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Southern Africa

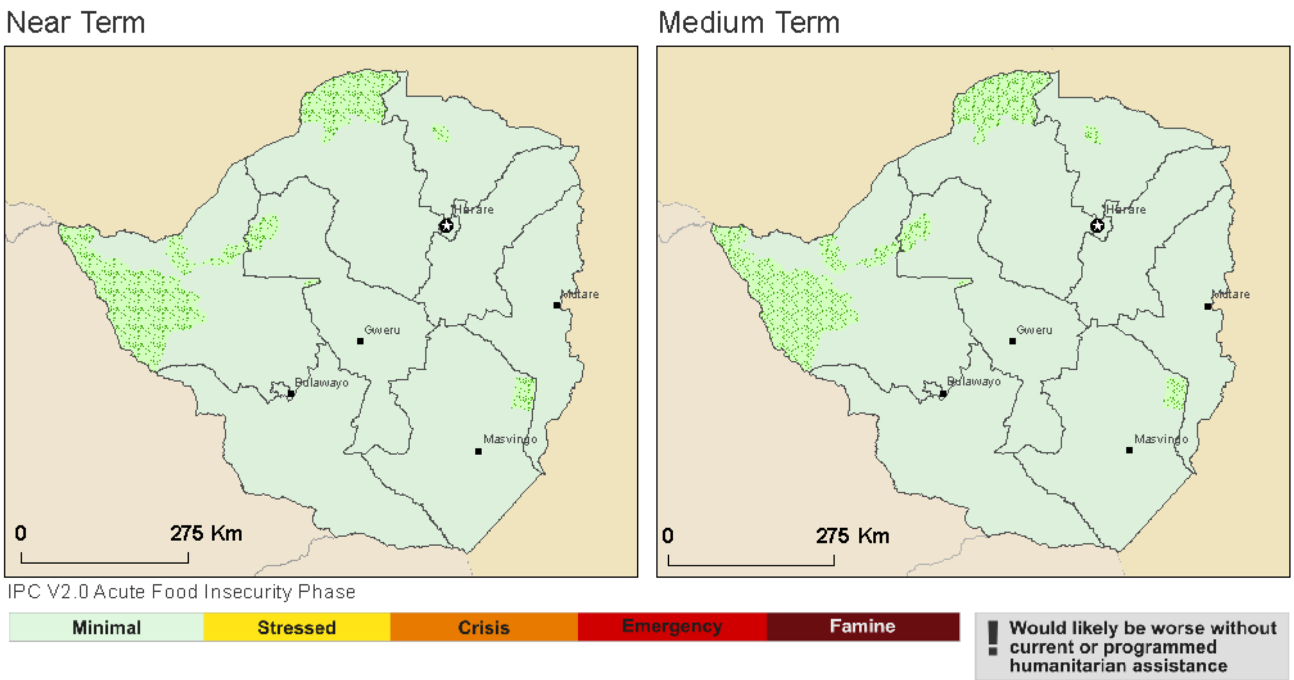
Zimbabwe

This country is monitored by local FEWS NET staff

Food Security Outlook Update

The ongoing main harvest continues to improve food security for very poor households

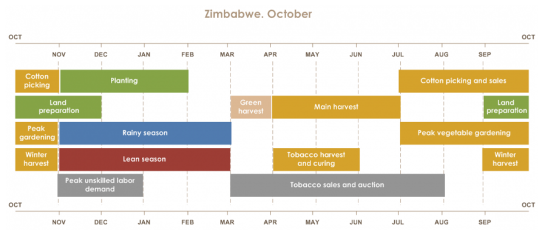
May 2014



Key Messages:
As harvesting activities progress, most households are currently consuming cereals from own production and experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes. These outcomes are likely to continue through September across the country.

Maize grain prices have started stabilizing in most areas as most households continue to access cereals from their own production. Nonetheless, national averages for both maize grain and maize meal maize grain and meal prices are about 7 and 2 percent higher when compared to the same time last year.

Current Situation



SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: FEWS NET

- Since the successful start of the main harvest, most rural households across the country are currently consuming cereals from own production. In both the northern and southwestern areas, households including the very poor and poor are currently experiencing Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1). Food access and availability at both the national and sub-national levels is very stable.
- The results from the Ministry of Agriculture second round crop assessment have not been publicly released. This year's harvest is generally projected to be above average and much better than last year.
- Monthly cereal prices have been generally stable. Over the last month the national averages for maize grain and maize meal have increased by approximately 8 and 4 percent, respectively. However maize grain and meal prices are about 7 and 2 percent higher when compared to the same time last year. A three year trend analysis show that the national averages for maize grain and meal have increased by 25 and 17 percent, respectively. The current difference in year on year maize grain prices is likely due to the fact that most households have not started selling their maize grain to the market because they are waiting for buyers with better prices. Over the next few months, as more grain moves from households to the markets, prices are likely to further drop; consistent with the seasonal trends during the post-harvest period.
- In the areas of concern, maize grain prices in representative markets in Masvingo Manicaland Midleveld Communal (MMMC) livelihood zone range from \$0.32 to \$0.46/kg. The average price in MMMC is \$0.37/kg, which is approximately 7 percent lower than the current national average. This decrease is linked to improved production levels in these areas and improved food access for very poor and poor households during the harvest. Maize grain is not currently available in representative markets in Beitbridge South Western Communal (BSWLC) livelihood zone.
- The government withdrew all cereal imports permits from private traders and they are now working on reissuing these permits. Delays in the reissuing process and or suspension of maize grain and maize meal imports will likely result in higher consumer prices since traders will no longer have to compete against the cheaper South African maize grain and meal.

Updated Assumptions

The assumptions used to develop the most likely scenario for the April to September 2014 Outlook period are still valid. The overall projected food security outcomes for the outlook period are not expected to change. A full discussion of the scenario is available in the Zimbabwe April to September 2014 Food Security Outlook.

Projected Outlook through September 2014

- Most very poor households throughout the country and in areas of concern are currently experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity. These outcomes are expected to continue through September 2014. Current outcomes are informed by recent above average harvest, which is expected to meet most household cereal requirements.
- Markets are also expected to continue functioning normally with cereals, particularly maize grain prices, expected to slightly decrease between May and July and stabilize from August through September. The slight reduction in maize grain prices will likely to be caused by increased cereal supply on the market along with reduced demand for the product as most households will be consuming cereals from own production.
- Livestock conditions are expected to continue to be good throughout the outlook period as there is sufficient pasture and water sources owing to the good rainfall performance during the 2013- 14 season.

About This Update

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET's quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work at www.fews.net.

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