

Reference Date: 12-January-2012

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Estimates for the 2011 harvest point to a large decline in coarse grains production
- Cereal prices recorded sharp unseasonal increases during November and December
- Conflict in Libya is having a serious impact on food security in parts
- Urgent actions are needed to prevent a further deterioration of the food situation

### 2011 coarse grains production sharply reduced due to rainfall deficits and pest attacks

Harvesting of the 2011 cereal crops is almost complete. Erratic rains and extended dry spells throughout the growing period as well as widespread pest attacks caused serious damage to crops, reducing coarse grains yields and delaying harvests in several parts of the southern producing regions (Dosso, Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Diffa and Tillabéri). The most affected area is the Tillabéri region in the south-west of the country, which recorded the sharpest decrease in cereal production compared to last year (more than 40 percent).. Moreover, the prolonged dryness caused the depletion of grazing resources and lowered water points' level in the pastoral areas of Tillabéri.

A joint FAO/CILSS/WFP Crop Assessment Mission which visited the country recently estimated 2011 aggregate cereal production at some 3.8 million tonnes, 27 percent less than previous year's record harvest and 10 percent below the average for the previous five years. Production of millet and sorghum, the main staple cereals in the country, is estimated to decrease by 24 and 38 percent compared to 2010, respectively.

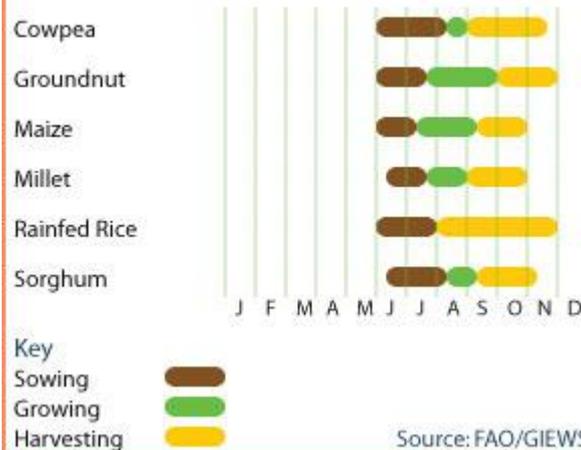
### Reduced supplies triggered unseasonal price increases in November and December

Coarse grains prices, which have been mostly stable at low levels since the last harvest in October/November 2010, recorded sharp unseasonal increases in all monitored markets during November and December 2011, reaching record or near-record levels in the capital Niamey and in Tillabéri market, located in the region where the largest decline in cereal production was recorded. In Niamey, millet and sorghum prices increased between October and December by 29 and 15 percent, respectively, and currently they are 38 and 19 percent higher than the levels of the same month last year. In Tillabéri, prices of millet are the highest in the country, both in absolute terms (25000 CFA per quintal) and compared to December 2010 (+72 percent). Prices of imported rice, mainly consumed in urban centres, are also on the increase and at high levels driven by trends in international food markets and increasing fuel prices and transport costs. In Niamey, imported rice prices in December were 10 percent higher than in the same month last year.

### Food and agricultural assistance urgently needed

Niger has already been affected by a severe food crisis in 2009/10 that caused a drop in incomes, substantial loss of livestock and other

### Crop calendar Niger



### Niger

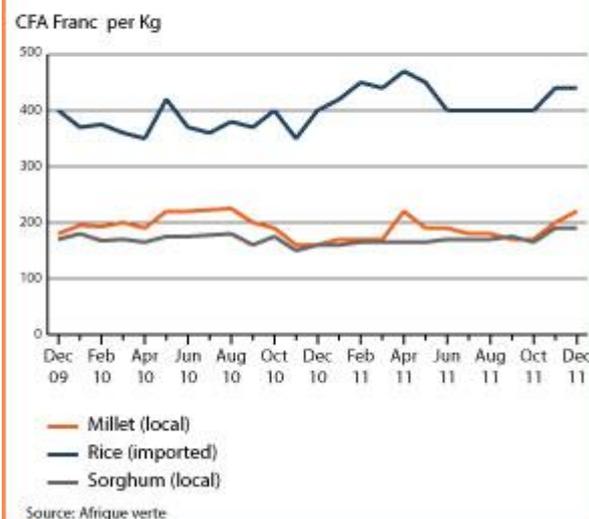
#### Cereal production

	2006-2010 average	2010	2011 estimate	change 2011/2010
	000 tonnes			percent
Millet	3 198	3 838	2 926	-24
Sorghum	942	1 302	807	-38
Rice (paddy)	83	101	85	-16
Others	25	15	13	-13
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 248</b>	<b>5 256</b>	<b>3 831</b>	<b>-27</b>

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

### Niger

#### Selected wholesale cereal prices in Niamey



assets, increased levels of household indebtedness, and deteriorated the nutritional situation of the pastoralist, agro-pastoralist and other farming groups. Hence the rural population is still very vulnerable to food production shocks because their coping strategies have been exhausted. Moreover, the country is seriously affected by the influx of returnees from Libya. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), about 84.000 people arrived in Niger as of early November. This has practically eliminated the remittances and has negatively affected the food security of the local communities. The renewed fall in coarse grain production combined with poor rangeland conditions, reduced cash crop returns and the continuing combination of poverty and persistently high food prices, could lead to sharp increases in malnutrition in next months. In view of the current food supply situation and unfavourable prospects of imports, the situation is likely to deteriorate further.

The following urgent actions are recommended:

- Safety net interventions, such as targeted distribution, sales at subsidized prices, food for work or cash for work activities, will be required during next year lean season, with quantities depending on the extent of food supply and pasture deficits in specific areas;
- distribution of inputs such as seeds and fertilizer is also needed to enable farmers to produce enough food during the current off-season (December-February) and the next cropping season (from June 2012);
- Vulnerable people, especially children, need (to continue) to have access to therapeutic and feeding centres;
- Market and price conditions and the situation of vulnerable groups, need to be closely monitored in order to respond to any sharp increase in assistance requirements