



GIEWS Country Brief Iraq

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Floods and economic constraints to affect cereal production**
- **Above-average cereal import requirements forecasted**
- **Some 2.5 million food insecure mostly among IDPs and returnees**

Floods and economic constraints to affect cereal production

Harvesting of the 2019 winter season barley crop, planted mostly in November, is scheduled to start in mid-April. The wheat harvest will start in mid-May. Up to March, conditions for the development of the 2018/19 winter cereal crop were exceptionally positive, with timely and abundant rainfall since the start of the season, promising an ample recovery from last year's drought-stricken harvest. Torrential rains at the end of March led to major flooding across the minor cereal producing areas of the eastern governorates of Diyala, Wasit, Misau and Al Basrah along the Tigris river. To a lesser extent, flooding also affected Kirkuk, Ninevah and Al Suleymaniah governorates in the cereal-producing belt in the north.

Despite weather conditions, crop prospects have been affected by economic constraints stemming from the recently ceased active conflict. In particular, limited availability and expensive inputs and machinery impact agricultural activities. Although reconstruction efforts are still in the early stages, some progress has been reported on reparations of damaged irrigation structures in the former conflict areas.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 1.825 million hectares were planted with 2019 winter wheat, including 315 000 hectares on irrigated lands. Due to systematic water shortages in the previous seasons, the country halved its winter crop planting area on irrigated land.

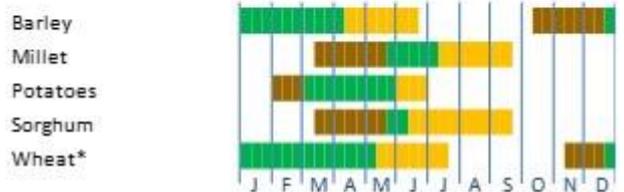
Before the March floods, the 2019 wheat harvest was forecasted by the Government at 4 million tonnes, over 80 percent above the previous year's harvest and 25 percent above average. The final production is likely to be lower than the preliminary forecast depending on the final impact of floods on yields.

The purchasing prices of the Grain Board of Iraq for the 2019 wheat crop remain unchanged since 2017, when they were

Iraq

Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)

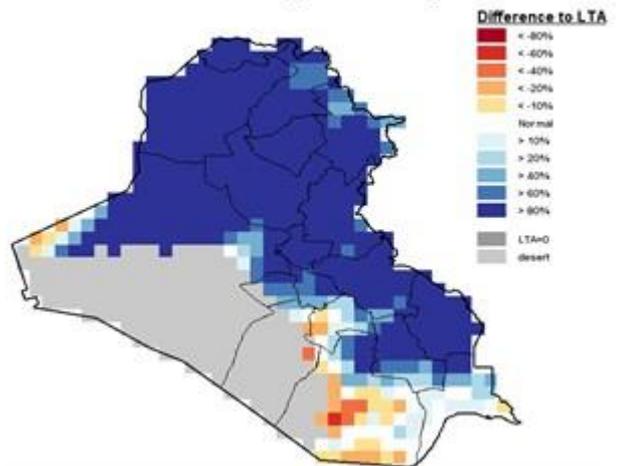


Sowing
Growing
Harvesting

Source: FAO/GIEWS.

Iraq - Precipitation anomaly

Relative difference to Long Term Average - March 2019



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

sharply reduced from previous years following lower international oil prices. Prices range from IQD 420 000 (as of early April 2019, equivalent to USD 350) to IQD 560 000 (USD 467) per tonne depending on the quality. The wheat purchased is used for the Public Distribution System (PDS), which distributes subsidized basic food rations to the population.

Above-average import requirements forecasted

Cereal import requirements in the current 2018/19 marketing year (July/June) are forecast at 5.2 million tonnes, including 3.7 million tonnes of wheat (imported mostly as flour) and 1.2 million tonnes of rice. The total cereal import requirements, reflecting a decimated 2018 domestic harvest, are forecast to be slightly above the previous year's level and about 25 percent above the five-year average.

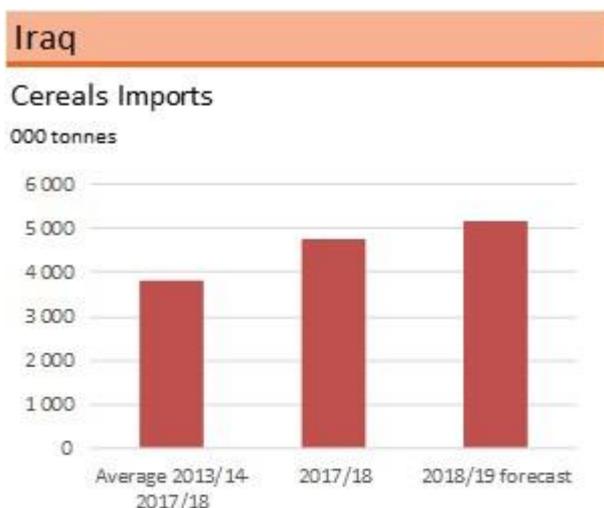
About 2.5 million food insecure mostly among IDPs and returnees

According to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) released in November 2018, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance decreased from 8.7 million in 2018 to 6.7 million people (out of a total population of 36 million), including 2 million internally displaced and 4 million returnees. About 70 percent of the returnees in need of assistance are in Ninevah and Anbar governorates. The number of food insecure people is estimated at 2.5 million, mostly among IDPs and returnees, with the majority concentrated in Diyala, Ninevah, Dahuk, Anbar and Erbil governorates. The recent flooding is likely to worsen food security outcomes.

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Iraq				
Cereal Production				
	2014-2018 average	2018	2019 forecast	change 2019/2018
	000 tonnes			percent
Wheat	3 185	2 200	4 000	81.8
Barley	596	400	700	75.0
Maize	256	300	350	16.7
Others	253	144	44	-69.4
Total	4 289	3 044	5 094	67.3

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



Note: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.