

Reference Date: 10-January-2012

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Uneven distribution of rains characterise the beginning of the 2011/12 agricultural season
- Monthly maize prices rise rapidly at the end of 2011
- Exports of maize temporarily suspended
- High prices aggravate food insecurity conditions, while food distributions begins in southern districts

### Poor rains recorded in central and southern region during 2011/12 agricultural season

Planting of the 2011/12 agricultural season crops is virtually complete. The rainfall situation in central and southern parts of the country during the first half of the rainy season (October-December 2011) was rather poor while normal to above normal rains have been recorded in the northern region. As a result water deficits have been observed in central and southern areas, causing localised crop wilting. In addition, high temperatures have aggravated the situation negatively impacting early crop development. The prevailing conditions also supported an outbreak of army worms in several areas in the south and centre. However, forecasts indicate an increased probability of above normal rains between January and March, which could help to alleviate the early moisture deficits.

### Sharp increase in maize prices in southern markets

During the last quarter of 2011, maize prices have increased rapidly, particularly in the deficit producing areas of the south. In Chiradzulu (southern region), prices increased by nearly 60 percent to MWK 55 per kg in December 2011 compared to the beginning of October 2011. The national average price was nearly one third above last year's level at MWK 39 per kg. Tighter maize supplies, due, in part, to larger than normal maize exports to neighbouring countries, and increasing transportation costs as a result of the fuel shortages were fuelling the price increase. Furthermore, ADMARC, the government parastatal, has raised its selling price for maize by 50 percent to MWK 60 per kg.

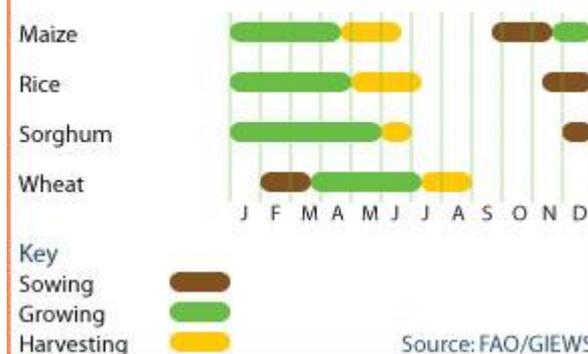
### Temporary freeze of maize exports

During 2011 there has been a marked increase in cross border trade to Mozambique and Tanzania. Between April and November over 53 000 tonnes crossed the border to Mozambique, compared to about 3 000 tonnes over the same period in 2010. Similarly more than double the quantity was exported to Tanzania. Formal exports have also increased, supported by the good harvest in 2011. However, amid concerns over rising prices and tighter supplies, the government suspended maize exports at the end of 2011 in an effort to ensure adequate supplies throughout the country, particularly in southern markets.

### Food assistance starts in southern districts

In November 2011, the government and humanitarian agencies agreed to facilitate the distribution of just under 5 000 tonnes of maize to the

### Crop calendar Malawi

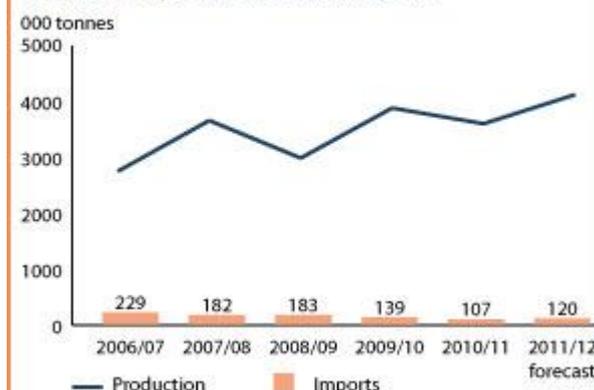


### Malawi Cereal production

	2006-2010 average	2010	2011 estimate	change 2011/2010
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	3 176	3 419	3 895	14
Rice (paddy)	111	103	118	15
Sorghum	59	54	73	35
Others	31	26	35	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 377</b>	<b>3 602</b>	<b>4 121</b>	<b>14</b>

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

### Malawi Total cereal production and imports



Notes: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.  
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

201 854 food insecure persons who were identified in the 2011 Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) report. The affected households are located in areas of the southern districts of Nsanje, Chikhwawa, Balaka, Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Mwanza, Neno, Phalombe, Zomba and Ntcheu that suffered localized production shortfalls as a result of irregular rains and a dry spell in 2010/11. However, given that one of the central parameters of the vulnerability assessment, namely the price of maize, has now altered a review of the MVAC results began in October 2011. Updated results are expected in the next month. Further factors that have aggravated current food insecurity conditions are the limited employment opportunities during the lean period compared to previous years, as well as the ban on livestock sales earlier in 2011 in Chikhwawa, due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The ban however, has now been lifted, providing households with increased income opportunities.

