

Meher cropping prospects mostly positive, but SNNPR and eastern Oromia drier than normal

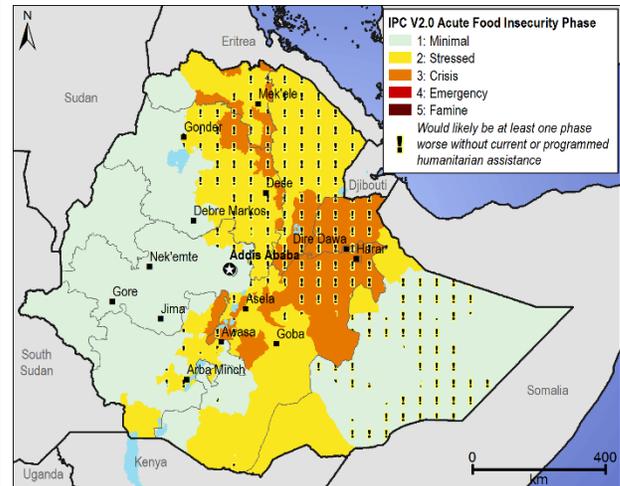
KEY MESSAGES

- At least 10 million people require emergency food assistance in 2016, following El Niño-induced drought in 2015. Worst-affected areas include Wag Himra, East and West Hararghe, and pastoral areas in Shinile and southern Afar, where Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes will continue through September. Continued, regular assistance is essential in order to mitigate food consumption gaps. Assistance needs in *Meher*-dependent areas should begin to decrease with *Meher* harvests in November.
- The ongoing *Kiremt* rains have been generally favorable for *Meher* cropping, although heavy rainfall in the western half and below-average rains in parts of eastern Oromia and SNNPR are threatening to reduce yields. Early impressions point to the prospect of near-average *Meher* harvests at the national level.
- Forecasts for continued heavy rainfall have increased the risk of flooding. Government’s Flood Contingency Plan estimates around one million people are at risk of flooding this year, of whom about 460,000 could be temporarily displaced. Flooding to date has been less than expected, but has caused damage and temporary displacement in parts of Amhara, Afar, and Gambella.
- There is a 55-60 percent chance for La Niña to develop by the end of 2016, which would likely suppress the October to December seasonal rains in the southern and southeastern pastoral areas, and lead to a deterioration of pastoral conditions and food security in those areas.

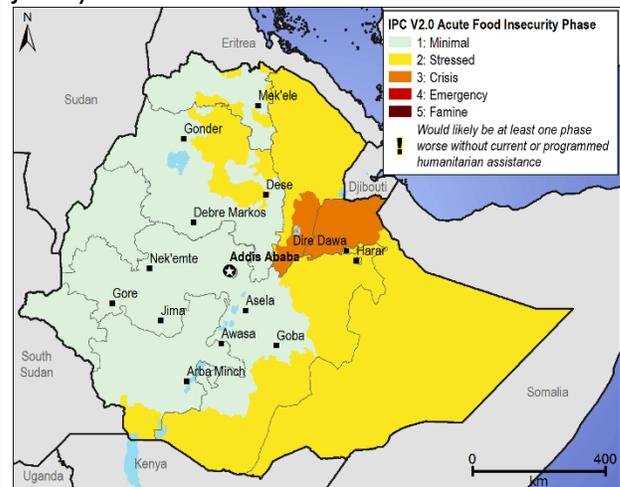
CURRENT SITUATION

- Although *Belg* harvests are normally completed in late July, harvests are delayed until August and into September in some areas such as SNNPR. These delays have disrupted the timing of land preparation and planting of some *Meher* crops, and agricultural households who plan to plant in the weeks ahead will likely shift to short-cycle crops, which tend to have lower yields.
- *Kiremt* rains started slightly early or on time in most areas. Cumulative seasonal rainfall has been near or above average in the northwestern half of the country, but only 65 to 85 percent of normal in most of SNNPR and parts of eastern Oromia, such as West Hararghe. Heavy rains in the north have damaged crops and temporarily displaced more than 10,000 households, mostly in Gambela, near Lake Tana in Amhara, and in the middle and lower Awash basin in Afar.

Projected food security outcomes, August to September 2016



Projected food security outcomes, October 2016 to January 2017



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. To learn more about this scale, click [here](#).

- *Kiremt* rainfall has been favorable for cropping over much of the country, except in much of SNNPR and parts of eastern Oromia. Overall, planting for *Meher* crops is generally going smoothly, partly due to provision of emergency seed assistance estimated at 504,920 quintal, as of 28 August. According to WFP's monthly Situation Reports, *Meher* planting by late July/early August was 70%, 75%, and 95% complete in Oromia, Amhara, and Tigray Regions, respectively. Progress of planting in SNNPR was rather low at 60 percent, as large areas were still covered with *Belg* crops. Planting performance to-date reveals that large areas remain to be planted in the coming weeks. However, due to the shortened time period for crop development, households are likely to switch to short-cycle crops such as vetch, chickpeas, and some varieties of wheat and teff that are normally low-yielding.
- *Meher* crops, currently between emergence and flowering stages, are generally doing well except in some parts of East and West Hararghe, Arsi, West Arsi and many parts of SNNPR where crops (particularly maize) have been affected by below-average rainfall. In northern areas where rainfall has been well above average, water logging is likely to hurt crop development and reduce yields in some localized areas. Households in agro-pastoral areas in Segen and South Omo zones in SNNPR; Bale, Guji and Borena in Oromia; and parts of central and southern Somali are expected to begin second season planting in late August, with most occurring in October. Considering the forecast below-average *Deyr/Hageya* (October to December) rains, below-average crop production is likely in late 2016/early 2017.
- Staple food prices have been mostly stable in recent months, likely due to a combination of low household purchasing power in some areas, delivery of large quantities of humanitarian assistance, Government's market stabilization programs, and releases of old stocks by traders anticipating better *Meher* harvests this year. However, prices remain higher than last year and the recent five-year average. For instance, maize prices in July 2016 at Shashemene market were similar to that of June 2016, but were 10 percent higher than in June 2015. In some areas where last year's drought was very severe, prices of cereals this year are substantially lower than last year. For instance, maize prices in July this year in Awash Fenate, Abala, Asayita and Shinile markets are 25, 33, 22, and 12 percent lower, respectively, than in July 2015.
- Improved rainfall this year has replenished water sources and led to regeneration of pasture and browse, resulting in normal livestock body conditions over much of the country. Livestock productivity is also normal, except for cattle and camels that were unable to conceive due to the extended drought. Fertile ones should now be conceiving, but due to the length of the gestation cycle, most births will take place starting in January 2017 for cattle and April 2017 for camels. As a result, current productivity of these large animals is very low. However, with improved livestock body conditions, prices have begun to improve. The July 2016 price of goats in Gode town was 9 percent higher than in June. Similarly, goat prices in July this year were 133 percent and 90 percent higher than that of March this year at Awash Fentale and Shinnile markets, respectively. Moreover, July 2016 goat prices in these two markets were 59 and 90 percent higher than the recent two-year average for July. The recent price increases are due to improved livestock body conditions, while before April their condition was so poor that pastoralists were forced to sell them at well below-average prices.
- In seasonally dry areas of southeastern and southern pastoral areas of Somali, Oromia and SNNPR, livestock are now showing seasonal declines in body conditions, which is likely to continue until the next *Deyr/Hageya* rainy season begins in October. Some parts of Somali, Oromia, and SNNPR that received below-average *Gu/Genna* rains this year are starting to face shortages of water and pasture for livestock, leading to early internal migrations of herds in isolated areas. These areas include parts of Dollo, Koraha, Shebel, Afder, and Liban sones in Somali; many lowland parts of Borena and Bale, and a couple of woredas in South Omo.
- Data obtained from the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) indicates a 12 percent decline in national-level TFP admissions between April 2016 and June 2016, with national TFP admissions in June 2016 at nearly the same level as in June 2015. The slight to moderate improvement noted since April over most areas is likely due to the impact of extensive nutritional interventions, the ongoing food assistance programs, the start of green harvest of *Belg* crops, and slight improvement in milk access from shoats in pastoral areas. There was significant variation among regions, however, and TFP admissions actually increased in West Hararghe by 29 percent between January and May 2016.
- An AWD outbreak has become a major public health concern, affecting nearly all regions of the country. Affected areas include Amibara (southern Afar); Mieso and Afdem (Sitti); 34 woredas in SNNPR, Bahar Dar Zuria and North Shewa (Amhara); North Shewa (Oromia) and Addis Ababa. The ongoing rainy season is aggravating the spread.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The current situation is in line with most assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most-likely scenario for June 2016 to January 2017. A full discussion of the scenario is available in the [June 2016 to January 2017 Food Security Outlook](#). One modified assumption states:

- Prices of domestically produced staple cereals are likely to follow seasonal patterns in most markets, yet remain higher than average.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2017

- **Revised Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD).** A recently released HRD has revised down its estimate of the total number of people requiring assistance to 9.7 million, a reduction of 500,000 people. Of the total annual requirement for the food sector, estimated at USD 1.1 billion, the current gap is estimated at USD 470 million. Overall humanitarian assistance needs will remain at very high levels through November 2016.
- **Lowlands of Wag Himra, and neighboring areas of North and South Gondar:** Households are expected to continue facing significant food consumption gaps through September and will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!). *Meher* harvests and related cash income should substantially improve household food access starting in October, although poor households will still be unable to meet their basic non-food needs and will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between October and January.
- **Lowlands of East and West Hararghe, East Shewa, Arsi, and West Arsi:** Poor households in lowland areas will continue to require humanitarian assistance, and will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) through September. Likewise, households in the lowlands of Arsi, West Arsi, and East Shewa will face significant food gaps through September and will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). *Meher* harvests starting in October should improve household access to agricultural labor income, sale of cash crops, and products from small livestock. Worst-off households in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe will still face difficulty meeting livelihood protection needs and will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between October and January. From October, Arsi, West Arsi, West Arsi, and East Shewa are likely to improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity.
- **Other parts of Amhara, Tigray and Oromia:** Humanitarian assistance is likely to mitigate food consumption gaps for poor households, which will limit acute food insecurity to Stressed (IPC Phase 2!), before *Meher* harvests improve acute food security outcomes to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) starting in October. The *Belg*-producing parts of North and South Wello will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in October-January, as the exhaustion of staple food stocks from *Belg* harvests will place greater needs on households to access food from markets, limiting household ability to meet their livelihood protection needs.
- **Lowlands of Guraghe, Silte, Halaba Sidama, Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Hadiya, Kembata, and Tembaro:** *Meher*-dependent areas in Guraghe, Silte and Halaba will stay in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) until October, when *Meher* harvests improve food household access to own-produced foods and labor income, and lead to seasonal declines in staple food prices. This should lead to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity through January 2017. Areas in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) will also improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) in October, and areas in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) should remain there through January 2017.
- **Afar and northern Somali:** Continued low livestock holdings following excessive sale and deaths due to drought last year will continue to limit poor households' access to food and income from the sale of livestock and livestock products. These areas will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) through January 2017. In central and northern Afar as well as Fafan Zone, where drought impacts in 2015 were less severe, households' ability to meet their basic food needs will remain significantly limited in the coming months. However, ongoing humanitarian assistance will limit food insecurity to Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) through September and food security will slightly improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from September to January.
- **Southern and southeastern pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Somali, Oromia and SNNPR:** Poor households are currently in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the pastoral areas of South Omo, Borena, Bale and parts of Liban zones and their food situation is unlikely to change notably through January 2017. In central and southern Somali, poor households are likely to remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1 to IPC Phase 1!) through September. From October, households are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), as expected below-average rainfall during the *Deyr* season fails to fully regenerate pasture and water resources, leading to below-average income from sale of livestock and livestock products.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET's quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work [here](#).