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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Record 2014 wheat production forecast
- Increased wheat imports in 2013/14 (May/April)
- Prices of wheat and wheat flour stabilized in March but at record or near record highs
- Overall food security conditions stable but localized food insecurity persists

Upward revision of the 2014 wheat production to a record level of 25.4 million tonnes

Harvesting of the 2014, mostly irrigated, winter wheat crop began in late March in Sindh province in the south and is expected to continue until mid-June in the main producing northern Punjab area. Recently revised official forecasts put the 2014 winter wheat crop at a record level of 25.4 million tonnes, up 5 percent from last year's above-average output. The projected increase in production is mainly attributed to a slight expansion in area planted, generally favourable weather conditions during the growing season in the main producing provinces of Punjab and Sindh, and good supplies of fertilizers and irrigation water.

Early prospects for the 2014 maize crop, currently being planted, are good. FAO's preliminary forecast points to an aggregate 2014 maize crop (including the spring and *Kharif* seasons) of about 4.8 million tonnes, slightly above the record output of 2013, as a result of anticipated higher plantings in response to sustained demand from the feed industry.

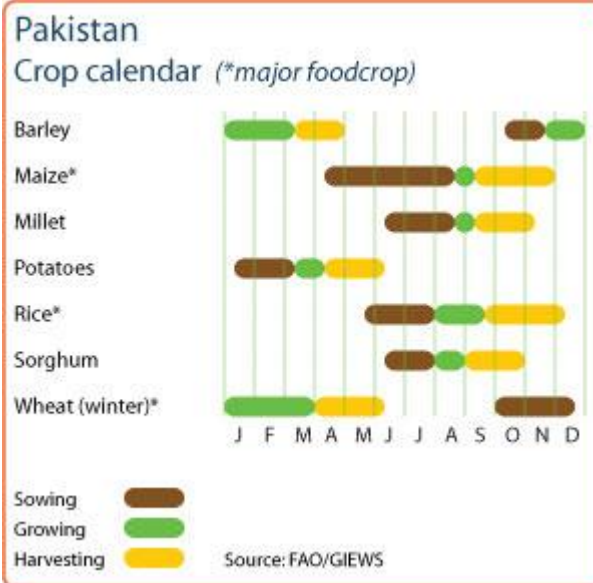
Planting of the 2014 main *Kharif* rice crop will start in late June. The total area planted to rice this year is officially forecast to increase to 2.8 million hectares, slightly higher than the average level of the previous year. Assuming good weather conditions, with adequate availability of water supplies for irrigation, FAO tentatively forecasts the aggregate 2014 rice production at 9.8 million tonnes, slightly above last year's good level.

Increased wheat imports in 2013/14 (May/April)

Reflecting the insufficient 2013 wheat production for a second consecutive year, wheat imports for the almost completed 2013/14 (May/April) marketing year are estimated to have increased considerably to 900 000 tonnes. Pakistan is the world's fifth-largest rice exporter. With the good rice production in 2013, the 2014 rice exports are forecast at 3.3 million tonnes, some 6 percent higher than the above-average level of the year before.

Prices of wheat and wheat flour remain at record or near record levels

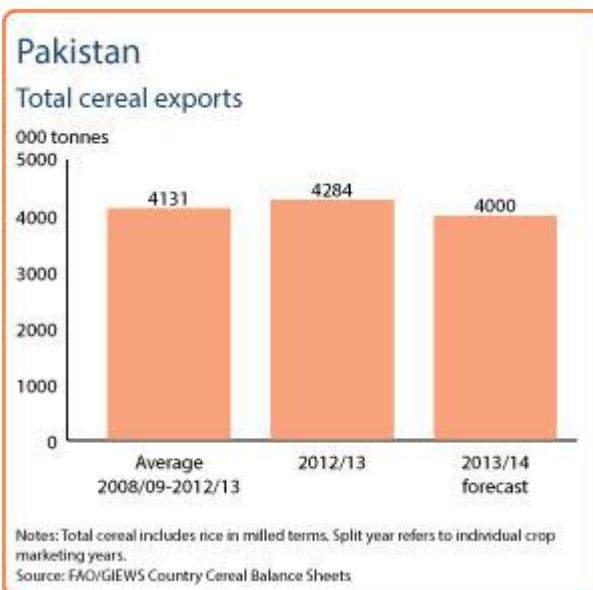
Prices of wheat and wheat flour stabilized in March in most markets with the onset of the 2014 harvest, anticipated at a record level. Early concerns about a reduction in the 2014 output and low level of stocks, underpinned prices in previous months. Overall, however, wheat and wheat flour prices remained at record levels substantially above those



Pakistan Cereal production

	2009-2013 average	2013	2014 forecast	change 2014/2013
	000 tonnes			percent
Wheat	24,052	24,231	25,420	5
Rice (paddy)	8,942	9,627	9,800	2
Maize	4,127	4,700	4,800	2
Others	554	611	611	0
Total	37,676	39,169	40,631	4

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



of a year earlier. In March 2014, retail prices of wheat and wheat flour in the largest Lahore market were 30 percent and 15 percent above their levels a year earlier.

In March 2014 the national CPI was up 8.5 percent relative to the same period last year. Compared to last year, the food component of the CPI increased by 9.3 percent, while the non-food component rose by 8 percent.

Overall food security conditions stable but localized food insecurity persists

Overall, food supply conditions are stable following consecutive years of relatively good harvests and adequate levels of imports. However, in 2013 the country was hit by severe floods for the fourth year in row. Last year's floods in August and September caused widespread damage, affecting at least 1.5 million people, particularly in Punjab and Sindh provinces. Furthermore, a powerful earthquake in Pakistan's remote western province of Balochistan on 24 September 2013 affected at least 300 000 people. In Tharparkar district (south eastern part of Sindh province), food insecurity has further aggravated since early 2014, due to cereal production shortfalls as a result of poor rains for the second successive season, coupled with loss of small animals following a recent sheep pox outbreak.

In general, the high prices of main staple wheat are also a contributing factor for food insecurity, especially of the low-income households.

