



## GIEWS Country Brief Yemen

Reference Date: 10-February-2017

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Conflict endangers agricultural livelihoods despite good rainfall
- Below-average cereal harvest gathered in 2016
- Over 17 million people food insecure towards the end of 2016

### Conflict endangers agricultural livelihoods despite good rainfall

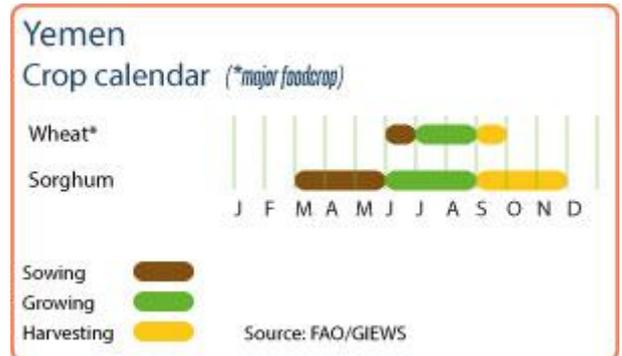
In the country, owing to a variety of natural conditions, agricultural activities vary greatly depending on the location. In Central Highlands and Southern up lands, barley, maize and sorghum harvests finished in November. In Central Highlands, second season wheat was planted in December, to be harvested from March 2017. In Eastern Plateau, wheat harvest started in January. Remotely sensed NDVI suggests satisfactory crop development owing to slightly above-average rains. In many key producing areas such as Taiz and Sana's, rainfall from September 2016 to January 2017 has been better than last year, securing sufficient soil moisture.

However, as a result of persistent conflict, almost all governorates are reporting shortage of agricultural inputs as well as high price of inputs with implications for the current agriculture season. The severity of the impact varies across the country. Agricultural activities, particularly irrigated agriculture, suffer from high fuel prices. Many rural households rely on casual labour as a source of income. In conflict situations and to cope with increased costs of production, hired agricultural labour is usually replaced by family labour.

### Below-average cereal harvest gathered in 2016

Total 2016 cereal production is estimated at 480 000 tonnes, including 220 000 tonnes of sorghum and 150 000 tonnes of wheat, about 11 percent below previous year's harvest and 37 percent below the five-year average. Agricultural production and livelihoods were affected by the ongoing conflict as well as torrential rains resulting in flash floods and landslides in July 2016. The Yemen Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (EFSNA) estimates that 40 percent of all agricultural households experienced a decline in cereal production compared to pre-crisis levels.

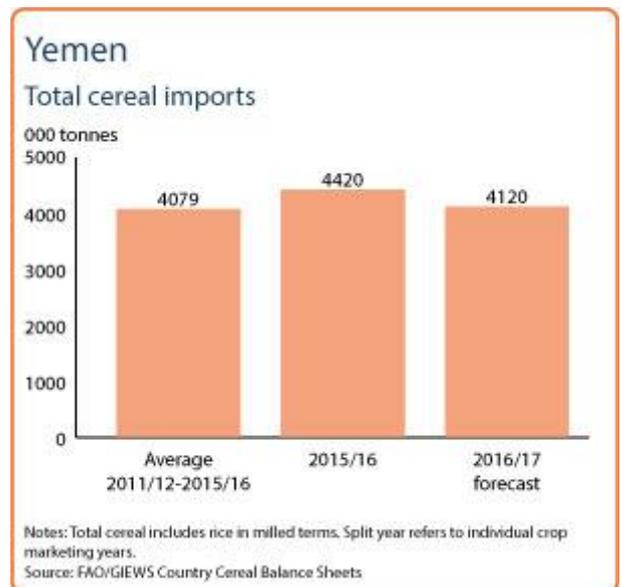
Although abundant rainfall in recent months improved availability of pasture and water for livestock, 45 percent of agricultural



Yemen  
Cereal production

	2011-2015 average	2015	2016 estimate	change 2016/2015
	000 tonnes		percent	
Sorghum	375	222	220	-1
Wheat	223	206	150	-27
Millet	74	49	50	2
Others	95	63	60	-5
<b>Total</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>-11</b>

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



households reduced their animal numbers to cover other household needs, such as health and food, or lost animals due to veterinary diseases.

While fruit and vegetable production did not deteriorate compared to 2015, lack of marketing channels and absence of cold chain translated into high prices in the urban centers and depressed farm gate prices.

### **Relatively stable import requirements**

On average, total domestic cereal production covers less than 20 percent of total domestic cereal utilisation (food, feed and other uses). The country is largely dependent on imports from the international markets to satisfy its domestic consumption requirement for wheat, the main staple. The share of domestic wheat production on total food utilisation in the last 10 years is between 5 to 10 percent, depending on the domestic harvest.

The import requirement for cereals to guarantee a sufficient calories intake in the 2016 marketing year (January/December) was estimated at about 4.1 million tonnes, including 3 million tonnes of wheat, 700 000 tonnes of maize and 420 000 tonnes of rice. Actual amount of imports is below the import requirement. In 2016, a total of 1 157 280 tonnes of wheat (of which 1 034 553 tonnes of wheat grain and 122 727 tonnes of wheat flour) were imported through Al Hudaydah. A smaller amount of 28 952 tonnes of wheat (19 034 tonnes of wheat grains and 9 918 tonnes of wheat flour) was imported through Al Mukalla port between May and November 2016.

As of January 2017, following the crisis in the Central Bank which led to a shutdown in trade finance and stopped wheat imports, the in-country commercial wheat grain stocks was estimated at some 940 000 tonnes (including flour), sufficient to satisfy country's requirements for 3 months. In addition, continued fighting around the port city of Al Hudaydah, the main entry point for about 70 percent of the food import in Yemen serving the northern governorates hinders imports.

### **Some 17 million people are estimated to be food insecure towards the end of 2016**

The latest multi-agency EFSNA, using data, collected in November 2016, estimated that over 17 million people in Yemen are food insecure, with an increase of 3 million from the last available Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) from June 2016. Some 65 percent of Yemeni households are estimated to be food insecure, compared to 41 percent in the pre-crisis period (2014). Out of 17 million food insecure, about 7.3 million people are estimated to be in need of emergency food assistance.

About 75 percent households report that the current economic situation is worse compared to pre-crisis. The cost of living is now 40 percent higher than pre-crisis, with income levels significantly deteriorating due to disruptions in livelihoods and salaries of public employees not being paid. High food prices continue to limit household access to food. In January 2017, the average prices of locally-produced commodities (sorghum, millet, and maize) eased compared to October 2016, but remained up to between 45 and 70 percent above their pre-crisis (February 2015) levels (Food Security Technical Secretariat Market update). Prices of imported wheat and wheat flour were relatively stable, but were still some 25-30 percent above the

pre-crisis levels. Large regional price differences persist.

As of January 2017, there were approximately 2.025 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, with the highest number residing in Hajjah, Taiz, Amanat, Al Asimah and Sana'a governorates. Reports indicate that IDPs are putting strain on host communities which are struggling to cope with already stretched limited resources.

The majority of Yemenis have little access to Government services and support. Many people do not have access to clean water and are struggling to feed themselves and their families. Water and sanitation issues likely contributed to the cholera outbreak announced in October 2016. Basic service infrastructure is near collapse, with fewer and fewer people able to access life-saving assistance, basic health care and education. Children and women have been the hardest hit.

Official exchange rate remains stable at 250 YER/USD, while the prevailing rate on the parallel market reached 350 YER/USD in February 2017. Households relying on remittances to improve their purchasing power report that lack of currency makes access of their remittances more difficult.