



## GIEWS Country Brief Pakistan

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### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

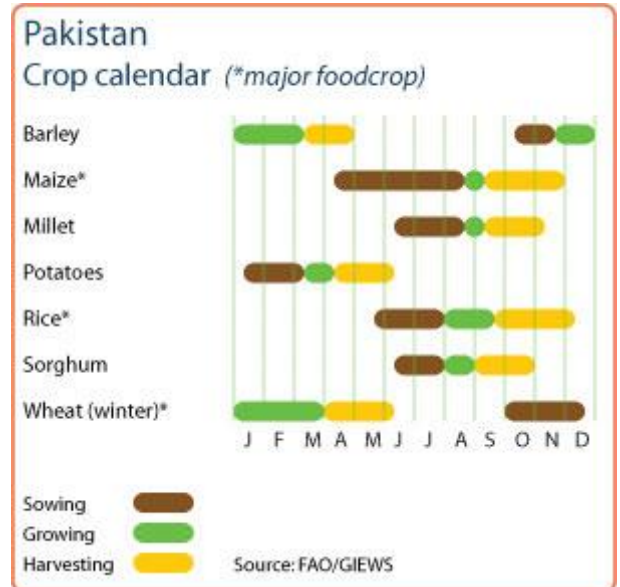
- With near-normal rains at start of season, current prospects for 2018 wheat output are positive
- Aggregate cereal output in 2017 estimated at record level
- Rice exports in 2018 forecast to increase from last year's near-average level
- Prices of wheat and wheat flour strengthened seasonally in recent months
- Food insecurity persists in localized areas

### With near-normal rains at start of season, current prospects for 2018 wheat output are positive

Planting of the 2018, mostly irrigated “rabi” (winter) wheat crop, was completed in December 2017, with harvesting expected to start in April 2018. Dry weather conditions between August and October last year have reportedly reduced soil moisture content and limited water supplies for irrigation, affecting planting operations for the wheat crop, particularly in the minor rainfed-producing “barani” areas. Near-normal rains in late November and December 2017 over most of the country provided some relief to crops in the main wheat-producing areas. A concern remains in the rainfed areas, which account for only 10 percent of the national wheat output, as these rains were not enough to offset the soil moisture deficit. Considering that growing conditions in the main wheat-producing areas improved and assuming normal weather for the remainder of the season, current prospects for the 2017 wheat production remain positive.

### Aggregate cereal output in 2017 estimated at record level

The 2017 aggregate cereal production is estimated at a record of 43.3 million tonnes. Disaggregated by crops, wheat production in 2017 is officially estimated at 25.8 million tonnes, marginally above the 2016 bumper level, mostly reflecting higher yields, which offset a small contraction in plantings. The 2017 output of rice is estimated at a record of 11.1 million tonnes, 8 percent above last year's good level, sustained by area expansions linked to remunerative prices and continued subsidies on basic inputs. Similarly, the 2017 maize output is forecast at 5.8 million tonnes, above the previous year's high level, supported by an increase in plantings due to sustained demand from the feed industry.



**Pakistan**  
Cereal production

|              | 2012-2016<br>average | 2016          | 2017<br>estimate | change<br>2017/2016 |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
|              | 000 tonnes           |               |                  | percent             |
| Wheat        | 24 846               | 25 482        | 25 750           | 1                   |
| Rice (paddy) | 9 891                | 10 268        | 11 120           | 8                   |
| Maize        | 4 920                | 5 500         | 5 800            | 5                   |
| Others       | 604                  | 615           | 615              | 0                   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>40 262</b>        | <b>41 865</b> | <b>43 285</b>    | <b>3</b>            |

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

## Rice exports in 2018 forecast to increase from previous year's near-average level

FAO forecasts Pakistan's rice exports in calendar year 2018 at 4.1 million tonnes, a 14 percent increase from the previous year's level, reflecting the record crop obtained in 2017.

Wheat exports in the 2017/18 marketing year (May/April) are forecast to remain close to last year's above-average level at 750 000 tonnes.

## Prices of wheat and wheat flour strengthened seasonally in recent months

Prices of wheat grain and wheat flour, the country's main staples, strengthened for the third consecutive month in December 2017, following seasonal patterns. Overall, prices in December were close to their year-earlier levels.

## Overall food security conditions stable, but concerns remain in southern parts of Sindh Province and some northern areas

Overall, food security conditions in the country are stable, following three consecutive years of good harvests and large carryover stocks of the main staples. However, food security concerns remain critical in the drought-prone arid southeastern and southwestern areas of Sindh Province and some northern areas of the country.

In southern parts of Sindh Province, recurrent drought conditions during the monsoon season since 2014 resulted in successive crop failures and losses of livestock, with severe consequences for the livelihoods of the local population. Based on the latest IPC analysis, valid for the period February to August 2017, some 2.7 million people (50 percent of the surveyed population) were estimated to be food insecure (in IPC Phases 3: "Crisis" and 4: "Emergency") in Jamshoro, Sanghar, Tharparkar and Umerkot districts of Sindh Province.

Food security conditions might have improved slightly with the 2017 main season crops harvested in September-November and improved rains during the 2017 monsoon season, particularly in Tharparkar. However, these improvements are likely to be limited and short-lived as the harvest in 2017 is estimated at below-average levels in these areas, due to erratic rainfall during the cropping season and reduced agricultural inputs, including seeds and fertilizers.

Recurrent insecurity in the northwestern parts of the country along the border with Afghanistan triggered large-scale internal displacement. According to OCHA, as of January 2018, over 42 000 families are currently displaced in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province due to the complex emergency. In addition, the country hosts close to 1.4 million registered and unregistered Afghan refugees. These populations rely mainly on humanitarian assistance to cover their basic needs.

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