 percent since the same time last year and are 14 percent below the five-year average. Poor livestock body conditions have contributed to the reduction in prices as well as the increased supply on the market.

Poor households also earn income from a variety of sources, including causal labor, remittances, and selling goods, in which payment is usually in-kind and through other non-monetary means. These informal payments for goods or services have decreased because of the drought and general poor economic environment for casual labor and labor wages in both the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. Employment opportunities and formal wages have decreased since last year and are below the five-year average. Remittances from Iran have declined to atypically low levels, negatively impacting households who heavily rely on this for income. The number of remittances decreased by 40 percent this year as the quantity per remittance decreased 50 percent. Livestock products are a food source, but more importantly a source of cash through the sale of dairy products, wools, and animals. This income source is atypically low for this time of year as livestock body conditions are poor. Poor households purchasing power has decreased due to below-average incomes, even as wheat prices remain stable.

Figure 5. Comparison of Cumulative Precipitation in Badghis province



Source: USGS/*FEWS NET*

A SMART survey in July 2018 carried out by Action Against Hunger (ACF) in Badghis indicated the GAM prevalence was 10 percent (6.6-15.0 95% CI). Based on the WHO classification of the severity of malnutrition, Badghis is currently classified as "Serious". The prevalence of GAM according to a 2016 ACF SMART survey was 6.5 percent (4.8-8.8 95% CI) suggesting a deterioration of the nutrition situation from 2016 to 2018. Badghis along with the other provinces making up this livelihood zone, have a high prevalence of tuberculosis. Most people do not have access to safe drinking water. The ACF SMART Survey in 2018 attributed the higher rate of malnutrition to drought and its effects on livelihoods and food security.

October is normally the post-harvest period where households have access to own production and labor opportunities and livestock are in good condition, however this year household food stocks and income are well below-average. Many poor households affected by drought have lost most or all their main season harvest and are facing very limited labor opportunities. Similarly, conditions for livestock are poor, leading many households to sell-off animals at below-average prices. Many of these households are likely facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity. Similarly, conflict affected households and IDPs, particularly those who have lost those who have lost their houses and key tools or other assets necessary for their livelihoods, are likely facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The worst affected areas by drought in Badghis are likely in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) as many of these households have sold their livestock and most of their livelihood assets and have lost their livelihoods. It is important the government reports the distribution of humanitarian assistance by the local government and partner agencies helping to mitigate the impact of the drought, however FEWS NET does not have enough information to incorporate the impacts on food and income sources into our analysis.

Assumptions

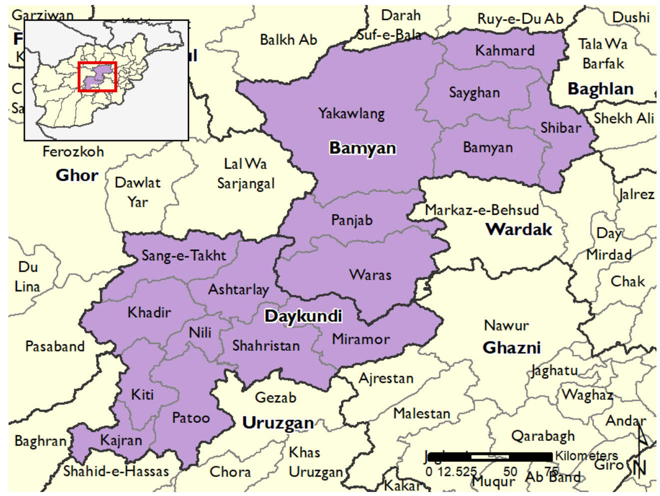
In addition to the national level assumptions, the most likely scenario for Livelihood Zone 20 is based on the following assumptions:

- Grazing land and fodder availability for livestock is a significantly below-average, pastoralists may face difficulties feeding their animals specifically as the wet season and winter start.
- Due deteriorated livestock body conditions and winter, livestock deaths will likely be above average during second half of the scenario period. Households will likely sell the portion of livestock they cannot keep alive and will likely attempt to keep female livestock.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Poor household's dependent on rainfed crops, on-farm labor, and livestock for food and income sources are the most affected by the drought and ongoing conflict. In a normal year, households harvest or earn enough income to meet their minimum food needs. However, poor conditions for rainfed crops including pasture for livestock will likely continue to negatively impact household food and income sources. The significantly below-average harvest limiting agriculture labor opportunities, poor pasture, and livestock body conditions will most likely continue to restrict household income and their ability to stock food and fodder for the colder months. Displacement due to the drought, conflict and insecurity, will likely continue to drive people from their homes moving to areas within or outside the province.

Figure 6. Reference map for Bamyan and Daykundi Provinces



Source: *FEWS NET*

During the October/November period most households typically stock food for winter, however many poor households with limited own production and labor income, or who have been heavily affected by conflict will likely be unable to stock food normally for the winter lean season. These households will likely face widening food consumption gaps until spring labor opportunities become available. Many drought-affected households, particularly those households who lost their rainfed crops, a portion of their livestock, and key tools or other assets necessary for their livelihoods will likely continue to face Crisis (Phase 3) outcomes with the number of households facing these outcomes increasing through the projection period. Households severely impacted by drought who are unable to stock food and have significantly below-average incomes will likely sell their productive assets attempting to close their food consumption gaps along with displaced households are expected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) from October to May 2019.

Affected households will employ some of the following coping strategies to mitigate more severe incomes including; migrating to seek labor opportunities where there is a maize or rice harvest, migrating to urban areas, reduce expenditures on non-staple food and on non-food purchases, working for food, using credit, and restricting the quantity and frequency of meals. Local government and humanitarian partners have pledged to assist in providing food assistance, livelihood support and animal food for the affected households before the start of winter. Information regarding ongoing and projected humanitarian assistance is limited, but it is expected the assistance will mitigate outcomes.

Bamyan and Daykundi Provinces

Current Situation

Bamyan and Daykundi Provinces are mostly covered by high-elevation rangeland, with areas of irrigated land along river valleys and streams with very limited arable land. However, irrigated agriculture production (potato, wheat, almonds, and other crops) and related labor opportunities remain significant livelihood activities as well as livestock rearing. A major income source is agriculture however, households also heavily rely on remittances from Iran and other countries (Turkey, Europe, and Australia). Generally, there are few labor opportunities during the winter months, leading to the migration of members of poor households to areas within Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan looking for seasonal work.

Due to inconsistent precipitation, low fertility of rainfed lands, and land degradation rainfed agricultural production is only significant food and income source in localized areas. Although irrigated agricultural production remains a key component of the local economy, household land holdings has decreased with population growth over time and most poor households rely on additional sources for food and income. The availability of irrigated water was reported to be lower than normal during the fall planting season, leading to an estimated 40 percent reduction in winter wheat cultivation in some areas. Based on MAIL's report of the 2017/18 wheat harvest there is a 27,000 MT deficit in Bamyan and a 56,000 MT in Daykundi. However, this is a deficit producing area and typically has consistent market stocks from imports.

Drought was accompanied by smaller shocks in the area including an earlier than normal frost and crop diseases causing a 60% reduction in overall orchard products production. Specifically, in Daykundi there was a reported 32 percent decrease in almond production. Livestock was also negatively affected by drought with the deterioration of livestock body conditions, decreasing livestock market prices and milk production. The price of sheep in the main reference market, Nili is 5 percent below last year. The poor production of fodder in 2018 has limited supply and increased market prices preventing many livestock keepers from storing enough fodder to have a supply of feed for the entire winter.

Remittances are below-average due to the devaluation of the Iranian Rial and large number of returnees. Remittances from Iran typically increase in frequency and quantity at this time of year because households use the funds to stock food and fodder for the winter. However, this year, the quantity of funds sent back to family members does not allow households to meet their food needs. The volume of remittances unexpectedly decreased by 40-50 percent this year according to key informants. In Bamyan Province, between 20-25 percent of the population has been working in Iran specifically from households with limited agriculture land and livestock to supplement their income. Recently migration from Bamyan to Iran has decreased due to economic challenges in Iran.

Marginal livelihoods and chronic food insecurity are typical in Daykundi and Bamyan Provinces, including an extended period of depleted household food stocks, poor market access, and limited income-earning opportunities, which leave poor households vulnerable to shocks to normal livelihood activities to access food and income. Currently, poor households and newly returned populations, affected by drought and decreased remittances with significantly below-average incomes are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Figure 7. Top 20 districts hosting the most IDPs October 2018, by region

Rank	District	Province	IDPs
1	Herat	Herat	179,296
2	Kabul	Kabul	78,677
3	Behsud	Nangarhar	74,536
4	Kandahar	Kandahar	69,455
5	Guzara	Herat	56,489
6	Obe	Herat	55,635
7	Injil	Herat	55,550
8	Pashtunzarghun	Herat	53,226
9	Zaranj	Nimroz	47,879
10	Farah	Farah	42,269
11	Khost (Matun)	Khost	40,603
12	Shinwar	Nangarhar	35,605
13	Jalalabad	Nangarhar	31,223
14	Surkhroad	Nangarhar	30,366
15	Khawjaghar	Takhar	28,045
16	Baghlan-e-Jadid	Baghlan	24,675
17	Nahr-e-Shahi	Balkh	23,207
18	Chaprhar	Kunduz	22,759
19	Pul-e-Alam	Logar	21,747
20	Chardarah	Kunduz	3,832
Total			975,074

Source: *IOM_DTM*

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions in the National Overview section of this report, the October 2018 – May 2019 analysis for Bamyan and Daykundi is based on the following assumptions:

- Household purchasing Power will likely deteriorate further, and households will likely rely on credit from stores, relatives and/or rely on in-kind payments from the better-off.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Poor households will face increasing food deficits due to the winter with restricted physical access contributing to the deterioration of food security outcomes. These households will employ a variety of livelihood coping strategies, including permanent migration abroad and to other provinces in Afghanistan for work, selling more livestock, and selling productive and basic assets to cover their food consumption needs. As spring begins, income-earning opportunities from both agricultural and non-agricultural sources will likely seasonally increase although will likely not fully restore incomes to buy food. Limited access to the health facilities coupled with limited food sources during the period with seasonal diseases outbreaks, could potentially lead to the deterioration of nutrition outcomes.

Primarily due to the reduction of income from remittances over the past two years, coupled with poor local harvests and rangeland conditions in 2017 and 2018 leading to reduced herd sizes, livestock-related income many households will likely face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity outcomes in Bamyan through May 2019. Many households in Daykundi have very few coping strategies as they have already consumed their seeds, spent their savings, sold most of their livestock, below-average employment opportunities and had a below-average harvest. The worst affected households are anticipated to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food security outcomes as they rely heavily on labor opportunities, which are expected to remain below average.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Drought-Affected Households

Conflict related displacements are greater than during the same time period in 2017, conflict has displaced more households than the drought. To date an estimated 282,000 have been displaced by conflict and another estimated 223,000 have been displaced by drought in the western region, according to UNOCHA. Conflict and drought will most likely continue displacing households through May 2019. Displacement affects both poor and better off households. Better-off IDPs migrate to urban centers, while other IDPs tend to migrate to safer areas within the same region. IDPs are particularly vulnerable because of the loss of traditional livelihoods, poor networks, and skills to enter an already-weak national labor market. Displacement affects households differently, as needs, vulnerabilities, and protection risks evolve over time due to the exhaustion of coping mechanisms and often only basic emergency assistance is provided following initial displacement.

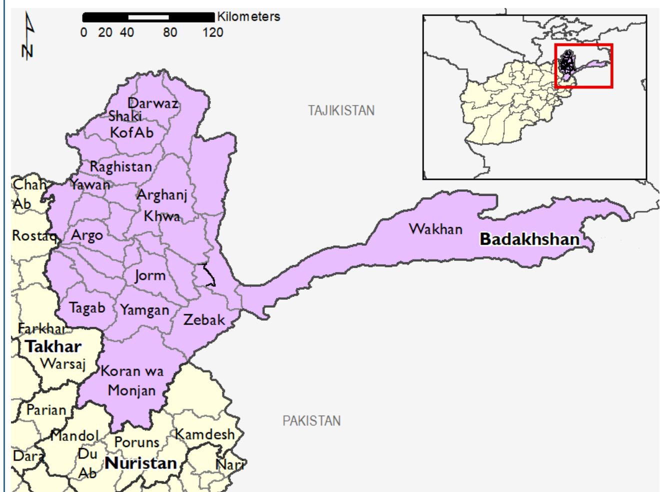
A REACH assessment in 2018 of IDPs in 46 hard to reach districts due to active fighting and constraints improved by non-state actors, found most of the assessed population had difficulty accessing markets, a majority of households only had food stocks for 1-3 weeks, and households coped by relying on less preferred and expensive foods, borrowing food, and sending male children to work. This survey also compared two different time periods, from the height of the lean season to the harvest period. Following normal seasonal trends, households increased their coping strategies and reported having reduced household stocks, with market access continuing to be constrained. The rational for market constraint included distance to market, safety concerns, and high prices.

IDPs receive emergency assistance from local charities and relief organizations. However, it is unlikely IDPs will receive support for permanent relocation and are expected to return to their place of origin when the opportunity presents itself. As IDPs are often in unfamiliar environments, they have not established their livelihoods or found new sources of income following displacement. They typically live in camps though a large number live among a host population either in informal settlements or within the host community. There is also a risk, host communities will not accept IDPs because of the stress placed on resources and livelihood opportunities. IDPs continue to flee their homes due to conflicts, especially the recently displaced, are at a disadvantage compared to other migration groups. As per the IOM, the top 20 districts hosting the most IDPs **(Figure 7)**, are potentially susceptible to social instability induced by the large influx of returnees and IDPs, who face inadequate access to basic services and limited job opportunities, jeopardizing reintegration prospects and fueling secondary displacement.

Due to conflict and drought displacement is assumed to increase over the scenario period from October 2018 to May 2019. During the second half of the scenario period (February 2019 to May 2019), the number of labor opportunities may drop in rural areas after the ongoing second season harvest and winter wheat planting is complete. Also, competition for urban labor opportunities increases during the winter and IDPs often do not know how to find the opportunities, know they exist, or lack the more specialized skills for winter labor in urban areas. IDPs with limited ability to replace lost sources of income and newly displaced will likely remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from October 2018 to May 2019 and depend heavily on support from host communities and from humanitarian assistance. The highest levels of food insecurity will likely be among the most recently displaced in drought affected areas and displaced by conflict. It is important to note due to the inaccessibility of areas not in government control, information is often inadequate with the full extent of displacement and full understanding of the situation and assistance needs of these areas is limited.

Badakhshan Province

Figure 8. Reference map for Badakhshan



Source: FEWS NET

Badakhshan has been negatively affected by the recent drought and continued deterioration of the security situation resulting in the severe decline in agriculture and non-agriculture labor opportunities. On top of the drought and deteriorated security situation, lack of access to affordable food items and employment opportunities, increased prices of food, and reduction in the scale of irrigated crops are among the acute challenges facing the people in this zone. Currently, a daily wage laborer finds work 2-3 days a week slightly below the 4-year average. However, the wage per work day decreased from an average 450 AFN per day this time last year to only 250 AFN per day, decreasing household income. Although, income from selling second season cash crops such as rice, flax, and maize, and fruit has been average. The potato harvest was below-average as it is mostly a rainfed crop. Many households in the province, including livestock face a lack of food. Livestock fodder is available in the market, however the drought has significantly increased prices and livestock owners are unable to afford fodder. Remittances for income are well below-average due to the depreciation of the Rial (IRR) against the Afghani (AFN) and broad disruptions to the Iranian and Afghani economy.

An ACF SMART Nutrition and Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) survey published in August 2018, during the post-harvest period indicated food consumption score was acceptable in 82 percent of the households. According to this survey, 13.7 percent of the population had an rCSI above 18 indicating a high level of coping with 29.2 percent of the population employing medium levels of coping strategies (rCSI equal to 10 to 17). The prevalence of GAM by WHZ shows 12.6 percent and for SAM 3.0 percent of children aged 6-59 months are acutely malnourished. This level of severity according to the WHO classification indicates a “serious” nutrition situation. Also, of concern is the prevalence of stunting across the province at 45.5 percent in children aged 6 to 59 months. It also should be noted of the children 6-59 months who were stunted, 24.4 percent were also wasted indicating a higher risk of mortality in those children. It should be noted the Crude Death Rate is high at .65 deaths/10,000/Day.

According to the same survey, most households had food stocks that would last up to 3 months. Based on this information household food stocks will be depleted atypically early and households will rely on market purchases. Significantly below-average incomes in this area will severely restrict households’ ability to purchase food to store for the winter. These households will resort to decreasing the frequency and quantity of meals, selling of assets to buy food, borrowing money, and purchasing food on credit as households begin to be cut-off in many parts of the province due to snowfall. In remote rain-fed agriculture areas farmers may resort to selling their land under mortgage schemes, so they can relocate and settle in another place where they can earn a living.

Due to the remoteness of this province, the effects of the drought and continual displacement from conflict continues disrupting livelihoods with most areas of Badakhshan are currently classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity. Due to below-average labor opportunities, increasing insecurity, and inaccessibility due to conflict and possible road blockages during the winter, remote districts of Badakhshan province will likely face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) from October to May 2019. Also, drought affected households, IDPs displaced by conflict; undocumented returnees many of these households are likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the region. Humanitarian assistance delivery and mobilization of insecure areas has decreased in the past years due to insecurity in the region and reports indicate limited quantities of assistance have been delivered to these areas.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 1: Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Market-dependent and landless households	An additional, sharp increase in wheat market prices due to further devaluation of Afghan currency and/or export related rules in Kazakhstan or Pakistan.	A sudden and unexpected decrease in imported wheat and wheat flour prices in the region would limit access to food for households relying on market purchases. The number of households reliant on wheat or wheat flour purchases will be seasonally high from October 2018 to May 2019. This would increase the number of households facing Crisis (Phase 3) and Emergency (Phase 4).
Nationwide	Improvement in Security	Taken in consideration the current peace efforts, if security improved during the winter and spring, which could have positive impacts on the food security of poor households.
Nationwide	Below-average seasonal precipitation.	Poor rainfall would decrease range land for livestock and the 2018/19 growing season leading to decreased labor opportunities and harvests potentially decreasing food consumption. Additionally, conflict may arise over access to pasture and rangelands due to increasing scarcity, particularly from January to March.
East-central mountainous agropastoral livelihood zone	An excessively cold winter with temperatures well below average and above average snowfall volume	If the winter is exceptionally cold, conditions for livestock may deteriorate, further leading to excess livestock mortality. Poor health of livestock limits the availability of milk through March, and heavy snowfall limits market access for to purchase food.
Western Afghanistan and Central Highlands	The Iranian Rial (IRR) substantially depreciates against the Afghanistan Afghani (AFN)	Remittances and labor income from Iran will proportionally decrease, so households that receive this income will have reduced purchasing power and reduced ability to access food from markets

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.