Food security improves significantly in southeastern areas, but continued assistance is needed

KEY MESSAGES

- A recent FEWS NET survey in Dollo Zone of Somali Region suggests food security and nutrition outcomes have improved significantly in areas worst affected by drought in 2016 and 2017. These improvements are largely due to improvements in seasonal performance, continued humanitarian assistance delivery, and declines in disease outbreaks. Currently, worst-affected areas such as Dollo Zone and much of southeastern Somali Region are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with humanitarian assistance preventing a further deterioration among some populations, particularly IDPs.

- While the risk of a deterioration beyond Emergency (IPC Phase 4) has declined, continued humanitarian assistance is needed through at least September, in order to sustain improved outcomes and offset seasonal declines in food access during the June to September dry season. Starting in October, improvements in livestock productivity, particularly from camels, should begin to drive longer-term improvements in food security.

- More than one million people are displaced in Ethiopia, most of whom have been displaced by conflict starting in September 2017 and many of whom are displaced along the Oromia-Somali regional border where conflict has been reported to be most severe. In the near-term, this displacement is driving large-scale, multi-sectoral assistance needs. Disruptions to households’ ability to engage in their typical livelihoods activities, such as seasonal cultivation and raising of livestock, are likely to drive Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes, particularly in far western Somali Region and in southern SNNPR.

- The 2018 Belg (March to May) rains performed very poorly over most northern Belg-producing areas, leading harvests to be as much as 40 percent below average and delayed by one to two months. Areas worst affected include eastern Amhara and southern Tigray. Meanwhile, Belg harvests are improving food security outcomes in SNNPR, and the onset of Kiremt (June to September) seasonal rainfall has been near to slightly above average over most Kiremt-receiving areas of the country.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

Gu season performance in southeastern pastoral areas

The 2018 Gu/Genna rains performed very well across most of southern and southeastern Somali Region between March and May, with an early start of 10 to 20 days in some areas and cumulative rainfall exceeding 130 percent of average (see Figure 1). Areas where seasonal rainfall performed particularly well include large parts of Jarar, Dollo, Liben, Gode, and Afder zones, as well as most pastoral and agropastoral areas of southern SNNPR, and far southern and eastern Oromia.
Above-average rainfall throughout the season has contributed to significant improvements in the availability of pasture and water for livestock in most southeastern pastoral areas. Field assessments conducted by FEWS NET in Dollo Zone in May 2018, alongside partner reports from other areas, suggest pasture and water availability has improved in areas of Somali Region worst-affected by drought in 2016 and 2017. Ponds in the lowlands of southern Oromia, SNNPR and Somali Region were fully replenished, which has improved the availability of water for both livestock and human consumption. However, heavy rains resulted in flash floods in most western and eastern zones of Somali Region, as well as in Bale Zone of Oromia. These floods have resulted in loss of life and the displacement of limited numbers of people.

Livestock body conditions and productivity have improved, particularly compared to conditions observed in mid-2017. Large numbers of goat and camel conceptions were reported during the above-average 2017 Deyr season, and many goats gave birth during the 2018 Gu season and are now milking. Meanwhile, as the 2018 Gu rains performed well, no camel abortions and deaths are being reported, and births and milking are expected to begin during the upcoming 2018 Deyr season. Still, livestock herd sizes remain much lower than normal in worst-affected areas, limiting improvements in total household food access due to increased livestock productivity. Several additional seasons are needed for households to begin rebuilding their herds.

**Belg seasonal performance in northern and southern Belg rainfall-receiving areas**

The 2018 *Belg* (February to May) rains performed well in most southern areas of Ethiopia, but were well below average and poorly distributed over time in most northern *Belg* rainfall-receiving areas. Cumulative 2018 *Belg* rainfall was 2-30 percent above average between March 1 and May 31 in most *Belg* rainfall-receiving areas of SNNPR, and central and eastern Oromia, according to CHIRPS rainfall estimates. This rainfall was sufficient in terms of quantity and distribution in order to support the development of maize and root crops. However, in eastern Amhara and southern Tigray, cumulative rainfall was 15 to 45 percent below average, according to CHIRPS rainfall estimates, and was very poorly distributed over time with extended dry spells during much of the season. Indications of poor performance of the *Belg* season in northern areas are likewise reflected in vegetation remote sensing products, such as the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), which indicates below-average conditions across much of northern Ethiopia. However, excessive and above-average *Belg* rainfall across much of Oromia and SNNPR Regions has resulted in flash floods and landslides in parts of Gedo, Sidama, and Guraghe Zones of SNNPR, and West Arsi and Kelem Wollega Zones of Oromia, leading to population displacement and damage to some planted crops.
Crop conditions are poor in northeastern Amhara and southern and southeastern Tigray, following very poor performance of 2018 Belg seasonal rainfall. Planting of Belg crops (such as barely, wheat, teff, and lentils) was delayed following poor seasonal performance early in the season, and field reports, alongside official estimates from the NDRMC and Amhara and Tigray Regional Bureaus of Agriculture, suggest area planted in Belg crops is as low as 65 percent of normal, and possibly lower in Tigray. Due to delayed planting and poor seasonal performance, harvests of Belg crops are expected to be delayed by as much as one month, in August instead of late June/early July.

By contrast, in southern Oromia and SNNPR where the Belg rains performed well, area planted was near normal and crops (maize, haricot bean, sweet potato and other root crops) are in good condition. Crop development in Belg-producing areas of SNNPR and western and southwestern Oromia is progressing very well, with most crops at either the vegetative or flowering stages. Overall maize crops are in good condition over southwestern and western Ethiopia, and WRSI values for both grains and long-cycled maize crops are well above 150 percent of the long-term average. Sweet potato plants suffered moisture stress due to the absence of Sapie rains in January 2018 in SNNPR, but improved later in February with the start of Belg rainfall. As a result, sweet potato crops have improved starting in March and April. This rainfall also facilitated land preparation for Meher short-cycle crops like barley, wheat, teff, and pulses.

Fall Army Worm (FAW) infestations have been reported in all zones of SNNPR, including infestations on more than 18,574 hectares of maize crops, according to the NDRMC. Control efforts are underway in an attempt to prevent further spread of the infestations to larger areas. The total area infested by FAW during the 2018 Belg is approximately 31 percent of the area affected by FAW infestations during the Belg in 2017.
Diraac/Sugum (March to May) seasonal performance in northern pastoral areas

The March to May 2018 Diraac/Sugum performed poorly in most northern pastoral areas of Afar, and were characterized by a late start of season, below-average cumulative rainfall, and an early end of seasonal rainfall. The onset of the Diraac/Sugum rains was delayed by approximately two weeks, followed by improvements in rainfall in April 2018, but rainfall was much lower than normal during the end of the season in May 2018. Overall, cumulative seasonal rainfall was approximately 10 to 30 percent below the long-term (1981-2010) average, according to CHIRPS rainfall estimates. In some areas, particularly northern Afar, rainfall was even lower. Although seasonal rainfall has contributed to some improvements in water and pasture availability compared to the previous dry season, these improvements were lower than normal. According to NDVI, vegetation conditions are below average in most areas of Afar. Despite below-average performance of the Diraac/Sugum rains, livestock body conditions have improved with recent improvements in pasture and water availability. In turn, livestock have continued to conceive and give birth, and there is no abnormal migration reported at this time.

Kiremt (June to September) seasonal performance to date

As of late June, seasonal rainfall has performed well in most Kiremt-receiving areas of the country, except in parts of northern Ethiopia. The onset of Kiremt rainfall has been generally on time in most areas, and cumulative rainfall totals range from near average to more than 200 percent of average, particularly in central areas of the country, according to ARC 2.0 rainfall estimates. However, rainfall has not yet started in some northern areas of the country, such as eastern Amhara. So far, no major flooding associated with Kiremt rainfall has been reported. Although data is limited on current levels of area planted in crops, most long-maturing Meher crops are planted in May and planting of short-maturing crops continue in June and July, and planting is underway in most Meher-dominant areas.

Markets and Prices

Staple food prices remained stable or increased slightly between April and May 2018, with maize prices near their 2017 levels and sorghum and wheat above May 2017 levels by approximately 20 to 50 percent. Wholesale maize prices were generally stable between April and May 2018, with fluctuations of between -5 and 7 percent across most of the 18 markets for which price data was available from the Ethiopian Trading Businesses Corporation (formerly the Ethiopia Grain Trade Enterprise). Prices were also similar to or slightly higher than their prior year levels in May 2017, and were 15 to 30 percent higher than the recent five-year average. Wholesale sorghum prices were also generally stable, with fluctuations of -5 to 5 percent between April and May 2018 across most of the nine markets for which data was available. Compared to prior year levels, sorghum prices are approximately 15 to 40 percent higher than in May 2017, and are approximately 15 to 30 percent higher than the recent four-year average. Meanwhile, wheat grain prices increased slightly on all markets monitored, approximately two to eight percent, and prices are approximately 25 to 60 percent higher than in May 2017, and 25 to 40 percent higher than the recent five-year average. Wheat prices are higher than in prior years largely due to devaluation of the Ethiopia Birr (ETB) in late 2017, which led to price increases for many imported commodities, of which wheat grain is one.
Livestock prices have improved in many southeastern areas of Ethiopia, particularly compared to prices observed in early 2017. In the nine markets for which price data was available in Somali Region, goat prices have increased to near or above pre-drought levels observed in mid-2016 (Figure 2), and in May 2018 are 30 to 90 percent higher than in May 2017. May 2018 prices were also 20 to 45 percent higher than the recent three-year average. Prices for camels have improved since hitting a three-year low in March-May 2017. These improvements in livestock prices are due to improved seasonal performance during the 2017 Deyr/Hageya and 2018 Gu/Genna seasons, improvements in pasture and livestock body conditions, and lower than normal supply on local markets, which have increased livestock prices.

Health and Nutrition

Based on data from the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) of the NDRMC, the number of children treated for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) nationwide increased by nearly four percent between February and March 2018, the most recent month for which data is available. Of the approximately 31,066 children admitted to TFP programs in March 2018, approximately 30 percent were in Somali Region, signaling continued concern for nutrition outcomes in Somali Region. Between February and March, TFP admissions increased by approximately 12 percent in SNNPR, five percent in Somali Region, five percent in Oromia, seven percent in Tigray, and 16 percent in Gambella. TFP admissions remained stable in Afar, and decreased by approximately four percent and one percent in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz, respectively. The number of admissions in Oromia was the lowest reported since January 2017.

There were approximately 717 total cases of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) reported nationwide between January 1 and May 31, 2018, according to UNICEF, down from a peak of more than 14,000 cases in March 2017 alone. This has likely contributed to improvements in nutrition outcomes reported in areas worst affected by drought in 2016 and 2017. However, concerns about water and sanitation in cotton-producing areas near the Awash River in Afar are driving increased concerns about new cases of AWD in Dubti woreda of Afar.

According to UNCHR, as of May 31, 2018, the total number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia was 920,262. Nearly half are from South Sudan, slightly more than one quarter are from Somalia, 18 percent from Eritrea, and nearly five percent from Sudan. In May 2018, approximately 4,436 refugees entered Ethiopia, bringing the total new arrivals in 2018 to approximately 29,211, the majority of which were from South Sudan, and most of whom entered through Gambela Region. This brings the total number of South Sudanese refugees to approximately 443,352 who have entered Ethiopia since December 2013. On the other hand, the number of refugees fleeing Somalia have fallen compared to last year, and the total number of Somalia refugees in Ethiopia at the end of May was approximately 255,943.

Conflict continues to drive significant displacement, particularly along the Oromia-Somali border. More than one million people in Ethiopia are displaced as a result of conflict, according to the 10th Round (March-April 2018) of the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, most of whom have been displaced due to conflict since September 2017 and a large share of whom are displaced in areas near the Oromia-Somali regional border. The National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and partners estimate that approximately 818,250 people have been displaced due to inter-communal violence near West-Guji (Oromia) and Gedeo (SNNP). Of these, approximately 642,152 people are displaced in Gedeo zone as of June 22, 2018, and 176,098 people are displaced in West Guji. Field reports indicate that displacement of populations has led to disruptions to household engagement in Belg and/or Meher seasonal agricultural activities.

Update on delivery of assistance

Humanitarian assistance continued to be delivered into May 2018 through the JEOP, WFP, and NDRMC. The 2018 Humanitarian and Disaster Response Plan (HDRP) estimated a total of 7.88 million people in need of food assistance during 2018. Dispatches of the 1st Round of 2018 assistance were underway, as were distributions in some parts of the country. Based on the most recent information available, distribution of the 1st round of assistance is 82 percent complete. Delays in provision of assistance are reported due related to heavy rainfall that led to flooding in some areas and delays associated with re-targeting of the 2018 HDRP. Distribution of 1st Round assistance is 90 percent complete in JEOP-assisted areas, 95 percent completed in NDRMC areas, and 64 percent complete in Somali Region. In some areas such as Dollo Zone, communities and key informants indicated that households are receiving roughly one full ration of assistance once every two months. NDRMC, JEOP, and WFP have already begun food dispatches for the 2nd Round. Overall, funding for the HDRP currently stands $351 million, or approximately one-third of the overall funding requested in the HDRP appeal. At current levels, funding is reported to be sufficient to cover four rounds of food distribution in 2018.
Current food security outcomes

In Ethiopia, humanitarian assistance needs remain higher than normal, particularly due to the continuing impacts of drought in 2016 and 2017 in southeastern Ethiopia. In southern and southeastern pastoral areas of the country (most parts of Somali, southern Oromia, and southern SNNPR), two above-average seasons in late 2017 and early 2018 have driven large-scale improvements in pastoral resource availability, improved livestock productivity, livestock to cereals terms of trade, and have contributed to some increases in household income from the sale of livestock and livestock products. Still livestock herd sizes remain well below normal, limiting the ability of households to substantially increase their access to food and income from these sources. Based on the results of a representative food security and nutrition survey conducted in Dollo Zone in September/October 2017, in the absence of emergency food assistance provided by the government and partners, it is likely that more than 20 percent of households would have experienced extreme food insecurity, the GAM prevalence would have exceeded 30 percent, and mortality would have increased significantly (see Lowland Hawd Pastoral Area of Concern section for additional detail). Improvements in access to food and income, coupled with continued large-scale humanitarian assistance and the reduction in cases of AWD, have led to large-scale improvements in food security and nutrition outcomes. In June 2018, many areas of Somali Region, including Dollo, eastern Jarar, Korahe, Afder, and Liben zones are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), although humanitarian assistance continues to mitigate a deterioration of outcomes among many populations, particularly IDPs.

In the rest of Ethiopia, large-scale displacement as a result of conflict – primarily along the border between Oromia and Somali regions, is disrupting many households’ access to their typical sources of food and income. The latest estimates suggest more than one million people have been displaced, many of whom are likely facing difficulty meeting their basic food and livelihoods protection needs. In addition, the delay in Belg harvests in northern Ethiopia is leading to a prolonged lean season and an extension of assistance needs in Belg-dominant areas of eastern Amhara and southern Tigray. In addition, Kiremt-dominant areas are entering the lean season in June, and poor households in many areas of eastern Oromia (West Hararghe, for example) and Kiremt-dominant areas of eastern Amhara (Wag Hamra) face seasonal food consumption deficits during this time. In June, these areas are classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Meanwhile, food security among most households in Belg-dominant SNNPR is improving in June, as Belg harvests, following good performance of the seasonal rains between March and May, are improving household access to own-produced crops. In western Ethiopia, most areas will continue to face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity.

Assumptions

The most-likely scenario for June 2018 to January 2019 is based on the following national-level assumptions:

Seasonal performance

- **Kiremt** (June to September) rainfall is likely to be average tending to above average in terms of cumulative amounts over major Kiremt rainfall-benefiting parts of Ethiopia, based on global, regional and national climate forecasts.

- Heavy rainfall is likely to result in flooding, particularly in July/August, when the Kiremt rains reach their peak. Areas particularly prone to flooding include the upper and lower catchments of Awash, Lake Tana catchment (in Rebe, Gumara and Megech Rivers), Borkena and Kemissie, Kobo, Baro-Akobo, and Omo-Gibe catchments and plain areas. Flooding is expected to temporarily displace households, damage crops, and livestock, and potentially limit humanitarian access to some flood-affected areas.

- **Karan/Karma** (July to September) rainfall in northern Somali Region and in Afar is expected to start on time and be above average tending to average in terms of total cumulative rainfall.

- **Deyr/Hageya** (October to December) rainfall in southeastern Ethiopia is likely to begin on time and to be above average in terms of cumulative totals.

Pasture/water/livestock

- In southeastern pastoral areas, availability of pasture and water will last longer than usual, but will continue to deteriorate through the dry season. This will lead to some deterioration of livestock body conditions, although severe impacts, such as livestock deaths and increased livestock abortions, are not expected. Based on an assumption of above-average Deyr/Hageya rainfall between October and December 2018, pasture and water availability will begin to improve starting
in October. During this time, camels and goats will conceive and give birth, and milk production from both species will improve, although herd sizes will remain much lower than normal.

- In northern pastoral areas, pasture, browse and water availability is expected to improve to normal levels starting in July following expected above to near-average Karan/Karma rainfall between July and September. Livestock body conditions, conceptions, births, and milking will be near normal for all livestock species during the outlook period.

**Crop production**

- **Belg** production is likely to be below average overall, with significantly below-average production likely in northeastern Amhara and southern Tigray, and near-average harvests expected in SNNPR.

- National **Meher** production is likely to be average, based on forecasts for above-average rainfall and generally favorable progress of the **Kiremt** rains to date.

- In riverine agropastoral areas of southeastern Ethiopia, harvests following Gu/Genna rainfall are likely to be delayed following significant flooding. However, starting in September, harvests of flood recession crops are expected to be above average.

- Fall Army Worm infestations are expected to continue and are likely to cause reductions in **Belg**, long-cycle sorghum yields and **Meher** maize yields in some areas.

**Markets and trade**

- Staple food prices on most major national markets are expected to remain at seasonal highs through the June to September season, when national demand is usually at its highest level and cereal supply is at its lowest level. Wheat and sorghum prices are expected to remain above average and near their levels observed in 2017, while maize prices are expected to remain higher than last year and above their seasonal averages. With the anticipated average **Meher** harvest starting in October, the supply of cereals will increase and prices are expected to decline seasonally as market supply improves and household demand decreases.

- The Government of Ethiopia will continue to implement wheat price stabilization policies, including continued subsidies of wheat imports, through at least the end of September 2018.

**Income-earning opportunities**

- Based on anticipated average to above-average **Kiremt** rainfall, agricultural labor opportunities are likely to be normal for planting, weeding, and harvesting in **Kiremt** rainfall-receiving regions of Oromia, SNNPR, Amhara, Gambela, Benshangul-Gumuz and Tigray.

- In general, other household income, like petty trading and social support of both in-kind and cash, are expected to slightly improve during the October to January 2019 period following a likely average **Meher** harvest.

**Conflict and displacement**

- Conflict is expected to continue during the scenario period and will likely lead to displacement, although it is difficult to estimate with precision the magnitude of these increases in the displaced population. Flooding during the scenario period will also likely lead to increase numbers of displaced households, although this displacement will likely be more temporary and lower in magnitude than that caused by conflict.

**Safety nets and humanitarian assistance**

- PSNP transfers are taking place later than normal and will be carried out through August 2018.

- Humanitarian assistance delivery is expected to continue between June and September 2018. Based on field assessment findings in Dollo Zone, beneficiary households in Somali Region are expected to continue receiving half rations on a monthly
Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Most pastoral and agropastoral areas of southeastern Ethiopia, including Dollo, Korahe, and eastern Jarar, and Afder and Liben Zones will continue to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between June and September 2018, as households continue to face food consumption gaps or face difficulty meeting their minimum food needs without resorting to unsustainable strategies. During this time, the number of households facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes will likely increase beyond current levels, although humanitarian assistance will continue to play an important role in helping many households to protect food consumption. In the absence of assistance, a substantial number of households would begin to face larger food consumption gaps and the size of the population in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) would grow further, although likely not reaching 20 percent of the population of the zone. Starting in October, the number of households facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes is likely to decrease substantially as households begin to access increased levels of camel milk and are able to begin accessing increased amount of income from the sale of livestock. However, due to continued low livestock holdings among poor households and IDPs, it is likely that at least 20 percent of households will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Between October 2018 and January 2019, these areas are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). However, most parts of Afder, Liben, and Shabele Zones will improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between October 2018 and January 2019, although some households will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. On the other hand, parts of Borena and parts of Bale are likely to improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) since Deyr/Hageya rainy season is expected to bring subsequent improvements from October onwards.

In the lowlands of central and eastern Oromia, the lowlands of Waghimra Zone of Amhara, and Tekeze River catchments of Tigray, June to September is the lean season for these areas of the country. Poor households have already exhausted their stocks from the 2017 Meher harvest and households begin to depend more heavily on market purchases in order to access staple foods. During this time, households will have access to agricultural labor opportunities (planting and weeding), and will continue to access some income from non-agricultural labor activities, although recent increases in the cost of construction materials has constrained construction labor demand. During this time of the year, poor households in some areas typically face seasonal food consumption gaps, and thus will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), while food security in other areas will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Starting in October, Meher harvests will improve household access to own-produced foods and in-kind and cash income from harvest labor. As a result, many households in these areas will improved to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity between October 2018 and January 2019.

In Belg-dependent areas of eastern Amhara, harvests are expected to occur one to two months later than usual, in August, following the significantly delayed onset and generally poor performance of the Belg rains in 2018. As a result, households are currently unable to access own-produced foods as would normally occur, and they continue to rely on markets in order to access staple foods, at a time when agricultural labor income is also below normal due to poor performance of the season. As a result, the lean season is being prolonged and households are facing difficulty meeting their basic food needs. Between June and early August, poor households in this area will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). However, as Belg harvests begin in August and households begin to access own-produced foods during the 2018 Meher harvest starting in October, food security in these areas will improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2), as poor households will be able to meet their minimum food needs but will forgo essential non-food needs. On the other hand, in the Meher-dependent eastern half of Tigray and Amhara regions are likely to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through September. With expected near-average production from the Meher season, household access to food and income will improve further, and most poor households will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity.

In Afar and Sitti Zone of Somali Region, the overall performance of the last two to three consecutive rainy seasons has been near average over these mostly pastoral areas, but March to May 2018 rainfall was below average. However, Karan/Karma (July to September) rainy season is expected to be average and will result in improvements in pasture, browse, and water availability beginning in August. Moreover, livestock conceptions are likely to increase between September and October 2018. However, income earned from other sources, such as causal labor, construction, salt mining, and self-employment, is expected to remain low. Thus, poor and very poor households in Sitti Zone and central and northern parts of Afar Region are projected to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) acute food insecurity through September and will move into Stressed (IPC Phase 2) for the remaining of the scenario period as staple food prices start to decline following Meher harvests in late 2018.

In the western half of the country in western and central Oromia, western Amhara, Tigray, SNNPR, as well as Gambela, and Benshangul Gumuz regions, poor households are expected to be able to maintain adequate access to food and income throughout the scenario period. Forecasted average Kiremt rainfall is likely to lead to average 2018 Meher production and
further improvements in access to pasture for livestock, which will contribute to normal milk yields and livestock prices. As a result, these areas are expected to face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity between June 2018 and January 2019.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Lowland Hawd Pastoral Livelihood Zone (LHP), Dollo Zone, Somali Region (Figure 3)

Current Situation

The 2018 Gu (March to May) rains were above average across most areas of Dollo Zone, leading to a second consecutive well-performing season, following significant drought in 2016 and 2017. According to CHIRPS rainfall estimates, cumulative Gu rainfall totaled more than 110 percent of average across nearly all of Dollo Zone, with rainfall reaching 150 percent of average in localized areas. The onset of the season was on time or earlier than normal, with unseasonably heavy rainfall occurring early in the season in March and was followed by continued rainfall during April and May. In far eastern areas of Dollo Zone where seasonal rainfall is typically lighter, field reports suggest rainfall performance was less robust, but nevertheless an improvement over seasons in 2016 and 2017. According to CHIRPS estimates for Dollo Zone as a whole, this was the third wettest Gu season on record since 1981, and it was preceded in late 2017 by an above-average Deyr season that was in the top third of all Deyr seasons since 1981. Good performance of seasonal rainfall has been corroborated by indications from the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) that vegetation conditions are above average.

Pasture, browse, and water availability has improved significantly as a result of the above-average 2018 Gu rains. A combination of rapid field assessments and remote sensing products, such as NDVI, suggest vegetation conditions have improve significantly compared to 2016 and 2017, with pasture, browse, and water widely available for livestock consumption. Water harvesting structures, like ponds and berkads, that are normally used as water sources for human and livestock consumption are now adequately replenished water in most parts of Dollo Zone.

Livestock body conditions have improved significantly, and most are in generally normal condition, although household livestock ownership remains much lower than normal. Due to improvements in access to pasture and water throughout the zone, livestock body conditions have improved, though it was possible to observe in some areas that some camels’ ribs are visible (a sign of below normal body conditions) in the southern areas of the zone. Large numbers of goat conceptions had been reported during the 2017 Deyr season, and in May 2018, field teams confirmed that large numbers of goat births had occurred during the Gu season, resulting in increased goat milk production. Goats also conceived during the 2018 Gu season, leading to expectations of additional births during the upcoming 2018 Deyr season, starting in October. In addition, field teams confirmed that large numbers of camel conceptions occurred in both the 2017 Deyr season and the 2018 Gu season. Significant camel births are expected during the upcoming Deyr season, which is expected to result in significantly improve camel milk production starting in October. However, households from all wealth groups possess significantly fewer livestock than prior to the drought, following large-scale, excess livestock deaths in 2016 and 2017, accompanied by substantially increased livestock sales in order to cope with the drought.

Livestock prices have significantly improved, following improvements in livestock body conditions as well as reductions in supply on the market. In Warder market, shoat prices in May 2018 were approximately 83 percent higher than in May 2017, and are approximately 36 percent above the recent five-year average, according to data from the Somali Regional Department Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB). Camel prices are approximately 67 percent higher than in May 2017, and 10 percent higher than the recent five-year average.
Prices for key staples, such as wheat flour and sorghum, remain above average following the devaluation of the Ethiopian Birr, while maize prices are closer to prior year levels. In late 2017, prices for wheat flour increased significantly from approximately 800 ETB/50 kg sack in November to 1100 ETB/50 kg sack in December, as the devaluation of the Ethiopia Birr created significant uncertainty among traders importing wheat flour into eastern Ethiopia from ports in Somalia. As the impacts of this devaluation have become more clear to traders, wheat flour prices have stabilized and declined slightly from the end of 2017 levels, but remain above levels observed in recent years. In May 2018, wheat flour prices were approximately 40 percent higher than in May 2017 and the recent five-year average. In line with trends observed more broadly in Ethiopia, sorghum prices are also higher than normal. In May 2018, sorghum prices were approximately 80 percent higher than in May 2017, and approximately 50 percent higher than the recent three-year average. Meanwhile, maize prices are near their May 2017 levels.

Terms of trade have improved significantly since the drought in 2016/17, driven largely by improvements in livestock prices. Trends in terms-of-trade have varied significantly over the past year. Goats to wheat flour terms of trade are near average, 30 percent higher than in May 2017, and approximately 30 percent higher than in September 2017. Meanwhile, goats to maize terms of trade are nearly double the level they were in May 2017 and are only slightly lower than in May 2016, prior to the drought. While these increases are improving household purchasing power, households’ ability to sell livestock remains constrained by very low livestock holdings, mitigating the improvements in food access typically associated with improvements in purchasing power.

Humanitarian assistance delivery continues in Dollo Zone, which in combination with PSNP assistance, is increasing household access to food and income. Based on the results of the recent FEWS NET survey in Dollo Zone, it is believed that approximately 40 percent of households in LHP received assistance during the 30 days prior to the survey, including approximately 21 percent of IDPs and 33 percent of resident households. The survey also indicated that the mean humanitarian food aid transfer was 50 to 70 percent of a full ration, which is broadly consistent with reports from the field that beneficiaries are receiving a full ration approximately once every two months. During a rapid FEWS NET field assessment in May 2018, households interviewed in several communities indicated that the most recent assistance distributions occurred in late March, while local officials indicated that the most recent dispatches from assistance warehouses had occurred in mid-May, and distributions of assistance were imminent.

The incidence of child morbidity, including the outbreak of Acute Water Diarrhea, has declined since 2017. Data from FEWS NET’s survey indicate that the percentage of children between 6-59 months of age who had one or more types of illness during the two weeks prior to the survey was 30 percent among resident populations, and 21 percent among IDPs. This represents a five percentage point decline among residents, and a 20 percentage point decline among IDPs. In addition, the outbreak of AWD declined overall in Ethiopia during late 2017, and key informants indicate that the AWD caseload in Dollo Zone declined sharply in late 2017 leading into 2018.

Current food security and nutrition outcomes

In September/October 2017, FEWS NET undertook collection of representative food security and nutrition indicators in Dollo Zone, in order to understand the impact of drought in 2016 and 2017 on food security outcomes. In the absence of emergency food assistance provided by the government and partners, it is likely that more than 20 percent of households would have experienced extreme food insecurity, the GAM prevalence would have exceeded 30 percent, and mortality would have increased significantly in the areas of Somali Region worst affected by drought, including Dollo Zone.

Food security and nutrition outcomes have improved significantly in May 2018 compared to October 2017, following continued improvements in seasonal performance as well as continued large-scale provision of humanitarian assistance. In May 2018, FEWS NET collected representative food security, nutrition, and mortality indicator data in Dollo Zone, stratified between IDPs and resident households. In addition to providing a snapshot in time, this survey followed the survey in Dollo Zone described from September/October 2017, which allows for a comparison between outcomes between late 2017 and mid-2018. In general, the results of the May 2018 survey showed a large improvement in food security outcomes compared to late 2017. The detailed results of that survey are presented below.

Key indicators suggest food consumption has improved significantly between October 2017 and May 2018, without significant changes in livelihoods-based coping strategies. In both surveys conducted by FEWS NET, three food consumption indicators were collected, including Food Consumption Score (FCS), the reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), and the
Household Hunger Scale (HHS), alongside one livelihoods coping indicator. Across all three food consumption indicators, significant improvements in food consumption were observed.

- **Food Consumption Score.** Zone-wide (including resident and IDP households), the proportion of households reporting “poor” food consumption, according to the Food Consumption Score, declined from 46 percent to 13 percent between October 2017 and May 2018. Meanwhile, the proportion of households reporting “borderline” food consumption declined slightly (25 percent vs. 21 percent), while the proportion of households reporting “acceptable” food consumption more than doubled, from 29 percent in October 2017 to 66 percent in May 2018. In general, food consumption was worse among IDP households compared to resident households, with nearly three times as many IDP households (27%) than resident households (10%) reporting “poor” food consumption (Figure 4).

- **Reduced Coping Strategies Index.** According to rCSI, the proportion of households reporting engaging in very high coping declined by three quarters, from 16 percent in October 2018 to approximately three percent in May 2018. The proportion of households who reported engaging in high coping declined from 50 to 29 percent, while the proportion of households who engaged in moderate coping increased from 28 to 43 percent, and the proportion of households who engaged in low coping quadrupled from six percent to 25 percent. In May 2018, few households reported engaging in very high levels of consumption-based coping, although the proportion was higher among IDPs (six percent) than among resident households (2.3%) (Figure 5).

- **Household Hunger Scale.** According to Household Hunger Scale, the proportion of households who reported facing “severe hunger” declined from 17 percent in October 2017 to less than 1 percent in May 2018. Moreover, the proportion of households facing “moderate hunger” decreased from 34 percent to 13 percent, and the proportion of households facing “little to no hunger” increased from 49 percent in October 2017 to 87 percent in May 2018. In May 2018, the proportion of IDP households facing moderate or severe hunger (30.1%) was approximately three times higher than among resident populations (10.1%) (Figure 6).

- **Livelihoods Coping.** FEWS NET also collected a fourth indicator – the CARI Livelihoods Coping module – which is an indicator of livelihoods coping (as opposed to consumption-based coping, such as reduction of meals). The results of this indicator suggested almost no change in the proportion of households engaging in stressed, crisis, emergency, and catastrophe coping, compared to the results found in October 2017. This suggests that improvements in the three food consumption indicators have likely not been driven by changes in how households are coping with the effects of the drought. Overall, approximately half of all households surveyed reported employing stressed strategies, while less than six percent used crisis or worse-level strategies.

Based on a cross-tabulation analysis of the food security indicators at the household level, slightly less than 20 percent of resident households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity in the presence of assistance, while approximately 45 percent of IDP households are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the presence of assistance. In the absence of assistance, an additional 12 percent of resident households would be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse, while the number of IDP households in Emergency.
The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) has decreased significantly among both resident and IDP populations since October 2017. Among IDPs, the mean prevalence of GAM decreased from 27.8% (23.8-32.3%, 95% CI) in October 2017 to 17.6% (14.5-21.1%, 95% CI) in May 2018. This reflects an improvement in levels of acute malnutrition to slightly above the WHO Critical threshold (>15%). Among resident populations, the mean prevalence of GAM decreased from 19.4% (15.8-23.6, 95% CI) to 14.0% (11.6-16.8%, 95% CI), reflecting an improvement from levels above the Critical threshold to be to levels slightly below. The number of TFP admissions has also continued to decline since 2017. Following a peak of TFP admissions in Dollo Zone at approximately 2,664 cases in June 2017, the caseload dropped to approximately 619 cases in January 2018, and 422 children were admitted in April 2018. These improvements are likely driven by a combination of improvements in food access following two above-average seasons, continued provision of large-scale humanitarian assistance, and a significant decrease in the AWD outbreak starting in late 2017.

Crude death rates (CDR) are very low among IDP and resident populations. According to FEWS NET’s survey in May 2018, the crude death rate among IDP populations was approximately 0.11 deaths/10,000 people/day (0.04-0.27, 95% CI) during the 120 days prior to the survey. Among resident households, the CDR was approximately 0.23 people/10,000 people/day during the same time period. Mortality data was not collected as part of the September/October 2017 survey, which does not allow for a direct comparison of mortality rates between the two time periods. However, the results from the May 2018 survey do indicate mortality levels in line with Minimal (IPC Phase 1)/Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes (mortality data does not distinguish between IPC Phase 1 and IPC Phase 2).

In June 2018, FEWS NET also completed HEA Outcome Analysis for Lowland Hawd Pastoral Livelihood Zone, based on the results from a rapid food security assessment conducted in Dollo Zone in May 2018. Consistent with information contained in the May 2018 survey, this analysis suggested that during the April to June 2018 period, small populations in Dollo Zone would likely be meeting their minimum food needs without engaging in irreversible coping and a large majority would be facing some difficulty meeting their food and livelihoods protection needs without engaging in irreversible coping strategies. However, the results also suggested a larger population would be facing large food consumption gaps than is supported by recent outcome indicator data on food consumption and nutrition.

In summary, and taking into account the above evidence, FEWS NET classifies the resident household group in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!), and the IDP household group in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) in June 2018. Given the fact that the number of resident households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse approaches 20 percent even in the presence of assistance, and the fact that nearly half of all IDPs are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the presence of assistance, Dollo Zone is mapped in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in this report, as humanitarian assistance is not sufficient to prevent the total number of households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from crossing the 20 percent threshold.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions have been used to develop the most-likely scenario for Lowland Hawd Pastoral Livelihood Zone for June 2018 through January 2019:

- Cumulative rainfall during the October to December 2018 Deyr season is likely to be average to above average.
- Goat milking is likely to decline seasonally into September, following significant numbers of goat births during the 2018 Gu season. Goats and sheep that conceived during the 2018 Gu season are expected to give birth and begin milking during the upcoming Deyr season.
- Significant numbers of camel births are expected during the upcoming 2018 Deyr season, following significant conceptions during the 2017 Deyr season. This will result in significant improvements in the availability of milk, although total milk...
quantity will remain below normal due to significantly below normal livestock herd sizes. As camel conceptions continued during the 2018 Gu season, additional camel births and increases in milk production are expected beyond the outlook period.

- Goat prices are expected to remain above average between June and August, particularly as the Eid holidays drive increased demand for livestock. Goat prices will remain above average after August, but will begin to decline seasonally toward the end of the scenario period. Meanwhile, camel prices are expected to remain near average throughout the scenario period.

- Staple food prices are expected to remain above average between June 2018 and January 2019. Prices of imported wheat flour will decline slightly, while prices of domestically produced staples such as sorghum and maize will peak seasonally between August and October, before starting to decline later in the scenario period.

- Due to the delayed start of PSNP distributions, provision of PSNP is likely to continue through August 2018 and will be distributed for a total of six rounds.

- Provision of humanitarian assistance is expected to continue at current levels through September 2018. Beyond September, humanitarian assistance is not planned, funded, and likely, and for the purposes of this scenario, no assistance is assumed between October 2018 and January 2019.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

Between June and September, poor households will continue to access limited quantities of goat milk, as much lower than normal herd sizes limit the contribution of improved milk yields. In addition, households will continue to access some cash income from the sale of livestock – primarily shoats for poor households – as well as from camels and shoats for middle and better-off households. However, the inability to generate substantially higher amounts of income, alongside the lack of camel milk production until later in the year, will likely lead to considerable food consumption gaps, particularly among poor households who receive neither PSNP nor emergency food assistance. Given seasonal reductions in food access as milk productivity declines during the dry season, poor households will be increasingly unable to meet their food needs. Between June and September, Lowland Hawd Pastoral Zone will likely remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with the number of households in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) likely to increase as September approaches, and even as humanitarian assistance continues to help protect food consumption among a large number of households. While the risk of deteriorating beyond Emergency (IPC Phase 4) has declined significantly, continued humanitarian assistance is needed through the summer to sustain improved outcomes and offset seasonal declines in food access during the June to September dry season. In the absence of assistance, a substantial number of households would begin to face larger food consumption gaps and the size of the population in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) would grow further, although likely not reaching 20 percent of the population of the zone.

Starting in October, the birthing of livestock (particularly camels, but also goats) will lead to substantial increases in milk yields, and food access among middle and better-off populations with more substantial livestock herds – though still below normal – will begin to improve. Likewise, households will likely be able to increase their sales of livestock as goats born during the previous seasons begin to reach maturity. Outcomes are also likely to improve among poor households who retain some livestock, although those improvements will likely be more limited due to very low holdings and the inability for many poor households to sell camels. IDPs, particularly those who no longer possess livestock, will face more difficulty benefiting from seasonal improvements in food access, although inter-communal sharing may increase as community members begin to access increase levels of milk from livestock. During this time and in the absence of assistance, it is likely that a substantial number of IDPs, and some poor resident populations, are likely to continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes, although the overall number of households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) will be lower than in the current situation, and the number of households in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) should be at a minimum.

**Bale Pastoral Livelihood Zone (BPA), Bale Zone, Oromia Region (Figure 7)**

**Current Situation**

**Performance of Genna (March to May) 2018 rainfall was above average across most areas of Bale Pastoral Livelihood Zone. Genna 2018 started in time and rainfall totals were above average over most areas of Bale Zone. According to CHIRPS rainfall estimates, cumulative rainfall was between 110 and 150 percent of average across Bale Zone, and well distributed throughout much of the season. The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) provides further convergence of evidence that rainfall was above average, with above-average vegetation conditions indicated over many areas of Bale Zone.**
Favorable performance of *Genna* rainfall has led to significant improvements in the availability of pasture, browse, and water for livestock. Livestock that are migrated toward Golocha, Beltu, Goro, Sewina, Jara, Dollo Mena, Ginir and Gura are now returned into their original places following the above average *Genna* rain in the area. Water harvesting structures, like ponds that normally used for water sources, now have adequate levels of water. However, water rationing is continuing in some IDPs sites of lowland Bale, where there are no nearby water ponds and water harvesting structures.

Improved availability of water and pasture has also contributed to improvements in livestock body conditions and productivity in Bale Pastoral Livelihood Zone. Body conditions for camels and shoats have improved to near normal conditions, with both conceiving and giving birth during the *Genna* season. As a result, milk productivity has also increased. However, additional time is needed before cattle return to normal conditions following the drought in 2016/17. However, livestock herd sizes remain lower than normal following excess deaths and sales during the drought. There are currently no atypical livestock deaths occurring, although an unknown disease is affecting some goats in parts of BPA.

Rainfall was sufficient for crop production in areas of Bale Zone where agriculture contributes a small share of overall food and income. Most *Genna* crops in these areas were planted on time and are at their normal growth stage, with harvests likely to occur in late June and July 2018. However, over 12,745 ha of planted maize and sorghum crops are infested by FAW in Bale Zone, and some damage to *Belg* crops are anticipated. Furthermore, heavy rainfall in May in several woredas of Bale Zone (Agarfa, Sinana, Goro, Goba, Gura Damole, Berbere, Lige hida and Sewena), caused flooding that damaged approximately 4,800 ha of crops. Meanwhile, planting of long-cycle crops such as maize and sorghum are also underway and those planted early are in good condition.

Conflict since September 2017 has left 90,096 people displaced within Bale Zone, according to the Bale Zone Early Warning Department of the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office (DPPO). The Oromia regional government moved has moved nearly half of those displaced to nearby woredas. IDPs are currently relying on a combination of productivity from their own assets (such as livestock) and humanitarian assistance. However, displaced households are likely to lack access to their typical agricultural land, and will likely miss cultivation of crops during the current season.

Prices for most key staples are higher than last year and above average in Bale Zone. April 2018 wheat prices are 30 to 40 percent higher than last year and the recent four-year average, while maize prices are 20 to 30 percent higher than last year and the recent four-year average, according to data from the Bale Zone DPPO. In April 2018 in Dewea Kechin market, sorghum prices are only slightly higher (by three to five percent) than in April 2017 and the recent five-year average. Atypically low market supply, partially associated with below average own crop production during the last consecutive years (2016/2017), alongside relief cash interventions that improved household purchasing power, are reportedly driving higher than usual prices.

Livestock prices are higher than normal on markets in Bale Zone, which is likely to partially support household purchasing power given higher than normal staple food prices. The price of an average size shoat in April 2018 in Bale Zone is reported to be 23 percent higher than in April 2017, and 29 percent higher than the recent four-year average, according to Bale Zone DPPO data. Similarly, in Dewea Kechin market, the price of an average size goat in April 2017 was 11 percent higher than in April 2017, and 14 percent higher than the recent five-year average. However, given currently low holdings of livestock, poor households in particularly are less able to improve their access to food through the sale of additional livestock.

Distributions of PSNP and humanitarian assistance are ongoing in Bale Zone, including HRDP assistance provided by NDRMC to resident and displaced populations. The first round of HDRP assistance has been completed in Bale Zone for resident populations, and assistance continues for populations displaced by conflict. Moreover, IDPs have received four rounds of
emergency food assistance in 2018. Meanwhile, preparations are underway to distribute the 3\textsuperscript{rd} round of PSNP in nine lowland PSNP benefiting woredas, which supports 201,336 public work beneficiaries and 50,903 direct support beneficiaries.

**Poor and very poor households continue to face difficulty meeting their food needs, as household access to milk production and income from the sales of livestock remain below average following significant deaths and sales of livestock during the drought in 2016/17.** Moreover, recent conflict along the Somali-Oromia border has led to significant displacement and has disrupted new IDPs’ access to their typical sources of food and income. PSNP continue to play an important role in providing access to cash income for some poor households, and humanitarian assistance is helping many households in need to meet their minimum food consumption needs, although many still lack the ability to afford key non-food expenditures. As a result, Bale Pastoral Livelihood Zone is currently in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) acute food insecurity.

**Assumptions**

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions have been used to develop the most-likely scenario for Bale Pastoral Livelihood Zone for June 2018 through January 2019:

- **Genna** 2018 crop production is likely to be average in most parts of Bale Zone.
- **Hagaya** (September to December) 2018 rainfall is likely to be near average in terms of cumulative amounts over Bale Pastoral Livelihood Zone, likely leading to near average harvests in December 2018/January 2019.
- Pasture and water availability expected to be deteriorate seasonally but remain adequate until the onset of Hagaya rains in September, when water and pasture will once again improve through the end of the scenario period in January 2019.
- Livestock body conditions, conceptions, births, and milk productivity are expected to be seasonally normal, with declines in productivity during the June to September dry season and improvements during the September to December rainy season.
- Staple food prices are expected to increase seasonally between June and September, and decline between October and January as harvests in high-producing areas improved supply on markets and as small-scale local harvests reduce household reliance on markets for food access.
- Livestock prices are likely to remain above average between June 2018 and January 2019, thanks to continued good livestock body conditions.
- Provision of PSNP is likely to continue through August 2018. Meanwhile, humanitarian assistance is likely to continue through September 2018. Due to uncertainty with regard to funding, no humanitarian assistance is assumed between October 2018 and January 2019.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

Between June and September 2018, poor households are likely to continue facing difficulty meeting the minimum food needs, as low livestock herd sizes continue to result in below average levels of milk production and cash income from the sales of livestock. However, harvests of Genna crops, alongside PSNP and humanitarian assistance, are likely to help households meet their minimum food needs even as food access from livestock declines seasonally during the dry season. Additionally, households displaced by conflict will continue to face difficulty access normal levels of food and income from their typical livelihood sources. As a result, Bale Pastoral Agricultural Zone will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) between June and September 2018. Starting in October 2018, herd sizes will begin to improve with additional livestock births, as well as from harvests of Hagaya crops later in the scenario period. Thus, poor households will move into Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to January 2019.

**South Wollo Belg Livelihood Zone (SWB), South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region (Figure 8)**

**Current Situation**

The 2018 Belg (March to May) rains performed very poorly in South Wollo Belg Livelihood Zone, with well below average rainfall, a delayed start of season, prolonged dry spells, and an early end of season. In a typical year, Belg seasonal rainfall in this zone usually gets fully underway in March, peaks in April, and begins to decline temporarily in May. In 2018, Belg seasonal rainfall was significantly delayed, with minimal rain in March, and increases in rainfall in April. The seasonal also ended several
weeks earlier than normal, with little rainfall occurring during May. According to CHIRPS rainfall estimates, cumulative seasonal rainfall was approximately 50 to 60 percent of average seasonal totals between March 1 and May 30.

**Area planted in Belg crops is below average, and harvests are expected to be delayed.** Due to the delayed onset of seasonal rainfall, most planting of Belg crops was delayed until April, up to two months later than is normal in a typical year. Due to the delayed onset and poor distribution of rainfall, many agricultural households planted less than usual. For example, according to data from the Amhara Bureau of Agriculture, area planted in Amhara Region as a whole is approximately 137,000 hectares, or approximately 65 percent of average area planted. Currently, planted crops are predominantly at vegetative growth stages. As the rain continued to be below normal in May, field crops suffered additional moisture stress that is likely to result in reduced yields. While some long-cycle crops are normally planted during the Belg season and harvested during the Meher, even crops that are normally planted during the Belg and harvested during the Belg are expected to be harvested in August, closer to when Meher harvests would be expected to begin.

**Pastoral conditions are generally normal in terms of feed and water availability, which are supporting typical livestock body conditions.** Normal Belg and Meher 2017 production that resulted in normal levels of crop residue, as well as additional feed availability from nearby Meher producing areas, and additional rainfall in April that resulted in improvements in pasture and water availability have contributed to normal water and feed access for livestock raised in the zone, principally sheep.

**Supplies of staple cereals are generally normal on markets, although prices of key staples such as wheat and sorghum are higher than usual.** Between April and May 2018, wholesale sorghum prices on Dessie market increased by 30 percent, and are approximately 39 percent higher than in May 2017, and 28 percent higher than the recent four-year average, according to data from the ETBC. According to data from Food Security and Disaster Prevention (FSDP) offices, in Wogeltena market (Delanta woreda), sorghum prices in April 2018 were 51 percent higher than in April 2017, and wheat prices were 80 percent higher than last year.

**Favorable seasonal performance over the past several seasons have led to good livestock body conditions, leading to slightly above normal livestock prices.** For instance, prices for sheep, the most important livestock for sale, are 15 percent than last year in Wogeltena market and two percent higher than last year in Dessie market. In Dessie market, sheep prices are 21 percent higher than the recent five-year average. Livestock to cereal terms-of-trade are near their five-year average levels.

**Nutrition Conditions:** Generally, nutrition situations are stable since last year. As per the routine screening data from zonal health department, proxy GAM in some woredas in south Wollo is about 7 percent and is stable since October 2017. The South Wollo OTP admission in March 2018 is 648 and no significant deviation (upward or down ward) is also observed since September/October 2017. Generally, the stable nutrition is attributed to, increased livestock price, normal Meher harvest and Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP) implemented by WFP in some selected woredas.

**Delivery of PSNP and emergency food assistance is ongoing, although field reports suggest distributions for both are delayed by several months.** As of late May 2018, three rounds of PSNP have been made at a rate of 145 ETB/person/month, which field reports suggest is a decrease from 195 ETB/person/month delivered in 2017, although this amount still represents approximately a three-quarter ration. Delivery of emergency food assistance is ongoing in the form of cash-based transfers. As of May 2018, the 1st round of HRDP assistance has been distributed to approximately 135,681 people in this livelihood zone, which is several months later than planned.

**Current Food Security:** Poor and very poor households typically get over 90 percent of annual food from own crops and purchase. Cash from PSNP, sale of livestock and migration labor are also key sources of cash income. Currently, as households...
are at their lean period, they have already exhausted food from their own stock. They are heavily relying on purchase of food from market. Although PSNP in cash is available, seasonally, the cash income from migration employment is low. In addition, higher than normal staple cereals has resulted in below normal purchasing power. Households are increasing their sale of livestock beyond what is seasonally normal and are engaging in migration in search of labor. Thus, poor and very poor households currently face significant level of food consumption deficit and are in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!).

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions have been used to develop the most-likely scenario for South Wollo Belg Livelihood Zone for June 2018 through January 2019:

- Most global, regional and national climate prediction centers, including NOAA, IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Center (ICPAC) and National Meteorological Agency (NMA), indicate Kiremt (June to September) rainfall is likely to be average tending to above average in terms of total cumulative rainfall.
- Belg harvests are expected to take place starting in August and are expected to be below average, due to below-average area planted and lower than normal yields associated with extended dry spells during key periods of crop development. In localized areas of south Wollo Belg Livelihood zone, complete failure of crops is likely.
- Due to below-average area planted in Belg crops and likely reduced yields, agricultural labor opportunities are expected to be below average during key periods of weeding and harvesting. However, with anticipated average June to September Kiremt rainfall, farmers are expected to cover their farm land with short-cycle Meher crops and thus near-average Meher production is expected in November/December 2018.
- Staple food prices are expected to remain at above average levels throughout the scenario period, peaking in September, and then beginning to show seasonal declines toward the end of 2018/beginning of 2019 as Meher harvests begin to arrive on markets.
- Livestock prices are expected to increase through the end of 2018, ranging between 1500 to 1600 birr per head of sheep and to be 10 to 15 percent higher than last year and 20 to 30 percent higher than the recent five-year average.
- Urban/rural construction labor and migration agricultural labor will be the main source of labor employment in the outlook period. However, both sources are expected to remain in its lower rate.
- PSNP is expected to continue through August 2018, while humanitarian assistance is expected to be provided through August/September 2018.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

With harvests delayed until August, the lean season will persist through July and households will continue to rely for a longer period than normal on market purchases in order to meet their food needs. During this time, households will continue to face difficulty meeting their food needs, although continued emergency food assistance and provision of PSNP will help protect food consumption among some populations. Between June and early August, poor households will face difficulty meeting their food needs and will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Food access will begin to improve starting in August/September 2018 as households begin to access Belg 2018 harvests. Those improvements will continue in October as Meher harvest begin to become available and as households begin to access cash income from migration labor associated with agricultural harvests in neighboring Meher areas. In addition, seasonal improvements in staple food prices should ease households’ access to market purchases and improve household food access. Thus, food security among poor households will improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October 2018 through January 2019.
EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Impact on food security outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somali Region (particularly Dollo, Korahe, and eastern Jarar zones)</td>
<td>Well below-average Deyr seasonal rainfall between October and December 2018</td>
<td>Significantly below-average 2018 Deyr rains could result in little to no regeneration of pasture and water for livestock consumption, and could limited expected improvements in camel and goat milk availability in late 2018. In turn, this could limit expected improvements in food security and lead humanitarian assistance needs to remain very high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali Region</td>
<td>Prolonged disruptions to provision of emergency food assistance</td>
<td>Prolonged periods without provision of food assistance is likely to result in households facing large food consumption gaps, leading to increased levels of acute malnutrition and the increased risk of mortality, particularly during the June to September 2018 dry season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize-producing parts of SNNPR, western Oromia, Amhara, Gambela, and Benshangul Gumuz</td>
<td>FAW infestations</td>
<td>Significant crop losses could occur during the Meher harvest between October and December. This would likely lead to an earlier than normal start to the lean season beyond the scenario period in 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Increased border and ethnic conflict between Somali and Oromia, Gedeo of SNNPR and Guji of Oromia, Gurage and Kebina in SNNPR, Afar and Amhara, and Tigray and Amhara</td>
<td>Increased ethnic conflict and tensions would result in displacement of people that would lead to an increase in the number of people who are in need of humanitarian assistance across the country. This could also lead to disrupt or delay agricultural activities, limit income from labor, and result in locally reduced Meher harvests.</td>
</tr>
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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.