



## DJIBOUTI Food Security Outlook

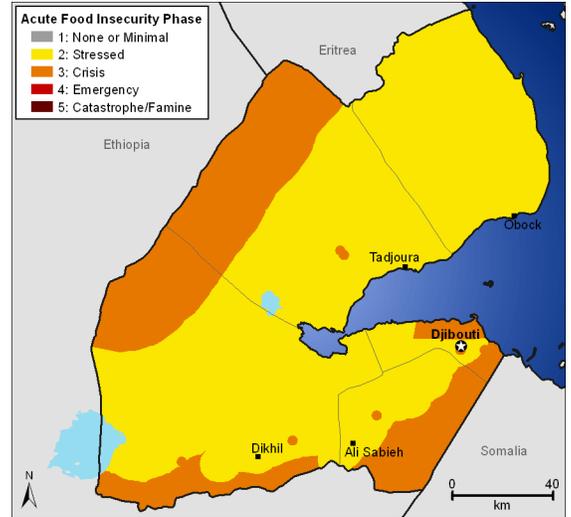
April through September 2011

Beginning in April 2011, FEWS NET is transitioning to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's (IPC) Household-based Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, which is scheduled for release with IPC version 2.0 in July 2011. For more information see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale).

### Key Messages

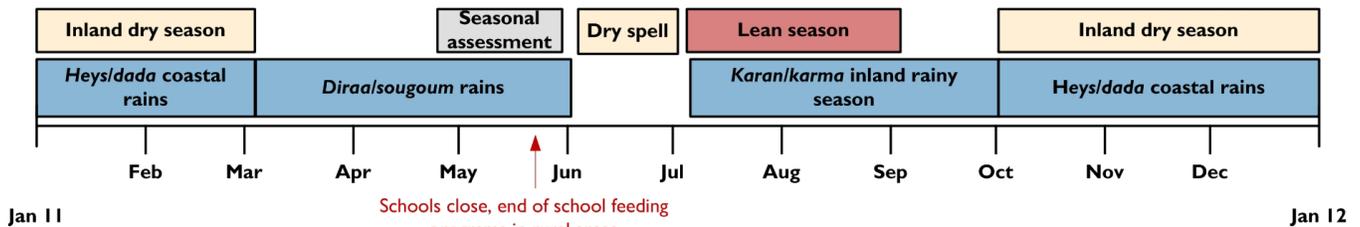
- Most pastoral households in the Northwest Pastoral and the Southeast Pastoral – Border Livelihood Zones are experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions following two consecutive poor seasons, which have led to reduced incomes and reduced food production. These livelihood zones are expected to remain at this level of food insecurity throughout the outlook period due to insufficient natural resources and inadequate food assistance. The Central Pastoral – Lowlands, the Central Pastoral – Highlands, and the Southeast Pastoral - Roadside Livelihood Zones will experience conditions of Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity for the outlook period.
- Poor urban households in the Djibouti City Livelihood Zone will likely face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions related to a two-month early start to the lean season. The main driving factors for this insecurity include high unemployment, a decline in petty trade activities, high staple food prices, increased rural-urban migration, and the seasonal closure of schools and the associated end of school feeding programs. Water shortages in Djibouti City are also expected to become a serious issue over the coming months as the peak demand for water approaches with the hot season.

**Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, April 2011**



Source: FEWS NET and WFP  
For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

### Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Source: FEWS NET

### Most likely food security scenario, April through September 2011

#### National Overview

Significant areas of Djibouti experienced a failure of the *heys/dada* rains from October 2010 to February 2011 and these same areas may experience a below-normal *diraac/sougoum* rainy season from March through May. This lack of rainfall, along with high and rising staple food prices, will likely push households towards higher levels of food insecurity,

FEWS NET Djibouti  
Djibouti City  
Tel: +253 35 33 43  
[djibouti@fews.net](mailto:djibouti@fews.net)

FEWS NET Washington  
1717 H Street NW  
Washington DC 20006  
[info@fews.net](mailto:info@fews.net)

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particularly in the Northwest Pastoral and the Southeast Pastoral - Border Livelihood Zones. There is a high likelihood that the World Food Programme (WFP) food aid pipeline, which has been active in all pastoral livelihood zones, will breakdown by June due to a lack of incoming supplies. The situation is expected to worsen as food and income from animal sources decline in pastoral areas over the coming months due to the prolonged dryness and the associated failed rejuvenation of pasture and browse and lack of sufficient water for livestock.

The failure of the *heys/dada* rains (October 2010 through February 2011) and the forecasted below-normal rains during the current *diraac/sougoum* season from March through May will result in insufficient pasture and browse and limited water availability leading to poor animal body conditions and higher livestock mortality rates. *Diraac/sougoum* rains contribute to between 25 and 50 percent of the total annual rainfall in most pastoral livelihood zones. The current *diraac/sougoum* rains have been poorly distributed and the food security situation in the *diraac* rain-dependant areas of Tadjourah, Dikil, and Ali-Sabieh districts is likely to deteriorate through June. As a result, the lean season may start in April, two months earlier than normal, in most pastoral livelihoods zones.

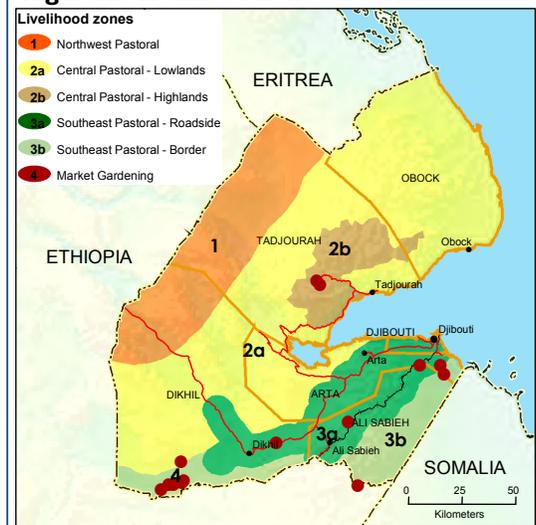
The main inland areas of the Northwest Pastoral and the Southeast Pastoral - Border Livelihood Zones are currently facing insufficient pasture and browse and a lack of water, particularly those areas which depend on water catchments. As a coping strategy households in the Northwest Pastoral Livelihood Zone are currently intensifying the sale of palm leaves and salt at the Ethiopian markets of Eldar and Manda in exchange for cereals, while households in the Southeast Pastoral – Border Livelihood Zone are selling more firewood and charcoal at lower prices. As a result of these factors, around 30 to 35 percent of all wealth groups in these livelihood zones are currently experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions. The Central Pastoral - Lowlands, Central Pastoral - Highlands, and Southeast Pastoral - Roadside Livelihood Zones, which depend on water trucking for both human and livestock water requirements, are experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity conditions. The situation is expected to deteriorate further through June in terms of pasture and browse as well water availability, though overall these three livelihood zones will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

As a result of a combination of reduced income and reduced food from animal sources due to poor consecutive rainfall seasons, higher staple food prices, and reduced terms of trade, wealth groups facing survival deficits include: poor and middle-income households in the Central Pastoral - Highlands Livelihood Zone; poor households in the Central Pastoral – Lowlands Livelihood Zone in Obock district; all wealth groups in the Northwest Pastoral Livelihood Zone in Tadjourah district; poor and middle-income households in the Southeast Pastoral - Border Livelihood Zone in Arta and Ali-Sabieh districts; and poor households in the Southeast Pastoral - Roadside Livelihood Zone in Ali-Sabieh district.

The most likely scenario through September is based on the following assumptions:

- Market prices in the main markets of the country are projected to reach levels slightly lower than those during the 2008 staple food crisis. This reflects increases of between 20 and 40 percent compared to March 2010 prices.
- Current herd sizes are 30 to 50 percent below the 2003 baseline levels across all livelihood zones and species. Over the coming six months, herd sizes and milk production are expected to decline further. Herd sizes and milk production have been estimated based on assessing the relationship between the performance of past, present, and future rains and herd mortality, conceptions, abortions, births, and milk yields. Herd sizes at the beginning of the current consumption year have been estimated based on field visits by FEWS NET Djibouti in December 2010 combined with secondary information on herd depletion over the past decade.
- Coping through increased livestock sales, remittances, and gifts has been included in the analysis. The ability of households to gain additional income through the sale of labor will be limited.
- The current WFP food aid pipeline is expected to break down in June and WFP has already started to decrease its food aid distribution by 20 percent since the beginning of the year.

**Figure 2. Livelihood Zones**



Source: FEWS NET

**Northwest Pastoral Livelihood Zone**

The pastoralists in the Northwest Pastoral Livelihood Zone mostly rely on their livestock for food and income. Livestock production contributes to around 60 percent of livestock-associated income in a normal year making the pastoralists especially vulnerable to drought. Herd size has been affected by consecutive droughts over the last decade and the recovery was very slow or insignificant due to poor subsequent rainfall seasons. Currently, goat and camel herd sizes are roughly 40 to 60 percent of the 2003 baseline levels. Thus, household coping capacity is limited given that anything more than very minimal additional livestock sales is unviable.

The pastoralists in this zone recently experienced a normal dry season extending from October through February and poor animal body conditions are expected to deteriorate further as the extremely poor rainfall observed during the *diraac/sougoum* season during March and April has affected the availability of both water and pasture. Livestock mortality has been reported across the zone and there is currently 25 percent excess mortality and this is expected to increase further. Additionally, milk production is far below normal given the poor rate of conception and births this season. Livestock prices are below normal due to poor animal body conditions and have currently decreased by 14 percent since August 2010, particularly in the Dikhil market, resulting in poor livestock-to-cereal terms of trade for pastoralists. Meanwhile, staple food prices are at high levels in both markets in Tadjourah and Dikhil, which serve pastoralists in this livelihood zone. Given the above conditions, the pastoral population in need of emergency assistance is expected to increase in the coming months.

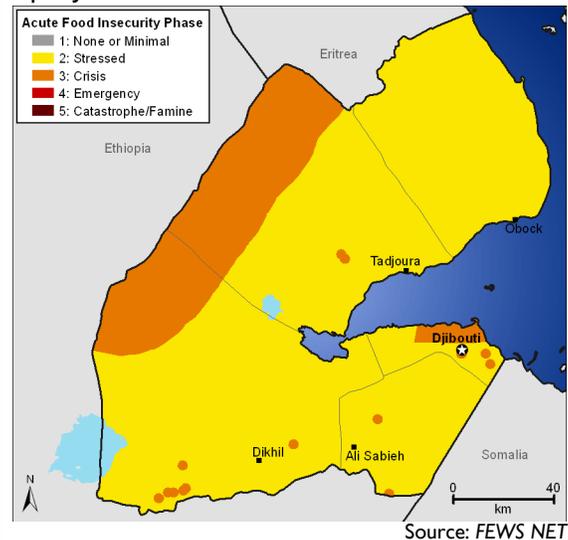
Though WFP food aid distribution has been reduced by 20 percent since the beginning of the year, ongoing WFP Emergency Operations (EMOP) are filling partially existing food deficits while water interventions are planned in rural areas by humanitarian agencies.

Almost all wealth groups in this zone are currently facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions and this level of food insecurity is expected to persist for the outlook period through September. Assuming that the *diraac/sougoum* rains perform poorly through the end of May, conditions are expected to deteriorate further. Livestock body conditions and prices are likely to worsen, and in combination with increasing food prices, result in declining livestock-to-cereal terms of trade. It is likely that the majority of poor households will be unable to maintain current livelihoods and will further erode their asset bases in order to meet food needs. As the outlook period progresses, households will have increasing difficulty meeting basic food needs.

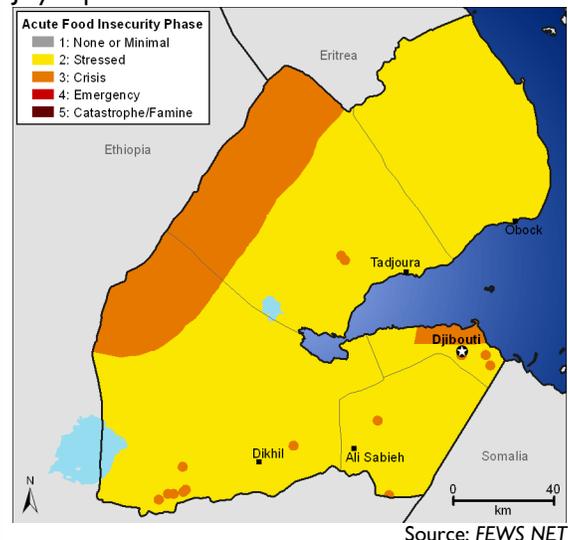
**Southeast Pastoral – Roadside and Southeast Pastoral – Border Livelihood Zones**

Poor pastoralists in the Southeast Pastoral - Roadside Livelihood Zone rely on milk sales as their main source of income given that they are accessible to the main road connecting Djibouti and Ethiopia and they are significantly affected by droughts. The failure of the *heys/dada* rains and the possible failure of the current *sougoum* season will have a negative impact on their production capability as lactating goats and camels will not get sufficient food and water resources to boost their milk production. Milk production is currently far below normal due to poor pasture and browse availability and pastoralists are currently opting to increase firewood sales and some are sending household members to neighboring cities in search of casual labor to supplement household income. The failure of the *heys* rains has already resulted in the deterioration of livestock conditions and has reduced the income received for animals sold. Additionally, poor animal body

**Figure 3. Most likely food security outcomes, April-June 2011**



**Figure 4. Most likely food security outcomes, July-September 2011**



For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

conditions have resulted in reduced births, extremely low milk production, and high increases in livestock mortality due to inadequate food and water resources.

As a result of these conditions, poor households and some middle-income households in Ali-Sabieh district are at risk of experiencing Crisis (IPC phase 3) food insecurity conditions through August. Poor households in the Southeast Pastoral - Roadside Livelihood Zone in Arta and Ali-Sabieh districts will be unable to secure enough income to protect their livelihoods in the medium- to long-term, facing livelihoods protection deficits equivalent to approximately seven to 22 percent of their income in a normal year.

The pastoralists in the Southeast Pastoral - Border Livelihood Zone rely on firewood on which they depend for over 80 percent of their income. Recent restrictions on firewood collection and charcoal burning in Arta and Ali-Sabieh districts is pushing pastoralists in this zone to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions. The current survival deficits are 13 to 34 percent and are most serious in Ali-Sabieh district, meaning that households will have food deficits of one to four months. Poor and middle-income households in this zone are facing survival deficits while all wealth groups are facing livelihood protection deficits through August. Pastoralists in this zone are opting to look for casual labor opportunities in the cities and are asking for more assistance from relatives in the city. Around 40 percent of the population is currently facing survival or livelihoods protection deficits.

#### **Central Pastoral - Highlands Livelihood Zone**

The rural households in the Central Pastoral - Highlands Livelihood Zone rely mainly on remittances and firewood sales as their main sources of income. The contribution of livestock production to their daily food and income is very limited, therefore the impact of droughts on their ability to access food is relatively insignificant. Obock district is the district which has been most affected by the impact of high staple food prices and reduced remittances. The poor and middle-income households in Obock district are currently facing survival and livelihood protection deficits of around 19 percent (equivalent to two months of food needs) and are having difficulty satisfying their daily caloric needs. These households are currently filling their food deficit gaps through the WFP food aid distribution, but this is expected to end by June. The situation is expected to deteriorate further as the current seasonal performance is not promising and staple food prices are expected to increase further through June due to high fuel prices and an increase of cereal prices in international markets (Djibouti imports all of its cereal requirements from abroad). The combination of a decrease in milk production during the ongoing *sougum* rainy season (important for filling 20 percent of food needs in a normal year) and the increased cost of securing food to meet food needs will mean that most poor households are likely to experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions through June. These households will be unable to cover essential non-food expenditures needed to maintain current livelihoods and will face significant shortfalls in their ability to meet basic food requirements during the outlook period.

#### **Central Pastoral - Lowlands Livelihood Zone**

Remittances from family and pensions from the social security service in Djibouti City function as the main sources of income for pastoralists in the Central Pastoral - Lowlands Livelihood Zone, particularly for wealthier households, while the sale of firewood serves a similarly important purpose for poorer households. While remittances and pensions have served to buffer the negative impacts of increasing staple food prices for wealthier households, increased sales of firewood and charcoal are not adequately compensating for these high prices for poorer households who report facing increasing difficulty accessing minimum daily caloric requirements. At present, poorer households in this zone are meeting basic food needs through a combination of purchases, assistance from family members, and food aid. Remittances have declined as the purchasing power of urban households has decreased, causing the amount of food and cash sent to rural households to decrease by 15 to 20 percent. This decline in remittances will continue with the likelihood of further rises in commodity and staple food prices. However, food security outcomes are expected to be better in this zone than in other areas because these households are not as seriously affected by climatic factors given that their main income sources are through remittances and pensions. Overall, households in this zone are likely to experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity conditions throughout the outlook period. However, poor households in Obock district are currently facing minor survival deficits and livelihood protection deficits and as a result they are facing food deficits of less than one month.

#### **Djibouti City**

The food security situation in urban areas is a major concern with some poor households already facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity conditions two months ahead of the peak of the lean season. This is due to the high unemployment rate,

high staple food prices, and high cost of water. These factors are all undermining the ability of poor households to meet their daily food needs. Significant migration of rural populations to most parts of the city has been observed, particularly in the Balbala area of Djibouti City where most of the poor households live. This is influencing the dietary intake of poor households as they are currently sharing their limited food stocks with an increasing number of people. Another issue of concern for both poor and middle-income wealth groups is the general shortage of water. This is particularly serious in Balbala where the price of water has increased by 50 percent and is expected to increase further.

**Table I.** Less likely events over the next six months that could change the above scenarios

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Northwest, Central, and Southeast Pastoral areas	Good performance of <i>sougoum</i> rains during the rest of the season (March through May)	The food security of poor households will improve slightly, though there have already been significant livestock losses.
Urban areas	Food for work activities in urban areas	Food access for poor households will improve if the interventions are properly targeted. These interventions would cover the food deficit gaps of the most vulnerable population during the lean season (June through August). WFP, the International Red Cross, and the Government of Djibouti would likely implement these interventions.
All rural areas	WFP EMOP remains fully funded through September	Projected deficits will be filled and all rural areas would improve their food security conditions and be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) throughout the outlook period.