

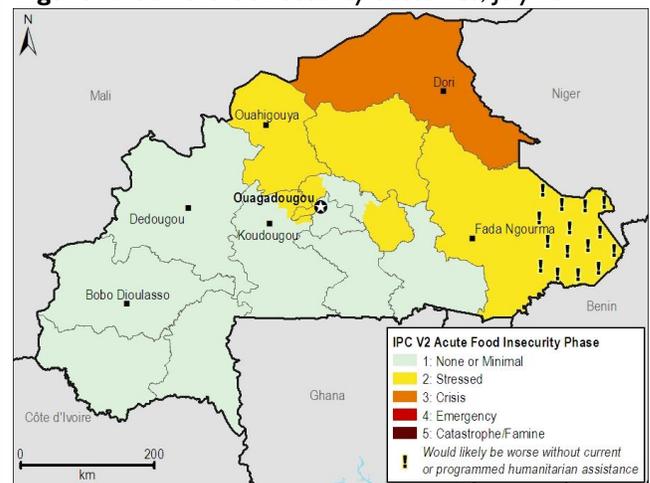
BURKINA FASO Food Security Outlook

July through December 2012

Key messages

- The growing season started early in livelihood zones 8 and 7 and was on time in other parts of the country.
- Very poor and poor households in livelihood zones 8 and 7 are still in IPC Phase 3: Crisis in July. Due to the impact of assistance programs by the government and humanitarian partners, and with the end of the lean season, households in livelihood zones 8, 9, 7, and 5, should be in IPC Phase 2: Stress between August and September. All zones should be in IPC Phase 1: Minimal between October and December.
- The government's operational assistance plan for food-insecure populations, scaled back from 2.8 million in June, will still provide assistance to over 2 million people, which should contribute to reducing food insecurity levels between July and September.
- Price levels are still high compared with the same time last year and the five-year average. However, prices are stabilizing on retail markets and falling on certain assembly markets with the unloading of cereal stocks and ongoing humanitarian and government assistance programs.
- The primary source of income for very poor and poor households is on-farm employment in an average year. Farm wage income will be slightly lower than usual between July and September due to a large supply of labor supplemented by income from gold washing activities and small-scale business activities beginning as of October.

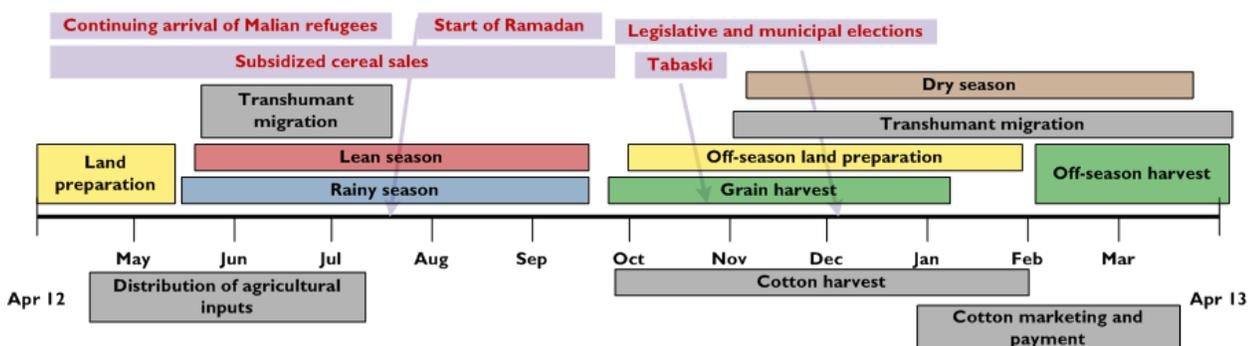
Figure 1. Current food security outcomes, July 2012



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Seasonal calendar and timeline of critical events



Source: FEWS NET

Current food security conditions

Food security among very poor and poor households country-wide is a continuing source of concern, with ongoing farming activities requiring a larger workforce and more cereal to meet food consumption needs. The current lack of household food reserves, the higher price of cereals and cowpeas, the normally low income levels among the poor and very poor, and the currently poor to fair market supplies are all contributing factors in aggravating the situation of these households in livelihood zones 9, 8, 7, and 5. Middle-income and better-off households are in a reasonably favorable situation with respect to their remaining food supplies used to fuel ongoing farming activities and their main sources of income, sales of large and small animals.

The initial scenario for the government’s operational assistance plan for food-insecure populations estimated the number of individuals to be covered at 2.85 million, requiring 118,500 metric tons of provisions between July and September. However, this scenario has since been updated in the face of the good progress of the growing season and price trends. The size of the food-insecure population is currently estimated by the government at 2,129,100 for the period from July through September (adjusted downwards by 25 percent), requiring 57,500 metric tons of cereal aid. As of the end of July, the government is able to mobilize 30,000 metric tons of cereal (52 percent of need).

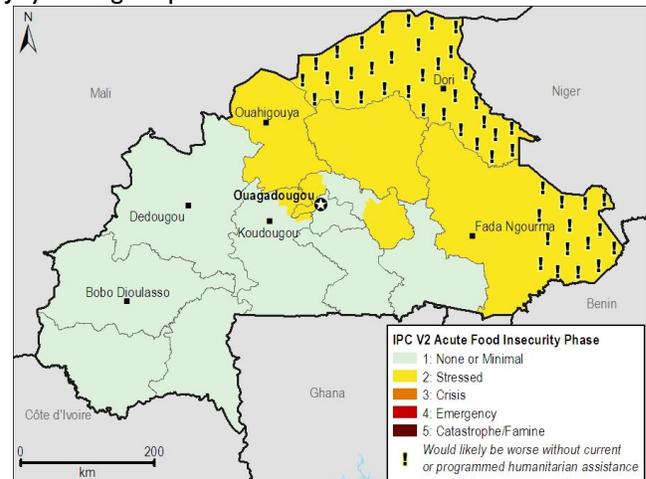
Growing season

The growing season got off to an early to normal start in all parts of the country. Reports of substantial rainfall activity in April and May, allowed for the planting of early crops. Ensuing dry spells in the month of June required the replanting of certain crops. There was good rainfall coverage in all parts of the country in the first dekad of July, with a regular spatial-temporal distribution of rainfall, marking the definitive start of the growing season. Most cereal crops are in the sprouting stage, with crops in livelihood zones 1, 2, and 3 (in the western and southwestern parts of the country) in the most advanced stages of development, namely the height growth and tillering stages, which is considered ahead of or on schedule. Short-cycle millet crops in Tapoa province and Kompienga province in particular (livelihood zone 9) are reportedly in the early heading/flowering stage. The main ongoing farming operations are the weeding of cereal and cotton crops and the planting of oilseed and high-protein crops.

In brief, the seasonal climate outlook for West Africa (PRESAO) called for above-normal rainfall tending towards normal in the far north (livelihood zone 8, north of the Djibo-Sebba road), in the center of the country (livelihood zones 7, 6, 5, 9, and 4, between the Djibo-Sebba and Sindou-Bobo-Fara roads), and in the south (livelihoods zone 1, 2, and 3, south of the Sindou-Bobo-Fara road).

The government and its partners are providing a sizeable amount of assistance for this growing season. In all, 9,000 metric tons of fertilizer and 5,500 metric tons of seeds have been furnished to farmers at subsidized prices (an 87 percent subsidy for seeds and 25-33 percent subsidies for urea and NPK). Based on this assistance and on the conclusions of seasonal outlooks (above-normal cumulative seasonal rainfall totals tending towards normal), the government and its partners set

Figure 2. Most likely estimated food security outcomes, July through September 2012



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on FEWS NET’s Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Figure 3. Most likely estimated food security outcomes, October through December 2012



Source: FEWS NET

production targets of 5.4 million metric tons for cereal crops (39.8 percent above the five-year average) and 532,000 metric tons for cottonseed (four percent above the five-year average). This constitutes prospects for a good outlook for seasonal projections, with investments in the agricultural sector that include: supply and subsidization of seeds and fertilizer, and the provision of equipment for lowland areas as well as for soil recovery. An increase in rice and corn production is expected.

To address the potential locust threat in at-risk areas the government has strengthened its surveillance system through the formation and training of locust control brigades (2 farmers per municipality) providing canvassing as well as plant health services. However, there is no operating budget for these teams, though the mounting of an effective response requires funding. As of the beginning of July, seven solitary desert locusts had been detected in the municipality of Arbinda in the northern reaches of livelihood zone 7. The optimistic scenario (a locust infestation of 20,000 hectares) for the government's locust control plan would require 14,000 liters of product, compared with an availability of 6,000 liters, with funding needs estimated at 839.42 million XOF (72 percent). A large-scale locust invasion from Mali (where there are no surveillance or control efforts due to the conflict in that country) or Niger (in spite of ongoing locust control efforts) between July and October could destroy harvests in border areas and aggravate the situation of all area households, resulting in losses of crops and/or harvests as well as green ground cover and aerial vegetation, and earlier than usual seasonal migration by transhumant animals, migrant workers, and, in some cases, entire households.

Market behavior

Cereal availability on major markets is still fair to poor, depending on the area. These markets are stocked with trader inventories, which are readily available but whose extremely high prices are unaffordable for very poor and poor households, particularly during the ongoing country-wide lean season. However, high prices are relatively stable, with certain assembly markets reporting slight dips in prices. This could be due to low demand in response to the high level of prices, as well as to the good rainfall activity in certain parts of the Southwest and the Hauts-Bassins and Cascades areas. Assistance programs by the government and its partners in the form of subsidized cereal sales and distributions of free food aid have also helped bring down market prices.

In general, cereal prices on most markets are stable if not down from last month, except in Ouagadougou and Koudougou, where prices for white corn and white sorghum are up by 10 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Prices are high compared with the same time last year, with millet and white sorghum prices showing the steepest rises. The smallest price fluctuations are on the Ouagadougou market (19 percent for sorghum and 20 percent for millet) and the largest fluctuations (103 percent for sorghum and 105 percent for millet) are on the Djibo market (in livelihood zone 7). Prices on the Solenzo market in livelihood zone 3 (a cereal and cotton-producing area) are farthest above the five-year average, or by 95 percent in the case of millet, 79 percent for corn, and 81 percent for sorghum. This is due to the large demand for cereal on markets in this area, both from traders and from private and institutional buyers.

Prices for mass-consumed products (rice, oil, milk, and fuel) have been relatively stable since last month and are above last year's prices and the five-year average by 20 percent at most. There is a normal flow of domestic trade for this time of year. On the other hand, foreign trade flows in general and cereal exports in particular are still subject to strict government surveillance measures. The Ouagadougou and Pouytenga markets are playing a dual role, assembling cereal crops from surplus areas and relaying them to cereal-short areas.

Terms of trade for livestock/cereal

The situation of livestock in traditional pastoral areas is gradually improving with the availability of grass and water. The return of transhumant animal herds is improving milk availability. The provision of agro-industrial byproducts to pastoralists for use as animal feed at subsidized prices (35 to 55 percent below market rates) by the government and the FAO should help them make it through the current critical period for large stock animals. As of the beginning of June, a male sheep in good condition was selling for 62,000 XOF (25-40 percent below-average) on the Djibo market and a male goat was selling for 29,250 XOF (near-average), allowing a pastoralist to buy 108 to 230 kg of cereal on that same market.

Refugees and humanitarian aid

The presence of over 89,000 Malian refugees in the country and the steady stream of new refugees fleeing the ongoing conflict in their country is a continuing source of concern. The refugees remain clustered in camps in livelihood zones 7 (15 percent) and 8 (approximately 75 percent, outnumbering host communities by more than 50 percent). Ongoing programs (by the government, its bilateral partners, and United Nations agencies) throughout the outlook period should meet household food needs, though they may not fully meet food preferences. Host households are being supported by

humanitarian stakeholders and some of the refugees are trading their cereal rations in the marketplace. The steady influx of refugees and their animal herds throughout the outlook period poses a problem in terms of the management of what is expected to be an inadequate volume of humanitarian aid, as well as a pasture management problem with the return of the transhumant herds of host households, which are expected to leave the area earlier than usual, beginning in October/November, for their usual receiving areas to avoid disputes with the refugees over local pastures and watering holes.

Most likely food security scenario (July through December 2012)

With the three-month periods from July through September and from October through December considered critical turning points from a food security standpoint, the most likely nationwide food security scenario for the period from July through December has been established based on the following general hypotheses and assumptions:

- The rainy season and growing season, which got off to an early start in the northern part of the country and an on-time start in major cereal-producing areas, will continue settling in.
- The larger than usual availability and supply of labor from very poor and poor households in all livelihood zones could reduce farm wage income by 10 to 20 percent.
- As is generally the case in an average year, the workforce will return and remain in place between July and September. Working household members will engage in seasonal migration to small-scale gold washing sites and neighboring countries like Côte d'Ivoire beginning as of the end of October, as in a normal year.
- Markets will function normally throughout the outlook period. Major cereal-producing areas will continue to supply cereal-deficit areas with small volumes of cereal between July and September. Cereal markets will be stocked with white corn imported from Ghana as of July and, as of September, will be getting regular supplies of local crops.
- The strict controls on cereal exports will remain in effect between July and September, but could be lifted by the beginning of October.
- Cereal prices should continue to rise between July and August, on average, peaking at between five and ten percent above current price levels. High demand during Ramadan, which is a time of heavy cereal consumption in general and millet consumption in particular, is liable to drive up prices. Cereal prices should come down between September and December, at harvest time.
- With the growth of new ground cover and woody pasture and the availability, though inadequate, of animal feed at subsidized prices, the outlook for livestock for the period between July and September is good, except in refugee settlement areas inundated with a steady stream of unregistered refugees and livestock.
- Livestock prices will steadily rise over the outlook period with the physical recovery of animals and the high demand for livestock for the Muslim holidays (Ramadan in August and, in particular, Tabaski in November).
- There will be a normal pattern of seasonal migration by transhumant livestock in all parts of the country, except in areas with large concentrations of refugee livestock herds, where it could start up earlier than usual, or by October/November.
- There will be no change in the status quo with respect to the conflict in Mali, translating into a steady stream of new Malian refugees, whose numbers could reach if not surpass the 100,000 mark by December, as indicated in the worst-case scenario for the government's response plan for the refugee problem.
- Even with the steady influx of new refugees, there will be an adequate level of assistance resulting from the efforts of the government and humanitarian community.
- The government and its partners will continue household assistance programs. The government will have close to 30,000 metric tons of cereal by the end of July for sale at subsidized prices under scenario "3" of its operational assistance plan for food-insecure populations. Assistance from its financial partners will help fund projects designed to ease food security conditions through September/October. However, current programs include no provisions for assisting households beyond October, which will not help restore the livelihoods of very poor and poor households.
- The rebuilding of institutional reserves beginning as of November/December, which are at their lowest level in the last five years, will help fuel a rise in prices as of November/December.
- Good rainfall conditions between July and September will help ensure a normal availability of nonwoody forest products and other wild plant foods to help supplement and improve the diets of very poor and poor households.

- The good coverage of treatment programs for moderate and severe acute malnutrition and of preventive health programs against acute malnutrition should help keep the nutritional situation of children under five years of age stable.
- There will be localized flooding in high-risk flood-prone areas or areas getting heavy rainfall between July and September.
- In the absence of new information regarding the behavior, location, activities, and movements of desert locusts, the most likely scenario assumes a minimal probability that locusts will cause some localized losses of crops and pasture. This assumption will be updated as new information becomes available given the potentially rapid evolution of the locust threat.
- The government will obtain necessary assistance for the mobilization of locust prevention and treatment resources in time to control a small-scale outbreak.

Livelihood zone 8 (*North transhumant pastoralism and millet*)

This livelihood zone had an estimated population of over 300,000 as of April 30th of this year, with very poor and poor households making up over half the local population. Normally, the main sources of food for the outlook period are purchases of millet for household consumption between July and September and milk and dairy production. Other food sources include gifts and harvests of cowpeas, millet, and wild fonio between September and December. The main sources of income for very poor and poor households are wages for farm labor and tending the livestock herds of middle-income and better-off households though, this year, there is a larger than usual supply of labor in refugee receiving areas. The main source of income for middle-income and better-off households is the sale of livestock, supplemented by remittances from migrants and transhumant pastoralists and small business activities (sales of milk, eggs, condiments, etc.), which could boom with the refugee presence in this area. A 20 liter barrel of drinking water normally selling for no more than 50 XOF is currently selling for between 100 and 150 XOF, with increased demand by refugees. However, very poor and poor households are still vulnerable to hikes in cereal prices and a sharp deterioration in terms of trade for livestock/cereal.

With food prices well above the five-year average in this area, households are cutting back their number of daily meals from two to a single meal and are eating leaves and other wild plant foods. As usual, income from gold washing activities is down sharply, income from sales of livestock is improving, and there should be a steadily growing availability of milk between July and September throughout this livelihood zone. Very poor and poor households are still facing crisis levels of food insecurity in July due to the constant, steep rises in cereal prices, poor to fair market supplies, sharper than usual deterioration in their livelihoods, and delays in the implementation of response measures.

The good progress of the growing season between July and September should help ensure the availability of wild plant foods and green crops by the middle of September, which could ease food gaps for very poor and poor households. All households in this area will make normal use of their usual livelihood strategies between July and September to generate income and meet food needs until the upcoming harvests. These strategies include: sales of small animals by households with any such remaining animals, sales of poultry, gainful on-farm employment with middle-income and better-off households, borrowing, gifts associated with the observance of Ramadan, and cereal purchases at subsidized prices. The refugee presence will definitely heighten demand for milk, which could be an important source of income for very poor and poor households tending the herds of middle-income and better-off households. However, their presence could also pose problems, with the lucrative price of milk potentially causing middle-income and better-off households to reconsider their current arrangements with households tending their herds. Moreover, the large numbers of refugees represent a large labor pool competing with the existing local labor pool, which could drive down the price of labor, reducing wage income.

The government will continue to make scheduled distributions of free food aid and subsidized cereal sales, targeting 8,300 households or approximately 50,000 people, and its humanitarian partners will extend their programs through the end of September. WFP expects to assist at least 22,000 households or 132,000 people between July and October. This would provide at least half of all local households with food aid. The volume of ongoing aid, meeting 86 percent of assistance needs for the period from July through September according to the estimate by the National Early Warning System (2,152 metric tons of aid deployed out of the required 2,656 metric tons, without counting the assistance furnished under cash-for-work activities), should improve the food security situation of very poor and poor households. In addition, over 58,000 people will be covered by various humanitarian aid programs during the same period. In spite of the high levels of market prices, subsidized cereal sales programs, income-earning opportunities (gainful on-farm employment, milk sales, etc.), and planned, confirmed, and ongoing assistance programs should keep very poor and poor households in IPC Phase 2 (stressed)

between August and September. The replenishment of food reserves from upcoming harvests beginning as of October should help put all households in IPC Phase 1 (no acute food insecurity) between October and December.

Livelihood zone 9 (*Southeast Cereals, Livestock, Forestry and Faune*)

The main sources of food for the outlook period are cereal purchasing on local markets or at subsidized prices in municipal shops operated by the government through October, the consumption of nonwoody forest products through September, household consumption of standing crops as of August (Niari millet), milk consumption, humanitarian aid (from the WFP and ACF), and social marketing programs for low-income populations, more so than usual. The main sources of income are small business activities, income-generating activities by women (women-operated small businesses), sales of livestock (small animals and poultry) and fishery products, gainful on-farm employment through November, and cash-for-work or cash transfer programs.

There have been clear changes in eating habits since March/April in 19 percent of municipalities in Tapoa, with the number of daily meals cut back from three to two and, in some case, to a single meal, even in the case of children, and a heavier than usual reliance on community assistance and self-help mechanisms, gifts, borrowing, temporary employment, small trades, and fish production in the region's two major dam construction and hydro-agricultural development projects. Expected local market supplies from the inventories of cereal traders could provide good cereal availability and market access for very poor and poor households between July and September. Cereal prices should stay stable through the middle of August, if not come down. As of September, expected good harvests should bring prices down farther than usual.

Most assistance efforts in Tapoa involve operations by humanitarian organizations (cash-for-work activities, seed aid, nutritional assistance), including a National Early Warning System (SAP) program targeting 5,400 households based on Household Economy Approach (HEA) surveys for Tapoa and, in particular, the nutrition component for Kompienga and Gourma. WFP is providing 200 metric tons of aid per month for approximately 47,000 children, 362 metric tons of cereal for 15,300 recipients, 127 million XOF for 12,000 beneficiaries, and 4,000 metric tons of food for 93,500 schoolchildren. The government has mobilized 3,000 metric tons of cereal for this area, which are being sold in government-subsidized municipal shops serving approximately 16,000 program beneficiaries. However, supplies on local markets in a number of municipalities in this area (Botou, Logoubou, Tansarga, and Tambaga) will be tight through October due to low trader inventories and the poor condition of roads serving local markets. Cereal prices (millet, corn, and sorghum) will stay well above the five-year average.

Between July and September, very poor and poor households with small animals and poultry will intensify their sales and work in the fields of middle-income and better-off households for cash wages (to buy cereal on the market or at subsidized prices) or in-kind payments to meet their day-to-day food needs. There will also be an increase in in-kind borrowing from better-off households against future harvests. Between October and December, ongoing harvests of cereal and cotton, the area's main cash crop, will improve food availability and the incomes of very poor and poor households paid for picking cotton for middle-income and better-off households.

Very poor and poor households throughout this livelihood zone will be in IPC Phase 2 (stressed) between July and September. There will be an improvement in conditions in the far eastern reaches of this area (Tapoa) where, without planned and ongoing assistance, very poor and poor households would be facing a food crisis, with high price levels and lower household incomes making market cereal supplies unaffordable.

Livelihood zones 5 (*Central plateau cereals and Market Gardening*) and 7 (*North and East Livestock and Cereals*)

The expected volume of government and humanitarian aid and the good progress of the agropastoral season should keep very poor and poor households in livelihood zones 5 and 7 in IPC Phase 2 (stressed) between July and September. The main sources of household income will be farm labor, cash-for-work activities (by NGOs), sales of livestock, and gold-washing activities, even with the official shutdown of these operations. The main sources of food for this period will be distributions of free food aid or subsidized cereal sales programs, market-buying, and the gathering of wild plant foods. The availability of fresh crops from upcoming harvests and the good performance of livestock will help bring down food prices on local markets, improve terms of trade for livestock/cereal, and help facilitate the rebuilding of on-farm cereal reserves between October and December. The availability of good water resources should help market gardening activities get off to a normal start, keeping households food-secure. However, the mounting of relief programs will be required to stabilize the food security situation of very poor and poor households.

Table I. Less likely events in the next six months that could change the above scenarios

Area	Event	Impact on food security conditions
Nationwide	Subsequent poor rainy season conditions	Smaller than usual harvests in surplus crop-producing areas; shortages of pasture and fodder in major livestock-raising areas; hoarding; poorer than usual food availability on markets and in households; less demand for labor and lower incomes for very poor and poor households; sharp rise in cereal and other food prices as of July; curtailed cereal access for the poor; poor pastoral conditions in livestock-raising areas; larger supplies of animals; and lower prices for livestock.
Livelihood zones 8, 7, 9, and 5	Desert locust infestations	Destruction of standing crops; large losses of crops; lower incomes for farming households; rise in the price of crops as of October; destruction of pastureland and woody pasture; serious concerns over animal feeding conditions; earlier than usual seasonal migration by transhumant herds; out-migration and seasonal labor migration by local populations.
Nationwide	Severe flooding in western and southern crop-producing areas on a similar scale to the 2007 floods	Losses of household food reserves and trader inventories; scaling back of shipments of food supplies to northern food-short areas; rise in prices; poorer food access; deterioration in food security, health, and nutritional conditions.
Nationwide	Problems with joint parliamentary and municipal elections	Socio-political problems; civil unrest; increase in road crime, resulting in poor market supplies; decline in hunting tourism at the countrywide level, creating fewer job opportunities and generating less income.