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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

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- Chronic poverty and food insecurity persist

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Harvesting of the 2011 main season paddy rice and maize, the principle staple cereals in the country, was completed earlier in the year, while that of the off-season crops is either just completed or nearing completion. The Ministry of Agriculture has recently reported, the annual paddy production at 98 000 tonnes (or milled equivalent of 58 978 tonnes), some 40 percent below last year's output. The main season maize crop is officially estimated at 30 666 tonnes, 79 percent below the harvest level of the same season a year before. The main factors responsible for the decline include prolonged rains causing delay in land preparation and planting.

The secondary, off-season, maize crop, which normally accounts for some 10 percent of the main season maize production, was also affected during 2011 for lack of adequate seeds due to hampered production of the main season. No official estimates for the off-season maize are yet available, hence it is preliminarily forecast to decrease to about 9 000 tonnes.

Thus the preliminary estimate of the annual total cereal production for 2011 is set at 138 000 tonnes (including paddy), indicating a decrease of 53 percent from the previous year's officially reported as record production.

Favorable weather towards the end of 2011 has had beneficial impact on cropping activities and the development of rice and maize crops of the 2011/12 main season.

Crop monitoring and production estimation in Timor-Leste is not rigorous and extensive due to the lack of technical capacity and resources. A newly EU funded FAO project to establish a National Information and Early Warning System (NIEWS) is expected to help strengthen crop estimation in the country.

Chronic poverty and food insecurity persist

Although the per capita gross national income (GNI) has increased to USD 1 939 in 2009 from USD 395 in 2002 (according to the World Bank estimates), Timor-Leste remains one the poorest countries in Asia. Thus food insecurity needs to be monitored due to the country's high dependence on cereal imports, social instability, and high unemployment.



Timor-Leste Cereal production

	2006-2010 average	2010	2011 estimate	change 2011/2010
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	106	130	40	-69
Rice (paddy)	96	164	98	-40
Others	0	0	0	0
Total	202	294	138	-53

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

