

*Start of green consumption and main harvest expected to improve the food security situation*

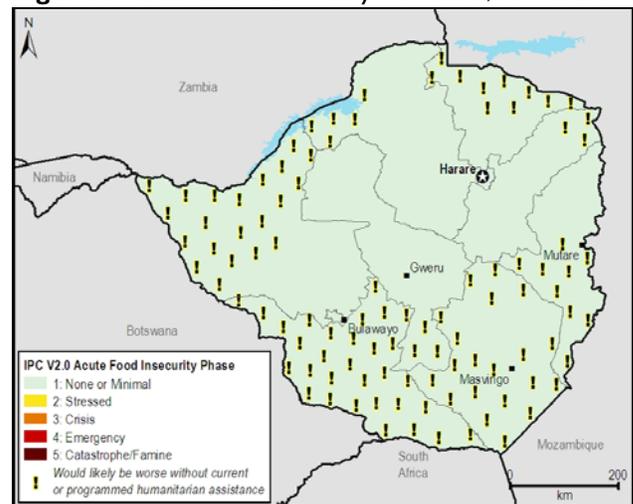
**KEY MESSAGES**

- The food insecurity outcomes across the country remain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) on account of steady food imports and the continued distribution of humanitarian assistance. Minimal outcomes are expected to persist as poor households start to consume green foods and harvests between April and June.
- Poor distribution of normal and above-normal cumulative rainfall was experienced across most of the country. Recent moisture deficits due to dry spells, especially in Matebeleland South and part of Masvingo, have caused crop conditions to deteriorate from fair to poor between mid-February and March. If these moisture deficits continue, production in the southern region of the country will be reduced.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

- Most households are relying on market purchases for food and availability at both the national and sub-national levels is not a problem.
- The recent increases in fuel excise duty have pushed petrol and diesel prices up 4.5 and 3.7 percent, respectively. These fuel price increases will be passed on to consumers and will likely result in slightly higher food prices.
- According to the Agriculture and Food Security Monitoring System (AFSMS), in January more households in the monitored sites were accessing staple cereals when compared to the same time last year.
- Up until late January, the 2012/13 rainfall season was performing well in most parts of the country. With adequate rainfall, crop conditions ranged from fair to good (with good crop conditions mostly recorded in the northern parts of the country). However, the substantial decrease in rainfall activity in most parts of the country in early February has severely impacted districts in the south-western areas of the country (Matebeleland South, parts of Masvingo, and Matebeleland North).
- With no major improvements in the rainfall situation forecasted, the continued dry conditions in southern districts could result in below average crop yields, which could constrain household access to food and income during the 2013/14 consumption year.

**Figure 1.** Current food security outcomes, March 2013.



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 2.** Projected food security outcomes, April to June 2013.



Source: FEWS NET

These maps represent acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making, and do not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity.

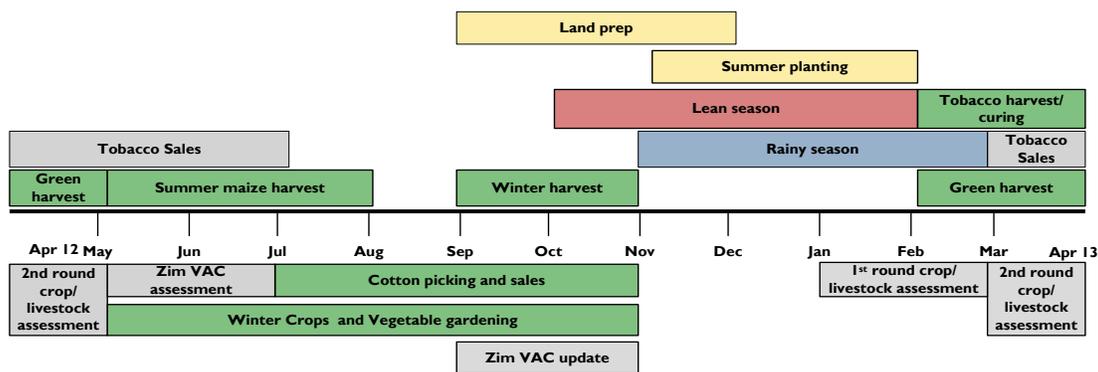
- The current maize crop Water Requirement Satisfaction Index (WRSI) indicates a high likelihood of mediocre maize crop performance in areas in the central region, while poor performance and crop failure is likely in the southern region (Figure 3). In comparison to last year (Figure 4), the WRSI conditions in March are largely average to below average, indicating that reduced production for the 2012/13 season is likely.
- While most households will depend on food from their own production beginning in April, 200,000-300,000 vulnerable people will continue to require assistance through safety-net programming. Vulnerable individuals include those that are in orphan headed and labor constrained households, as well as people living with a chronic illness. Members of households that are categorized as vulnerable are unable to engage in meaningful agriculture production and require assistance even in a good production year.

**UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS**

The current situation has changed one of the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET’s most likely scenario for the period of March to June 2013. The updated assumption (see below) is not expected to change the projected food security outcomes for the outlook period. A full discussion of the scenario is available in the Zimbabwe January [Food Security Outlook](#).

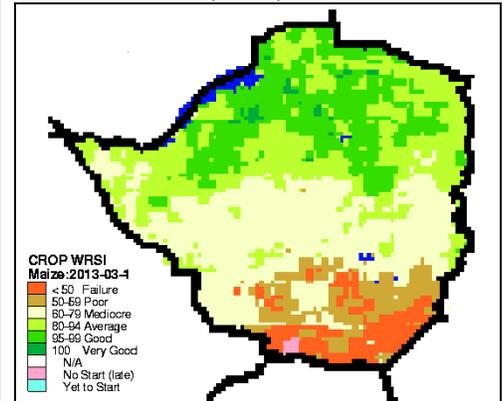
- In the January Outlook, it was assumed that normal to above normal rains would extend into April with a short dryspell of up to two weeks. However, due to the effect of tropical cyclone Haruna, the dry spell has extended to more than three weeks in the central and southern parts of the country. This will likely impact green consumption for late planters and overall yield for early planters. Consequently it is anticipated that farmers in the southern districts will begin to rely on markets earlier than usual during the 2013/14 consumption year. Poor rural households will also rely on casual labor to access food directly or in order to obtain cash for market purchases. However, the projected low production in southern districts is likely to result in limited casual labor opportunities during the main harvest and a high labor supply could reduce labor rates in these areas.

**SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR**



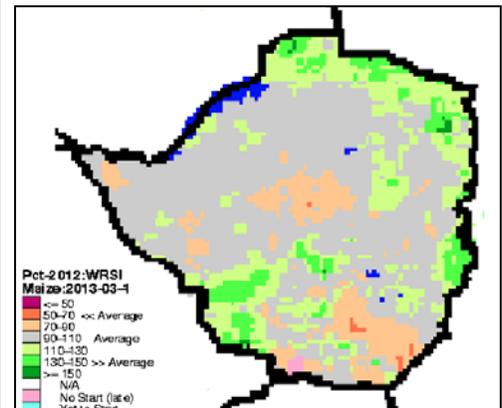
Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 3.** Extended water requirement satisfaction index (WRSI), March 2013.



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 4.** Current water requirement satisfaction index (WRSI) compared to March 2012.



Source: FEWS NET