



# GIEWS Country Brief Ethiopia

Reference Date: 17-June-2021

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Erratic seasonal rains affecting 2021 secondary season “Belg” crops
- Severity of desert locust upsurge declining in recent months
- Erratic precipitation affecting rangelands and livestock in southern and northern pastoral areas
- Alarming food insecurity in Tigray Region due to ongoing conflict, with 5.5 million people requiring food assistance, including 350 000 people facing IPC Phase 5: “Catastrophe” levels of food insecurity
- More than 16 million people estimated to be severely food insecure between May and June 2021

## Erratic seasonal rains affecting 2021 secondary season “Belg” crops

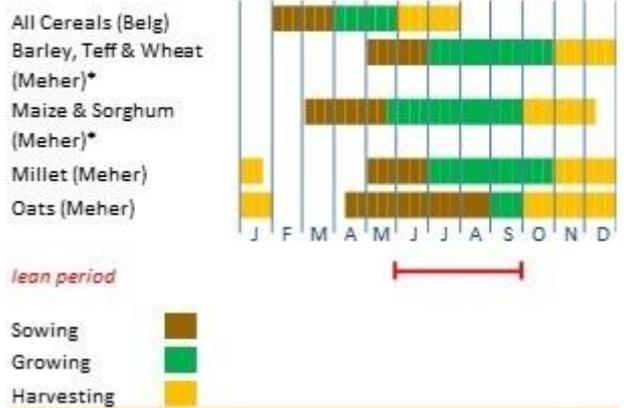
Harvesting of the 2021 secondary “Belg” season crops will start in July with about one month of delay in Southern Tigray, eastern Amhara, eastern Oromiya and northeastern SNNP regions. Cereal production is expected at below-average levels, as the February-May rainy season has been characterized by an erratic temporal distribution of precipitation over most cropping areas. Cumulative rainfall amounts between February and mid-April ranged from 30 to 80 percent below average in Southern Tigray, eastern Amhara and eastern Oromiya regions, resulting in delayed and reduced plantings as well as in germination failures. In southern Tigray Region, agricultural operations have also been affected by insecurity and input shortages due to market disruptions caused by the ongoing conflict. The substantial rainfall deficits had a negative impact on vegetation conditions and, according to FAO’s Agricultural Stress Index (ASI), as of mid-April, severe drought affected more than 70 percent of the crop land in several areas. Although abundant rains between mid-April and mid-May offset moisture deficits and improved vegetation conditions, the early cessation of seasonal rains in late May did not allow the maturation of late planted and replanted crops.

Planting of the 2021 main “Meher” season crops, for harvest from October, is well underway in key producing areas of western Oromia, western Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz regions. A timely onset of seasonal “Kiremt” rains in early June benefited crop planting and germination. According to the latest weather forecast by the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF), the June-September rains are likely to be favourable,

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Crop Calendar

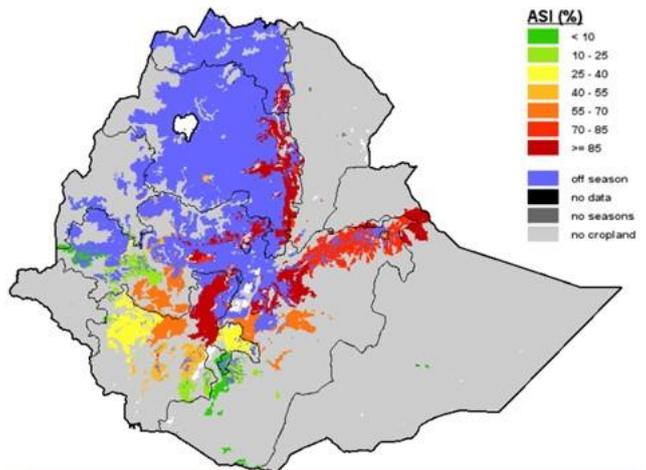
(\*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

## Ethiopia - Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)

from start of season 1 to dekad 2, April 2021



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

with average to above-average amounts expected in most major cropping areas. However, the ongoing conflict continues to severely disrupt agricultural operations in western, northwestern, central and eastern zones of Tigray Region.

### Severity of desert locust upsurge declining in recent months

Since mid-2019, the country has been affected by a severe desert locust upsurge, the worst in 25 years. Large-scale control operations carried out by the government with the support of FAO are mitigating the impact of the locusts on crops and pastures. Widespread damages have been averted and losses, although significant, occurred only in some localized areas. Infestation levels have been declining since late 2020 as a result of sustained control operations and below-average October-December “Deyr/Hageya” rains that created an adverse environment for insect reproduction.

Abundant “Belg/Gu/Genna” rains in late April and early May allowed the remaining swarms to mature and lay eggs in lowlands of eastern Oromiya and Somali regions. Although current infestation levels are significantly lower compared to one year ago, monitoring and control operations must be maintained to reduce the number of locusts before they form a new generation of swarms from late June onwards, which are expected to move to Afar Region for breeding in August and September, that is expected to coincide with above-normal rains.

### Erratic precipitation affecting rangelands and livestock in southern and northern pastoral areas

In pastoral areas of southern SNNP, southern Oromiya and southern Somali regions, rangeland conditions have been affected by below-average rains between October 2020 and mid-April 2021 and, in some areas, by desert locusts, leading to a decline of livestock productivity and conceptions. Although abundant rains between mid-April and mid-May improved rangeland conditions, the increased availability of pasture and water had a limited and short-lived impact in terms of livestock body condition and milk production, also due to the early cessation of seasonal rains in late May. In addition, heavy rains triggered floods in Shabelle, Jarar, Dolo, Afder, Fafan and Korahe zones of Somali Region, which displaced about 56 000 people and resulted in the death of about 7 700 heads of livestock.

In northern pastoral areas of Afar Region and Sitti Zone of northern Somali Region, the March-May “Diraac/Sugum” rainy season has been characterized by an erratic temporal distribution of rains. After severe early and mid-season dryness, abundant rains in late April and early May improved vegetation conditions, but also triggered floods which caused the displacement of about 27 000 people and livestock losses.

### Alarming food security situation in Tigray Region due to ongoing conflict

According to the June 2021 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, 5.5 million people in Tigray and neighbouring zones of Amhara and Afar regions (about 60 percent of the population in the analysed area) are estimated to face severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” and above) including 350 000 people in “IPC Phase 5: “Catastrophe”, thus

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### Cereal Production

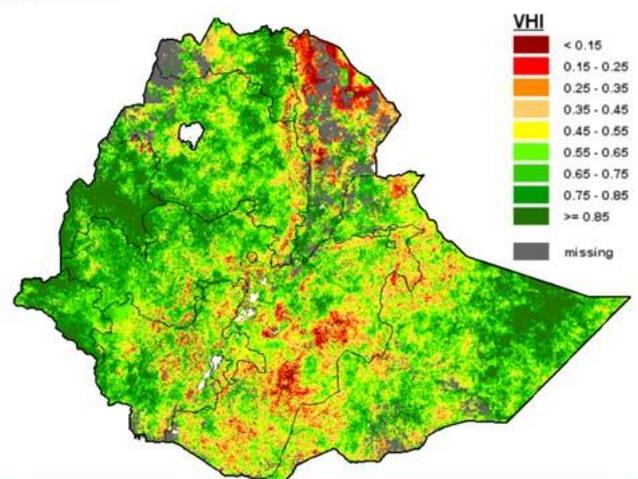
	2015-2019	2019	2020	change
	average		estimate	2020/2019
000 tonnes				
Maize	8 651	9 636	9 200	-4.5
Cereals NES	5 274	5 736	5 500	-4.1
Sorghum	4 995	5 266	5 000	-5.1
Others	8 096	9 036	8 603	-4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>27 016</b>	<b>29 674</b>	<b>28 303</b>	<b>-4.6</b>

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

### Ethiopia - Vegetation Health Index (VHI)

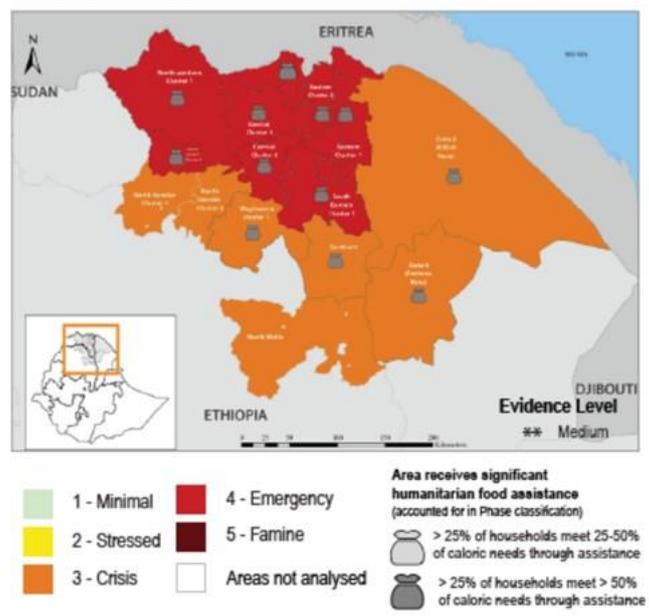
May 2021



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

### Ethiopia – Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

Tigray Region and neighbouring zones of Amhara and Afar regions, May-June 2021



urgently requiring Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA). The IPC updated figures for Tigray Region indicate a sharp increase in the number of people affected by food insecurity, from about 761 000 projected in the October 2020 report for the period January-June 2021 to about 4 million in the May-June period, mainly due to the conflict which erupted in November 2020.

The revised IPC figures show that, in total, more than 16 million people are estimated to face severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” and above) between May and June 2021. The high levels of food insecurity are mainly due to the lingering impact of the measures implemented in 2020 to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, macro-economic challenges resulting in high food prices, localized but significant locust-induced crop and pasture losses, the negative impact on crop and livestock production of erratic rains in the first half of the year and to the intensification of inter-communal violence since 2020 in several areas and the ongoing conflict in Tigray Region.

In particular, in Tigray Region and in neighbouring areas of Amhara and Afar regions, the conflict had a dramatic impact on the local food security situation mainly through:

- Large-scale displacements, with about 2 million people uprooted in northern Ethiopia.
- Movement and access limitations, impairing livelihood activities, market functioning and access to basic services and humanitarian assistance.
- Severe food losses, with an estimated 90 percent of the 2020 “Meher” crops lost through burning and pillaging by armed groups and widespread livestock looting, especially in western and central zones, where pastoralists lost up to 80-90 percent of their animals.
- Losses of income from agricultural, casual and salaried labour, with salaries not paid to most public and private workers since the start of the hostilities.

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