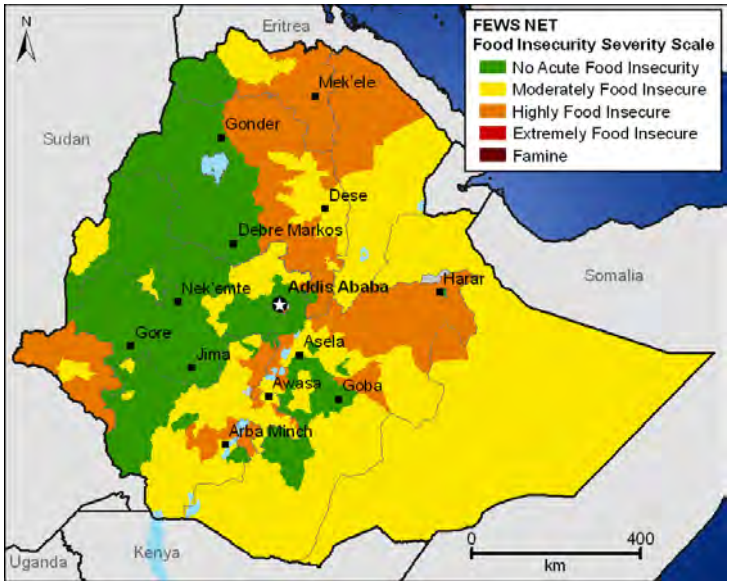
ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook October 2010 to March 2011

- Food security has improved in the *meher* crop producing parts of the country following the start of the *meher* harvest this month. Although the annual crop assessment has not yet been conducted, overall *meher* season production is expected to be average to above average this year following the average to above-average *kiremt* season rains.

- According to the National Metrology Agency (NMA) forecast for the *bega* season rains (October to January), normal rainfall distribution and quantity are likely to occur across the west and northwest regions of the country while drier than average weather is expected over much of eastern half of the nation.

- Food security is expected to deteriorate in the eastern parts of SNNPR beginning in February/March following the anticipated below-average *sapie* rains and a resulting decline in the production of transitional crops, mainly sweet potato.

Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, October 2010

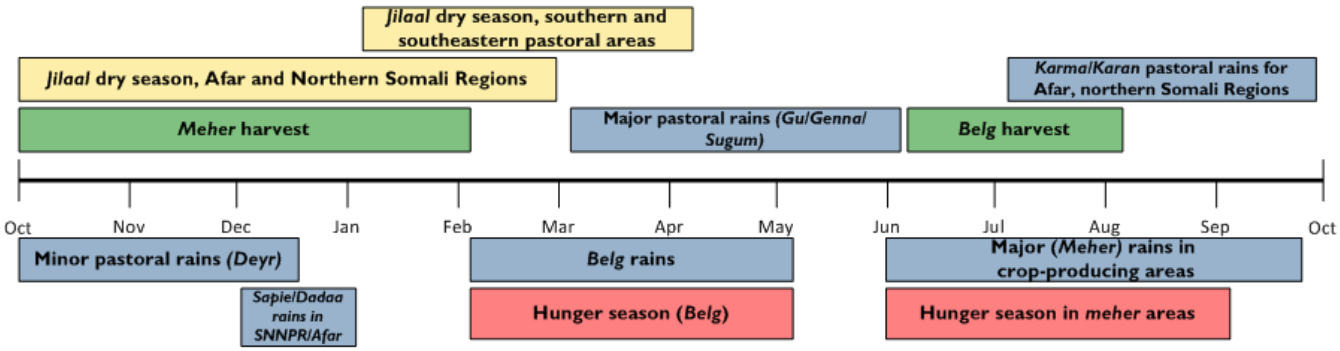


For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Source: *FEWS NET and WFP*

- Water availability, both for human and livestock consumption, is expected to deteriorate in the southern zones of Somali Region, neighboring lowlands of Bale, Borena and Guji zones of Oromia region and South Omo zone of SNNPR following the predicted poor *deyr* (October to December) rains in these parts of the country.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



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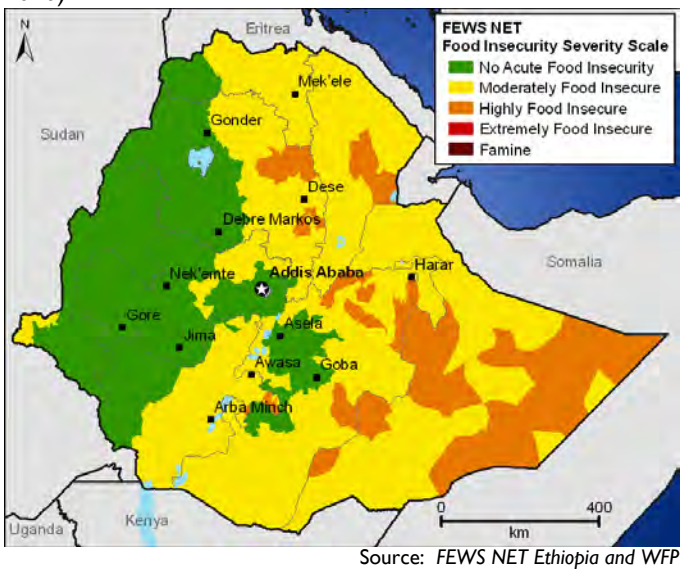
Most likely food security scenario (October 2010 – March 2011)

Food security has improved in most parts of Ethiopia with the start of the *meher* harvest in October. Food security between October and March is typically stable given that the *meher* season harvest (October to January) contributes 90 to 95 percent of total annual crop production. Official *meher* crop production levels will be estimated by the Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission in November/December. However, given the average to above-average *kiremt* (June to September) rains (according to both field reports and satellite imagery), this year's *meher* crop production is expected to be average to above average (Figure 4), except for areas in the highlands where heavy rains led to water logging, flooding, and crop pests. Prices of staples continue to be low. For example, retail price of white maize in Addis Ababa is 11 percent less than the 2005 to 2009 average and 25 percent less than that of last year. Prices of livestock on the other hand, remain high following the improvement in livestock physical conditions across most of the country. These have increased purchasing power and contributed to the overall improvement of food security.

Despite these improvements however, there will be areas that will require emergency assistance during the 2010/11 consumption year. The most likely scenario for October 2010 through March 2011 is based on the following key assumptions:

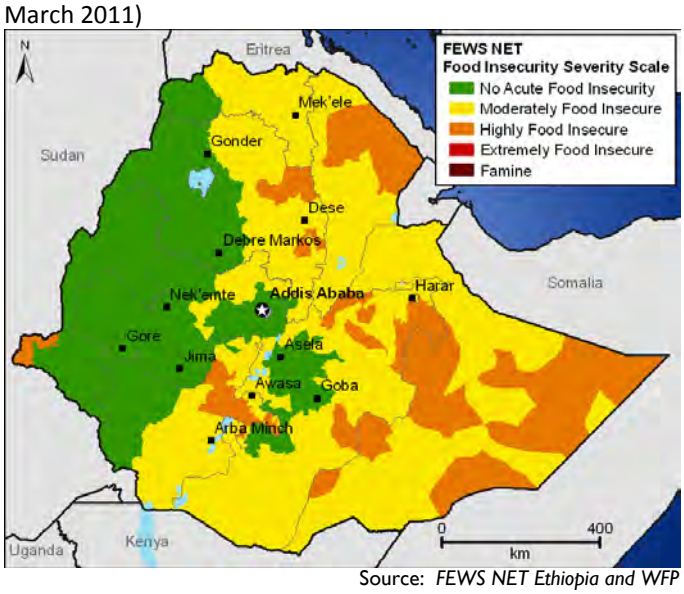
- This year, the distribution and quantity of *bega* season rains (October to January), are likely to be average across the west and northwest regions of the country.
- Drier than average conditions are expected over much of the eastern half of the nation leading to deteriorated pasture and water conditions in the pastoral and agropastoral parts of the southeast and poor production of sweet potato in eastern SNNPR.
- Prevailing conflict within Gambella region and across the border with Sudan is expected to continue and increase the number of displaced people due to conflict.
- Staple food prices are expected to remain stable through the outlook period.
- Emergency food and non food assistance is expected to be provided for identified beneficiaries based on the requirement.
- PSNP transfers are also assumed to take place as per the plan.

Figure 2. Most-likely food security outcomes (October to December 2010)



Source: *FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP*

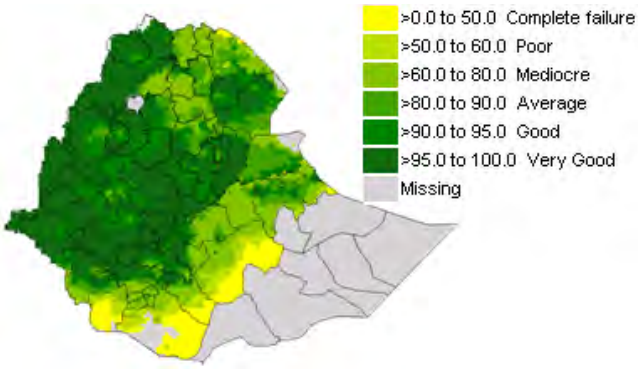
Figure 3. Most-likely food security outcomes (January to March 2011)



Source: *FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP*

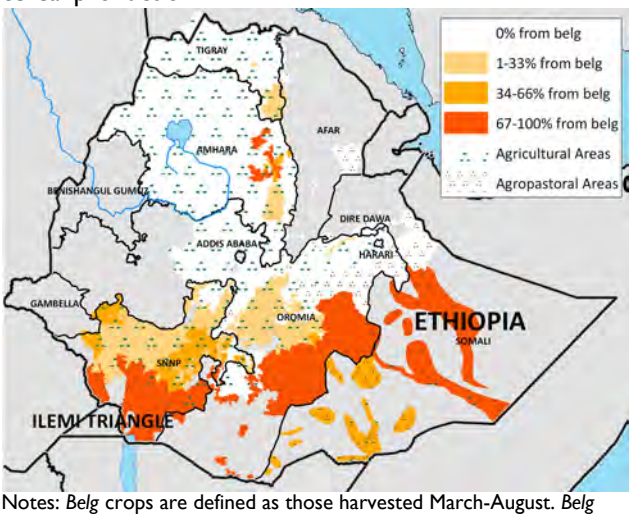
A multi-agency, multi sector assessment to estimate specific assistance needs is scheduled to begin on 21 November 2010.

Figure 4. Water Requirement Satisfaction Index for *meher* maize and wheat as of first dekad of October



Source: *LEAP (WFP Ethiopia)*

Figure 5. *Belg* cereal production as a percentage of total cereal production



Notes: *Belg* crops are defined as those harvested March-August. *Belg* rains are known as *gu* rains in southern Somali region and as *gana* rains in Oromiya

Source: *Livelihoods Integration Unit, DMFSS, MOARD, Govt. of Ethiopia, Graphics: FEWS NET*

***Meher* crop producing areas**

Most eastern *meher* producing parts of the country, including those in the eastern parts of Tigray and Amhara regions, parts of the Rift valley, and East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia region, received average to above average *kiremt* rains. There were floods in August in some woredas of Southern Tigray Zone of Tigray Region, North Wello, South Wello, and Wag Hamra zone of Amhara Region, and in the highlands of East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia Region. These floods caused displacement of people, loss of livestock, and damage of household items, planted crops, and infrastructure.

In addition to the flooding, the recent occurrence of yellow wheat rust in the major wheat producing parts of the country is also expected to result in reduced production. Yellow wheat rust, also known as stripe rust, has been reported in parts of Arsi, West Arsi, Bale, North and Western Shewa, Horogudru and Jimma zones of Oromia region, North Shewa, South Gondar, East Gojjam, North and South Wello Zones of Amahara Region, and Guraghe, Siltie, and Hadiya Zones and Alaba Special woreda of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region. The extent of the resulting damage varies and spraying has begun in almost all areas. More detailed information on the extent of the damage is expected from the crop assessment missions typically conducted in November/December and the Ministry of Agriculture. Despite the anticipated reduction in production due to the wheat rust, flooding, and excess rains, the prices of staple foods continue to be low and most people in the eastern *meher* producing parts of the country are currently moderately food insecure, though these areas are expected to be worse off over the coming months.

Exceptions are those households that are highly dependent on *belg* crop production and had poor belg season harvest in June/July this year, and those areas listed above that face significant damage to *meher* crops due to the floods. Areas with poor belg production include northeastern lowlands where the *belg* rains were below normal, the highlands of North and South Wello Zones of Amhara region which were affected by water logging and hailstorm during the belg season, and East and West Haraghe zones where a significant reduction in *belg* season production of potato and barley occurred due to potato blight and barley disease.

In these areas, poor households are currently facing food deficits as stocks from the previous belg season declined. For the flood affected, their livelihoods have been disrupted, and have therefore been classified as highly food insecure. These households are expected to remain highly food insecure throughout the outlook period as there are no events anticipated between October and March that would improve food security outcomes. External assistance (relief and PSNP) are expected to be provided through the outlook period and prevent further deterioration of food security. Improvement in food security is expected with the start of the *belg* harvest in June/July for *belg*-dependent households and in October for households which rely primarily on *meher* production.

SNNPR

Food security is also stable in most eastern parts of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (Wolayita, Hadiya, Gamo Gofa, Hadiya, Kembata Tembaro and Silti zones) following above-average *belg* root crop (sweet potato, taro and

yam) and short and long cycle *meher* cereal crop harvests. These areas also produce *meher* crops and average to above average *meher* harvest is expected this year following the average to above average rains. The *meher* dependent rift valley zones of Alaba special woreda, and the mid and lowlands of Silti and Guraghe zones have also benefited from the average to above average *belg* and *meher* rains this year which allowed for an unusual *belg* season harvest (these areas typically harvest only *meher* crops), early planting and early green harvest from long cycle *meher* crops.

Despite the overall improvement in food security, most poor and very poor households in these areas (20 to 35 percent of the total population) face chronic food shortages due to very high population density, shortage of land, and declining soil fertility. According to the livelihoods baselines, even in a normal year, the poor and very poor in most of these livelihood zones rely on food aid (emergency or PSNP programs) to meet 5-25 percent of their basic food requirements. Thus, these parts of the region will be moderately food insecure during the outlook period, despite a good 2010 harvest.

In the Sidama and Gedeo coffee livelihood zones, the performance of coffee is reported to be affected by early onset and above normal *meher* rain, leading to poor prospects for the coffee harvest this year. In addition, coffee production is cyclical, with every other year (including this year) tending to be poor, regardless of climatic conditions. This is expected to further depress the harvest. As a result, food security outcomes among coffee growing households, and the poor people who heavily rely on coffee labor as their main source of income, is expected to deteriorate beginning in October, when the coffee harvest typically begins. The poor and very people in these areas are expected to be highly food insecure beginning October.

According to the climate outlook provided by the National Meteorology Agency for the *bega* (October to January) season, the rains in the southern and southeastern parts of the country are expected to be normal to below normal. This means the *sapie* rains (December/January), which are important for the production of transitional crops, mainly sweet potato, in central parts of SNNPR, are expected to be normal to below normal. Production of sweet potato, which is typically harvested between February/March and June in different parts of the region, is therefore expected to be below average. Poor performance of sweet potato is expected to cause household food shortages and also low market supplies which may drive higher sweet potato prices during the typical lean season for these areas (February to May). This, in combination with poor caring practices, could lead to high levels of acute malnutrition in these chronically food insecure parts of the country, especially among the poor and very poor, beginning February/ March 2011.

Gambella

Food security has substantially improved in Gambella region with the start of the *meher* harvest in September. *Meher* season crop production was generally good, with the exceptions of Lare, Gog, and Abobo woredas where rainfall was erratic and heavy rains caused floods, crop damage and livestock deaths. In these woredas 14,525 people were displaced and 918 hectares of crops damaged or destroyed. In addition to those displaced by the floods, an additional 24,000 people were displaced from Akobo woreda due to cross border conflict with groups in Sudan. Food and non food assistance is currently being provided to the displaced people. Prospects for fishing are also good this year following the good *kiremt* rains that led to filling of the rivers. This has contributed to the overall improvement in food security in the region. Except for the woredas that are affected by the floods and conflicts, the rest of the region is generally food secure while the affected woredas are moderately food insecure through the outlook period.

There is a fear of continued internal and cross border conflicts particularly in Akobo, Wantao, Jikawo and Lare throughout the outlook period due to the upcoming referendum in Sudan in January 2011. Food security in the border areas of Gambella, especially Akobo, Wantao, Jikawo and Lare woredas, may deteriorate to highly food insecure if there is a large influx of refugees from Sudan.

Afar and Northern Somali Region

Performance of this year's *Karma/Karan* (July to September) rains was better than the previous year's across Afar region and the northern two zones of Somali Region. Chronically water deficit woredas (Afdera, Erebti, Bidu, Kori and Ellidar) of northern Afar Region received above average rains during the season and also benefited from highland floods that regenerated pasture and replenished water sources. As a result, livestock body conditions and milk availability in both Afar and northern two zones of Somali Region has significantly improved.

Rain fed crop production in the southern (Amibara, Dulacha, Argoba, Gewane, and Semurobi) and northern (Abala and Dallol) agro-pastoral parts of Afar neighboring Amhara and Tigray Regions is expected to be good this season. However, although flood waters have recently subsided in most affected woredas, crop-production along the Awash River, particularly in the central woredas of Aysaita, Mille, Dubti and Afambo, has been disrupted by extended floods covering both rain fed and irrigated farmland. Humanitarian access and commercial movement within these woredas, and those where bridges collapse during the flooding, continue to be limited.

In most of the woredas of Afar region, slight decreases in livestock prices, and increases in cereal prices after Eid Al-Fitr festivals were observed through the end of September. Prices of livestock are expected to temporarily increase during the upcoming Hajj season (October-December) while cereal prices are expected to stabilize or slightly decline during the same period due to increased supplies from seasonal harvests. Such temporary increase in livestock price is not expected to offset the existing problems of food unavailability for communities in flood affected woredas of Afar due to limited access of food to markets as most of the rural bridges that collapsed during the flooding are not yet rehabilitated. Cereal to livestock terms of trade is expected to be poor during the remaining part of the outlook period (January to March). Thus, the eastern half of Afar region (the area neighboring Oromia, Amhara and Tigray) will remain moderately food insecure throughout the outlook period. Chronically water deficit northern woredas such as Afdera, Erebti, Bidu, Kori and Ellidar will deteriorate to highly food insecure as of January. Conditions in the flood affected central woredas of Aysaita, Mille, Dubti and Afambo, which are currently classified as highly food insecure, will improve to moderately food insecure as of January through the outlook period. These areas depend on Awash River waters in irrigating flood recession areas for crop production during October to December and by January short cycle crops are harvested.

In the northern two zones of Somali region on the other hand, the performance of both *Diraa* (March to May) and *Karan* (July to September) rains were significantly above normal, leading to substantial improvement in pasture and water availability. Milk production has also substantially improved in these areas. Prices of cereals throughout the woredas of these zones are lower than that of last year at the same time, while prices of livestock are also reported to be high leading to favorable terms of trade. However, the repeated failure of seasonal rains in recent years has led to a substantial decline in livestock holdings. Improvement in terms of trade for the pastoral and agro pastoral communities is also attributed to high demands for livestock after lifting of livestock trade ban by importing Arabian Gulf countries followed by Eid Alfitr and upcoming Hajj season (October to December). Thus, the northern two zones of Somali region will continue to be moderately food insecure throughout the outlook period as communities will use the recipes of the good year to maintain current food security status during the dry period (October to March).

Somali Region and the Oromia/SNNPR lowlands

The *Gu/Gana/Belg* rains (April-June) are the main rains for the southern zones of Somali region, neighboring lowlands of Oromia region and South Omo Zone of SNNP region. The *deyr* rains (October-December) are the secondary rains in these same areas. Each year between 1999 and 2009, rainfall during at least one of these seasons was below the long term average in these parts of the country. The consecutive effects of poor seasons culminated in high livestock mortality, poor conception, and low birth rates, which diminished livestock holdings at the household level for all wealth groups. Flooding in riverine areas has been the major disasters recorded during these years for every normal seasonal rain that increased livestock mortality. The above-average rains during the 2008 and 2009 *deyr* season and the 2010 *Gu/Gana/Belg* season generally improved water and pasture availability, leading to gradual recovery of livestock body conditions, increased births and milk availability, and reduced livestock mortality. However, reduced livestock holdings, and the related impacts on food security persist. In addition, security related market access problems exist in the five zones (Korahe, Dagahbur, Wardher, Fik and parts of Gode) of Somali Region, and pastoral communities of other parts of Somali Region, Bale lowlands, Borena, and Guji zone of Oromia and South Omo are known for recurring conflicts and livestock raiding that escalate during bad seasons, like the one forecasted during October-December 2010. These conflicts over resources (water and pasture) caused displacement and loss of livelihoods. The cumulative effect of such hazards and shocks reduced community resilience and increased the level of dependence on external assistance.

Due to above normal rains during this year's *Gu/Gana/Belg* (April to June) season, crop cultivation in agro-pastoral and riverine areas increased significantly, although an equivalent increase in crop harvests has not been realized in riverine areas due to prolonged flooding and infestation of pests. The problem affected irrigable and flood recession areas that usually produce about 40 percent of the cereals grown in this part of the country. However, a good harvest has been

realized in most agro-pastoral areas. Ginir, Gololcha and Gasera woredas of Bale lowlands, and Gelana and Abaya woredas of Borena zone, that suffered from pest infestation and local floods during harvest, are exceptions.

Prices for livestock have substantially increased following the improvement in livestock body conditions and the increase in demand that coincided with lifting of livestock trade ban by importing Arabian Gulf countries and holiday festivals of Eid Alfitr (September) and Hajj season (October to December). The prices of cereals slightly declined in most of agro-pastoral areas of Southern Somali, Bale lowland, Guji and Borena zones of Oromia and South Omo of SNNPR due to improved seasonal harvest and relief food distribution through WFP's hubs and spokes system in Somali Region. In Somali region, prices of cereals have remained stable, despite failed seasonal harvests in the riverine areas of Southern Somali Region, due to continued relief food distribution. This has resulted in improved livestock to cereal ToT for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in the concerned areas.

According to the Ethiopian National Metrological Agency (NMA) and World Metrological Organization (WMO), La Niña conditions are likely to result in below-avergae *Deyr* Rains (October to December) Water shortages and poor crop production is anticipated. As a result, pastoralist livelihoods are likely to be affected, particularly in areas that depend on surface water harvesting (southern Somali Region and Borena zone of Oromia Region) and agropastoralist households that had poor *Belg* harvests this year (Ginir, Gololcha and Gasera of Bale lowlands, Gelana and Abaya of Borena zone of Oromia). Areas with anticipated water shortages include Miyo, Dire and parts of Teltele of Borena zone of Oromiya region, Wardher, Danot and Bokh of Wardher zone, entire Fik zone, Gunagado and Dagahmadow of Dagahbur zone, Danan, East Emi and Adadle of Gode zone, Shilabo and Dobowein of Korahey zone, Guradamole, Gorobaqaqsa and Barey of Afdher zone and Hudent of Liban zone of southern Somali region.

Food security outcomes are likely to depend heavily on the effectiveness of humanitarian response that provide water and relief food to the affected communities. Therefore, pastoral communities in water deficit areas of southern Somali region; and agro-pastoral communities in Bale lowlands, Guji and Borena zones of Oromia that faced crop failure will be highly food insecure throughout the outlook period in the absence of adequate assistance and failed *deyr/hagaya* rain.

River flooding in Wabe Shebele, Dawa, Genale, Woito and Omo due to average to above average *kiremt* (July to September) rains in the neighboring highlands caused crop failures in these riverine areas. However, assuming that the *deyr* rains are below normal, as forecast, the residual moisture from these floods will be sufficient to enable crop production in currently flooded riverine areas while additional *deyr* rain showers will boost crop growth during the season. Thus, food availability is expected to improve after the local harvest in January, though the sharing of crop harvests through informal social security system will undermine substantial improvements in food security and poor households will remain moderately food insecure though the outlook period.

Table 1: Less likely events over the next six months that could change the above scenarios.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Parts of SNNPR-Wolayita, Gedeo, Sidama, Kembata Tembaro and Hadiya zones and the southern special woredas	• Average to above average performance of the *sapie* rains	• Average to above average production of sweet potato which will contribute to the stability of food security in Eastern SNNPR.
Gambella Region	• Decline in the level of internal and external conflict.	• Continued moderate food insecurity for the population who are currently displaced due to conflict and flooding.
Southern Somali, Lowlands of Bale, Guji and Borena zones of Oromia Region and South Omo of SNNPR	• Average to above average *deyr* rains. • Continued movement and commercial trade in the five restricted zones of southern Somali Region	• Continued moderate food insecurity in areas that receive the good rains. • Extreme food insecurity in some of the areas within the restricted areas.
All areas	• Irregular and inadequate resources transfers through the PSNP and emergency programs	• Unusually high levels of cereal prices. High levels of acute malnutrition/rapid increase in the rates of admission to OTPs and SCs