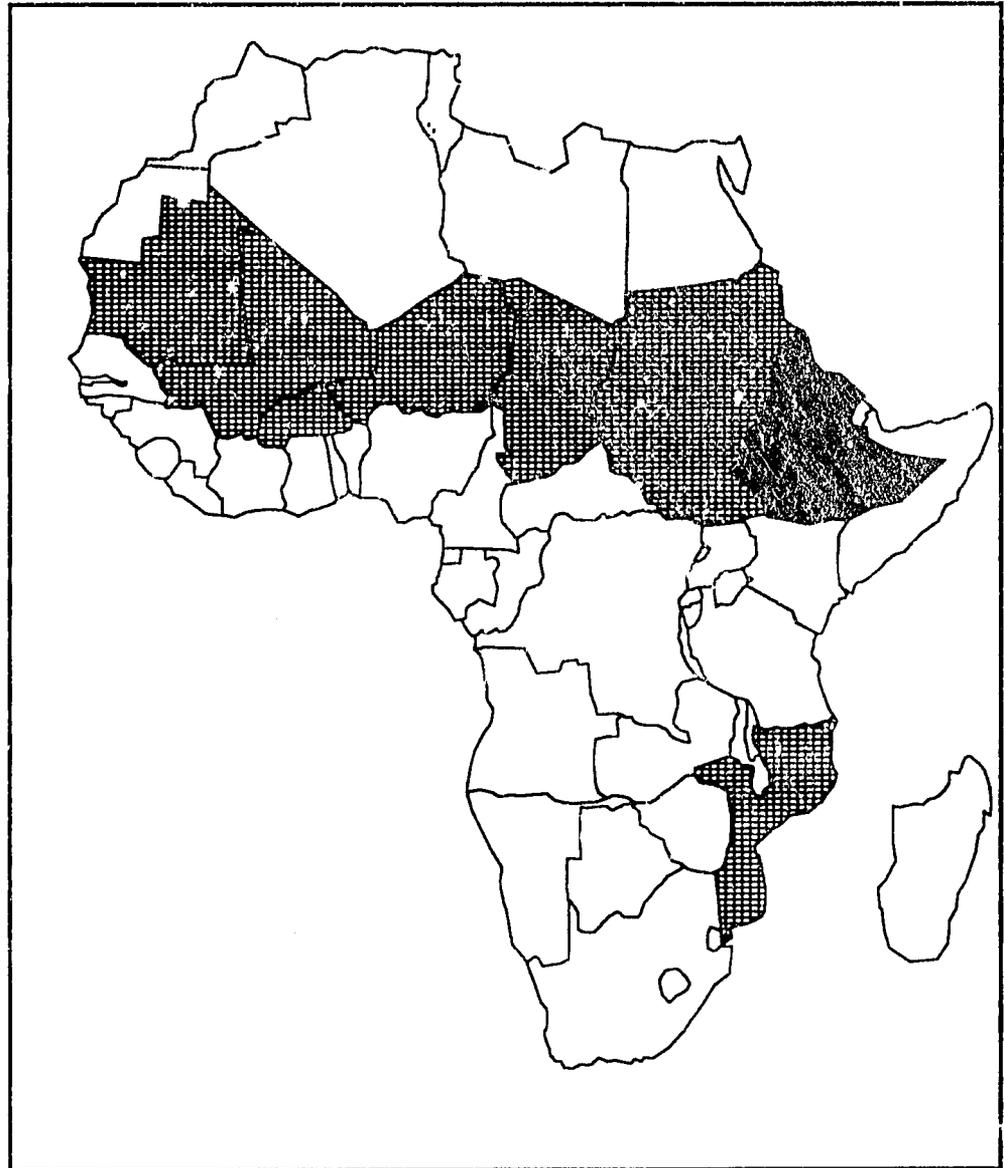


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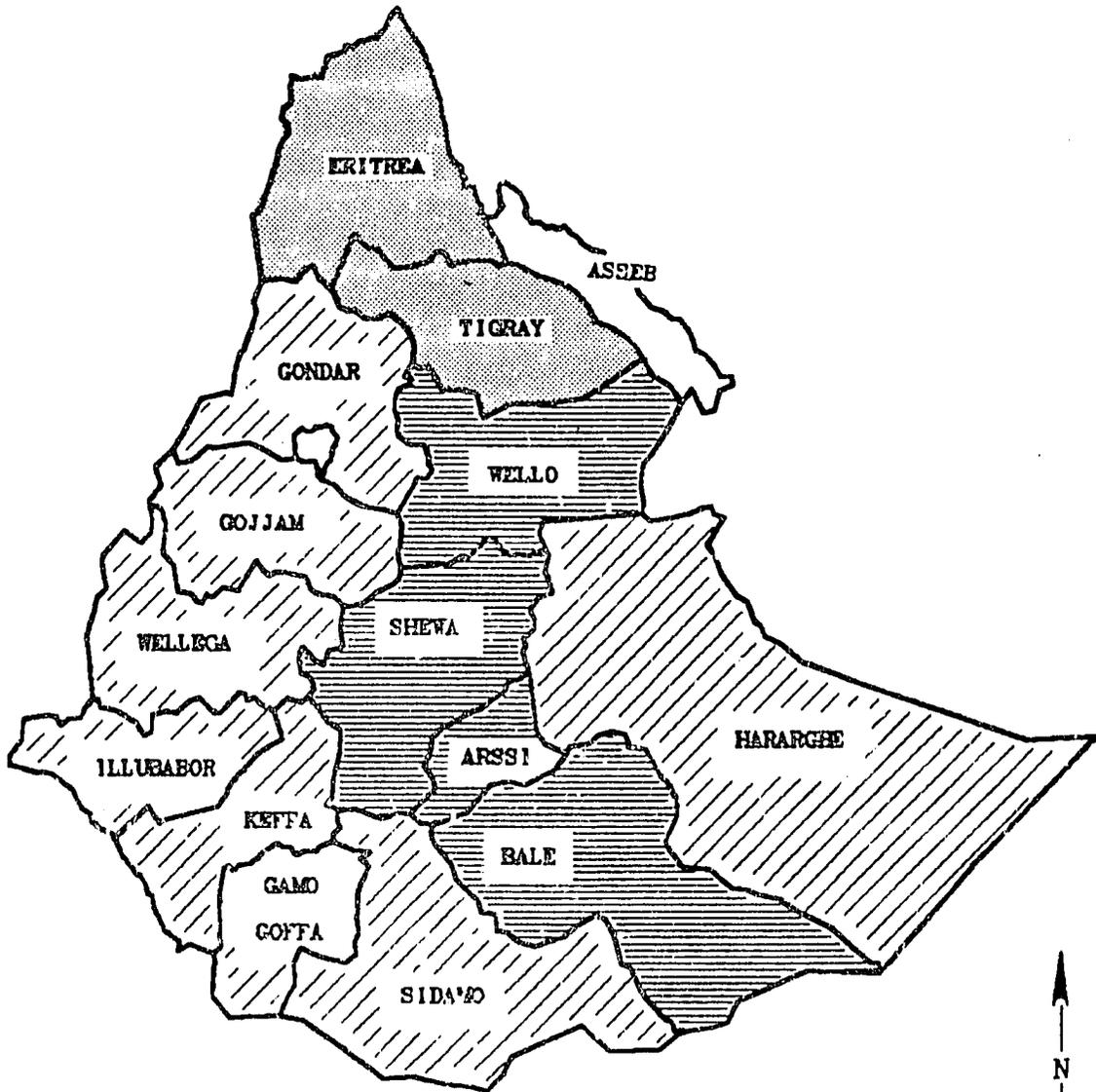
FEWS Country Report

ETHIOPIA

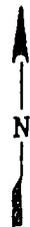


Africa Bureau
U.S. Agency
for International
Development

Summary Map



-  Excellent Food Supplies for 1987
-  Poor Food Supplies for 1987
-  Marginal Food Supplies for 1987



ETHIOPIA

Bright Outlook For The New Year

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

Prepared by
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INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh 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

The USAID mission in Ethiopia estimates a net food surplus of 70,000 mt in 1987. This includes approximately 200,000 mt of non-emergency food aid. The emergency in Ethiopia is clearly over. There will be pockets of need scattered throughout Ethiopia in 1987, but outside observers believe that sufficient resources exist within Ethiopia to ameliorate the situation. The Early Warning unit of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) has not issued its estimate of people at-risk in 1987, which was originally scheduled for publication at the end of October 1986. Politically unacceptable estimates could have caused the delay or cancellation of the publication. Attention should now turn to the "short rains" season (Belg) that occurs between March and June. The common wisdom, that the Belg season foreshadows the success or failure of the main crop production season (Meher, with harvest from September through the beginning of December) proved true in 1986 when an exceptional Belg season foreshadowed what looks to have been normal (or better) production during the Meher season.

Issues

- Objective Ethiopian government (RRC) estimates of people at-risk in 1987 would help outside observers refine their own estimates. The delay in issuing these estimates may have resulted more from political than technical considerations, calling into question the reliability of statistics from the RRC.
- The RRC is expected to call for new pledges of emergency food aid for delivery in 1987. The amount could be inflated to levels characteristic of the drought or be as little as 300,000 mt to insure a carryover stock, of that amount, into 1988.
- Reports of Desert locust swarms in Saudi Arabia could presage greater locust activity in Ethiopia next year. These swarms could breed gregariously this winter providing large numbers of locusts, even if in less than swarm concentrations, to next summer's locust breeding season in Ethiopia.

Key January Indicators

- Winter rains, along the Red Sea Coast and on the Arabian Peninsula, drive Desert locust breeding, and will provide an early indication of their future numbers and swarm potential. The convergence of meteorological events could lead to the build up of swarms that could escape back to Ethiopia for next year's summer breeding season.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

All evidence continues to support estimates of a good Meher season harvest. With the combination of leftover emergency food aid, programmed non-emergency food aid and anticipated commercial imports, Ethiopia will have a net surplus of at least 70,000 mt in 1987, according to the latest USAID mission estimates. The current harvest is at least good, certainly better than last year, and is part of the world's record cereal harvest for the 1986/87 crop year. Anticipated declines in the world price of grain would mean that Ethiopia could afford to expand its commercial import tonnage during 1987.

A Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) crop assessment mission has completed its work and should have submitted its preliminary results to the Government of Ethiopia. Approved results should be available in January. Early indications suggest that the FAO believes production to be good, overall, but that local events (such as failure of the early rains in the west, hail storms, flooding and stalkborer) have reduced crop production from the level anticipated in earlier forecasts. Nevertheless, the FAO mission will probably support the view that the drought emergency is over and that the food supply, including the additional supplies outlined above, should be sufficient for the population of the country.

The previous 6,284,000 mt FEWS estimate of Meher season cereal and pulse production was already a reduction from earlier forecasts and could be close to the final FAO estimate. Estimates of regional food supplies in 1987 (see Food Availability section) are not very sensitive to minor reductions in harvest estimates.

PESTS

The general pest situation in Ethiopia during 1986 was quiet. Desert locusts did not inflict crop damage on accessible parts of Ethiopia and, even in rebel controlled areas of Eritrea Region, were never reported in locations or in densities that would have elevated 1986 to a year of heavy locust activity. Minor swarms did affect some rangeland. Damage to human economic activities was minimal, at worst.

Armyworm infestations, which early in the year produced some concern, failed to form dangerous densities in the second generation (August) and had little effect on overall production. Grasshopper infestations were of some concern due to high densities (for Ethiopia) reported, especially in Gondar. In relative terms, however, grasshopper infestations in Gondar were moderate to light compared to other areas on the African continent.

Reports of stalkborer infestations in several Woredas (administrative districts below Awrajas) of northern Shewa Region are the only indications of a (locally severe) pest problem in 1986. These reports point to a 40% crop loss due to these insects. Individual farmers could have lost their entire production.

As in any agricultural country, Ethiopia must continue to monitor and act against potentially destructive pests. This is especially the case with respect to Desert locusts. Current reports of swarms in winter breeding areas in Arabia, reported to have originated in Sudan (the Sudanese suggest Eritrea), could bode ill for next year's summer breeding season in Ethiopia. Gregarious breeding of these swarms, given appropriate rainfall, could give rise to swarms returning to Sudan and Ethiopia to breed during next year's main agricultural season. Other outcomes are also possible. The breeding swarms in Arabia could fail to materialize and present little danger next summer, or they could be blown east into India.

PEOPLE AT-RISK

Further details necessary to refine FEWS estimates of the Ethiopian population at-risk in 1987 are not available. The current estimate of the maximum number at-risk for any part of 1987 remains 3,973,000 people, 1,143,000 of whom are pastoralists with limited potential for recovery, and 2,830,000 of whom are agriculturalists. Absolute numbers tend to overstate the severity of the problem. The actual number of agriculturalists at-risk is probably much lower than 2,830,000 (perhaps closer to 2,300,000) based on descriptions of the current situation in Hararghe, Wello and Shewa regions. But even using the maximum number, perhaps as few as a quarter of them (700,000) are expected to require total assistance until the next harvest.

Ethiopia's land tenure policies may be helpful to individual agriculturalists attempting to recover from the drought. Traditional methods of coping with drought and famine usually culminate in the sale of productive resources, with the sale of land finally forcing either migration or the pauperization of rural people. Sale of land is not a possible strategy for Ethiopians. Drought victims still have access to land, allocated by the state.

While the system of land tenure has negative consequences for production as well as for the protection and expansion of agricultural lands it does, in principal, allow

famine victims to return to their usual areas and economic pursuits. Other policies of the Ethiopian government, including resettlement and villagization among others, counteract this one positive factor in famine recovery.

Those pastoralists most at-risk fit more closely into the pattern of rural pauperization as a consequence of famine. With herd sizes below the subsistence level, there is little potential for recovery without long-term outside assistance. At the same time, there is little chance for families to regenerate their herds to economically healthy sizes, given the ecological and climatological limits on aggregate livestock numbers, and the growth rate of the pastoralist population.

FOOD AID STOCKS

The USAID mission in Ethiopia continues to use 400,000 mt as the minimum estimate for emergency food aid stocks left undistributed at the end of 1986 and available for distribution in 1987. The UN Office of Emergency Operations in Ethiopia (UNOEOE), and the Ethiopian government have negotiated an estimate of 385,000 mt as the maximum amount that would be carried over into 1987.

According to the USAID mission, the maximum carryover estimate used by the GOE and UNOEOE takes into account three possible scenarios for distribution and anticipated arrivals of pledged emergency food aid during the remainder of 1986 and the early months of 1987. (See Table 1) As the negotiations leading to this estimate began no later than September, it is likely that estimates of in-country stocks and anticipated distributions are dated and relatively inaccurate.

These estimates are controversial. There is good reason to believe that the September stock figure is low, as it is partially the result of a negotiated settlement on the question of how much food was carried over into 1986 from 1985. Relief organizations, which provided much of the data for determining September stocks, believe the figure is too high.

The heavy distribution figure (113,000 mt/month) represents the amount of food aid that the RRC thinks is required by people at-risk. The medium distribution (80,000 mt/month) is that which all agree is the maximum that can be physically distributed. The light distribution (67,000 mt/month) is the average level of distribution carried out over the several months preceding this estimate. It is likely that the actual distribution will fall short of the light scenario. As has been reported,

relief organizations were expected to phase down, or postpone distributions in the last months of 1986 in concert with the arriving harvest. Several organizations have reportedly done so.

TABLE 1: Government of Ethiopia and UN Office of Emergency Operations in Ethiopia Estimates of Emergency Food Aid Carryover Stocks Into 1987, Under Three Different Distribution Scenarios. (Metric Tons)

	Scenario 1 Heavy Distribution	Scenario 2 Medium Distribution	Scenario 3 Light Distribution
Stocks Sept.-Dec.	306,207	306,207	306,207
Arrivals Early 1987	216,085	216,085	216,085
Arrivals Total	133,912	133,912	133,912
Available	656,224 *****	656,224 *****	656,224 *****
Monthly Distributions Total	113,000	80,000	67,000
Sept.-Dec. Distributions	452,000 *****	320,000 *****	268,000 *****
Carryover Into 1987	204,224	336,224	388,224

Source: USAID Mission Cable

The USAID mission's minimum carryover estimate of 400,000 mt is certainly justifiable. The actual carryover will probably fall between 400,000 mt and the previous FEWS estimate of 533,000 mt, which can be considered a maximum. A 533,000 mt carryover would require a reduction in monthly distribution, from that considered in the GOE/UNOEOE estimate, to 36,200 mt, an amount probably adequate for the people at-risk in the last months of 1986, but an unlikely low level of actual distribution. If the GOE/UNOEOE estimate of stocks as of 1 September is low, however, then a higher monthly distribution could result in the larger carryover figure.

FOOD AVAILABILITY

The picture emerging from estimates of the current harvest shows 1987 to be a complete turnaround from the food availability situation during 1984 through 1986. In

general, regions requiring food aid in 1986 have more extra food available for 1987 than was forecast as the shortfall in 1986.

Chart 1 shows the amount of emergency food aid forecast, by the RRC Early Warning Unit, as required by people at-risk in each region during 1986. This is compared to the estimated amount of emergency food aid distributed in 1986. This comparison is important for, at least in Wello Region (the largest forecast requirement), surveys of childhood nutrition show normal or lower levels of malnutrition even though distribution was only 50% of forecast requirements. In Hararghe Region similar surveys show relatively low levels of childhood malnutrition, as well--levels that, while high in terms of developed countries' experience, are nonetheless as good as "normal" in some other African countries that experienced the recent famine.

Chart 1

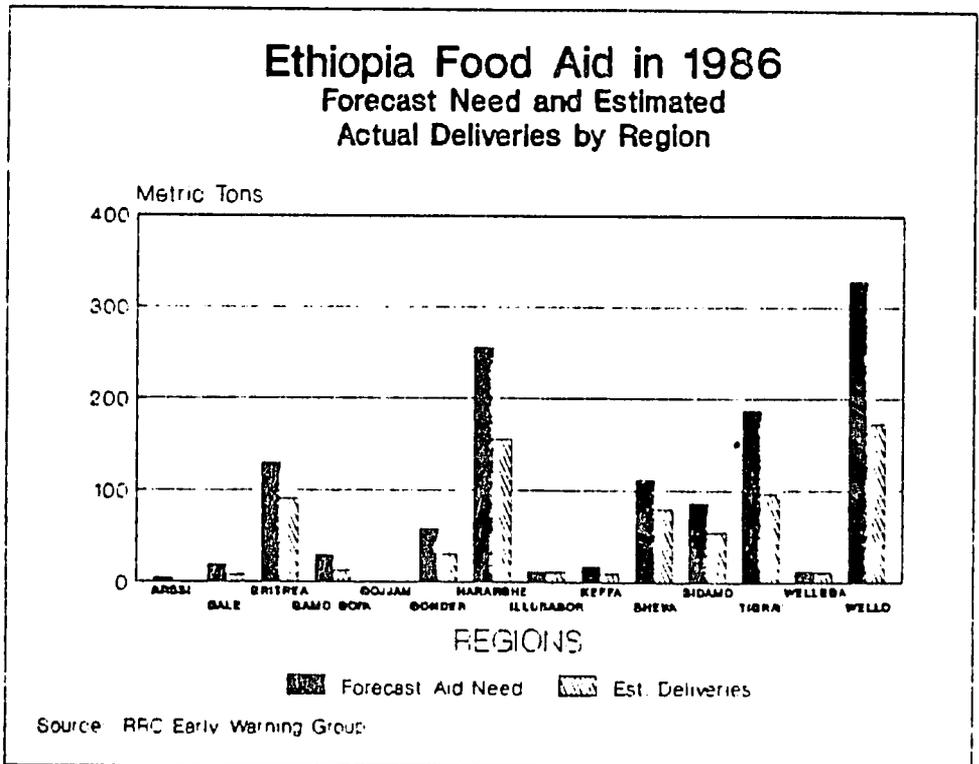
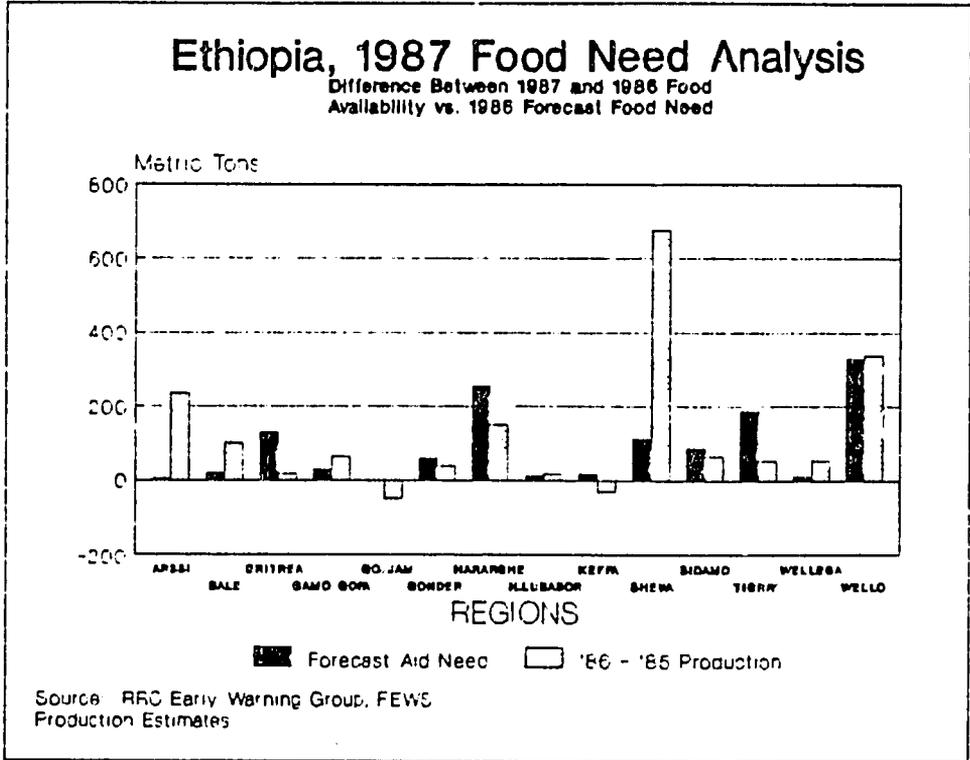


Chart 2 shows the same 1986 emergency food aid forecast and the difference between cereal and pulse production in the 1985 main season (food available in 1986) and cereal and pulse production in the 1986 main season (food available in 1987). In Wello Region, the extra food available in 1987 exceeds the shortfall forecast for 1986, which was probably double the actual shortfall, implying that Wello Region is at least self-sufficient in cereals and pulses in 1987 and could have more than a small surplus. In Hararghe Region the extra food available in 1987 is approximately equal to the food aid distributed in 1986, implying that, with no additional food aid in 1987, nutrition levels should remain unchanged from 1986.

Chart 2



In Shewa Region there should be a major surplus of cereals and pulses, and surpluses should also exist in Arssi, and Bale Regions. Even in Wellega, Illubabor and Gamo Gofa Regions, areas of reported crop failures, estimated extra food available in 1987 exceeds the food aid forecast for 1986. And, in Sidamo and Gonder, the extra production is just slightly less than the food aid forecast for 1986.

The regions of shortfall include Gojjam, Keffa, Eritrea and Tigray. In Gojjam, less food available in 1987 than in 1986 does not imply a food aid requirement as farmers' stocks could make up the difference. In Keffa Region there appears, from this analysis, to be a real shortfall. In Tigray and Eritrea Regions, both being areas of marginal agriculture, a continued food shortfall will be exacerbated by the continued conflict.

This analysis is not without its pitfalls. It assumes that the Belg harvest in 1987 will be about normal. It discounts the extraordinary Belg harvest in 1986 which contributed an additional 150,000 mt to the food supply and is in part responsible for the general nutrition levels extant in Wello Region (but, the Government of Ethiopia estimates the 1986 Belg harvest as below normal). And, it assumes that Government of Ethiopia estimates of total peasant sector production in 1985 are accurate. In fact, they could be low, and therefore there was more food available in 1986 than the government knew. Furthermore, it assumes that regional production is available for regional consumption, but food supplies must be procured for urban populations, especially Addis Ababa, as well. Finally, it understates the amount of food aid actually distributed in Eritrea and Tigray Regions. The rebel controlled relief organizations, the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) and the Relief Society of Tigray, delivered major quantities of food aid--whose exact amounts are unknown.

The general picture is of good regional food availability in 1987 in those regions (with the exception of Tigray and Eritrea) that had large numbers of people at-risk in 1986. Even within regions of adequate food availability, there will be people and whole communities that do not have adequate food resources in 1987. Nonetheless, the emergency is over and adequate resources exist within Ethiopia to ensure that pockets of need are satisfied.