



GIEWS Country Brief Madagascar

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cyclone Ava brings heavy rains to eastern regions in early 2018
- Rice production in 2017 estimated at well below-average level mainly reflecting dry conditions in main-producing areas
- Prices of rice in 2017 up on annual basis, mostly on account of tighter supplies
- Moderate improvement in food security situation in southern regions, but conditions worsened in southeastern areas due to weather shocks

Heavy rains impact coastal regions in early 2018

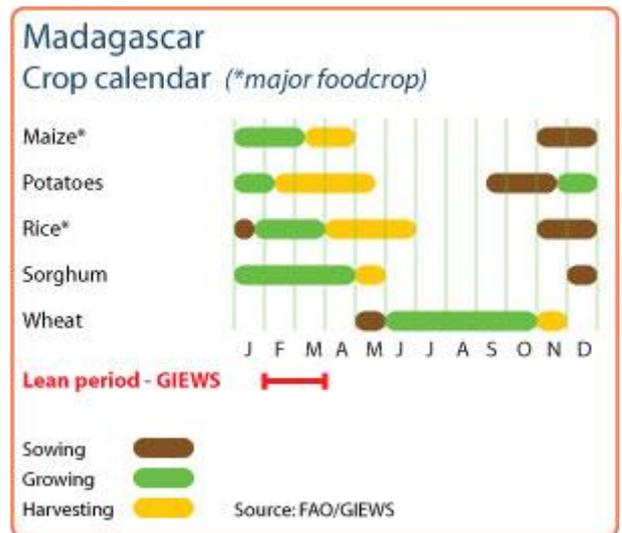
Harvesting of the 2018 minor first season rice crop is underway, while the 2018 main (secondary) season rice crop is being transplanted and is expected to be harvested from April 2018. Weather conditions across most of the country were generally favourable in the last quarter of 2017, except for some minor producing areas in the southwest, where below-average rains have stressed local vegetation conditions.

At the start of January 2018, Cyclone Ava hit eastern coastal regions, bringing heavy rains and strong winds. Although information on the impact to the agriculture sector is not yet available, localized flooding may have damaged transplanted rice crops and could impede the harvesting of the first season crops, resulting in production losses in the affected areas.

Regarding overall rice plantings for 2018, given farmers' high reliance on retained seeds and the low availability of improved varieties in the country, the reduced output in 2017 may have negatively impacted the sown area for the 2017/18 season.

Dry conditions cut rice production to below average levels in 2017

According to the 2017 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), conducted by FAO and WFP, national rice production is estimated at about 3.1 million tonnes in 2017, a decrease of 20 percent on an annual basis and about 21 percent down from the previous five-year average. Maize production is estimated at 281 000 tonnes, a year-on-year decline of 11 percent, and the national cassava output is estimated at about



Madagascar
Cereal production

	2012-2016 average	2016	2017 estimate	change 2017/2016
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	3 935	3 815	3 100	-19
Maize	366	316	281	-11
Wheat	6	5	5	0
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	4 308	4 137	3 388	-18

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

2.5 million tonnes, a 4 percent reduction compared to last year, with both outputs below their respective averages.

The below-average outputs mostly result from insufficient and poorly distributed rainfall in the main rice-producing regions of the country, reflecting a delayed start of the rainy season and a dry period (three months of below-average rains between December 2016 and February 2017). The resulting water deficits caused a contraction in plantings, restrained crop development and resulted in below average yields, triggering a sharp reduction in the 2017 rainfed and irrigated rice outputs. In addition, Cyclone Enawo, which traversed the country in March 2017, brought heavy rains that caused flood damage. However, in areas where the cyclone damage was negligible, the associated heavy rains partially alleviated the water deficits, limiting the impact of early seasonal water stress and curbing further production losses.

Restrained access to inputs, including improved seed varieties and an inadequate irrigation system, further underpinned the weak agricultural performance in 2017, given farmers' high exposure to climate effects.

At the subnational level, the largest year-on-year decreases in rice production were in the north and central main rice-producing regions. By contrast, production in the southern regions of Androy and Anosy increased on an annual basis on account of favourable weather conditions, following three consecutive years of dry weather-reduced outputs (2013-2015). However, the harvests in these regions still remained below average and are of comparatively minor quantities in relation to the national output.

Import requirements increase to compensate for reduced harvest

Rice import requirements in the 2017/18 marketing year (April/March) are estimated at about 560 000 tonnes, well above the previous year and average, reflecting the reduced production and low stocks. Between April and October 2017, an estimated 320 000 tonnes of rice had already been imported, well above the volume imported in the entire 2016/17 marketing year (April/March). In total, above 800 000 tonnes of cereals are needed to meet the domestic supply gap in 2017/18 and maintain near-stable consumption levels.

Rice prices pushed up by tighter supplies

Expectations of a reduced output triggered rice price increases across the country during 2017, which were further underpinned by low stock levels. Although prices stabilized from May for a few months, reflecting new availabilities from the main harvest and large import volumes that eased supply pressure, prices remained generally higher on a yearly basis as of October 2017.

Food security conditions improved in southern regions, but situation worsened in southeastern areas

Based on the results from the CFSAM, food security conditions improved in the vulnerable southern regions of Androy and Anosy, mostly resulting from the moderate upturn in cereal production. However, due to weather shocks, there was a worsening of conditions in southeastern areas.

In 2017/18, over 407 000 people are estimated to be severely food insecure in the south and southeast and, without adequate external assistance, they are unable to meet their food needs. An

additional 1.7 million people are estimated to be moderately food insecure, inferring they are generally able to meet their food needs, except if there is a major shock. However, 35 percent of these people (approximately 595 000) were reported to be already adopting negative coping strategies or were spending a greater share of their income on food at the expense of other necessities, including health and education and, therefore, remain at a high risk of falling into severe food insecurity without humanitarian assistance.

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