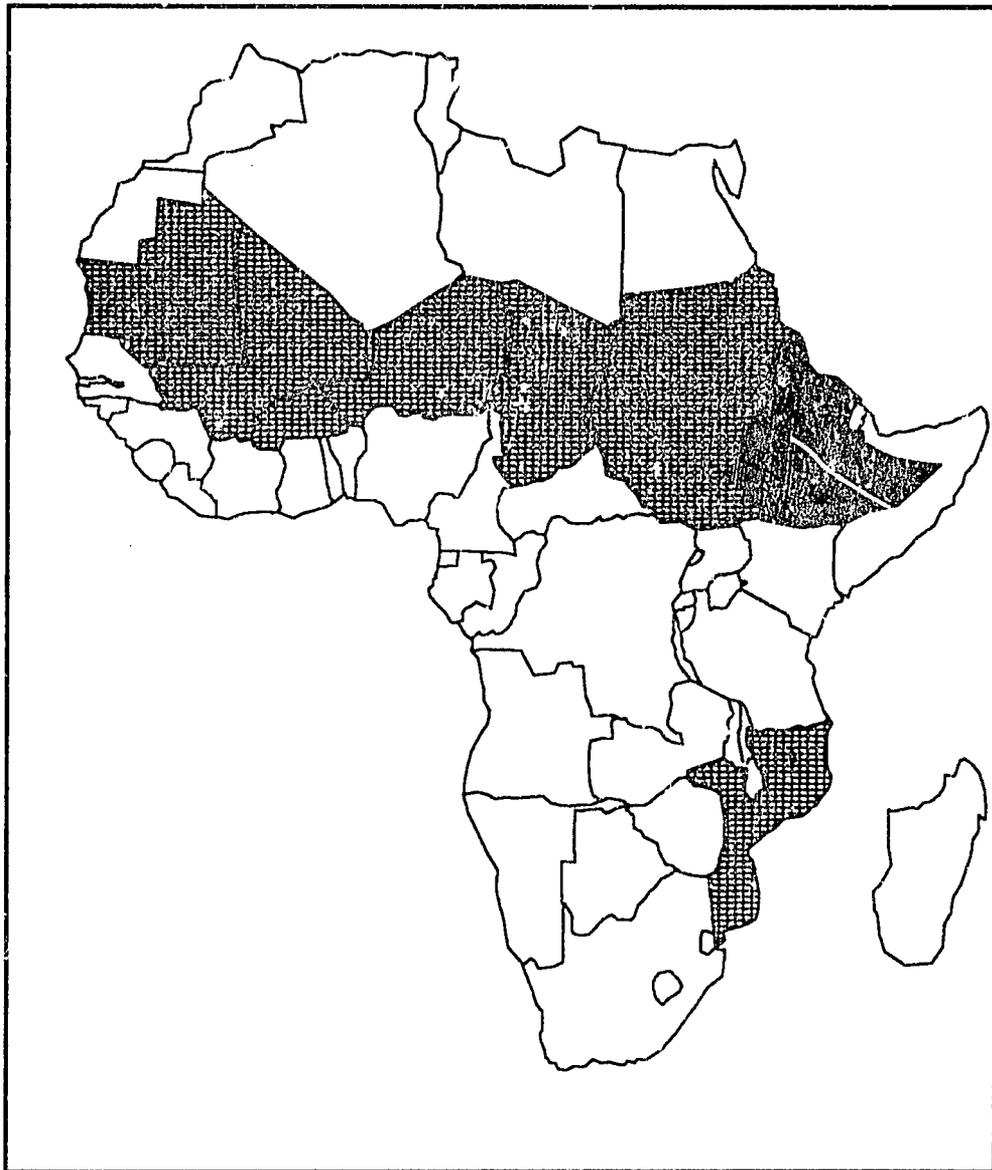


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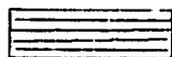
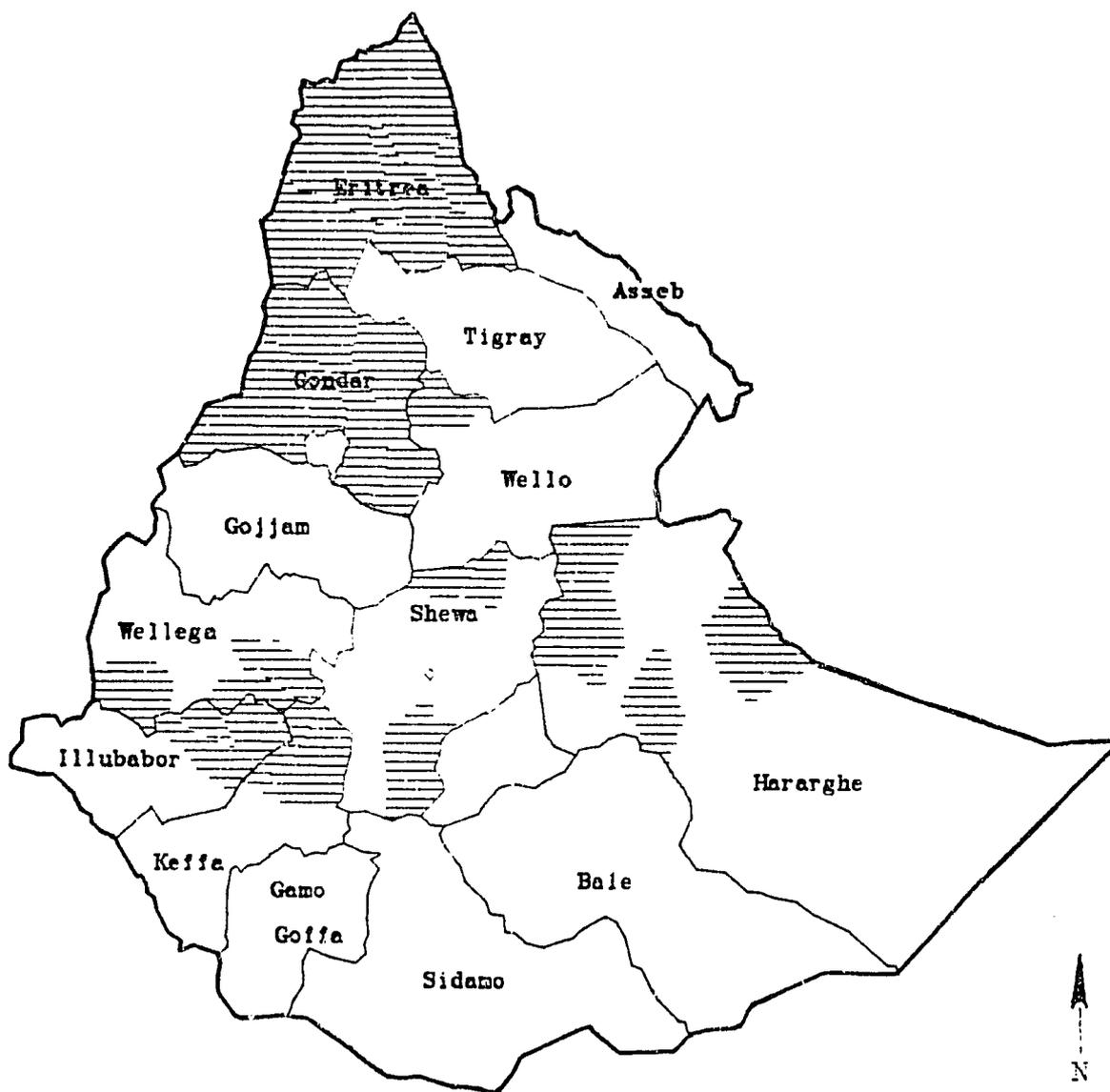
Report Number 6
November 1986

FEWS Country Report ETHIOPIA



Africa Bureau
U.S. Agency
for International
Development

Summary Map



Regions and Sub-Regions (Awrajas) with
Agricultural Production Falling
Short of Requirements

ETHIOPIA

After the Emergency People Still At-Risk

Prepared for the
Africa Bureau of the
U.S. Agency for
International Development

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INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth of a series of monthly reports issued by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) on Ethiopia. It is designed to provide decisionmakers with current information and analysis on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. Each situation identified is described in terms of geographical extent and the number of people involved, or at-risk, and the proximate causes insofar as they have been discerned.

Use of the term "at-risk" to identify vulnerable populations is problematical since no generally agreed upon definition exists. Yet it is necessary to identify or "target" populations in-need or "at-risk" in order to determine appropriate forms and levels of intervention. Thus for the present, until a better usage can be found, FEWS reports will employ the term "at-risk" to mean...

...those persons lacking sufficient food, or resources to acquire sufficient food, to avert a nutritional crisis, i.e., a progressive deterioration in their health or nutritional condition below the status quo and who, as a result, require specific intervention to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Perhaps of most importance to decisionmakers, the process underlying the deteriorating situation is highlighted by the FEWS effort, hopefully with enough specificity and forewarning to permit alternative intervention strategies to be examined and implemented. Food assistance strategies are key to famine avoidance. However, other types of intervention can be of major importance both in the short-term and in the long-run, including medical, transport, storage, economic development policy change, etc.

Where possible, food needs estimates are included in the FEWS reports. It is important to understand, however, that no direct relation exists between numbers of persons at-risk and the quantity of food assistance needed. This is because famines are the culmination of slow-onset disaster processes which can be complex in the extreme.

The food needs of individual populations at-risk depend upon when in the disaster process identification is made and the extent of its cumulative impact on the individuals concerned. Further, the amount of food assistance required, whether from internal or external sources, depends upon a host of considerations. Thus the food needs estimates presented periodically in FEWS reports should not be interpreted to mean food aid needs, e.g., as under PL480 or other donor programs.

FEWS is operated by AID's Office of Technical Resources in the Bureau for Africa in cooperation with numerous USG and other organizations.

SUMMARY

With the current harvest, the drought emergency is over in Ethiopia. Most private voluntary organizations (PVOS) agree that, while the national emergency is over, pockets of need will persist during 1987, but these are scattered widely throughout the country. The total population at-risk in 1987 is probably less than the almost four million people forecast in the FEWS Report #5. Agricultural production is probably better than forecast and the number of agriculturalists at risk in 1987 will decline. These agriculturalists are at-risk due to a combination of local environmental conditions and structural problems within agriculture. Lowland pastoralists, on the contrary, remain particularly at-risk, primarily due to structural causes and residual effects of the 1984 drought. Many PVOs will cease emergency feeding operations and convert to food for work and other development strategies in 1987. The UN Office of Emergency Operations (UNOEO), which will cease to exist as a separate entity on December 31, 1986, has agreed with the Ethiopian government that a total of 400,000MT of emergency food aid stocks will be carried over undistributed into 1987. This figure, also used by the USAID mission in Addis Ababa, is almost certainly a minimum. Nonetheless, the official carryover figure is close to that required to feed the population at-risk in 1987.

Issues

- o Official Government of Ethiopia estimates of food aid required in 1987, currently exceeding estimates made at the height of the drought, will undergo extended scrutiny by donors.
- o The Government of Ethiopia's agricultural and economic policies are an underlying cause of underproduction and the continuing, relatively high number of people estimated to be at-risk next year.

November indicators

- o A special FAO agricultural assessment team will conclude its mission during November and will attempt to forecast production during the current harvest season. These figures will be an essential component of all planning by international agencies for 1987.
- o An official Relief and Rehabilitation Commission estimate of people at-risk in 1987 should become available by the end of November.

CROP PRODUCTION

Descriptions of this year's agricultural production continue to support a forecast of good to excellent harvests almost everywhere in Ethiopia, with the exception of Eritrea Region and pockets of need in the four

western Regions of Wellega, Illubabor, Keffa and Gonder (See Summary Map). This year's Meher (main) season production of cereals and pulses should be in the range of from 6.3 million to 6.7 million metric tons. Calendar year 1986 saw a dramatic turnaround in agricultural production from 1985 and 1984, especially when the current harvest is combined with the exceptional Belg season harvest in June and July.

Other than Eritrea Region, the consensus among observers pinpoints just a few pockets within agricultural areas where production will not be sufficient to feed the local population. The UN Office of Emergency Operations reports that, in Eritrea crop prospects "are mixed, keeping in mind that even a good crop harvest there would be insufficient to feed all the people in need", while in Gonder crop prospects are said "to be poor due to late and then excessive rains", although "there did not appear to be a large scale emergency situation there". In Wollo Region, the Awraja of Sekota is pinpointed as the only area that may not be able to feed itself (this is a dramatic change in Wollo from the situation during the last two years). In northern Shewa two awrajas served by Save the Children have been reported to have lost up to 40% of their crops due to stalkborer, and in southern Shewa the area of Tora has lower than normal production due to hail damage. In eight awrajas in Wellega, Keffa and Illubabor Regions, the main season maize and sorghum crops failed due to delayed rains.

PEOPLE AT-RISK

Last month FEWS estimated the maximum number of people at-risk, for any part of 1987 at 3,973,000, 1,143,000 of whom are pastoralists. The estimate of pastoralists at-risk is not expected to decline, but, given current harvest reports, it is likely that the estimate (2,840,000) of agriculturalists at-risk will decline. In Hararghe Region, for example, one report suggests that highland agriculturalists are not at-risk next year, which alone would reduce the FEWS at-risk estimate by 446,000 people. Further detailed information is required to refine the FEWS estimate. The Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission was to have issued a forecast of the population at-risk in 1987, enumerated by Region and sub-Region (Awraja) by the end of October. This has been delayed.

FOOD AID

The Government of Ethiopia and UNOEO recently negotiated an estimate that a total of 400,000MT of emergency food aid stocks will be carried over undistributed into 1987. The USAID mission in Addis Ababa explicitly uses this figure as a minimum. The last FEWS estimate was

533,000MT. The amount of emergency food aid that will remain undistributed at the end of 1986, and is therefore available for distribution in 1987, is a politically sensitive question. It also directly impacts estimates of the amount of food aid, if any, requested from donors.

The difference can be attributed to several factors. The UNOEO has also recently renegotiated, with the Ethiopian government, the amount said to have been carried over from 1985 into 1986, reducing the estimate by 30,000MT. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission has recently been credited with the distribution of over 100,000MT of emergency food aid during the first six months of this year (although they are also said not to have received any food aid from donors during this same period). It is possible that this is a double count of food distributed through the Ethiopian Red Cross. These amounts in themselves make up the difference in the estimates of carryover food aid stocks.

As of 7 November, 743,800MT of emergency cereal grains had been delivered to ports supplying Ethiopia, against donor pledges of 1,039,600MT for the year. An additional 104,700MT of emergency food grain is expected to arrive during November for a total of 847,500MT for the first eleven months of the year. It is almost certain that both the USAID estimated emergency food aid requirement of 880,000MT (Jan., 1986) and the FAO estimated requirement of 900,000MT (Dec., 1985), will be exceeded by the end of the year. In FEWS Report #5 total distributions this year were estimated at 677,000MT while total supply this year (including last year's carryovers) was estimated at 1,205,000MT.

Several PVOs have ceased distribution of food aid. World Vision's distributions stopped as of October 15 (to allow farmers to concentrate their energies on the harvest) in Wollo, N. Shewa and N. Sidamo Regions. Distributions of remaining stocks will take place in the first quarter of 1987 to allow farmers to build their reserves. LICROSS will have ceased distributions in Wello Region by mid-November.

In sum, these operational changes support last month's forecast of declining distributions during the last months of the year, with continuing arrivals of food aid. Distributions will total about 677,000MT. Emergency food aid distributions during 1987 will decline from those of 1986, with an estimated maximum of 477,000MT necessary to feed the estimated population at-risk. In this case, the possibility still remains that food aid will be carried over from 1986 through 1987, and into 1988. This is more

likely given the cut back in emergency food aid distribution programs and the general rule that not all people at-risk receive food aid.

1987 AGRICULTURE

In August of this year, the USAID mission in Addis Ababa identified some of the Government of Ethiopia's policies that constrain agricultural production. Their analysis suggested that certain agricultural policy changes might take place as early as next year, changes that could lead to an immediate increase in peasant production and, or, mitigate the effects of adverse environmental factors. Agricultural production in 1987 will be partially dependent on unpredictable environmental factors, but production will also be strongly affected by the government's agricultural, economic, political and defense policies.

According to this analysis, some policy constraints on agricultural production could be modified in 1987, if final agreements are made between the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) and the World Bank, and the GOE and the European Economic Community (EEC). The most important of these are a limitation on the Agricultural Marketing Corporation's quota, a coupling of the quota price with world grain prices, the licensing of private traders to engage in free trade in farmer's surpluses over quota, and the removal of barriers to the free flow of grain between Regions. At the least these modifications will provide greater incentive for farmers and allow the marketing of food grains across regional borders.

Insecurity of land tenure will remain a great constraint on agricultural production. It will continue to provide disincentives for farmers to undertake the long term rehabilitation and improvement of arable land, that most observers agree is required. Currently land is reallocated among farmers as often as once a year, based on increasing population and the effect is to both reduce the total land cultivated by each farmer and fragment his holdings. Sixty percent of the potential arable land in Ethiopia is reported as currently lying fallow. Expansion of cultivation is therefore possible, if unlikely, given the current system of land tenure.

Agricultural inputs will be crucial in increasing yields over traditional levels. The constant growth of seed and fertilizer distribution implies that in 1987 these will be at record levels. The bias that exists toward state farms in the distribution of improved seeds, however, will probably continue. In 1986, this was especially evident in parts of western Ethiopia where lush state

farms, using short growing season varieties of hybrid sorghum, existed side by side with unproductive peasant farms which had relied on traditional long growing season varieties.

The development and distribution of improved, micro-climate suitable, seed to peasant farmers is not on the horizon. At best peasant farmers can expect the redistribution of cleaned seed from other regions, seed potentially unsuitable to local growing conditions.

The demand for fertilizer will continue to grow as its cost-effectiveness is demonstrated to peasant farmers. If policy changes, outlined above, increase farmers' incomes, the cost-effectiveness of fertilizer use will also increase. If Ethiopia is willing to use its limited foreign exchange to purchase fertilizer, increased crop yields from greater use of fertilizer will result.

The final policy constrain on agricultural production is the Government of Ethiopia's security strategies in conflict-affected regions. Continued military operations will adversely affected the degree to which agricultural potential becomes agricultural production. Should military operations become more widespread, this effect could be exacerbated. The areas of greatest risk are in Eritrea, usually a food deficit region, and Tigray, where agriculture has made a very dramatic turnaround from last year.