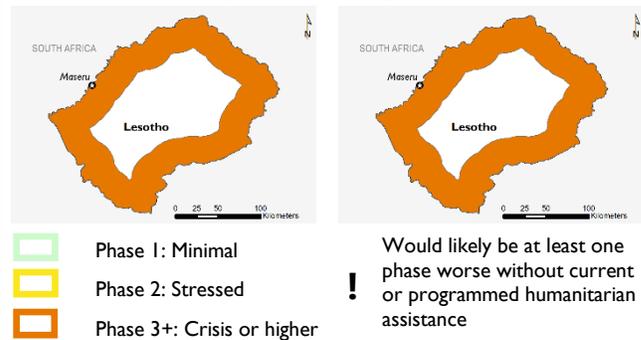


Population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is increasing as the lean season approaches

KEY MESSAGES

- As food stocks from the last harvest are depleted and the lean season approaches, the number of households facing food consumption gaps is increasing. After September, most households in Lesotho are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). These outcomes are will likely continue through the peak of the lean season in January 2020. The lean season started atypically early and is likely to be more severe than last year.
- According to FEWS NET/USGS, the start of the 2019/20 rainy season in Lesotho and other parts of Southern Africa is most likely to be late and below average. This is expected to affect the availability of income-earning labor opportunities in agriculture as households prioritize food expenditures over agricultural inputs and labor.
- Despite domestic cereal shortfalls, maize meal prices have been stable since April and will likely remain stable through September (Figure 2). However, FEWS NET price projections indicate that prices will likely rise in October. South Africa is expected to have a below-average surplus in 2019/20, however imports will likely offset any domestic deficits in Lesotho.

Projected food security outcomes, Aug to September 2019 (left) and October 2019 to January 2020 (right)



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

FEWS NET Remote Monitoring countries use a colored outline to represent the highest IPC classification in areas of concern.

ZONE	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
<i>Nationwide but with more intensity in the entire southern parts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below-average incomes from livestock sales and off-farm activities • Depletion of food from own production • Limited purchasing power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above-average staple food prices • Below-average agriculture labor opportunities and wage rates

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2020

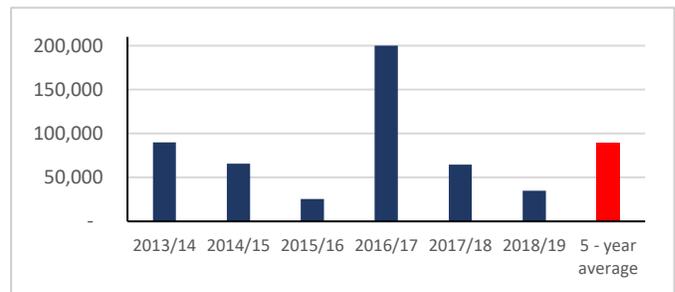
Livelihoods continue to be strained in Lesotho mainly due to the poor 2018/19 agriculture season and below-average harvest. Official crops estimate from the Bureau of Statistics indicate that maize production for 2019 was 61 percent below the five-year average, leading to a corresponding reduction in income earned from crop sales (Figure 1). Income earned from other sources is also below average. Many households no longer have livestock to sell, the LVAC 2019 Annual Assessment estimated household livestock ownership to be at 39 percent as of June 2019.

Currently, households are engaging in self-employment activities to earn additional income. As the next agriculture season approaches, land preparation will provide limited opportunities for casual labor. However, given the poor harvests experienced for two consecutive years in Lesotho, farmers will be financially constrained in their ability to purchase inputs and labor. These factors, in addition to an anticipated late start to the season, will likely negatively affect the demand for labor and wage rates. FEWS NET/USGS indicates that during the October 2019 to March 2020 period, rainfall will likely be below average in parts of South Africa, Southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and Lesotho. Remittances from South Africa remain one of the important sources of income, and along with traditional safety nets programs such as Government Public Cash for Work (locally known as *Fato-Fato*), are helping provide incomes especially to the poor households. Given increasing food insecurity, households are prioritizing food purchases, and this is likely to continue until the next harvest in 2020. Estimates from recent survey indicate that poor households were spending more than 50 percent of their income on market food purchases.

Due to poor rainfall received during the 2018/19 rainfall season, pastures and livestock water sources will likely dry up earlier than normal, especially in southern areas of Lesotho. Livestock conditions are expected to deteriorate from October until the rain season starts to regenerate pastures. Deterioration of livestock conditions will have a negative effect on pricing.

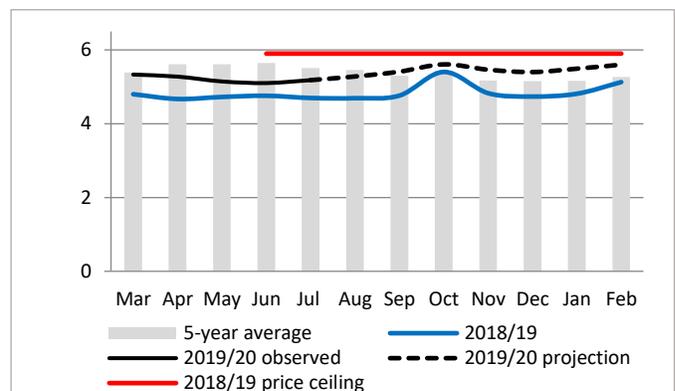
Following a below-average 2019 harvest, domestic availability of maize grain is more limited. A food balance sheet presented by LVAC in July 2019 indicated a domestic cereal shortfall of 287,240 MT. However, the shortfall has been filled by imports from traditional South African markets and prices have been stable since April. South Africa is expected to have a below-average surplus in 2019/20, however imports will likely offset any domestic deficits in Lesotho. Availability of staple food is therefore expected to remain stable through January 2020. Price projection by FEWS NET indicates that maize meal prices in Maseru will likely remain stable through September, however prices will likely begin to rise in October as the lean season peaks. With current widening food consumption gaps, the number of people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is growing with the approaching lean season. After September, it is expected that most households in Lesotho will be in IPC Phase 3. These outcomes are expected to continue through the peak of the lean season.

Figure 1: Official maize crop estimates Lesotho (MT)



Source: Bureau of Statistics (BOS) Lesotho

Figure 2: Maseru market maize meal price projection (LSL/kg)



Source: FEWS NET estimates based on WFP/BOS data

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING

In remote monitoring, a coordinator typically works from a nearby regional office. Relying on partners for data, the coordinator uses scenario development to conduct analysis and produce monthly reports. As less data may be available, remote monitoring reports may have less detail than those from countries with FEWS NET offices. [Learn more here.](#)