

High food prices in Amboasary-Atsimo are limiting poor households' ability to access food

KEY MESSAGES

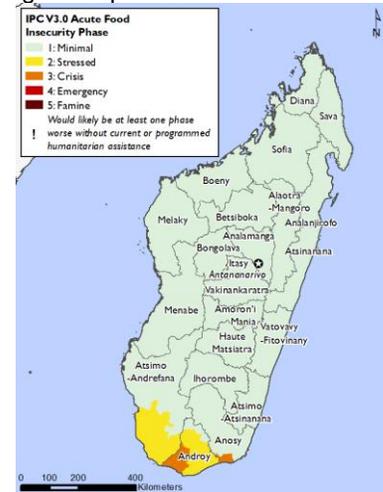
- Livestock herd sizes and prices are increasing in South Madagascar as pastoralists have reduced sales further improvement in food availability both for human and animals. Nevertheless, livestock robberies reemerged in the districts of Ambovombe and Amboasary.
- Huge quantity of tubers are currently sold at very low prices in many markets of the South, except in Amboasary district. This may run out producer stocks very quickly and leads to an early lean season than the normal although a better production compared to last year.
- Rice production has doubled in South-Central penneplain further a favorable rainfall, an increase of planted areas and the absence of major hazards. Meanwhile, Fall Army Warm impact on maize production has reduced compared to last year. However, locust and other pests damaged rice crops particularly in Center-South.
- Food security has improved in vulnerable zones of Madagascar. Poor and very poor households in Mahafaly Plain: Cassava, Goats and Cattle (MG 23) and in Androy Semi-Arid Cassava, Maize and Livestock (MG 24) are experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity situation expect in Beloha where Crisis (IPC Phase 3) persists in southern Amboasary and Talagnaro. Other households throughout Madagascar are experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity.

Current situation

The rainy season ended in May in most of Madagascar except along the east coast where rain continues throughout the year. In August 2019, the Meteorology Department expects below average rainfall in the Extreme South, average to below average rainfall in the Southeastern and Central regions, and above average rainfall in the North.

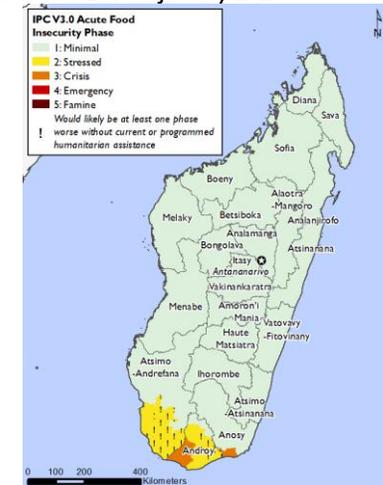
The tuber harvest is ongoing in Southern Madagascar and the vegetable harvest is ongoing in the central highlands, particularly pumpkins in Bongolava Region. Maize production increased slightly in the central highlands despite the rainfall deficit because of treatments against Fall Armyworm that were used by some farmers. In most parts of the Highlands and Middle West, farmers are now preparing their land for rice planting.

Projected food security outcomes, August – September 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October 2019 – January 2020



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.

Cash crop harvests have started in Southeastern of Madagascar particularly for coffee and pepper for which sales contribute significantly to poor and very poor household incomes. According to SISAV, the prices of coffee currently vary between 2,600 MGA (in Farafangana) and 7,000 MGA (in Nosy Varika) per kilo while the prices of pepper vary between 3,000 MGA (in Vohipeno and Vangaindrano) and 16,000 MGA (in Manakara). Overall, prices of these two cash crops decreased by 30 to 40 percent compared to last year and remain near or below the 4-year average.

In August 2019, labor demand remains high for tuber, cash crop, and off-season crop harvesting, and for land preparation, and rice planting. Nevertheless, daily labor wages remain very low and are only slowly increasing. In MG19 for example, the daily wage in June 2019 is 10 percent higher than last year at the same period and 14 percent above 4-year average according to SISAV. In the Extreme South of Madagascar, daily workers earn higher wages, about 10 percent higher than last year and 22 percent above the 4-year average.

Livestock sales are currently decreasing because of the higher availability of food. As a result, livestock prices increased by 20 percent during the peak of the harvest (May to June 2019) in the south compared to the end of lean season (March to April). Current prices in the Extreme South are 20 to 50 percent higher than last year, and 15 to 35 percent above 4-year average because of good cattle body conditions. Some livestock robberies have been reported in the district of Ambovombe and Amboasary.

In total, Madagascar imported 392,000 MT of rice during the 2018/2019 marketing year, which is just under half of last year's imports and near the 5-year average. According to the *Observatoire du Riz*, 174,000 MT of rice were imported during the first half of 2019. This is half of last year's quantities in the same period; and 22 percent below the 5-year average. Unexpectedly, rice imports slightly increased in June compared to April and May due to higher demand in vulnerable areas.

In most of markets, prices of rice were 5 to 25 percent above the five-year average, which is lower than last year, suggesting improved supply both for imported and local rice. Compared to mid-June, imported rice prices remained stable or decreased while local rice prices started to increase because of the end of the harvest period. Maize prices remain higher than last year in almost all markets due to lower production this year, except in Betioky, Toamasina, Antsirabe I and Mananjary where prices were near average due to good rainfall and Fall Armyworm treatments. Prices of tubers decreased in almost all markets, except in Beloha, compared to the previous month, which may signal an increase in overall production.

The Nutritional situation in southern districts improved during the second quarter of 2019 compared to the first quarter of 2018 and compared to the second quarter of 2018. Globally, it results from the improvement of the availability of food and water in the South. Nutrition programs have also been reinforced. Particularly for the district of Ampanihy, the situation passed from emergency to crisis according to the SMART survey undertaken in end April showing a MAG prevalence of 11.8 percent among under five-year-old children. Meanwhile, an urban SMART survey was also undertaken in the city of Antananarivo in June 2019 and found that 4.5 percent of children under five were acutely malnourished while 9.7 percent of teenagers have and 16 percent of women between 15 and 49 years old had a BMI under 18.5 cm. These results put a "stress" on the nutritional status of adults in the city which may, indeed, have been worsened by the water shortage signaled in some fokontany of the Capital since early August.

Proposals for new humanitarian assistance programming to replace recently ended programs like ASOTRY and FARARANO have been submitted. Other emergency programs are likely to be funded soon to address the needs of the next lean season based on the results of the June 2019 IPC. ACF continues to respond to the effects of the last drought in Southern Madagascar through their Integrated Project that includes nutrition, food security, and WASH under USAID/OFDA funding. This project focuses on technical support to health centers for Severe Acute Malnutrition relief, and is combined with WFP's care for Moderate Acute Malnutrition.

Updated Assumptions

The current situation has not affected most of the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's [most likely scenario for the period of July 2019 to January 2020](#). However, the following assumptions have been updated:

- **2019/2020 rainy season:** The National Meteorological Department of Madagascar forecasts average to below-average rainfall in southwestern Madagascar in October 2019 when the next rainy season is supposed to start. Rainfall will likely

be average to above-average in the southeast, central and western areas of the country; and above normal in northern regions. Meanwhile, the NOAA NMME probabilistic forecast does not predict any severe rainfall deficits.

- **Livestock prices:** In southern Madagascar livestock prices will likely stabilize at above average prices in September during the ongoing tuber harvests. Prices will then likely start to decrease again at the beginning of the lean season but will remain higher than last year and near average.
- **Labor demand and income:** Labor demand will continue increasing through January 2020 during the ongoing tuber harvests in southern Madagascar, and the land preparation and the rice planting in the highlands. Cash crops along the east coast will also likely require labor both for harvesting (cloves in September and litchis in December) and for export packaging. Daily wages will likely decrease from August 2019 to January 2020 both in the south and the southeast.
- **Rice imports:** Imports of rice are expected to stabilize in the next few months during the post-harvest period and then increase between November 2019 and January 2020 because of the lean season. In total, rice imports will likely be above last marketing year's level above the 5-year average during the second semester of 2019 due to the above average needs in some districts of southern Madagascar .
- **Staple prices:** Prices of local rice in Antananarivo will likely continue to increase through January 2020 and will likely remain above the 5-year average due to the persistence of general inflation. In Tulear, with the end of cereal harvests and the abundance of tubers, the substitute food, prices will likely stabilize near normal through January 2020. Maize prices in Ambovombe will likely remain stable until September then it will increase from October to January, remaining above average due to very low maize production.
- **Livestock herd sizes and livestock health:** Pasture will likely remain dry until the next rainy season expected in October 2019. Animals will continue to be fed with sweet potato and cassava leaves from June to September and with cactus (*O. Ficusindica*) and sugarcane leaves from October 2019 to January 2020. Livestock health could deteriorate in the worst affected areas like Tsihombe because of the scarcity of water, but in general herd sizes will likely increase as people start to restore them. Unfortunately, livestock robberies will likely increase in the Extreme South when animals are in good shape and herds are starting to increase.
- **Nutrition in Southern Madagascar:** Before October, GAM levels will remain serious (GAM between 10 to 14.9 percent) in most of the districts particularly in Bekily. GAM levels in Tsihombe, Amboasary and Fort-Dauphin will likely be acceptable or alert (GAM below 10 percent). The number of admissions in CRENAS will also decrease but remain above average, which is between 200 and 300 per district, in Ambovombe and Ampanihy, and below average in Amboasary and Fort-Dauphin. Starting from October through the end of the outlook period, the prevalence of acute malnutrition will likely increase because of the lean season. Nevertheless, the situation will be better than during the last season and will be near normal.

Most likely Food Security Outcomes

In the [Extreme south: cassava, maize, and livestock rearing livelihood zone \(MG 24\)](#), households will likely continue to have less diverse diets, mostly consisting of starches. Few households will adopt stressed food consumption based coping strategies like reducing the daily ration. As the nutritional situation will likely remain in an Alert situation and humanitarian assistance will likely be very limited during the post-harvest period, very poor and poor households in most of the zone will be in **Stressed (IPC Phase 2)** until January 2020. In Beloha, below-average agricultural production and high food prices will likely lead households to use coping strategies earlier, and in southern Amboasary and Talagnaro, where poorly distributed rainfall will lead to a more severe and earlier than usual lean season. The situation in Ambovombe may also be worse if no action is taken to strengthen poor and very poor household livelihood and to incite them to diversify their diet.

In the [Southwest: cassava and small ruminants \(MG 23\)](#), food consumption improved as the very poor will be able to access fresh cassava and sweet potatoes from the main harvest. Household income will also likely improve as livestock prices increased and food prices is near normal. Nutritional situation will likely stabilize so poor and very poor households will likely

be in **Stressed (IPC Phase 2) up to September 2019**. From October onwards, staple consumption will reduce with the end of harvests and market prices will likely start to increase. Food gaps will increase given the limited food stocks and low incomes. Poor and very poor households will likely face **Stress (IPC Phase 2) in the zone between October 2019 and January 2020 and Ampanihy may likely return into Crisis** unless a recovery humanitarian assistance is planned for at least 20 percent of population.

Local stress has been identified in Central Madagascar related to nutrition, but the impacts was not sufficient enough to struggle food security classification. Therefore, [households throughout Madagascar](#) remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outside the areas of concerns.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. [Learn more here](#).