



# ETHIOPIA NETWORK on food security

Monthly Report

Number 1/03

21 January 2003

## Highlights

> Total cereal food aid requirement for 2003 is about 1.3 million metric tons. About 670,000MT of this amount has already been pledged so far or 50 percent. While this is sufficient to cover needs through the end of May, a break in the food aid pipeline is expected as of June.

> Although many districts require food assistance in January, on-going food aid distributions are mostly targeting areas with confirmed or elevated risk of high malnutrition and/or migration.

> According to an FAO/WFP forecast, Ethiopia's 2002/03 meher (main) cereal and pulse production is 8.9 MMT, down by 25 percent from last year and 21 percent from the average for the previous five years.

> FAO/WFP estimates that Ethiopia faces a 2.3 MMT of cereal deficit in 2003. After taking into account commercial import capacity and undelivered food aid from last year, there still remains an uncovered gap of about 1.83 MMT.

> Cereal prices continued to increase in December 2002 in most reported markets, reflecting the abnormal food supply situation in the country. Prices are expected to increase further in the coming months.

> Although December is usually a dry period in most parts of the country, southern and southwestern Ethiopia received rain at this time this year.

> Deyr season (late September through November) rainfall has been near normal in Somali Region, but food insecurity remains very high in Shinille and Fik Zones due to little recovery from the impact of previous droughts.

## Break in food aid pipeline expected as of June

Current cereal food aid pledges are only sufficient to partially cover needs through the end of May<sup>1</sup>. Unless additional food assistance is immediately pledged and delivered, a break in the food aid pipeline is expected as of June (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Cereal Food Aid Pipeline (Jan - Dec 2003)



Data Source: World Food Program (17 January 2003).  
Graphics by FEWS NET/Ethiopia.

There is an even more urgent need for supplementary food (Corn-Soya blend or CSB) for malnourished children because available stocks will only cover 60 percent of January's requirements, and 36 percent of February's. While this will increase in March through May, a breakdown is expected by June. Delivery of already-pledged food and additional food aid pledged for the June-December period is essential in order to prevent a break in relief food distribution.

Although many districts require food assistance in January, on-going food aid distributions are mostly targeting areas with confirmed or elevated risk of high malnutrition and/or migration (Figure 2). Most of these areas are found in East Tigray (Tigray Region), Zones 1, 2 and 3 (Afar Region), Wag Hemra, Oromiya, North Gonder, South Gonder, South Wello and East Gojjam (Amhara, Region), North Shewa, East Shewa, West Hararghe and East Hararghe

<sup>1</sup> Total cereal food aid requirement for 2003 is about 1.3 million metric tons. About 670,000MT of this amount has already been pledged so far or 50 percent.

The Ethiopia Network on Food Security is an initiative by USAID's Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) and the EU's Local Food Security Unit (EU-LFSU) to coordinate and disseminate early warning and food security information.

Contributors to this report include the National Early Warning Working Group, whose members include the following organizations: the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission (DPPC), Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE), National Meteorological Service Agency (NMSA), Save the Children UK (SC-UK), World Food Program (WFP), USAID's Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). In addition, this report uses satellite data from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and US Geological Survey EROS Data Center (USGS).

(Oromiya Region), Shinille, Fik, Jijiga and Gode Zones (Somali Region), Kembata-Tembaro and Hadiya Zones (Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region-SNNPR).

Ensuring sufficient and timely food assistance to these areas is of critical importance, particularly as many are chronically food insecure and/or have suffered several shocks in recent years. As a result, household and community coping mechanisms have been severely eroded making this year's shocks even more difficult to bear. Figure 3 illustrates this for poor households in Sekota District of Wag Hemra Zone (Amhara Region).

In a baseline or 'typical year', poor households in Sekota District obtain food through their own crop production (41 percent) and food purchases (31 percent), but are also reliant on relief food to cover 31 percent of their food needs.<sup>2</sup>

However, as a result of the drought, poor households in Sekota are facing a significant reduction in their own crop production as well as their purchasing power (due to a decline in income from crop and livestock sales combined with an increase in the price of staple foods).

Even after these poor households exploit the limited coping options available to them (additional firewood sales, extra seasonal labor and pulse sales) they still face a 67 percent food deficit that can only be filled by relief food.

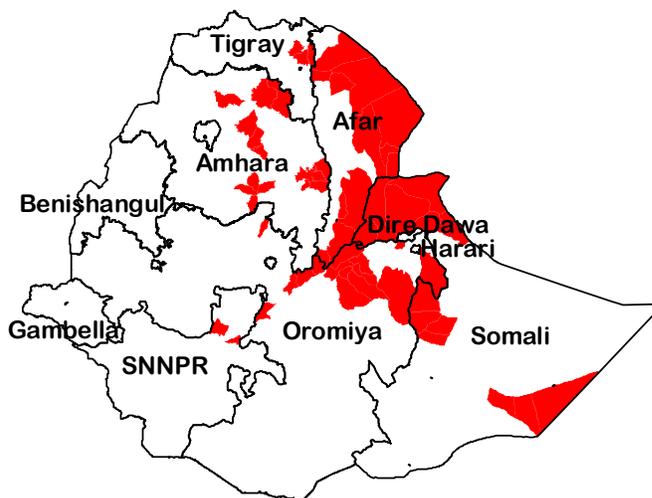
## FAO/WFP estimate that Ethiopia will face 2.3 million metric ton food deficit in 2003

An FAO and WFP mission visited Ethiopia from 7 November to 3 December 2002 to conduct the annual Crop and Food Supply Assessment. The objective of this mission was to estimate the *meher* (June-

September 2002) cereal and pulse production, forecast the 2003 *belg* (March-May) production, assess the overall food supply situation and estimate grain import requirements including food aid needs for the 2003 marketing year. The assessment results were released on 30 December 2002 in the form of a special report by FAO/WFP.

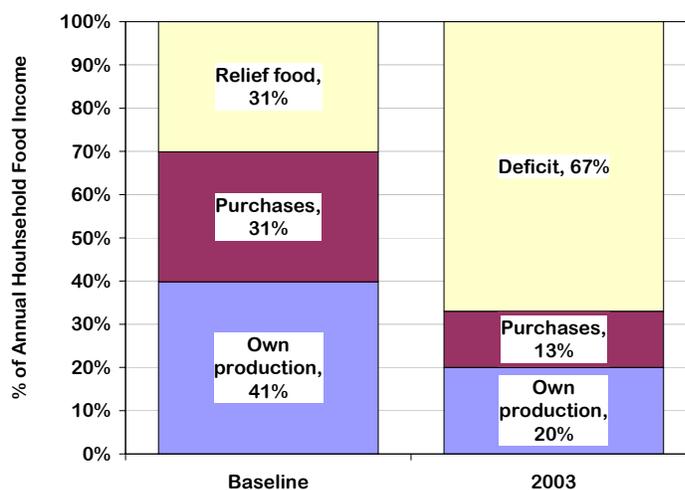
According to the special report, overall agricultural performance in 2002 was poor, primarily due to unfavorable weather conditions and low producer incentives. More specifically, despite a reasonable secondary season (*belg*) harvest of some 460,000 MT of cereal and pulses in 2002, a prolonged dry spell between the end of the *belg* rains and the beginning of the main season (*meher*) rains: (i) adversely affected land preparation for the main season; (ii) delayed sowing dates; (iii) reduced the relative amount farmers planted of high yielding, late maturing maize and sorghum crops vs short-cycle crops such as teff, wheat, and pulses; (iv) and deterred farmers already concerned about low returns, from investing in inputs.

**Figure 2. Areas with Confirmed or Elevated Risk of High Malnutrition Rates and/or Migration (Shaded)**



Source: Based on World Food Program Field Update (14 January 2003).  
Graphics by FEWS NET/Ethiopia.

**Figure 3. Illustrative Impact of the 2002 Drought on Food Access by Poor Households in Sekota District**



Source: Save the Children/UK (December 2002).

<sup>2</sup> In Sekota, the poor constitute 46 percent of the rural population or 50 percent of the total number of rural households in the district.

In addition, the *meher* season was further disrupted because rains were poorly distributed and lighter than usual. As a result, farmers had to replant at lower crop densities, and yields will almost surely be affected. Although these negative effects were most severe in the lowland and other marginal areas of the country, the major cereal producing zones in the central plateau were also affected, seriously reducing grain production in the recognized surplus producing areas by 20-30 percent. Perennial staple and cash crops such as *enset* and *chat* have been less affected.

Poor rainfall in the eastern and northeastern pastoral areas reduced available forage and water, increased livestock mortality rates, prompted unseasonable and early migration of herds and flocks, and reduced livestock prices by as much as 50 percent in all affected areas. Accordingly, the FAO/WFP Mission's forecast, Ethiopia's 2002/03 national pulse and cereal production will be 9.3 MMT, comprised of 8.9 MMT from the current *meher* harvest and 350,000 MT from the 2003 *belg* harvest (Table 1).

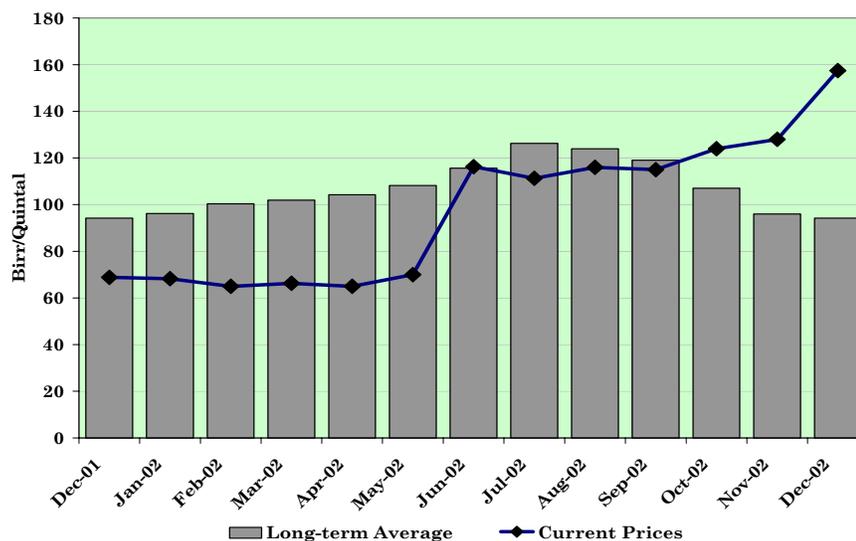
The FAO/WFP *meher* harvest estimate represents a 25 percent reduction from last year's Ministry of Agriculture post-harvest estimates and a 21 percent decline from the average for the previous five years.

As a result, 2.3 MMT of cereals will need to be imported in 2003. With commercial imports forecast at 328,000 MT and food aid in the pipeline and pledges currently amounting to 140,000 MT, there is an uncovered gap of about 1.83 MMT. This is expected to be covered mostly through food aid imports given the country's limited capacity to import such a large amount of food commercially.

## Cereal prices continued to rise in December

Although December is part of the harvest season, when cereal prices are usually low, retail prices of major cereals continued to increase in December 2002 in most reported markets (Table 2). December cereal prices were also substantially higher compared to last year and long-term averages.

**Figure 4. Real Retail Prices of White Maize in Addis Ababa: 13 Month Trend and Long-term Monthly Average**



Source: Market Information System of the Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE) and European Commission Local Food Security Unit (EC-LFSU); data archives of FEWS NET/Ethiopia.

**Table 1. Total Grains Supply/Demand Balance, January-December 2003 ('000 MT)**

<b>Domestic availability</b>	<b>9,782</b>
- Opening stock	509
<b>Production</b>	<b>9,273</b>
- <i>Meher</i>	8 923
- <i>Belg</i>	350
<b>Total utilization</b>	<b>12,077</b>
- Food use	10,369
- Feed use	180
- Seed use	670
- Losses	730
- Unofficial exports	28
- Closing stock	100
<b>Import requirement</b>	<b>2,295</b>
- Anticipated commercial imports	328
- Undelivered food aid pledges from 2002	140
<b>Uncovered deficit</b>	<b>1,827</b>

Source: Special Report of the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Ethiopia, 30 December 2002.

The increase in maize prices during the month was particularly significant as available stocks from last year's modest harvest continue to dwindle (Figure 4).

Cereal prices are expected to increase further in the coming months and this will reduce the purchasing power of poor households, thereby diminishing their access to food.

**Table 2. Retail Prices for Selected Cereals by Market**

CEREALS & MARKETS	Dec 02 (Birr/Quintal)	Percentage Change from		
		Previous Month (Nov 02)	Last Year (Dec 01)	Long-term Average for Dec (1994-2001)
<b>WHITE MAIZE</b>				
Addis Ababa	158	24	129	67
Nekempte	121	14	203	56
Jimma	119	33	188	53
Dire Dawa	140	11	40	12
Mekele	156	6	99	14
<b>WHITE SORGHUM</b>				
Addis Ababa	221	-2	46	23
Gonder	166	11	55	42
Dire Dawa	245	4	44	18
Mekele	199	-2	68	12
<b>WHITE WHEAT</b>				
Addis Ababa	214	-2	63	24
Bale Robe	150	3	93	10
Hossaena	164	4	122	14
Dire Dawa	222	-4	15	0
Mekele	205	-5	38	-1
<b>MIXED TEFF</b>				
Addis Ababa	253	-1	14	19
Hossaena	171	3	36	0
Bahir Dar	196	6	30	11
Dire Dawa	250	0	6	2
Mekele	203	1	28	-3
<b>WHITE BARLEY</b>				
Addis Ababa	180	2	26	5
Gonder	193	8	22	12
Jimma	178	11	96	9
Assela	152	1	29	-11
Mekele	189	-11	33	27

Source: Market Information System of the Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE) and European Commission Local Food Security Unit (EC-LFSU); data archives of FEWS NET/Ethiopia.

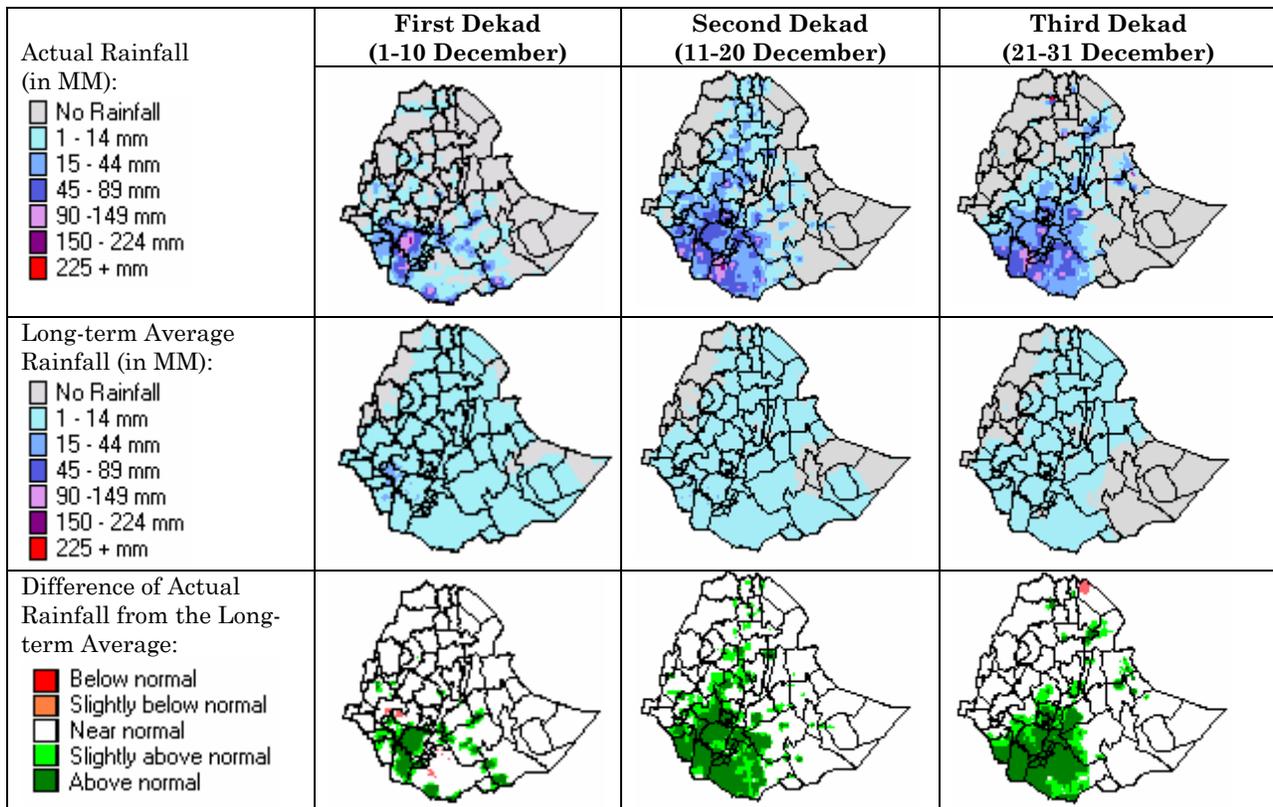
Notes: Quintal=100kg; 1 Ethiopian Birr=12 US cents.

## Southern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia benefit from unseasonable rainfall in December

Although December is usually a dry period in most parts of the country, with most areas receiving less than 45 millimeters of rainfall during the month (Figure 5), southern and southwestern Ethiopia received rain at this time this year. In general, these rains had a favorable impact on pasture and water, although some areas reported limited damage to standing crops and harvested crops that were not properly stored.

The unseasonable rains were also beneficial for land preparation for the ensuing *belg* (March-May) production season.

**Figure 5. Actual December 2002 Rainfall Compared with the Long-term Average**



Source: United States Geological Survey (USGS) Eros Data Center.  
Graphics by FEWS NET/Ethiopia.

## Deyr season (late September through November) rainfall was near normal in the Somali Region, but food insecurity remains very high in Shinille and Fik Zones

According to a quarterly report by Save the Children/UK's Food Security and Early Warning Program for the Somali Region, the secondary *deyr* season rains were near normal in Liban, Warder, Degahbur, Fik and Afder Zones, but below normal for Gode and Korahei Zones. The rains stopped much earlier than normal in most zones. All zones are currently experiencing the long and dry *jilaal* season. *Gu* rains are expected in late March/April throughout the region.

Despite a near normal *deyr* season, the current food security situation in the Somali Region is mixed due to modest recovery from the impacts of previous droughts (Figure 6). The food security situation in Shinile Zone remains at emergency levels, with significant livestock migrations in search of water and pasture to neighbouring Jijiga Zone (Somali Region) and East Hararghe Zone (Oromiya Region). A massive livestock migration to the Awdal region in Somaliland has also been reported

more recently. The current food security situation in the other zones is below normal (Gode and Korahei) to near normal (Jijiga, Degahbur, Warder, Afdher and Liban), with the exception of some pocket areas in the latter, where many households are experiencing food shortages.

A nutrition assessment by SC-UK in Fik zone in November found a malnutrition rate (GAM) of about 20 percent, indicating a nutrition crisis. In a similar assessment in December in Shinille Zone, SC-UK found out indications of high GAM rates (probably over 15%) , with a somewhat worse situation in the agro-pastoral parts of the zone.

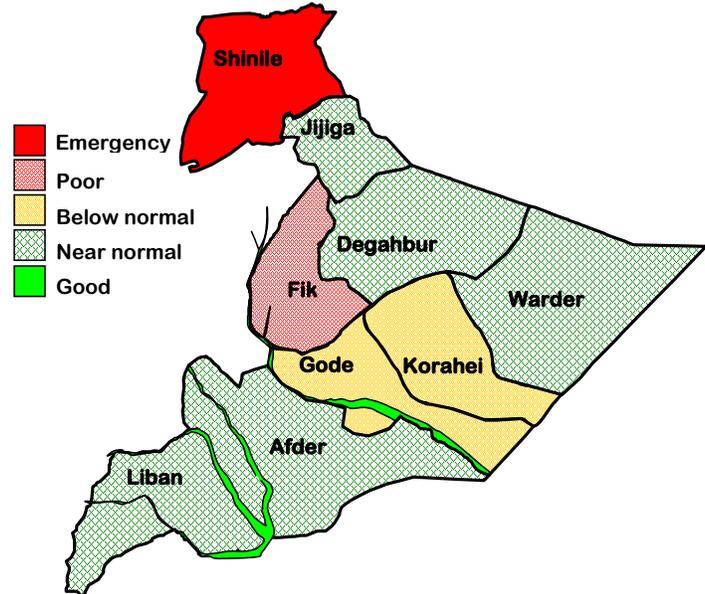
Terms of trade for pastoral and agro-pastoral groups were mixed across the Region during October-December 2002. In Shinille, terms of trade have been steadily declining and are much below normal; in Warder, Korahe and Gode, and most of Degahbur terms of trade have been worsening (but were moderated slightly by a strengthening of the Somali Shilling which is widely used in the region – against the Ethiopian Birr ). In the rest of the zones, terms of trade have either remained stable (Jijiga, Liban and Afdher Zones) or improved (Fik Zone).

In general, there is no water scarcity except in Shinille and Fik zones and in isolated pockets of other zones. However, as the *jilaal* season progresses, severe water shortages are expected in the chronic water problem areas of Fik, Gode, Warder, Liban, and Korahei.

The incidence of diarrhea (watery and sometimes bloody) has increased across the Region. However, local health personnel are limited in their attempts to control the disease by poor capacity and a shortage of drugs. There are reports of diarrhea-related child deaths in all the affected Zones.

Several NGOs in the area are undertaking food, water and veterinary interventions in various parts of the region, including rehabilitation of people who were displaced internally (IDPs) following the severe drought of 1999/2000.

**Figure 6. Current Food Security Status in the Somali Region**



*Source and graphics: Based on Quarterly Report of the Food Security Monitoring and Early Warning Program of Save the Children/UK (20 January 2003).*

**Disclaimer:**

This document should not be construed as an official pronouncement by FEWS NET, the EU-LFSU or members of the Early Warning Working Group. Comments and suggestions regarding this report should be addressed to:

The Country Representative  
USAID—FEWS NET  
P.O. Box 1014  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tel: (251-1) 510088 or 510488  
Fax: (251-1) 510043  
Email: [ethiopia@fews.net](mailto:ethiopia@fews.net)