

Reference Date: 15-October-2012

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Land preparation for 2012/13 cropping season began in October
- Rainfall forecasts indicate generally average conditions for the season
- Maize prices begin to rise in August, following stable period since the start of 2012
- Food security situation generally favourable

Rainfall forecasts point to generally normal conditions for 2012/13 cropping season

Land preparation for 2012/13 cropping season (October-June) is underway with the bulk of planting expected to begin from November onwards. The seasonal forecast indicates that most of the country is expected to receive normal rains between October and December 2012, apart from the far south-east and north-east, where normal to below-average rains are predicted. During the second half of the rainy season (January-March) higher rainfall amounts are forecast across the country, with potential heavy rains in northern regions.

As in previous years, large numbers of farmers will be able to access subsidised inputs (seeds and fertilisers) through the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), which will target 900 000 farmers for the 2012/13 season. In efforts to improve crop production diversity and broaden farmers' income sources, the FISP will also include inputs for sorghum, groundnuts and cotton. Approximately 10 000 cotton farmers have been identified to receive support.

Government increases strategic reserves

The large maize output from the 2012 harvest enabled the country to retain a significant national surplus, estimated at over 1 million tonnes, for the current 2012/13 marketing year (May/April). In efforts to counteract potential upward price pressure from international markets and foreign traders, as well as maintain stable supplies, the government doubled the procurement of maize by the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) to 1 million tonnes for the strategic reserves (still less than the 1.75 million purchased in the previous marketing year). In addition, the government centralized the issuance of export permits in order to regulate the level of exports and manage national supplies.

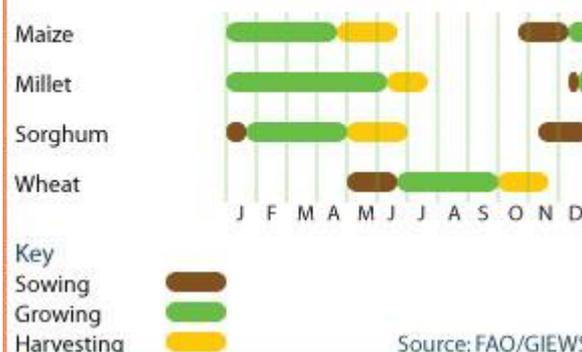
Maize prices begin to climb slightly

The country's ample maize supplies have helped to contain price increases during much of 2012. However, pressure from foreign traders has led to some rises in recent months, particularly in border markets, while the enlargement of the public procurement programme underpinned seasonable price growth. In August and the start of September prices rose month-on-month by 11 and 7 percent respectively, and were slightly above their levels of one year earlier.

Food security conditions currently stable

Stable food security conditions are reported across the country. The

Crop calendar Zambia

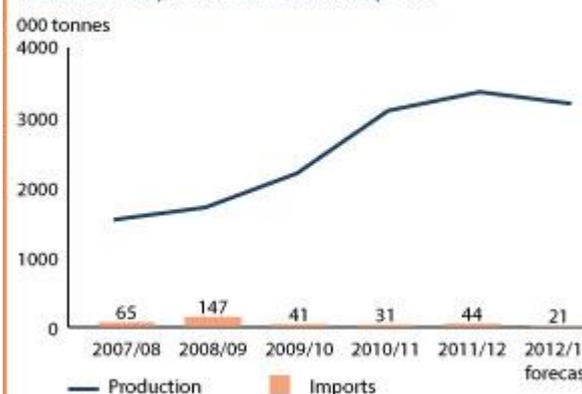


Zambia Cereal production

	2007-2011 average	2011	2012 estimate	change 2012/2011
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	2,103	3,020	2,853	-6
Wheat	181	237	254	7
Millet	39	38	28	-26
Others	59	69	62	-10
Total	2,382	3,364	3,197	-5

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

Zambia Total cereal production and imports



Notes: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

above average 2012 cereal production and good national supplies of the main food staple maize have had a positive impact. However, current price rises are a concern especially with the approaching lean season (December-February), where food security conditions generally get tighter as households' reliance on market purchases increase.