



## GIEWS Country Brief Lesotho

Reference Date: 20-December-2017

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Dry conditions during planting period of 2018 cereal crops
- However, rainfall prospects generally favourable for remainder of current 2017/18 season
- Maize production in 2017 estimated at well above-average level
- Ample cereal supplies result in reduced import requirements for 2017/18 marketing year and increased stock levels
- Food security conditions improved significantly, mostly on account of increased agricultural output

### Dry conditions at start of 2017/18 cropping season

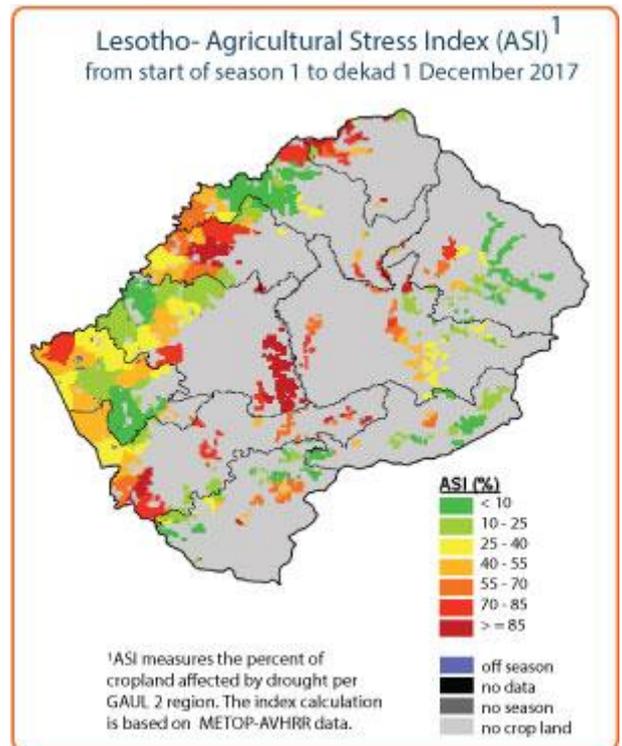
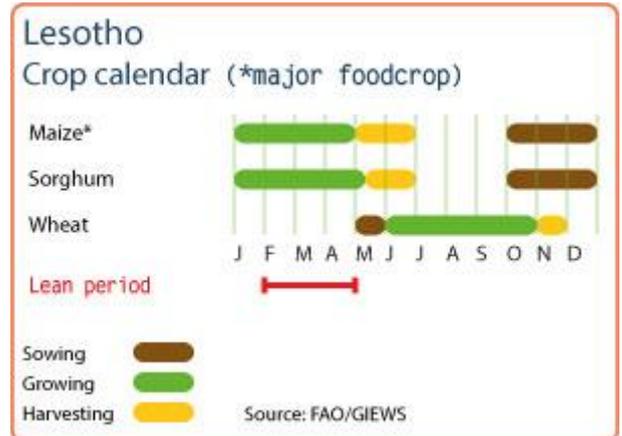
Land preparation and planting for the 2018 cereal crops is underway and is expected to be finalized by the end of the year. Abnormal dry conditions were observed during most of September and November, resulting in below-average vegetation conditions in cropped areas in the main cereal-producing northern regions. However, heavier rains were recorded at the beginning of December and meteorological forecasts point to a higher likelihood of above-average rainfall in the first quarter of 2018. Should the favourable rains materialize, the current moisture deficits are expected to be reversed with a positive effect on 2018 production prospects.

### Production rebounded strongly in 2017

Based on the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics' agricultural assessment, cereal production in 2017 is estimated at a well above-average level of 238 000 tonnes, a significant increase compared to the drought-reduced level of 2016. Most of this increase reflects a sharp upturn in maize production, estimated at 200 000 tonnes. In addition, there was a sharp increase for sorghum production, while the wheat output is estimated at an average level, but still well above the previous year's output.

### Import requirements drop in 2017/18

As a result of the bumper 2017 output, cereal import requirements are estimated at a well below-average level of 177 000 tonnes in the 2017/18 marketing year (April/March). Of this amount, imports of maize would account for 65 000 tonnes.



In addition, given the favourable supply situation, stock levels are forecast to rise sharply in 2017/18 to near average levels.

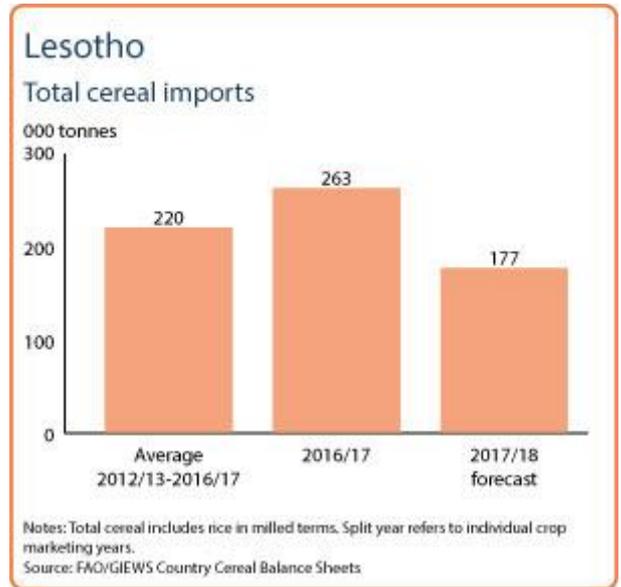
### Decreased number of food insecure

The food security situation has improved markedly in 2017/18 compared to the previous year where an estimated 709 000 people required food assistance. Based on the latest 2017 Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee's (LVACs) evaluation, the number of food insecure people in 2017/18 is estimated at about 225 000. The year-on-year decline is mostly attributed to the upturn in this year's agricultural output.

**Lesotho**  
Cereal production

	2012-2016 average	2016	2017 estimate	change 2017/2016
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	65	25	200	700
Wheat	10	4	10	150
Sorghum	8	1	28	2700
Others	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>668</b>

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



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