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Southern Africa

Malawi

This country is monitored by local FEWS NET staff

Key Message Update

Over 3 million people planned to receive humanitarian food assistance through the lean season

October 2018

Key Messages:

Through January 2019, poor households in many central and southern areas will likely face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes with the worst affected households in southern areas likely experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3). These households were negatively affected by high production losses during the last agriculture season as they continue to have below-average incomes. Most households in northern Malawi will continue to experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes as northern areas experienced favorable rainfall and production.

In mid-October, the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee reported roughly 3.3 million people in parts of central and most of southern Malawi will require humanitarian food assistance during the lean season. Apart from the one-time maize assistance the Malawian Government distributed in September, the government has pledged to meet about 75 percent of the maize and logistical needs for humanitarian assistance. Although, further information on the exact location and timing of food assistance delivery is still being gathered, therefore the impact of this assistance is not yet reflected in projected outcomes.

Maize grain prices were atypically stable in half of the monitored markets in September as prices have been increasing since June, with slight increases and decreases in prices across other markets. The current maize prices are similar to the five-year average, although are significantly above last year. The stability in market prices is assumed to be partly due to the one-time government maize distribution carried out in October across the country.

The updated seasonal forecast by FEWS NET and USGS partners indicates a likely weak El Niño with seasonal rainfall for the October to March 2019 period most likely to be average in central and southern Malawi and average to above-average in northern areas. However, with the uncertainty associated with the sea surface temperatures over the Indian Ocean and the weak El there is a wide range of possibilities. This forecast is likely to positively impact 2019 production and agriculture activities.

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Source URL: <http://fews.net/southern-africa/malawi/key-message-update/october-2018>

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