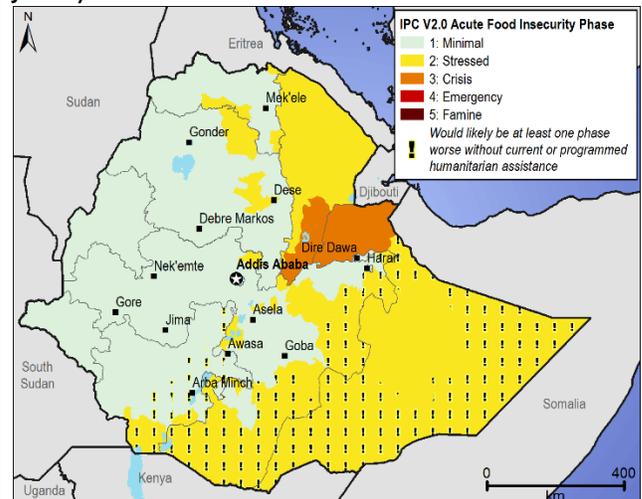


Pastoral conditions deteriorate following very poor seasonal performance in southeastern areas

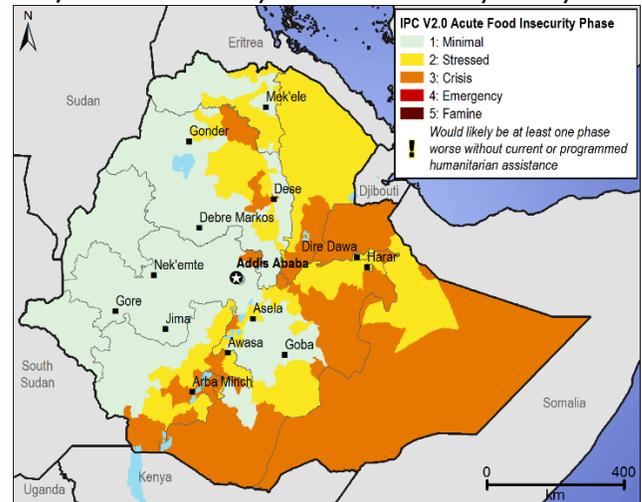
KEY MESSAGES

- Food security outcomes have improved in many areas of Ethiopia as *Meher* harvests have improved household food access. However, emergency food assistance needs will remain high as poor seasonal rainfall in southern and southeastern pastoral areas and lowland cropping areas of eastern and central Oromia and Rift Valley areas of SNNPR lead to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity through May 2017, or Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) in the presence of emergency assistance.
- *Deyr/Hageya* seasonal rainfall between October and December 2016 was very late and significantly below average across most of southern and southeastern Ethiopia. Livestock body conditions have started to decline, leading to low livestock productivity, decreasing livestock prices, and below-average terms of trade for poor households. In riverine agricultural areas, crop production was also significantly affected.
- Three separate analyses conducted by USGS and NOAA suggest March to May 2017 *Gu/Genna* rainfall is likely to be below average in south and southeastern areas of the country. Although pasture and water sources may temporarily improve, a combination of reduced livestock production during the dry season and early exhaustion of pasture and water sources constrain access to food and income from livestock and livestock products.
- Fieldwork by the government-led multi-agency *Meher* seasonal assessment has recently completed. Assistance needs are likely to remain high in 2017 due to below-average *Kiremt* rainfall in some lowland areas of Oromia, SNNPR, and eastern Amhara, well below average *Deyr/Hegaya* rainfall and prospects for a below average *Gu/Genna* season in 2017 in southern and southeastern pastoral areas. Official estimates of the number of people in need of emergency assistance between January and June 2017 are expected to be released in the Humanitarian Resources Document in January 2017.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2016 to January 2017



Projected food security outcomes, February to May 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](#).

CURRENT SITUATION

- Following below-average March to May *Gu/Genna* rains in parts of Somali Region, Borena, Guji and Bale lowlands of Oromia, and South Omo Zone of SNNPR, the October to December 2016 *Deyr/Hagaya* rainy season was well below normal. Cumulative seasonal rainfall between October and December was less than 30 percent of average in most areas

of Somali Region, and less than 50 percent of average in pastoral areas of eastern Oromia and southern SNNPR. Well below-average rainfall in these areas has led to substantially less regeneration of pasture than is typical, although three to four days of unseasonable rainfall in late November did contribute to some improvement in water sources in eastern Oromia and SNNPR towards the end of November. However, this rainfall was too late to improve cropping prospects substantially, which are expected to be well below average, particularly along riverine cropping areas in Shebelle Zone of Somali Region, where *Deyr* harvests are expected to be minimal.

- Harvests of most *Meher* crops are underway, with fieldwork from the recent multi-agency assessment suggesting that crop production is normal to above normal, and much higher compared to last year, in most highland areas. However, in eastern and central Oromia and northern SNNPR, well below-average rainfall is likely to lead to below-average production in lowland areas, and moisture deficits and waterlogging in localized areas of Amhara and Tigray are likely to lead to somewhat below-average production. Localized incidences of pest infestations, yellow rust, flooding, and hailstorm damage have reportedly led to some crop damage and reductions in yields in localized areas of Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR, and Tigray regions.
- *Kiremt* rainfall helped to replenish water sources and regenerate pasture and browse in most highland parts of the country. This, together with the availability of crop residue since September, has helped to improve livestock body conditions. However, in lowland areas of eastern and central Oromia and along the Rift Valley in SNNPR, the availability of crop residue is much lower than normal following well below-average rainfall and extended dry spells during critical growing periods of *Kiremt* season crops. In a typical year, households are able to stock and use crop residue starting in January (following the harvests) through approximately June. However, households started using crop residue in September this year, which will likely lead households to exhaust stocks of crop residue much earlier than normal. In southeastern pastoral and agropastoral areas in Somali Region, southern parts of SNNPR, and southern and eastern Oromia, atypical livestock migration has also been reported, with some households keeping their livestock in dry-season grazing areas due to a lack of pasture.
- Livestock body conditions are deteriorating and livestock deaths have been reported in much of Somali Region as well as in Borena, Guji and Bale lowlands of Oromia and southern parts of SNNPR. In Somali Region, livestock abortions are reported to be high for camels and shoats. Pastoralists in Somali Region and in some pocket areas of southern Borena Zone are also starting to slaughter calves, kids, and lambs as a coping strategy in order to save adult female livestock. Livestock body conditions and productivity are also poorer than usual due to atypically low availability of water for livestock. In Oromia and Somali regions, the regional governments have already started to provide water trucking and feed for selected breeding livestock.
- Following the start of *Meher* 2016 harvest, prices of maize, sorghum, wheat and other staple food grains, in most southern, north, western and central markets started to decline as supply increased supply to the market and demand declined. On the other hand, the price of imported staple food and locally produced staple crops remained higher than the previous years in Somali, lowland parts of Oromia and SNNPR regions. For example, the November 2016 price of imported rice in Degehabur and Jigjiga markets was up to 25 percent higher than the recent five-year average, and prices of locally produced maize were up by 50 and 17 percent, respectively over the five-year average. On top of this, overall supply of staple cereals on major markets in Somali, Borena, Guji and lowland parts of Bale continues to be constrained by poor market linkages between the highland crop producers and lowland pastoralists.
- Livestock prices declined sharply in November 2016 in areas where *Deyr* rainfall in October and November was well below average, particularly in Somali Region. These decreases are largely attributable to significant declines in livestock body conditions as well as a temporary ban on livestock exports from Somali Region of Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia markets. Based on locally collected price data, goat prices showed significant declines in Chereti and Gode markets, while declines were more moderate in Fik, Filtu, Kebridehar, and Warder Markets. Prices for key staples such as maize and sorghum are also somewhat above average in markets such as Gode, leading to below-average purchasing power.
- Despite a decline in the cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) since August 2016, incidences are still active in some parts of eastern, south eastern and central Oromia, parts of Amhara and Afar Regions. On the other hand, following the increased supply of grain from recent *Meher* harvest in highland parts of Oromia, parts of Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR, coupled with humanitarian assistance, household food availability have improved and the nutritional status of children, lactating and pregnant mothers are improving. On the contrary, October 2016 screening results show that malnutrition is still a concern in parts of Somali, Borena, and lowlands of Guji, and Bale, East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia and

South Omo of SNNPR, Waghimra Zone of Amhara Region. Moreover, a recent MUAC screening conducted by the Somali Regional Health Bureau and UNICEF in October 2016 in Shabelle Zone screened a total of 25,098 pregnant and lactating women out of 35,244 targeted. Of these, 6,622 were identified as malnourished (MUAC less 21cm). In addition, 1,226 children were identified with severe acute malnutrition, and 7,553 with moderate acute malnutrition.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The Ethiopia Food Security Outlook for October 2016 to May 2017 has been revised based on the following updated assumptions:

- *Gu/Genna* rainfall between March and May 2017 is likely to be below average in parts of southern and southeastern Ethiopia, including southern SNNPR, southern and eastern Oromia, and southern and central Somali Region.
- Below-average *Gu/Genna* rainfall will lead to below-average regeneration of pasture and water sources for livestock, following the below-average Deyr and seasonal dryness leading up to March 2017. Livestock body conditions may improve temporarily, but livestock prices and productivity will likely remain below average.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2017

- Ongoing *Meher* harvests are improving income from labor and access to own-produced foods. Combined with the sale of livestock, food access is improving for most poor households in highland parts of the country, which will remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity. However, poor households in lowland areas of southern and eastern Oromia, Somali and SNNPR for whom crop production and access to income from agricultural labor were well below average will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or (IPC Phase 2!).
- In southern and southeastern Somali, Borena, South Omo of SNNPR and lowland Guji and Bale zones of Oromia, significant decreases in livestock prices are leading to declines in purchasing power for poor households. As livestock prices continued to decline through at least March 2017 due to deteriorated livestock body conditions, and staple food prices increase, terms of trade (TOT) will be much below normal, limiting household food access. Poor purchasing power, combined with reduced access to milk from livestock is likely to limit household food access, but the continued delivery of humanitarian assistance is likely to limit acute food insecurity to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through at least December 2016. Between January and May 2017, food security in these areas will deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
- Eastern Oromia, Wag Himra and *Belg*-dependent areas of Amhara are likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2 or IPC Phase 2!) through January due to below-average crop production and low income from the sale of livestock. After exhausting their food stocks earlier than normal and humanitarian assistance in 2016 ends, the lower than normal income from the livestock sale and anticipated increases in staple food prices during the peak lean period will reduce household food access, leading to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity between February to May 2017.
- In lowland areas of Gedio, Sidama, Wolayita, Gamogofa and Segen Zones in SNNPR, households will be able to meet their food needs through a combination of own production, market purchases, and humanitarian assistance, and will therefore face Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) acute food insecurity through January 2017. However, households are expected to exhaust their food stocks two to three months earlier than normal, due to below-average production. As demand for agricultural labor decreases in early 2017 and staple food prices increase, poor households will begin to face food consumption gaps and be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between February and May 2017.
- In Southern Afar and Northern Somali, pasture and water availability will decline seasonally January 2017, but *Dadaa* rains in January 2017 and the March to May 2017 *Sugum/Dirra* rain season are expected to improve pasture and water availability, and thus livestock productivity. However, livestock herd sizes remain lower than normal following the severe drought in 2015. As a result, poor households' access to food from livestock products and income from the sale of livestock and livestock products is likely to limit lead to some food consumption gaps, and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity through May 2017.

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](#).