



## GIEWS Country Brief Zambia

Reference Date: 10-May-2017

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Production of maize expected to exceed 3 million tonnes in 2017
- Cereal supply situation forecast to improve in 2017/18, with increased potential for exports
- Following stressed situation in previous year, food security conditions anticipated to ameliorate in 2017/18 reflecting expected increase in agricultural production

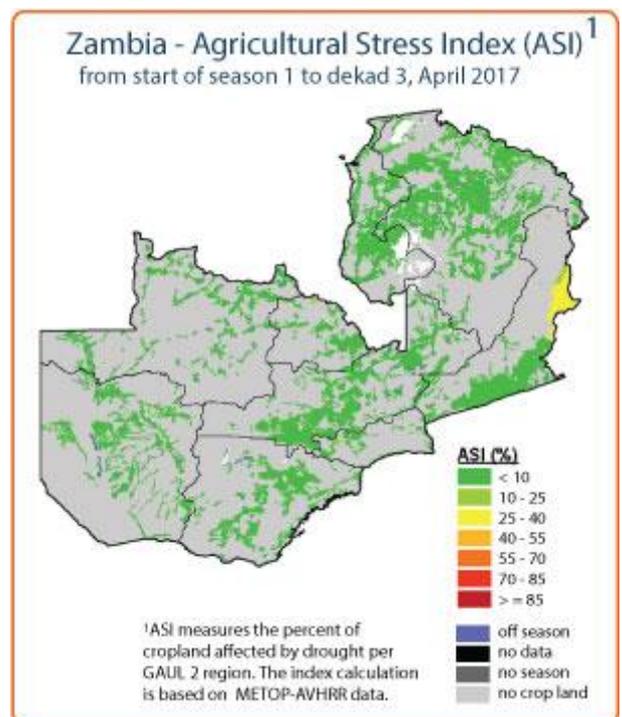
### Production of maize in 2017 expected at above-average level

With the cereal harvest underway, maize production is forecast at approximately 3 million tonnes, which would mainly be reflective of beneficial weather conditions. Despite a slightly delayed start of seasonal rains, cumulative precipitation between November 2016 and April 2017 was above-average in the main maize-producing Central, Eastern and Southern provinces, which combined, contribute to approximately 60 percent to the national output. As a result, vegetation conditions in cropped areas, just prior to the harvest period, show an improvement compared to the previous year, indicating a likely increase in yields and the area harvested.

An infestation of the invasive fall army worm, which was first detected in late 2016, reportedly affected just under 200 000 hectares of cropped land. Control operations by the Government contained the outbreak, however, in the infested areas production is expected to be negatively affected, although the impact at the national level is anticipated to be only minimal. Additionally, a red locust outbreak was also reported in more localized areas, but the damage is not expected to be significant.

### Supply situation expected to improve, increasing export potential

Following a tighter supply situation in the 2016/17 marketing year (May/April) that prompted the Government to impose an export ban to ensure sufficient domestic availabilities, the supply situation is forecast to improve in 2017/18 on account of an anticipated bumper output. This may result in increased export opportunities. However, as neighbouring countries, notably Malawi and Zimbabwe, are also forecast to harvest bumper maize crops, export destinations may need to be sought outside of the subregion.



Regarding wheat, which is the second most consumed cereal, an import ban, implemented to protect local producers in 2015, was lifted in the first quarter of 2017. The reversal of the ban was intended to boost national supplies and to constrain potential price rises. Production of wheat, which is grown in the winter season and harvested from October, is forecast to rise in 2017, due to a combination of improved water availabilities and a more stable electricity supply (the crop is grown mostly under irrigation conditions), following the replenishment of water levels in the Kariba dam, the country's major hydropower plant.

### Food security anticipated to improve in 2017/18

Food security conditions are anticipated to improve in 2017/18, mostly owing to an expected increase in the agricultural output. However, farming households affected by the outbreaks of red locusts and the fall army worm may experience more stressed food security conditions as the pests had likely dampened production. The results of the annual Zambian Vulnerability Assessment Committee's evaluation are expected in June/July and will provide more information on the numbers of food insecure. In the previous year, an estimated 975 738 people (162 623 households) were food insecure and required assistance, mostly supported through the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme.

Zambia				
Cereal production				
	2012-2016 average	2016	2017 forecast	change 2017/2016
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2,864	2,873	3,100	8
Wheat	239	250	270	8
Rice (paddy)	39	27	45	67
Others	45	46	52	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,187</b>	<b>3,196</b>	<b>3,467</b>	<b>8</b>

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