GIEWS Country Brief
Zambia

Reference Date: 15-April-2019

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Significant rainfall deficits in Southern and Western provinces have sharply reduced national production prospects for 2019 cereal crop
- Tight domestic supplies expected in 2019/20 marketing year, import requirements forecast to rise
- Supply pressure and weaker currency provoked steep price increases for maize products since late 2018
- Food insecurity expected to worsen in drought-affected southern and western parts of the country

Production of maize in 2019 is forecast at below-average level
Harvesting of the 2019 cereal crops is expected to start in April.

Production of maize, the main food staple, is forecast to decline for a second consecutive year in 2019 and remain at a well below-average level. Most of the expected decrease is associated with foreseen production declines in Southern, Western and, to a lesser extent, Central provinces, which combined account for about one-third of the national maize output.

Seasonal rainfall deficits are the main factor behind the unfavourable production prospects. Large areas of cropped land in southern and western areas exhibited stressed vegetation conditions as of March, inferring a high likelihood of reduced yields this year. In addition, the poor rains at the start of the season are estimated to have caused a contraction in the area planted to a slightly below-average level.

Overall, maize production in 2019 is expected to be between 2 and 2.2 million tonnes. However, results from the government led crop assessment are expected to be released in May and will provide definitive estimates for this year’s cereal output.

Tight supplies forecast in 2019/20
The expected decrease in the 2019 maize output is forecast to be compensated by a large drawdown in stocks and an increase in imports in the 2019/20 marketing year (May/April). Opening inventories in 2019/20 are forecast at 450 000 tonnes, down by
almost half compared to the previous year. Although a drawdown in stocks is anticipated to assist in satisfying the most of the national consumption requirements, an increase in imports is likely to be needed to buffer supplies and maintain adequate stock levels.

Moreover, exports are forecast to decline steeply in 2019/20, although an export ban in 2018 had already curbed the quantity shipped in the current marketing year compared to normal levels.

**Maize prices rose sharply on supply pressure**
Seasonal price increases of maize have been exacerbated by tighter supplies and have resulted in a 60 percent increase in the average retail price of maize grain in the year to March 2019. Similarly, maize meal products were 30 to 40 percent above their year-earlier levels. Expectations of a reduced harvest as well as a depreciation of the local currency further underpinned the price increases.

**Reduced harvest expected to worsen food insecurity**
Food security conditions are anticipated to worsen in 2019, particularly in Southern and Western provinces where the anticipated reduced harvests are likely to severely constrain households’ food availability. In addition, the current high cereal prices are impeding access to market supplies.

Conditions in 2018 had already deteriorated compared to the previous year on account of the lower cereal output, which pushed an estimated 954 000 people into IPC Phase 3: “Crisis”.

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**Zambia**

**Cereal Production**

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>3 017</td>
<td>3 646</td>
<td>2 395</td>
<td>-34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>-40.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice (paddy)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3 317</td>
<td>3 910</td>
<td>2 601</td>
<td>-33.8</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.*


**Zambia**

**Retail prices of maize**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mar-17</th>
<th>May-17</th>
<th>Jun-17</th>
<th>Jul-17</th>
<th>Aug-17</th>
<th>Sep-17</th>
<th>Oct-17</th>
<th>Nov-17</th>
<th>Dec-17</th>
<th>Jan-18</th>
<th>Feb-18</th>
<th>Mar-18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast maize meal</td>
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<td>Maize (white)</td>
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<tr>
<td>White roller maize meal</td>
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Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.

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