

Reference Date: 21-April-2011

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- The 2011 cropping season has started in April
- Preliminary estimates point to an above average rice production in 2010
- Currency depreciation led to higher inflation

The 2011 cropping season has begun with seasonal rains

Seasonal rains commenced in April, allowing land preparation and planting of the 2011 rice crop, the main cereal produced and consumed in the country.

Estimates point to a larger rice harvest in 2010

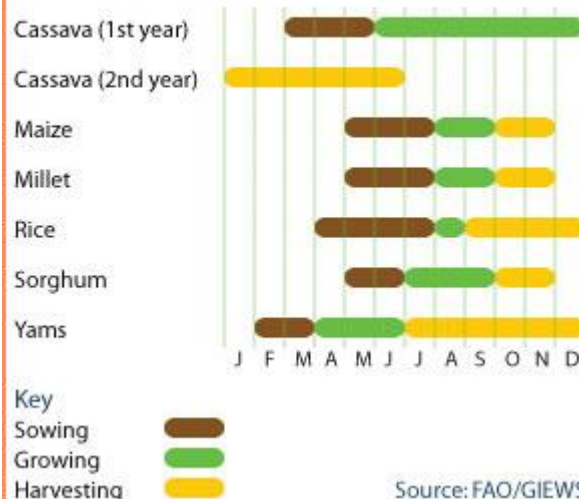
Harvesting of the 2010 rice crop was completed last December. Following above average rains throughout the growing season, rice production (paddy) is estimated to have increased compared to the previous year's good output. Similarly, a good cassava harvest was gathered. Yield levels for rice have grown only gradually since the end of the civil war, and production gains are mainly as a result of an expansion in the cultivated area, which has grown each year since 2000.

The country's dependency on imported rice has been decreasing; however, it is still a net rice importer, with imports expected to reach approximately 80 000 tonnes in 2011.

Currency depreciation increases imported inflation

The steep depreciation of the Leone (local currency) during 2009 and 2010 led to higher inflation rates. Average national inflation is estimated to have reached 16.5 percent in 2010. In spite of last year's good crop, prices are likely to remain firm this year due to the continuing depreciation of the Leone and persistently high international food prices. Government decided in mid-February to ban rice export to limit price increases. Nearly 50 percent of households' expenditure in urban, peri-urban and rural is allocated to food purchases, according to a WFP assessment in 2009.

Crop calendar Sierra Leone



Sierra Leone

Cereal production

	2005-2009 average	2009	2010 estimate	change 2010/2009
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	633	784	830	6
Maize	24	35	29	-17
Sorghum	23	35	30	-14
Others	32	64	58	-9
Total	712	918	947	3

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets