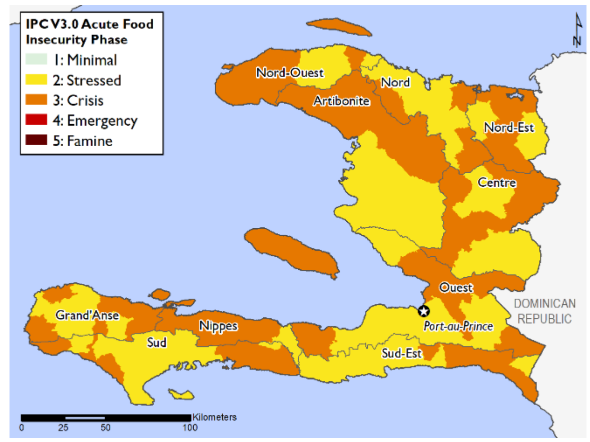
HAITI Food Security Outlook | June 2020 to January 2021

Worsening food security outcomes in the context of drought and COVID-19

KEY MESSAGES

- Irregular and below-average rainfall since late March has slowed agricultural activities and delayed the development of crops throughout most of the country, with the exception of some irrigated areas in the Sud, Nord, Nord-Est, Ouest, Centre and Artibonite departments. This situation has disrupted the growing cycle of seasonal crops, especially beans and maize.
- Poor spring harvests foreshadow below-average summer/fall and winter growing seasons, given the reliance on inputs from the first season. Although cumulative rainfall is forecast to be above average for this period, these growing seasons will produce below-average harvests.
- Measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 are continuing to have an adverse effect on market functioning and remittances, impacting income and job opportunities throughout the country. In addition, the poorest households are finding it hard to access food because of the high prices of staple foods at a time when the national currency is continuing to weaken against the dollar and income has fallen below average.
- The June/July harvests will marginally improve food security and access for very poor households because of expected declines in production, continuing inflation and the effects of COVID-19. Most of these households will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) during the outlook period.

Current food security outcomes, June 2020



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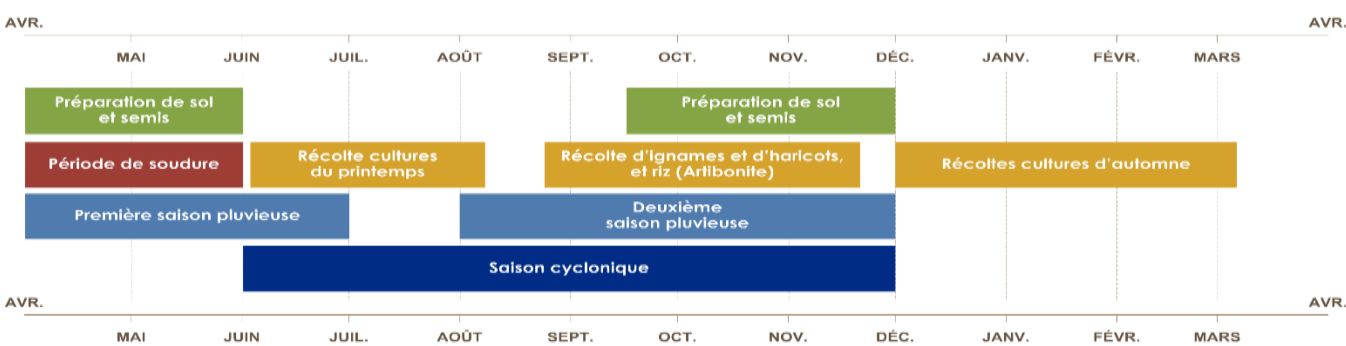
SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



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NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

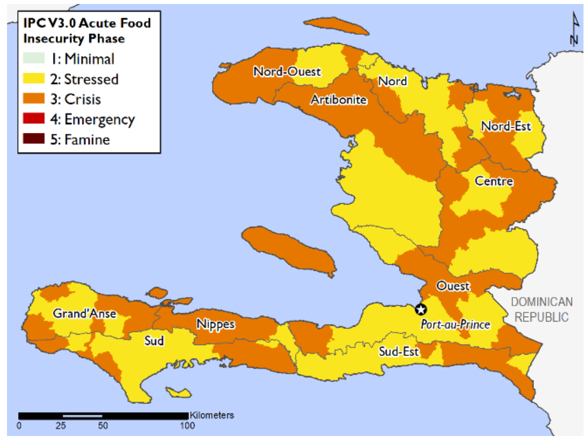
COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP), there were over 5,000 recorded cases of COVID-19 in June 2020, along with 100 deaths and 800 recoveries (MSPP, 2020). Close to 80 percent of cases were recorded in the Ouest department, where the country's three COVID-19 testing laboratories are located (in Port-au-Prince).

The COVID-19 pandemic should be considered first and foremost an aggravating factor against the backdrop of the pre-existing situation in the country. Haiti is a low-income country with a health care system that lacks the resources necessary to cope with demand for COVID-19 prevention and treatment services. In addition, resources normally allocated to addressing food insecurity and vulnerability have been mostly redirected to COVID-19 control efforts. For instance, over 50 percent of the entire budget for the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is allocated to COVID-19 control.

In addition, as COVID-19 cases have been rising rapidly since May, the Haitian Government has opted to keep the measures to contain the spread of the virus in place until July. Measures such as restricting access to certain public spaces, limiting the number of passengers on public transportation, and reducing the number of market days are having an impact on income-generating activities and adversely affecting households' access to food.

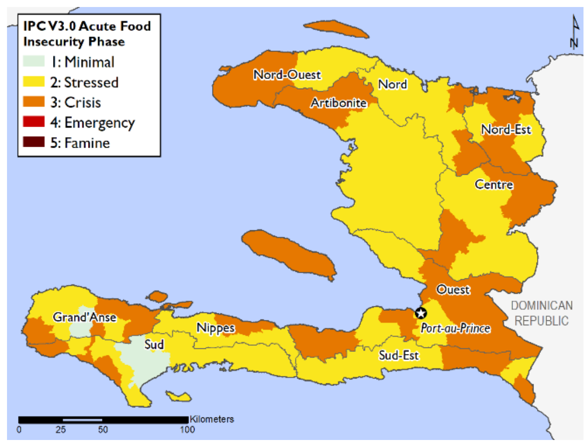
Socio-political situation. The socio-political situation is calm at present, and restrictions on gatherings to contain the spread of COVID-19 are limiting the ability to hold demonstrations. The outlook remains unpredictable, however, amid persistent inflation and price rises, and the impending end of the Government's term of office.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, October 2020 to January 2021



Source: *FEWS NET*

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Rainfall conditions. Cumulative rainfall between the end of March and the first dekad of June was below average, with irregular temporal and geographical distribution. The normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) (Figure 1) remains below average, despite the rainfall recorded in late May. Other than areas with irrigation systems (Les Cayes Plain, Camp-Perrin, Les Anglais in the Sud department, Artibonite Valley, Maribahoux Plain in the Nord-Est department, etc.), most of Haiti is experiencing prolonged water shortages, which is disrupting the growing cycle of spring crops in those areas that planted early. This situation is similar to the conditions experienced in 2019, when the drought caused production to decline by an estimated 12 percent (FEWS NET, Haiti: Supply and Market Outlook, September 2019). This year, the drought began earlier, and marks two consecutive years of low rainfall.

Impact on seasonal agricultural production. Except for irrigated plains and semi-humid mountain areas, the temporal and geographical irregularity of rainfall has disrupted the normal development of spring crops and affected the launch of the spring growing season in dry, largely rain-fed agricultural zones. The first harvests were expected in departments such as Grand'Anse and Sud in May and June, but the ongoing drought and delayed crop growth have pushed back the harvests. In other areas, where the harvest normally starts in July, current ripening trends foreshadow a poor harvest. This situation is especially concerning in dry areas such as the south coast, coastal parts of Grand'Anse, Haut-Plateau, Haut-Artibonite, lowlands in Nord-Ouest, Nippes, and some areas of the Ouest department (Fond-Baptiste in the commune of Cabaret).

Figure 1. Haiti: Rainfall trends in mm and NDVI 2020

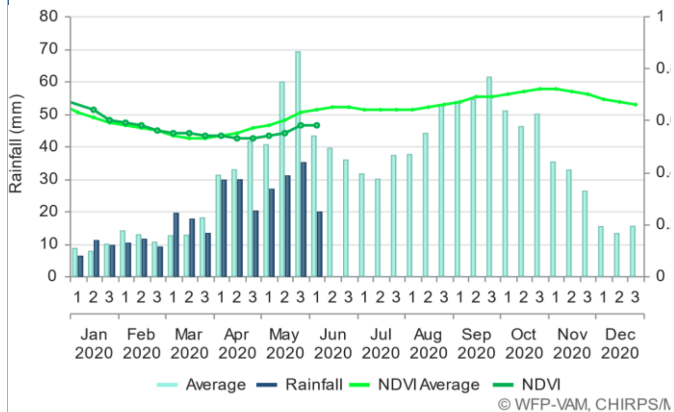
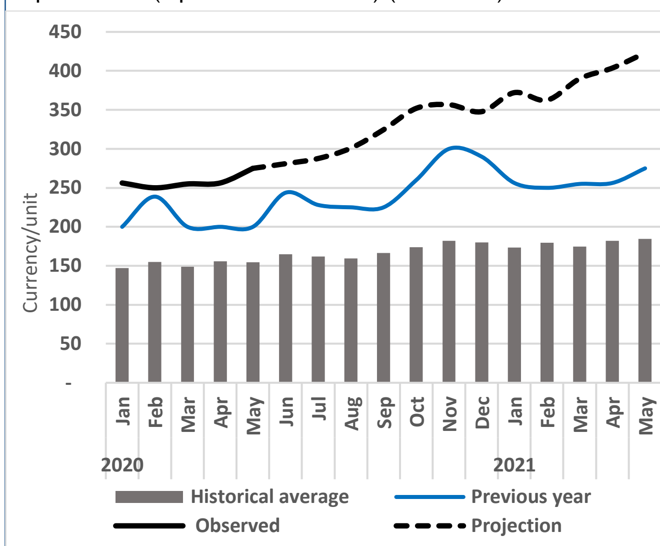


Figure 2. Port-au-Prince, observed and projected prices of imported rice (4 percent broken rice) (HTG/6 lbs)



Source: *FEWS NET/Haiti National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA)*

Urban and regional markets. Despite the global COVID-19 pandemic, the domestic market remains well supplied with food products across all categories, especially imported food. No stock shortages have been observed to date. Staple food flows have remained largely unaffected by the restrictions, although the availability of some products that come exclusively from the Dominican Republic (such as condiments, oil, flour and other non-food goods and services) has been somewhat limited since the borders closed. As a result, prices have been on an upward trend during the period. Locally produced food is still in extremely limited supply, and in some cases even below average for this period, with the exception of bananas, mangoes, etc.

However, the local and regional authorities are continuing to limit the number of market days and market opening hours to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Haiti. This is adversely affecting income.

Price trends. Staple food prices have been rising for three consecutive months. The price of grain maize increased by almost 7 percent between April and May, from HTG 168.50 to HTG 180 per 6 lb pot. This situation is due to limited local supply of grain maize, especially in the Grand'Anse and Sud departments, which saw an atypically high price increase of close to 41 percent (by monthly average). Grain maize prices are currently around 80 percent higher than the 5-year average. Local black bean prices fell between May and June but are still 61 percent above the 5-year average. This appears to be the result of falling prices at some markets such as Hinche and Jacmel, where several black bean harvests have been observed. At markets in Les Cayes and Fonds-des-Nègres, most black beans come from Beaumont (Grand'Anse), where plantations have produced generally satisfactory harvests. Prices at these markets were down 20.2 percent and 13.5 percent on average.

The price of imported rice remains well above the 5-year average, by 67 percent. The price has also increased by 12 percent since March, reflecting the continued weakening of the gourde against the US dollar and the high price of rice on the international market. Locally, a 6 lb pot is selling for around HTG 304, up from HTG 293 in April.

Relatively modest price rises have been observed for other staple food products, such as cooking oil, wheat flour and sugar. For instance, prices of wheat flour and cooking oil increased by approximately 5.3 percent and 4 percent respectively between April and May. These two commodities are now selling for 21 percent and 31 percent more than they were one year ago, and for 51 percent and 65 percent above the 5-year average.

Livestock conditions. In areas experiencing water shortages, a lack of water points and feed is causing the physical condition of animals, especially cattle, to deteriorate. As a result, their market value has decreased compared with last January. There have even been reports of some animals dying, particularly in Grand'Anse (Corail, Pestel, Anse-d'Hainault, etc.).

Agricultural labor and other sources of income: Demand for labor is lower than usual due to the slowdown in economic activity, which has reduced farmers' ability to fund the spring growing season and this year's poor, late harvests. In addition, the supply of agricultural labor has increased with the influx of Haitian migrants from the Dominican Republic, school closures, and a decline in other income sources because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, income from what is a major source for the poorest rural households is below average. Moreover, migration yields limited income given the closure of the border with the Dominican Republic and the sanctions that impede the use of informal crossing points.
The measures have also affected other formal and informal sectors in urban areas, especially the night-time economy and transportation, causing income to fall in these areas.

According to the World Bank, foreign remittances to Haiti account for about 34 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), with over 50 percent of remittances coming from the United States and about 20 percent from the Dominican Republic. The slowdown in economic activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic in both countries is having a direct impact on the volume of remittances to Haiti and affecting the income sources of the relatively large group of households receiving these transfers. According to a World Bank estimate, the volume of remittances is over 9 percent lower this year (Dialogue, Migrants and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Remittances, May 2020).

In terms of **malnutrition**, the preliminary findings of the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey conducted last January by the MSPP, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), revealed a national increase in cases of malnutrition (weight-for-height) compared with the Mortality, Morbidity and Service Utilization Survey (EMMUS) survey in 2016/2017. There is now 6 percent prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM). At the departmental level, severe acute malnutrition (SAM) ranges from 0 percent (Nippes) to 1.3 percent (Nord-Est). However, the situation is more serious in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, where there is 6.5 percent prevalence of GAM and 2.5 percent prevalence of SAM.

Impact on food security. Food security continues to be affected by inflation. In addition, while food security outcomes continue to be impacted by the residual effects of the socio-political crisis of last year and early this year, climatic conditions observed since the last dekad of March have severely disrupted the launch of the spring growing season and the normal development of seasonal crops. All of these issues come against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is heightening the vulnerability of most areas of the country. Demand for labor is below average, even in the run-up to the spring harvest and the start of the summer/fall season, because farmers are struggling to finance their growing seasons. Meanwhile, labor supply is high, inflated by the voluntary return of around 33,000 workers from the Dominican Republic, according to the Support Group for Refugees and Returnees (GARR).

The poorest households are seeing their income from the sale of agricultural products and manual labor decline, while continued price rises for food products is eroding their purchasing power.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is making matters worse for households in vulnerable areas of the country. As well as prices that are already above average, the slowdown in market activity due to the restrictions is increasing the prices of certain products. High food prices and lower incomes caused, inter alia, by the closure or reduced activities of businesses and the decline in remittances from abroad, have reduced households' purchasing power and thus their access to staple foods. Against this backdrop, the poorest households in some areas have no option but to resort to stress strategies just to maintain their current food consumption. These strategies include reducing non-essential expenditure, increasing food purchases on credit, consuming less preferred food, and reducing adult consumption to prioritize children. These areas are Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

In other areas that are more vulnerable to price shocks and drought, such as Nord-Est, Nord-Ouest, lowland communes in Nippes, some communes in Ouest (e.g. Gonâve, and Fond-Baptiste in the commune of Cabaret), Sud-Est (district of Belle-Anse) and along the south coast (Tiburon), households are more commonly adopting crisis strategies such as increasing the sale of charcoal and animals, and consuming seeds and foods low in nutritional value. They are therefore in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

The poorest households in urban areas, especially in Port-au-Prince, are facing food prices that are well above the 5-year average and that have risen even further in recent months. In addition, the current curfew and restrictions on travel and gatherings are adversely affecting informal income-generating opportunities and demand for paid labor. These households are Stressed (IPC Phase 2), while the poorest households (such as in Cité Soleil) are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

In light of the above, the most likely scenario for June 2020 to January 2021 is based on the following assumptions at the national level:

Agroclimatology

- The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season began on June 1 and will last until November, covering the North Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. According to forecasts by the Tropical Meteorology Project at Colorado State University (CSU), this year's season is expected to be more active than normal, which will lead to above-average cumulative rainfall during the outlook period.

COVID-19

- The Government's measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 (closure of ports, airports and border crossings, support for online banking transactions, a debt holiday for businesses, social distancing, etc.) are expected to remain in place until July and to be eased gradually thereafter. The re-opening of the airport, expected on June 30, is a promising sign of a return to normal.

Agricultural production

- Overall, spring harvest yields will be 20–30 percent below average. Following low production from the main spring growing season, farmers will lack the financial capacity they need to fund the summer season, and total usable agricultural land will be limited even in the event of good rainfall conditions. The worst-affected areas will be dry zones with no irrigation systems.
- Supply of inputs will be below normal for the summer/fall and winter growing seasons due to the below-average spring harvests.

Sources of income

- Labor supply will be above average because of the influx of Haitian migrants from the Dominican Republic and school closures.
- Sales of charcoal will be average to below average due to potential government-imposed travel restrictions and a possible fall in demand for charcoal driven by the falling price of propane.
- Migration to the Dominican Republic will be below average, but will depend on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic both domestically and globally.
- Income from the sale of agricultural products will be below average because of below-average harvests.

Prices and markets

- Oil prices will continue to fall as a slowdown in economic activity in major importing and exporting countries continues to depress global demand.
- The prices of imported products will increase as the domestic currency continues to weaken, and the prices of local products will follow the same trend as imported products.
- Market supplies will continue to be disrupted because of tighter restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19, such as limits on the number of market days and market opening hours.

Other assumptions

- The socio-political situation will remain calm but unpredictable. Moreover, confusion around the end of the President's term of office could breed uncertainty and bring the recent period of apparent calm to an end.
- The gourde will continue to weaken against the US dollar and the Dominican peso, depreciating at a rate faster than last year and above normal. At present, the gourde is trading at close to 2 Dominican pesos in border areas, and will continue to lose value.
- Inflation will continue throughout the outlook period, following the same trend as the exchange rate.
- Various sources, including the Bank of the Republic of Haiti (BRH) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), predict that foreign remittances will be 10 percent lower than last year because of the sharp slowdown in global economies, especially the United States and the Dominican Republic.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The period from June to September coincides with the spring harvests, which will have a limited impact on acute food insecurity for poor and very poor households. Production from this growing season will be below average because of farmers' limited investment capacity (less land planted this season) and the prolonged water shortage experienced in most productive areas. However, harvests from the spring growing season will temporarily improve the food security situation for poor households and will go some way to stabilizing market prices, especially in irrigated areas where the production outlook is average. High commodity prices and below-average incomes will continue to negatively affect households' access to food. As a result, the poorest households will continue to resort to the above-mentioned crisis strategies. In this context, most areas of the country are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

The second part of the outlook period, from October 2020 to January 2021, coincides with the harvest for the summer/fall growing season and the start of the winter growing season. This includes beans and maize in irrigated plains and humid mountain areas, as well as roots, tubers and bananas. It also coincides with the harvest of seasonal crops such as pigeon peas, lima beans and cowpeas. Despite favorable agroclimatic conditions, these growing seasons, which represent only a small contribution to national agricultural production, will be adversely affected by losses from the spring season. As a result, households will continue to source most of their food from markets. In addition, given the strong supply of agricultural labor, income-generating activities will be unable to absorb the surplus observed since the border closure to contain the spread of COVID-19 on both sides of the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The income of the poorest households will once again be below average. In these circumstances, the poorest households will continue to use coping strategies to meet their food needs. Although there may be a reduction in the number of food-insecure households following the summer/fall growing season harvests and a resumption of economic activity in the run-up to the end-of-year celebrations, most areas of the country will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Events that Might Change the Outlook

Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	Increased socio-political unrest	The escalation of violence would likely disrupt the current functioning of the economy and markets. This would lead to a decrease in food availability and access, forcing more households to adopt negative coping strategies. As certain coping strategies are depleted, food consumption deficits could emerge. Thus, more areas and households could be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
National	Substantial improvement in the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic	If the pandemic stabilizes, both globally and locally, the volume of incoming remittances should increase significantly and households could resume informal income-generating activities. Sources of income could also return to normal. This would reduce the number of people and areas in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
Production zones	A hyperactive hurricane season	Flooding in rice, maize and bean production areas could cause substantial losses of summer/fall crops, damaging the livelihoods of the poorest households.

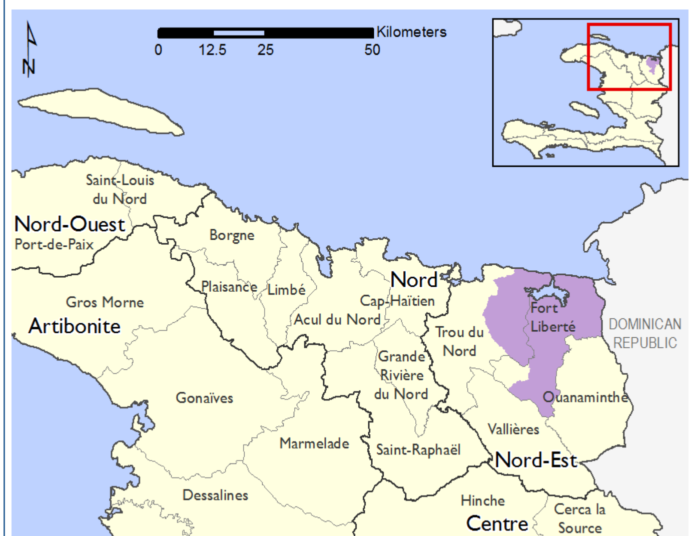
AREA OF CONCERN

Nord-Est, zone HT02

Current Situation

Seasonal progress. After taking advantage of the rains in early March to plant their crops for the spring growing season, farmers experienced a rainfall deficit that lasted until the second dekad of May. This deficit slowed crop growth and development, especially for maize. The prolonged water shortage has disrupted the normal development of the major crops that were planted, such as maize and beans, despite the arrival of the rains in late May. The NDVI has been on a downward trend and remained below average since April, a period in which it would normally be increasing.

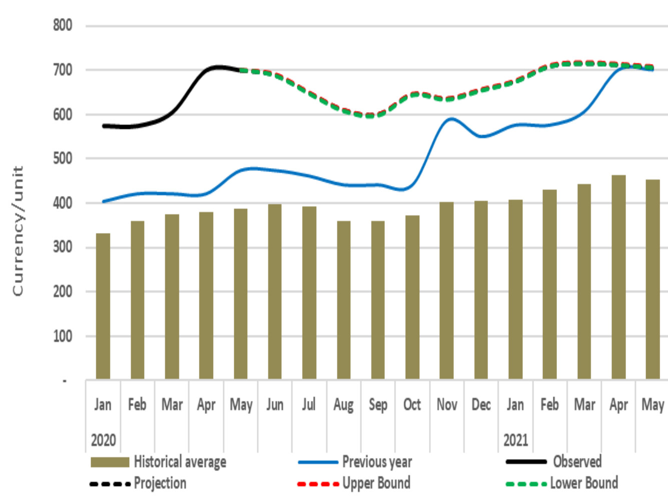
Figure 3. Map of area of concern HT02 – Nord-Est



Source: *FEWS NET*

Product availability and food consumption.
The current main sources of food for poor and very poor households are market purchases, their own production, and food donations from neighbors, food programs and family members, among others. Markets are relatively well supplied, although mainly with imported produce. Key sources report below-average production of mangoes, which are a relatively important source of food during this period.

Figure 4. Ouanaminthe: observed and projected prices for local black peas



Source: *FEWS NET/Haiti National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA)*

During the lean season, which runs until the late harvests in late June/early July, there is very little diversification in the food consumption of very poor households, which is mostly limited to foods of low nutritional value such as broken rice (commonly known as “Ti tèt” or “Cabecite”), especially in the southern section of livelihood zone HT02, and to boiled mango. On average, the poorest households consume one meal a day. This meal, which is often insufficient relative to caloric needs, is typically eaten just before bed to avoid going to bed hungry.

Nutritional situation. The latest nutritional figures date from January 2020. The findings of the SMART survey, funded by UNICEF and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), were published by the MSPP on January 30, 2020. The results revealed an increase in GAM (which covers SAM and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM)) in six departments, including the Nord-Est department. According to the 2019 National Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Survey (ENUSAN), the GAM rate in the Nord-Est department was 4 percent. In the SMART survey, this figure had increased to 5.4 percent.

Livestock farming. Contrary to the situation in April, there is a relatively good supply of livestock feed following the rains in May, which enabled regrowth of fodder and marginally improved the availability of water. As a result, animals are in a slightly better physical condition than they were in previous months. It should be noted that very poor households own very few animals, and even fewer large livestock. However, they have a few goats, usually as a result of minding them for others.

Markets and price trends. Markets are relatively well supplied, although mainly with imported produce, especially rice. However, high and rising prices are making it difficult to access this produce, especially for the very poor. The prices of the main commodities, particularly rice, maize and beans, are unusually high relative to the 5-year average (67 percent, 80 percent and 61 percent respectively).

Sources of income. The main sources of income for very poor households are sale of labor, sales of harvested food (pigeon peas, rice, maize, etc.) from stocks and farms, sales of wood/charcoal, and informal small-scale trade. In coastal areas such as Caracole and Fort-Liberté, the sale of fish products enables some fishing households to access some of their food. Small-scale trade is still practiced by many households, although it is declining. Households are earning very little income from the sale of labor due to an increase in supply (in part as a result of the mass influx of Haitian migrants returning from the Dominican Republic) and weaker demand caused by farmers' limited investment capacities and irregular geographical and temporal distribution of rainfall. Income from the sale of harvested produce is becoming scarcer as food stocks are depleted.

Humanitarian assistance. As part of its COVID-19 response, the Government has distributed food packages and cash transfers worth HTG 3,000 to some people (less than 5 percent of the population), although the methodology does not guarantee that the assistance reaches the poorest households.

Current food security outcomes. The early lean season and the delayed, below-average harvests expected in late June are forcing the poorest households to adopt crisis strategies in order to maintain their basic food consumption. Strategies include early/unusual food consumption, seed consumption and reduction of non-food expenditure (Stressed), as well as reduced meal sizes, prioritization of feeding children over adults, and reduced spending on health and education (Crisis). A very small number of households living in extreme poverty are resorting to begging, among other strategies. The zone is therefore in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

In addition to the assumptions at the national level, the most likely scenario for this zone from June 2020 to February 2021 is based on the following assumptions:

- Mangoes are particularly important in the Nord-Est department. Between May and mid-July, mango production is expected to be close to average.
- Income from livestock sales is expected to be close to the long-term average, and above the level seen last year, when the physical condition of animals was extremely poor.
- Hurricane season rainfall will be above average and will disrupt the spring, summer and fall harvests.
- Production from the 2020 spring, summer and fall harvests will be extremely poor and below average due to successive losses from previous growing seasons and adverse rainfall conditions.
- The supply of beans will be insufficient to keep prices low because below-average rainfall observed since the last dekad of March points to a below-average harvest. Beans are therefore expected to sell for above last year's price, and above the 5-year average.
- In border areas, households' access to the border will be greatly reduced relative to normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These households, which earn a large portion of their income in the Dominican Republic, will therefore see their income fall below average.
- The prices of local and imported products will remain well above the 5-year average throughout the outlook period.
- Labor supply will be above average because of the influx of Haitian migrants from the Dominican Republic and school closures

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In a typical year, the spring harvests and seasonal price declines help to improve household food security outcomes from June onward. However, this year's spring harvests will bring little improvement to households' food security because of high and rising staple food prices and the high dependence of the poorest on markets for their food consumption. Over the next four months, they will be forced to continue using crisis strategies to maintain their consumption of staple foods at its current level. These strategies will include limiting portion sizes and reducing adult consumption to prioritize children.
From October onward, the summer/fall harvests will produce below-average yields because farmers will lack the financial capacity to purchase certain inputs (fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) and use appropriate crop management techniques. Overall, income from agricultural labor, harvests, sales of charcoal and informal small-scale trade will be below average and may fall short of the amount needed to cover food expenditure on account of ongoing price rises. Households' increased dependence on markets, coupled with rising prices for food products, will continue to weigh on the food security of poor households. Households will continue to use negative coping strategies and will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) until January 2021.

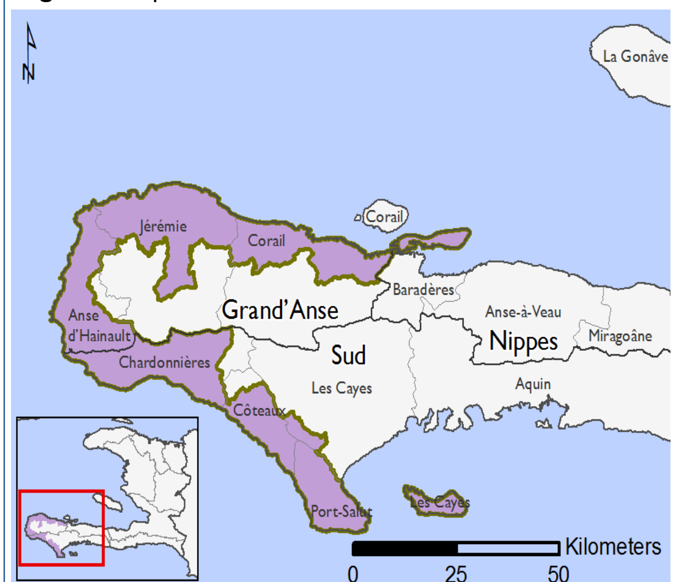
Sud and Grand'Anse, HT08

Current Situation

Seasonal progress. Zone HT08 (Grand'Anse and Sud) is currently experiencing water shortages, which have adversely affected spring crops planted in February. Despite an increase in rainfall in late May, overall precipitation remains well below the required level. Some communes, including Corail, Pestel, Dame-Marie and Anse-d'Hainault, even skipped the spring growing season altogether because the rains arrived late and in insufficient quantity. This situation is exemplified in the figure below, where the NDVI curve points to extremely dry conditions, with rainfall well below average since April.

Conditions are almost identical in the Sud department, with the exception of the commune of Les Anglais, where there are small-scale irrigation systems. In the area stretching from Saint-Jean-du-Sud to Tiburon, the lack of regular rainfall has all but prevented beans and maize from developing normally, and some plantations have even been destroyed.

Figure 5. Map of area of concern HT08 – Grand'Anse and Sud



Source: *FEWS NET*

Trends in agricultural conditions.

__Grand'Anse.__ Near-average rainfall in late February and early March enabled farmers to begin the annual spring growing season, including land preparation and planting activities. However, in some communes (Anse-d'Hainault, Dame-Marie, Corail and Pestel), late, irregular and limited rainfall forced farmers to further delay the start of land preparation and planting activities. Many farmers even ended up abandoning this year's spring growing season and resorted to other, low-yield activities, especially self-employment. The drought event affecting the area has caused a water shortage, disrupting the normal development of various crops, especially maize and beans planted in February. In those areas where the rains are yet to arrive (Corail, Pestel, Roseaux), the growing season was skipped altogether.

__Sud.__ The situation in the Sud department is similar to that observed in the Grand'Anse department. Bean and maize crops have withered, except in the commune of Les Anglais, which has an irrigation system. Although land preparation activities began on time, very little land was actually planted because of the drought conditions.

Food availability and consumption. Key sources report a fall in the availability of local food products for households, due to the lean season and households' low purchasing power. However, bananas, mangoes and other wild products are available and accessible. For the zone overall, food consumption largely consists of rice, flour and pasta from the market. Because of high prices and low incomes due to lack of job opportunities in the area, very poor households are still limiting their consumption to one meal a day, with a reduction in the quality of their diet.

Markets and price trends. Markets are generally well supplied, although mainly with imported produce such as rice, wheat flour, oil and condiments. However, prices for local and imported staple foods are extremely high.

According to reports, the price of local grain maize at the market in Les Cayes increased sharply in April and May (close to 19 percent and 16 percent respectively). The average price in the first three weeks of June was HTG 191. This situation is attributable to two factors: the lack of harvests in the lean season that typically affects all production areas at this time of year, and restrictive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, even though the market is operating normally.

In addition, the price of grain maize is significantly higher than in the same period last year, having jumped by almost 26 percent between May 2019 and May 2020. The current price is around 80 percent above the 5-year average.

Bean prices are also increasing sharply, with average monthly rises of around 18.5 percent and 14 percent at the Les Cayes and Jérémie markets respectively. This upward trend is also due to both the particularly severe lean season and COVID-19 restrictions. Local black bean prices were around 52 percent higher in May 2020 than they were in May 2019, and trending at 61 percent above the 5-year average.

The price of imported rice was also up by close to 10 percent over the same period. Year-on-year (May 2019/2020) and compared to the 5-year average, the price of imported rice has risen sharply by 22 and 67 percent respectively.

Sources of income. Agriculture is the main source of income in livelihood zone HT08. Between 50 and 80 percent of the working population (of which the poorest make up around 30 percent) sell agricultural produce from their harvests in addition to working as agricultural laborers. A significant minority (20–30 percent) also practice fishing or sell fish products, while 20 percent sell livestock products.

Figure 6a. *Rainfall trend (mm) in Grand'Anse*

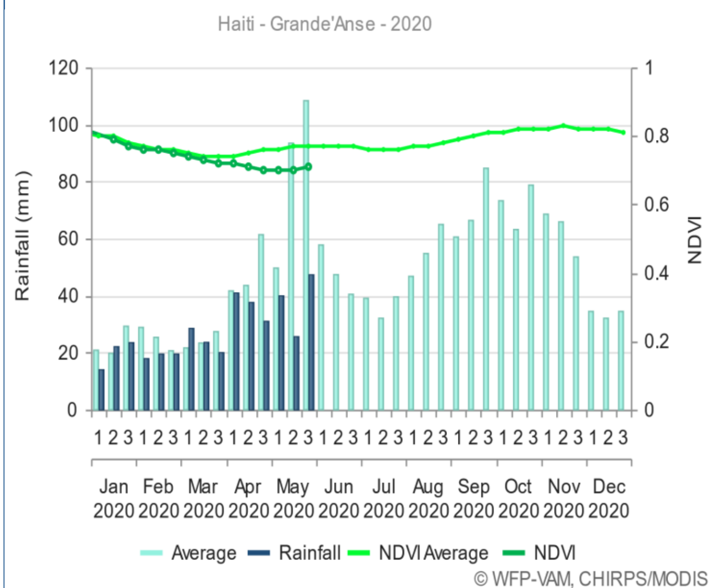
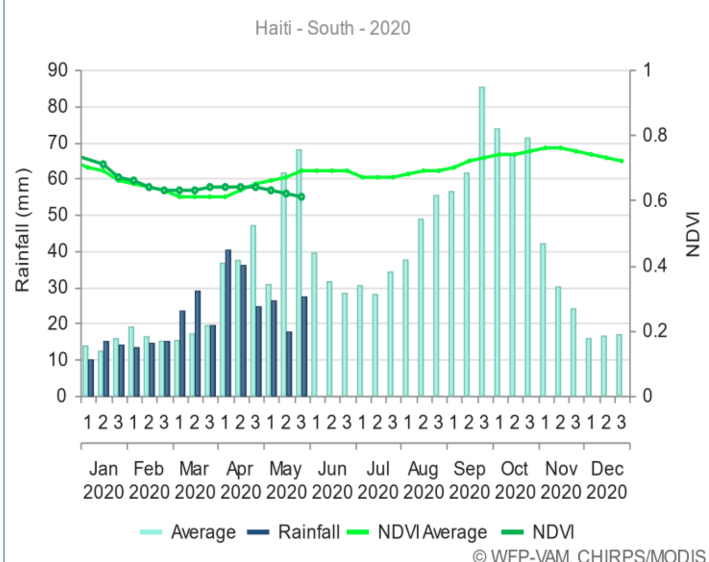


Figure 6b. Rainfall trend (mm) in Sud



Currently, the only effective sources of income for poor and very poor households are small-scale trade and self-employment, since agricultural activities are affected by the drought. As a result, lower incomes are being generated for all wealth categories, especially the poorest, who are largely dependent on activities initiated by the more affluent, and are receiving lower incomes than usual in the current crisis. Moreover, migration is not a viable source of income in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, which is pushing up transportation costs. Instead, workers are tending to return to their places of origin, thereby increasing the local supply of labor.

As a result, the number of people who are unemployed is rising, causing incomes to decline.

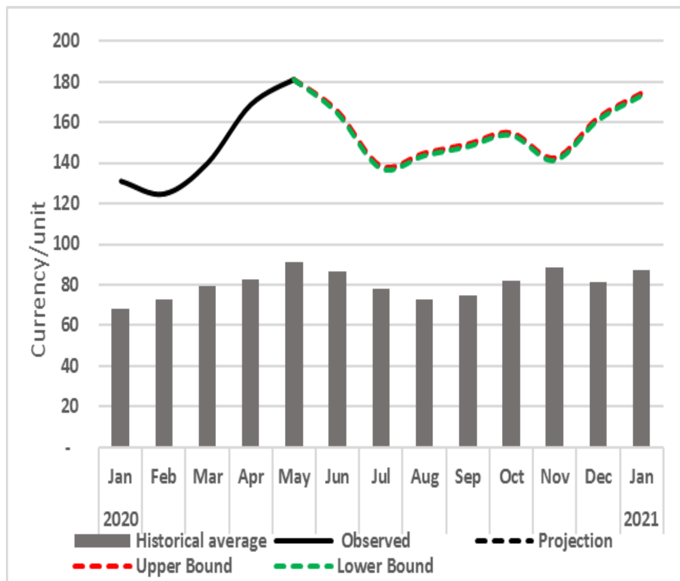
Livestock conditions. Goat and poultry farming are predominant among the poor and very poor. Typically, they have two to four goats, or four to six hens. The drought is causing serious shortages of water and feed for livestock. Although goats and poultry have so far remained largely unaffected, sources indicate that the situation is particularly severe for cattle, especially in Anse-d'Hainault and Corail.

Nutritional situation. No new data are available to give an update on the nutritional situation. The latest analysis is therefore still based on data from last year's food security monitoring survey, which painted a concerning picture. The 2019 ENUSAN survey revealed an increase in the prevalence of GAM in livelihood zone HT08 (Grand'Anse and Sud), with a rate of 7 percent and 9 percent for the two departments, respectively. Although these rates are below the World Health Organization (WHO) threshold, they nevertheless point to a concerning nutritional situation.

Emergency humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian agencies are working to support the most vulnerable in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Current assistance programs involve the distribution of cash vouchers and food coupons and are implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Solidarités International and CARE. To support these families, the Haitian Government is also distributing food packages and cash transfers via the Digicel mobile network. However, given the number of people in need, these assistance programs do not cover the food needs of the poor and the very poor in the current context.

Current food security outcomes. Livelihoods in the zone are deteriorating under the combined influence of high prices for staple food products, a lack of employment opportunities, low incomes among the poorest, and almost certain losses from the spring 2020 harvest. In addition, the rapid spread of COVID-19 is making matters worse due to the restrictive measures put in place to contain the virus (restrictions on public transportation, fewer regular market days, etc.). Very poor households are therefore turning more and more to selling charcoal and female animals to compensate for their loss of income. They are also consuming early harvests of products such as bananas and mangoes, as well as eating foods low in nutritional value. Other strategies being adopted to maintain a certain level of basic food consumption are sharply increased purchases of food on credit, consumption of low-quality produce purchased on the market, and reduction of adult consumption to prioritize children. Temporary migration to other parts of Haiti or to other countries (especially the Dominican Republic), which is a strategy normally adopted in similar situations, is not currently a viable option for making up lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This zone is in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Figure 7. Les Cayes: observed and projected prices for local grain maize (HTG/6 lbs)



Source: *FEWS NET/Haiti National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA)*

Assumptions

In addition to the assumptions at the national level, the most likely scenario for this zone from February to September 2020 is based on the following assumptions:

- According to forecasts by the Tropical Meteorology Project at CSU, this year's Atlantic hurricane season is expected to be more active than normal, which will lead to average cumulative rainfall during the outlook period.
- Climatic conditions will be favorable for the summer/fall growing season, as well as for wild products such as breadfruit, bananas and other fruits (avocados, citrus fruits, etc.). This will also support activities at the beginning of the winter growing season in November/December.

- Mangoes could still be available between June and August, especially in upland areas. This will provide a complementary source of food for poor and very poor households.
- There is likely to be an average harvest for pineapples, sales of which should increase farmers' incomes.
- Local maize and bean prices are expected to follow seasonal trends, as they did last year and have done over the past five years, with a fall during the harvest period.
- The prices of local and imported products (especially rice) will remain well above the 5-year average throughout the entire outlook period.
- Harvest yields are likely to be affected by the late start of spring growing season activities, unfavorable climatic conditions, limited availability of inputs and a reduction in the area of land cultivated.
- Demand for agricultural labor will remain below average throughout the outlook period, due to the expected poor yield from the spring harvests, which begin in July.
- Agricultural laborers, who are largely dependent on the more affluent, will earn below-average income due to the expected poor performance of the post-spring growing seasons.
- Depreciation of the gourde is continuing to affect the prices of imported staple foods.
- The spread of COVID-19, coupled with the restrictions, is expected to disrupt the movement of products and individuals and, therefore, adversely affect the markets. The pandemic will continue to worsen food security outcomes in the zone by limiting trade with other parts of the country.
- Since average rainfall is forecast for the forthcoming growing seasons, activity could recover in August and October, thereby leading to new employment opportunities. However, income will remain below average because the summer and winter growing seasons represent only a small contribution to domestic agricultural production (less than 20 percent, according to the Ministry of Agriculture).
- Fishing: Since the prime fishing season runs from January to June, activity is highly likely to slow down during the hurricane season. Income from fishing is therefore expected to be below average.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Between June and September, the expected poor harvests from the spring growing season (maize, beans, etc.) will make little contribution to the food consumption of the poorest households. However, roots and tubers, bananas and other wild products could make a relatively modest contribution, supporting a slight improvement in food consumption from July. Food consumption will therefore be much more dependent on market purchases, with demand for rice, flour and pasta remaining high. No change is expected in the number of daily meals, but they are expected to decrease in quality due to very limited diversification.

Income will be below average because of the slowdown in income-generating activities and a lack of employment opportunities. Livelihoods could also deteriorate as a result of the restrictions and emergency measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, which are limiting access to markets, as well as the large size of rural households (over six people to feed). Very poor households will therefore need to focus on self-employment activities (especially small-scale trade) in order to earn the income they need to survive. However, they will need to turn to selling charcoal and animals to buy food, to consuming early harvests (mangoes, bananas, etc.), and to sharply increasing purchases of food on credit to maintain a consumption level of at least one meal per day. The zone is therefore expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

No change in the situation is expected between October and January, since summer/fall production is heavily dependent on the performance of the spring harvest. However, seasonal crops such as pigeon peas, market-garden crops and wild products could contribute to food consumption. Purchases of food from markets will remain predominant. Rice, flour and pasta will continue to be highly popular foods. Diversification could still improve. The number of meals per day is expected to remain unchanged. Diversity could improve slightly, however, as people include a greater share of wild products in their diets.

Below-average spring harvests will adversely affect subsequent growing seasons, despite forecasts pointing to favorable climatic conditions. This is because the failure of the spring harvest will have knock-on effects on the other harvests. Income from the sale of products and from agricultural labor is expected to remain below average, even if the emergency measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 are eased. As a result, livelihoods will not stabilize during the second part of the outlook period. Households will have to maintain the crisis or stress strategies they adopted during the previous period, such as selling more animals and charcoal, as well as other negative strategies. The zone is therefore expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.