



GREATER HORN OF AFRICA (GHA) FOOD SECURITY BULLETIN

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SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Despite some recent improvements, food security remains a concern in much of the GHA, especially among pastoralists living in the arid and semi-arid zones. Overall, about 18 million people remain at risk of high food insecurity. This estimate has not changed for many months because pastoralist livelihood systems, having deteriorated over several failed rainfall seasons, still need several successive good seasons to recover fully. Beyond the current problems with the relief food pipeline, which donors need to address, the chronic food insecurity conditions now predominant in the region require multi-sectoral interventions geared at supporting livelihoods and building resilience in the communities.

The March-May season has just ended. Rainfall has been poor in pastoralist areas in most of Eritrea, northeastern Somali Region, eastern and northern Afar Region of Ethiopia, northeastern Kenya, and southwestern Somalia. In contrast, rains were good in most of southern and southeastern Ethiopia, southern and northwestern Kenya, the Sanaag and Sool plateaus of Somalia and the agro-pastoralist areas of the Karamoja Region in northeastern Uganda. Those good rains contributed to improvements in food security, as livestock body mass and milk production increased. However, pastoralists will require more successive good rainfall seasons to recover from the current livelihood crisis.

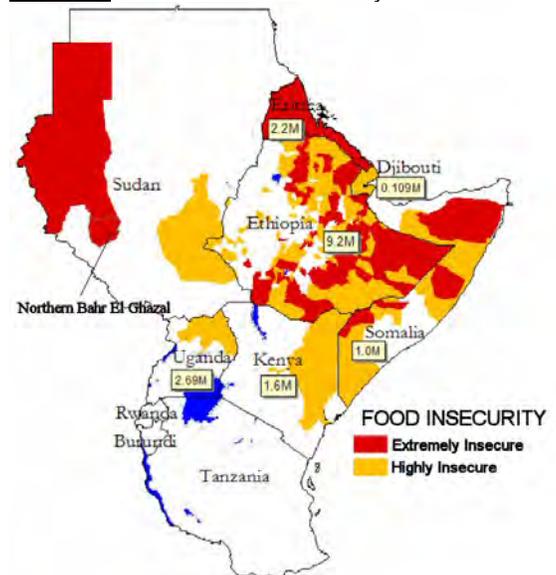
In agricultural areas, rainfall performance and crop prospects are mixed. Crop production in eastern and coastal areas of the GHA will be below average, due to insufficient and poorly distributed rainfall. In contrast, rains were sustained unexpectedly until early June in the equatorial sector, improving harvest prospects in this area, while food availability and supplies to local and cross border markets are expected to improve. Tradable surpluses of cereals, beans and rice are expected from Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda. This situation calls for governments to remove barriers to facilitate flows of food within and among the countries of the region and for donors and humanitarian organizations to buy as much relief commodities as possible within the region.

MIXED FOOD SECURITY SITUATION FOR PASTORALISTS

Currently, over 18 million people are facing very high risk of food insecurity in the GHA Region (see estimated numbers inserted in Figure 1), and over half of them are in Ethiopia. Northern Bahr El Ghazal in southern Sudan is experiencing a severe food crisis due to not only to production shortfalls but also to the recent return of significant numbers of refugees who now compete with the existing population for the little food available. The food relief program in the region is having serious pipeline problems (see respective country reports at www.fews.net). Rapid purchases in surplus areas would help address the risks of food pipeline breakage. Non-food assistance in water, sanitation and health sectors are poorly funded, despite the fact that livelihoods in the region have become severely strained and weakened, therefore requiring protracted, multi-sectoral interventions.

Pastoralists continue to be the most food insecure and vulnerable group. In May and June, the evolution in pastoralist areas has shown mixed patterns, with some areas deteriorating further and some improving. Food security did not improve in most of Eritrea, the northeastern Somali Region and eastern and northern Afar Region of Ethiopia, central eastern and northeastern Kenya, and southwestern Somalia. Figure 2 illustrates this situation for the zones covered by the Livestock Early Warning Systems (LEWS) Project. (Note that the LEWS does not monitor pasture conditions in Sudan or Eritrea.) As in other pastoralist areas, very poor pasture conditions and insufficient water have forced pastoralists to migrate with their animals over longer distances from homesteads and markets. This has disrupted the normal sources of food (mainly milk) for children, women and the elderly, as they are typically left behind. There are already reports of rising child malnutrition in parts of northeastern Kenya and eastern Ethiopia, as well as reports of intensified cross-border disputes over scarce pasture and water, particularly in Turkana and Marsabit districts of northwestern and northern Kenya. The harsh food insecurity conditions facing

Figure 1: Overview of food security in the GHA

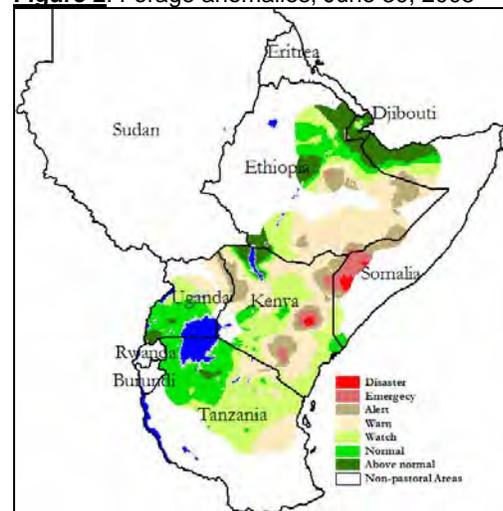


pastoralists have worsened since May in areas such as northeastern Kenya (e.g. Wajir District), southern Somalia (Sorghum Belt and Shabelle and Juba valleys), eastern and southeastern Ethiopia (e.g. Shinile, Jijiga of Somali, and Borena zone of Oromiya) and Eritrea. This resulted from poor crop production, causing cereal prices to remain high or even increase further, while livestock prices remain stable or even decrease due to poor body conditions of the animals. The unfavorable cereals-to-livestock terms of trade for pastoralists are particularly worrying at this time (end of belg/gu season and crop harvest). Normally, cereal prices are declining and the pastoralists' purchasing power for food should be improving. The next cereal harvest in those regions is not expected for another six months.

Except in the pastoralist areas cited above, the April-June rains rejuvenated vegetation and recharged water sources and livestock body conditions in southern and southeastern Ethiopia, southern and northwestern Kenya, the Sanaag and Sool plateaus of Somalia and the northeastern agropastoral areas of the Karamoja Region of Uganda. Access to pasture and water for livestock has improved significantly there, bringing renewed hopes for temporary relief among pastoralists. Nevertheless, the long-term recovery of these pastoralists will need more time, due to the effects of successive drought seasons, which have negatively affected household livelihood systems.

Even for those areas showing improvement, recovery is likely to be short-lived. In the arid areas of the GHA, poor rainfall and unfavorable terms of trade in recent years have aggravated pastoralists' vulnerability and undermined their resilience. Protracted household food insecurity has forced the affected households to overstretch their coping strategies, causing them to resort to unsustainable strategies such as charcoal production in fragile environments. Considering the food insecurity risks from both climate and non-climate factors, reportedly increasing year after year, there is need for appropriate interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral (typically food and non-food) interventions to free the pastoralists from what has now become permanent humanitarian crises. Contingency and mitigation plans to promote short and medium-term recovery are no longer sufficient.

Figure 2: Forage anomalies, June 30, 2005



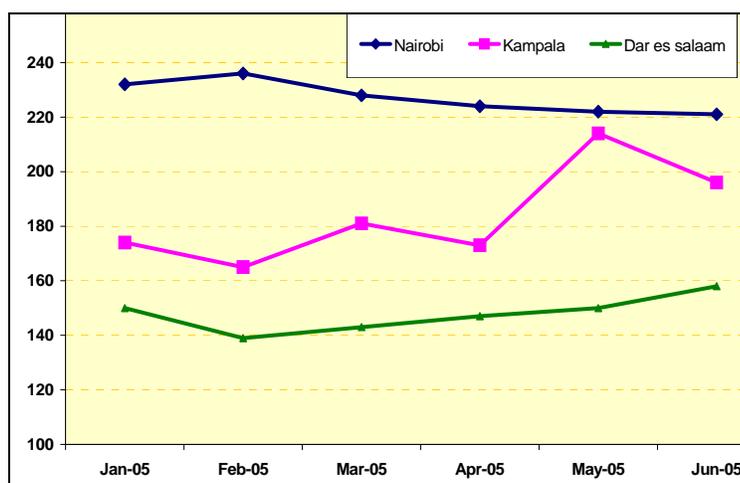
Source: LEWS

HARVEST PROSPECTS MIXED; FAVORABLE OUTLOOK IN CROPPING AREAS

In the eastern and coastal areas of the GHA, the rainfall remained poor even after April, particularly in marginal agricultural areas Kenya and in the agricultural and agropastoral zones of southern and southeastern Somalia. Crop production prospects are less favorable in these zones, which were repeatedly affected by drought in the last few years. According to its Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya's harvests are now expected in September, later than the normal harvest period of July and August.

Contrary to expectations, the rainfall that rebounded by the end of April remained favorable until mid-June in the southern sector of the GHA. The prospects for that zone are for average to above average harvests. The anticipated good production will increase food availability and supplies to local and cross border markets, and may bring food prices down to more accessible levels, which would be particularly beneficial for poorer consumers. In Kenya, long-rains cereal production (to be harvested in September) is estimated to be 37 percent above 2004 production and 7 percent above the five-year average. A near normal *belg* harvest is expected from the March-May season areas in Ethiopia. During the coming June-October period, large tradable surpluses of cereals, beans and rice are expected from Tanzania (over 400,000 MT) and from Uganda (about 150,000 MT of maize and 52,000 MT of beans). There have already been reports of increasing cross border maize flows from Tanzania to southeastern areas of Kenya since June. Because of a good harvest, tradable beans are expected to be available on the market by July. In order to enhance the benefits of the good production, the region's governments should remove the various barriers to domestic and cross-border trade of food commodities to allow food to flow from surplus to deficit areas within the region. To take advantage of the large tradable regional surplus, donors and humanitarian agencies should consider purchasing more relief food within the region this year.

Figure 3: Wholesale Maize Price in Capital Markets of East Africa (in USD/MT)



Source: RATIN

In response to the mixed production prospects, cereal prices have stabilized, as suggested by the wholesale maize price trends in the capitals of the East African countries (Figure 3). However, they remain very high. With the bulk of maize from major production areas of southern Tanzania Highlands and Western Uganda soon hitting the markets, prices are expected to drop, but only slightly because of tight supply conditions in Kenya.

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FAVORABLE PRODUCTION PROSPECTS FOR THE NEW SEASON IN NORTHERN SECTOR

In June 2005, the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Center (ICPAC) released a consensus climate outlook for the June, July, August and September (JJAS) 2005 (see Figure 4a). The forecast indicates a very high probability of receiving at least near normal rainfall for most of the northern sector of the GHA, which is agriculturally active during that period. The improved likelihood for near normal rainfall conditions is not certain, as there is still the possibility of receiving above normal and below normal rainfall. Also, the forecast assumes normal season onset and good distribution of rainfall during the season. It is equally important to note that the forecast is only relevant for the aggregate four-month period and over relatively large areas. Therefore, significant and localized variability in the amount and distribution of rainfall could occur within this 120-day period.

Figure 4a: Climate Outlook for Jun. – Sep. 2005

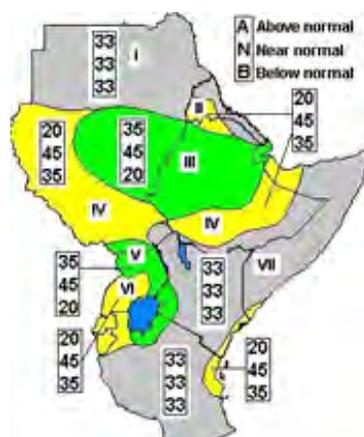


Figure 4b: Climate Outlook for Jun. – Sep. 2005 - Probability for receiving at least 400mm of rainfall (long-cycle cereals requirement)

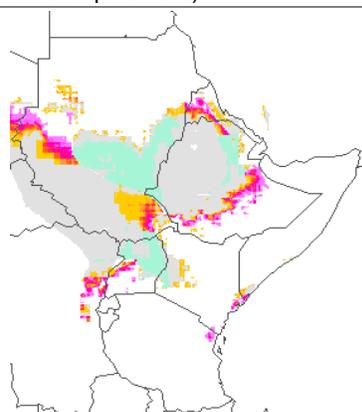
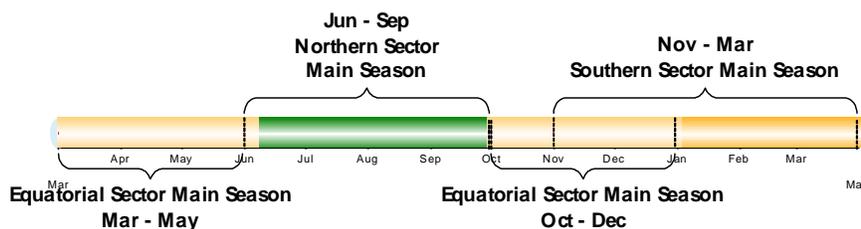
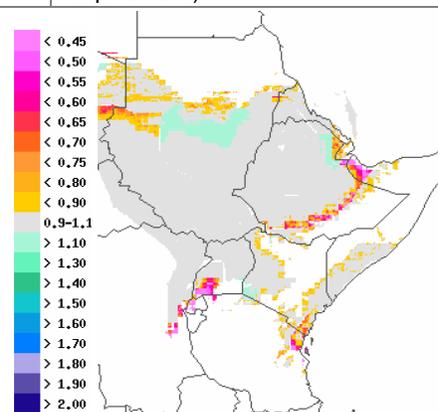


Figure 4c: Climate Outlook for Jun. – Sep. 2005 - Probability for receiving at least 150mm of rainfall (pasture requirement)



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET translated the ICPAC forecast into potential rainfall quantity probabilities for the period using its Agro-climatological Tool/Forecast Interpretation Tool (FACT/FIT) based on the “most probable” scenarios. Further, the FACT/FIT tool was used to identify areas with potential rainfall amounts of at least 400mm and 150 mm (Figures 4b and 4c), the minimum water requirements to support a normal growth for the long-cycle maize and for pasture growth, respectively. The FACT depicts an enhanced likelihood for near normal maize growing conditions for most of the northern sector of the GHA, particularly in Ethiopia, Southern Sudan and the high potential maize growing area of Western Kenya. There is also an enhanced probability that pasture conditions will improve in the drought-affected areas of Djibouti and northern Uganda. These outcomes would improve the short-term food security in much of the pastoralist livelihood systems of the GHA. There is, however, some concern over the enhanced likelihood of possible problems in the southern limit of the crop production areas of southern and southeastern Ethiopia. FEWS NET will closely monitor the rainfall performance throughout the season and update the anticipated trends as they become more established.

MORE ON THE GHA FOOD SECURITY BULLETIN...

This bulletin draws from the FEWS NET regular monthly reports, with additional contributions from network partners whose names and logos appear at the bottom of the first page. Please consult <http://www.fews.net> for in-depth analysis of the countries where FEWS NET has a national representative: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Southern Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The World Food Programme provides the information on Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and northern Sudan.

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