Average precipitation and weak labor market incentivize engagement in winter wheat planting

**November 2019 - January 2020**

**February - May 2020**

**IPC v3.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase**

1: Minimal  
2: Stressed  
3: Crisis  
4: Emergency  
5: Famine

*Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance*

**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.**
Conflict and insecurity continue to disrupt livelihoods across most of the country with over 380,000 people displaced since the start of 2019. Additionally, over 440,000 people have returned from Iran and Pakistan to date in 2019. Most of the returned and internally displaced populations are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) as these households have limited ability to access labor markets. Moreover, poor households impacted by weak labor markets, and below average remittances in higher elevated areas of the country remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The rest of the country is in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) as many households continue to consume own foods, although have below average incomes.

Winter wheat area planted is expected to be above last year and the five-year average. Despite continued conflict in most areas of the country, this is mostly the result of more households engaging in agriculture as casual labor opportunities and income from this source is below average. In insecure areas some farmers are facing difficulty accessing their land as conflict in Afghanistan is fluid, although once conflict subsides households return to engage in agriculture activities. Additionally, the normal start to the precipitation season as well as the forecast for average precipitation is leading to increased engagement in agriculture.

Afghanistan has shifted from relying almost completely on Pakistan for wheat flour imports to importing wheat flour mostly from Kazakhstan to fulfil the national important requirement. Due to a below average regional surplus of wheat flour, prices are above last year. Based on MAIL data, the national average price of imported wheat flour is 13 percent above last year. Wheat flour prices are expected to remain slightly above last year, although stable as regional trade is expected to take place normally.

Based on results of nutrition and mortality (SMART) surveys conducted in 2019, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence as measured by weight-for-height z-score (WHZ) was 13.5 percent (10.5 - 17.1, 95 percent CI) and 12.8 percent (10.5 - 15.6, 95 percent CI) in Helmand and Daykundi provinces, respectfully. This is indicative of a “serious” level of acute malnutrition according to the WHO classification. Continuation of conflict and high morbidity of acute respiratory infection (ARI) and limited access to health facilities in winter, especially in hard to reach districts of Daykundi and Helmand provinces, in conjunction with a nondiverse diet is expected to have negative impacts on malnutrition during the winter months.

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https://fews.net/central-asia/afghanistan/key-message-update/november-2019

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