

Reference Date: 08-April-2015

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Prospects for 2015 main rice season uncertain
- Cereal imports are forecast to increase in 2014/15 marketing year
- Rice prices rise sharply in March, maize prices increase for a third month

Prospects for 2015 main rice season uncertain

Harvesting of the 2015 main season rice crop is about to begin. Preliminary forecasts point to a recovery in production from last year's reduced level, mainly reflecting larger plantings. However, this forecast might not materialize as low precipitations since late December 2014 might have significantly affected yields. The 2015 maize forecast points to a slight reduction from last year's high level, as the main first season, to be harvested from late June and accounting for 90 percent of production, was also impacted by dry weather which might affect yields. In aggregate, FAO's forecast for the 2015 cereal production points to an output of almost 2.6 million tonnes, unchanged from last year's level but still above the country's five-year average.

Cereal imports are forecast to increase in 2014/15 marketing year

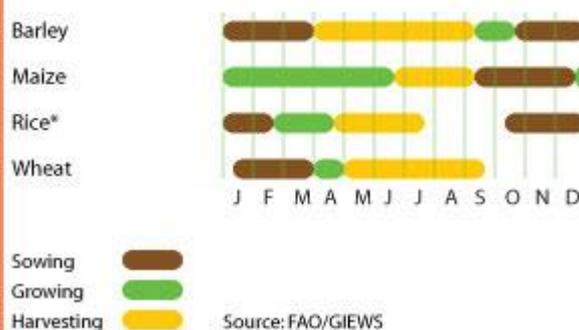
Cereal imports in the 2014/15 marketing year (July/June) are forecast to increase by 4 percent from the previous year. This mainly reflects higher wheat imports, which are expected up 6 percent from 2013/14. By contrast, a sharp drop in maize imports is expected for a third consecutive year. Maize imports are forecast to decline by 5 percent to 125 000 tonnes as a result of Government policy to sustain domestic prices to encourage farmers to sow more maize and achieve self-sufficiency.

Rice prices rise sharply in March, those of maize prices continued to increase

Rice prices increased sharply in March, by 7 and 18 percent in main markets Quito and Guayaquil, respectively. Seasonal price increases are being strengthened by reduced supplies in the market as a result of last year's low output and uncertainty about the level of this year's crop, to be harvested from April. To prevent further price increases, the Government has begun to release rice from its strategic reserve of 100 000 tonnes.

Maize prices increased for a third consecutive month in March in the main markets of Quito and Guayaquil and remained well above their year-earlier levels. Seasonal trends are being strengthened by high demand and reduced import levels.

Ecuador Crop calendar (*major foodcrop)

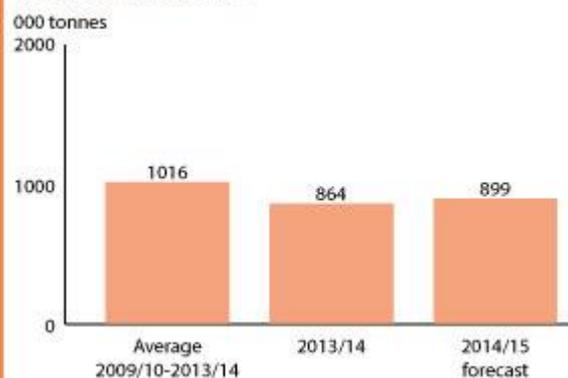


Ecuador Cereal production

	2010-2014 average	2014	2015 forecast	change 2015/2014
	000 tonnes		percent	
Rice (paddy)	1 239	1 170	1 230	5
Maize	1 141	1 350	1 300	-4
Barley	20	20	20	0
Others	19	19	19	0
Total	2 419	2 559	2 569	0

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

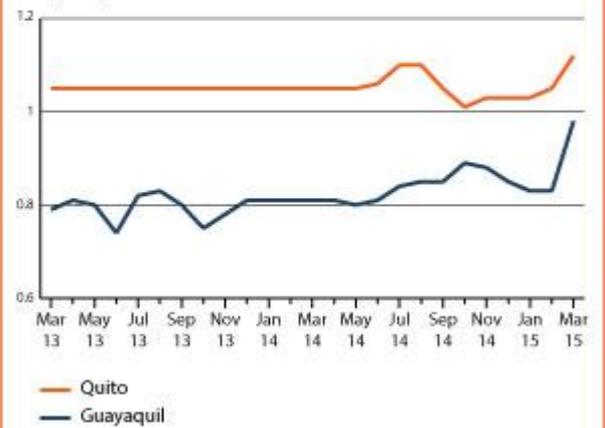
Ecuador Total cereal imports



Note: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Ecuador Wholesale prices of rice

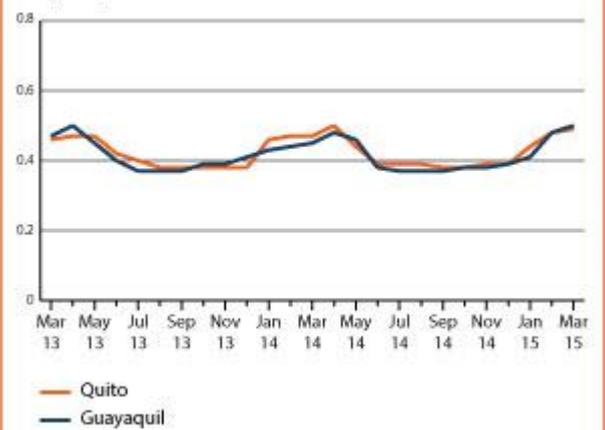
USD per Kg



Source: Sistema de Información Nacional de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuicultura y Pesca - SINAGAP

Ecuador Wholesale prices of yellow maize

USD per Kg



Source: Sistema de Información Nacional de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuicultura y Pesca - SINAGAP