EAST AFRICA Food Security Outlook April to September 2011

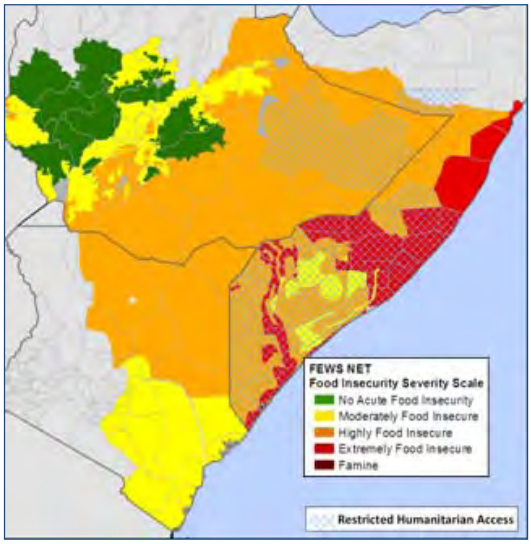
Key Messages

- Households in pastoral and marginal cropping areas in the eastern Horn currently face moderate to extreme levels of food insecurity due to ongoing drought, increasing staple food prices, declining purchasing power and in some areas, limited humanitarian assistance (Figure 1).

- Forecasts for the March to May rainfall season indicate a likelihood of below-normal rains in the eastern Horn. In most of the cropping areas, the below-normal rains will most likely exacerbate food insecurity conditions through June 2011, before temporarily improving between July and September following harvests. However, the pastoral areas will most likely experience further deterioration of food insecurity until September as the rains are unlikely to fully restore the browse and water resources (Figure 2).

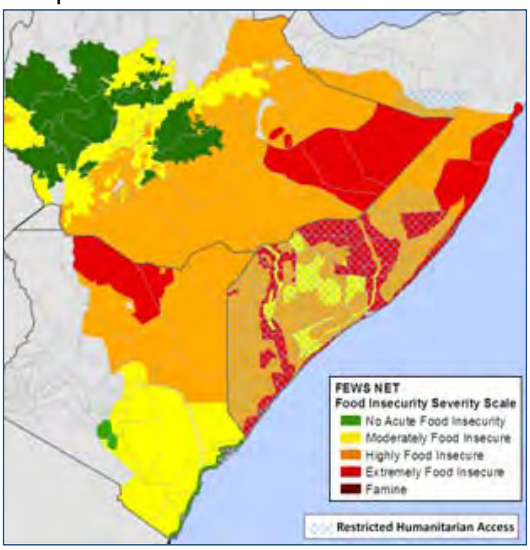
- Current assistance programs are inadequate to mitigate existing and expected food deficits and high malnutrition. In areas with humanitarian access, expanded programming should be implemented to address current and expected food insecurity. However, development of new strategies is critical in order to reach affected households in areas with limited humanitarian access.

Figure 1. Estimated food security outcomes in the eastern Horn, April to June 2011



Source: *FEWS NET/FAO/FSNAU/WFP/ALRMP*
For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Figure 2. Estimated food security outcomes, July to September 2011



Source: *FEWS NET/FAO/FSNAU/WFP/ALRMP*

Households in pastoral and marginal cropping areas are currently the most food insecure in East Africa. These households are facing moderate to extreme levels of food insecurity due to an ongoing drought, deteriorating purchasing power, and, in some areas, limited access to markets and to humanitarian assistance. Following two seasons of average to above-average rainfall in most areas, the 2010 October-December rains were extremely poor – by some measures the worst in 30 years– across the region's eastern sector. January/February harvests completely failed in most agropastoral areas. In pastoral areas, poor rainfall has severely limited both livestock conceptions and pasture/water availability. Household purchasing power has also declined across these same drought–affected areas.

The March-April-May (MAM) period is particularly important for the eastern parts of the Greater Horn of Africa region. It is the main rainy season when about 40 to 80 percent of total annual rainfall is received. According to IGAD's Climate Prediction and Application Center's MAM consensus climate outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa, increased likelihood of near-normal to above-normal rainfall is indicated over the western and southern parts of GHA while near-normal to below-normal rainfall is indicated over the eastern parts of the region (Figure 3). The predicted near-normal to below-average rainfall could have

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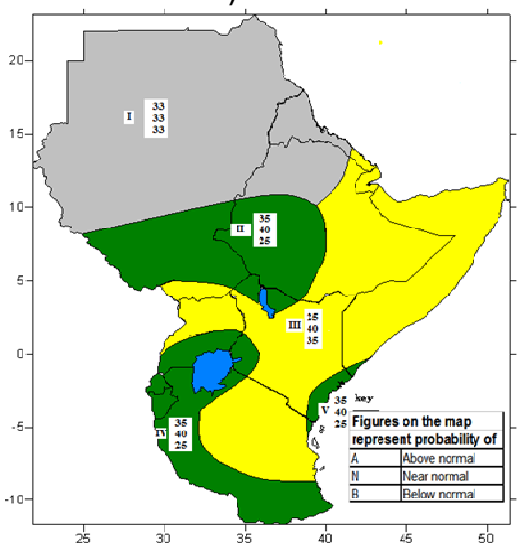
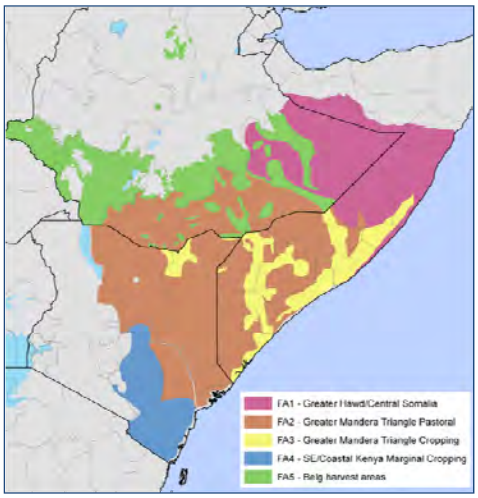
a substantial negative impact in these pastoral and agropastoral parts of the region as well as areas that produce belg (second season production) crops in Ethiopia. Most of these areas are already highly and extremely food insecure.

Figure 3. GHA Consensus Climate Outlook: March - May 2011



Source: ICPAC

Figure 4. Areas of concern in the eastern Horn



Source: Source: *FEWS NET/FAO/FSNAU/WFP/ALRMP*

Most likely food security scenario – April to September 2011

Drivers of food insecurity will vary from one area to another and five areas can be delineated based on the livelihood patterns and the importance of the MAM cropping season (Figure 4). These areas include: the southeastern marginal agricultural areas and coastal lowlands of Kenya; the pastoral areas of the Greater Mandera Triangle; the cropping areas of the Greater Mandera Triangle; the Greater Hawd and central Somalia region; and, the Belg region of Ethiopia. The most likely food security scenario for April to September period is premised on the following assumptions:

(i) The MAM rainfall in the eastern Horn will be below normal. The deficiency of the rains will however vary by region as follows:
   a. The agro-pastoral marginal cropping areas of southeastern Kenya will most likely receive 60-80 percent of average rains with an erratic onset and distribution;
   b. The pastoral greater Mandera Triangle rainfall will most likely be 80-85 percent of average in Somalia, 60 percent in Kenya and 70 percent in southern Ethiopia; with normal onset and erratic distribution;
   c. The Somalia-Ethiopia Hawd region will receive 60-70 percent of average rains with normal onset and erratic distribution;
   d. The cropping areas of southern Somalia are likely to receive 75-100 percent of average rains with normal onset and erratic distribution;
   e. The Belg cropping areas of southern Ethiopia will most likely receive 75 percent of average rains with erratic distribution.

(ii) Prices for key locally-produced staple grains are expected to increase from April through June/July in all the areas of the eastern Horn, but will most likely ease slightly from July/August through September following harvests.

(iii) Water prices are expected to remain stable at the current high level. Water availability is expected to improve in April with the start of the Gu rains; however increases in fuel (water transport) prices will cause prices to remain high.

(iv) Sugar and rice prices in these areas are already high in line with international commodity markets and will most likely remain high but stable through September 2011.

(v) Cattle prices are expected to decline in all areas from April to May while goat prices will most likely remain stable.

(vi) Livestock prices in Somalia, Djibouti and Somali region of Ethiopia will likely increase with increased demand from the Hajj and Ramadan in August.

(vii) Longstanding safety net programs and ongoing emergency interventions will remain at their current levels.

(viii) There will be no new outbreaks of conflict.

Southeastern marginal agricultural areas and coastal lowlands

These areas, which include Kwale, Kilifi, Malindi, Makueni, Mwingi, Kitui, Tharaka, Mbeere, Mwea and Machakos districts/counties in Kenya, experienced above-average 2009 short rains (SR) harvests that were followed by consecutive poor 2010 long and short rain seasons. The extension of the 2009 SR into February 2010 led to aflatoxin in the bumper maize harvest and an eventual ban in maize trade out of these districts. It is most likely that wholesale traders and better-off farmers in these districts are still holding stocks from the 2009 SR which has contributed to prices in most markets being comparably low (less than the five-year average) despite two consecutive failed seasons.

The consecutive seasonal failures have led to reduced labor opportunities for the very poor and poor households (who comprise about 50 percent of the population). Although the food consumption of these households has declined, most of them are still able to meet survival needs due to favorable maize market prices as evidenced by the fair nutritional status for children under five years of age. For example, the percentage of children under five 'at risk' of malnutrition (measured as MUAC<135 mm) are 20-50 percent below the five-year averages in Kwale, Kitui, Mbeere and Taveta. However, very poor households have resorted to using negative coping strategies like charcoal burning and sand harvesting while meeting their survival needs. These coupled with ongoing humanitarian intervention programs implies that most households are moderately food insecure, a condition that will most likely persist through June 2011.

It is anticipated that the 2009 SR carry-over stocks held by traders in these southeastern marginal areas will most likely begin to dwindle starting in April 2011. This will force traders to seek supplies from external markets (i.e. 2010 long rains harvests from high-potential areas). This will lead to significant increase in market prices in these marginal districts as prices in the key surplus markets are already high. The high prices will most likely stretch the purchasing power of the poor and very poor households. However, these households will get respite from the increased labor opportunities, consumption of non-cultivated vegetables, and improved access to milk that is likely to accompany the onset of the rainy season in April, and which will enable them to continue meeting their survival needs.

Although MAM rains are expected to be below normal, they will most likely lead to realization of near-average harvests of cowpeas, pigeon peas, green grams, sorghum and millet, leading to replenishment of household food stocks. Following the harvests, most households in the southeastern highland areas and coastal strip will most likely experience no acute food insecurity, while most of the poor and very poor households in the inland lowland areas will still remain moderately food insecure as the MAM period does not comprise a major cropping season in these areas.

The pastoral areas of the Greater Mandera Triangle

The pastoral areas of the Greater Mandera Triangle, comprising northeastern Kenya, southern Somalia and the southern Ethiopia areas of Borena, Omo, Konso, Burji, Amaro and Dirashe, experienced a failed *deyr* 2010 season resulting in: (i) a significant reduction in pasture and browse across the region; (ii) drying up of all non-permanent watering points; (iii) a significant increase in water prices (in Southern/Central Somalia, about 40-80 percent above the previous year and in some cases reaching the highest level ever); and (iv) a significant reduction in deyr 2010 sheep and goats conceptions, estimated at below 25 percent in Somalia and southern Ethiopia. The limited availability of water and browse has led to unusually long trekking distances for livestock in search of water, leading to severe deterioration in productivity. Livestock body condition, especially cattle, has declined significantly, leading to lowered value and prices, and increased distress sales. There is increased culling of young kid and lambs conceived during the last deyr, a strategy aimed at saving the does.

Although the 2010 LR staple food harvests from Ethiopia and Kenya were above normal, poor market infrastructure and high marketing costs have constrained lower price transmission from surplus areas, exposing pastoralists to high and increasing prices of local staples due to high transaction costs. This situation is exacerbated this year by above-average fuel prices, which have led to significant increases in transport costs, particularly to markets in isolated areas. Prices of rice and sugar that comprise other important diet commodities have remained high in tandem with international commodity prices.

The MAM rains, although projected to be below normal, will most likely offer some relief through improvement in water and pasture availability between April and June. Even though water availability will improve compared to current conditions, these resources will not be fully replenished and shortages will most likely reappear during the July-September dry season. In addition, the April to June pasture regeneration will be below average due to erratic temporal distribution of rainfall. However, pasture is likely to be substantially better than in 2009 when the gu/long rains failed completely. In some pockets pasture regeneration may be much better, though these will attract pastoralists and pasture would not be expected to last the season. These conditions will lead to significantly below-average milk production, reduced number of lactating shoats due to failed deyr impact on conceptions and the culling of calves and kids in some areas. Specifically, in central Somalia goat and camel milk availability will most likely be 14 percent and 55 percent of the baseline, respectively, based on the assumptions that 1) conceptions will be 25 percent of normal for goats, and normal for camels, and that 2) milk yields will be 55 percent for all species. Consequently, many households are expected to remain highly food insecure through September despite the rains.

The cropping areas of the Greater Mandera Triangle

The cropping areas of the greater Mandera Triangle include both the rainfed cropping areas in Gedo, Jubas, Bay Bakol and the Shabelles and the irrigated strips within the Juba and Shabelle valleys. In these areas, the total *deyr* 2010 harvests were about 20 percent of the five-year average. The significantly below-normal harvests coupled with restricted humanitarian access have caused most of the crop agriculture-dependent households within the Juba valley (Juba riverine livelihood zone) to become extremely food insecure. Similarly, most households in the agro-pastoral areas remain in precarious conditions due to reduced livestock productivity (both milk production and livestock market value) against a background of increasing prices of staple foods and water. As a result, the livestock to cereal terms of trade have continued to deteriorate causing most households to become highly food insecure. The deteriorating food insecurity has led to high malnutrition rates – for example, the November/December nutrition surveys conducted by FSNAU in southern Somalia found GAM prevalence above 25 percent across livelihoods in Juba and Gedo (SAM>6 percent) and above 20 percent among IDP populations in Afgoye.

Although the March-May rainfall forecasts for these areas are expected to be 75-100 percent of normal with timely onset, the food security conditions in the Juba riverine livelihood zone is unlikely to improve as most households have high vulnerability to shocks (either flooding or drought). The livelihood zone is also occupied by marginalized ethnic groups that are not only less preferred by creditors as borrowers, but also have the least access to remittances in the country and therefore low levels of social support. These communities are culturally tied to land and not inclined to move during shocks. Most of their food sources are from own production, which is entirely rain-fed or flood recessional. It is therefore projected that deterioration in food access, nutrition, and mortality will most likely persist through June as most households will remain extremely food insecure. There is likelihood of short-term improvement following the harvest in July (estimated at about 50 percent of average), though improvements are unlikely to last beyond September.

Greater Hawd and central Somalia region

The Greater Hawd and central Somalia region comprises the Lowland Hawd pastoral livelihood zone of Somali region of Ethiopia, Hawd Pastoral, Addun pastoral and Coastal Deeh of Somalia. In these areas, performance of both the deyr 2009 and gu 2010 rains was normal to above-normal; however the 2010 deyr (October to December) rains were a near failure, leading to a longer-than-usual dry season. In Somali region in Ethiopia, some pockets in Warder received deyr rains and pasture was available. However, these areas have received large inflows of livestock from Somalia. Currently dry grass and shrubs are available only in remote areas away from water sources. In areas near water sources, pasture is very poor. Severe water shortages are reported in all areas and people are relying on water trucking for human and animal consumption. Water prices in December/January in Southern and Central Somalia were 40-80 percent above the previous year. While water trucking is common during the end of the jilaal season, water trucking needs have been longer than usual this year. Conception of shoats was also very low following the poor deyr rains. Livestock loss of about 50 percent was reported in the Coastal Deeh livelihood zone of Somalia due to drought and increased sales. In the other livelihood zones (apart from the Coastal Deeh), livestock holdings are about 75 percent of the baseline. Both livestock and staple food prices are high and continue to show an increasing trend, and therefore terms of trade continue to be stable, despite the prevailing drought conditions. Livestock prices are high mainly due to the lifting of the livestock import ban by the Gulf countries. There is also limited or low volumes of marketable livestock at the household level and overall higher inflation compared to the reference years.

Income from wage labor and petty trade is lower than usual because of increased supply by IDPs and destitute pastoralists who have relocated to urban centers. The devaluation of the Ethiopian currency has increased the cost of imported food items in Somali region, including oil, sugar, pasta, and rice. Ongoing security-related market access problems since 2007, particularly in the Hawd parts of Somali Region of Ethiopia, have increased transaction costs for livestock exports. In Coastal Deeh, piracy and related activities on the coast prevent access to the sea, affecting trade routes between coastal rural and urban centers, and hindering fishing activities. There was limited food aid distribution to the Somali region of Ethiopia over the past six months while Central Somalia received substantial food assistance throughout 2010. In the Coastal Deeh livelihood zone however, no food assistance was provided due to insecurity leading to limited humanitarian access. Households in this area also have fewer livestock to sell than usual which is affecting their ability to purchase staples and water.

January to April is the peak lean season in these areas and the combination of increased water expenditures and reduced ability to earn income through shoat sales means that this lean season is more severe than usual. Some schools in Warder

have closed due to water shortages and there is abnormal migration to permanent water points in Hawd of Somali region, Mudug, Sool and Coastal Deeh. Culling of young animals is also reported in Addun pastoral and Coastal Deeh. All of these areas are currently highly food insecure apart from the Coastal Deeh livelihood zone, which is extremely food insecure.

If gu rains are below average as predicted, pasture regeneration will be below average. Milk yield is expected to be 50 to 60 percent of average for this time of year. Water availability will improve with partial replenishment of birkads. Conflict over resources and increased displacement of people due to the conflicts is expected in all areas following the poor availability of pasture and water. Decline in herd size will occur for shoats before and after the gu rains due to increased sales and mortality. The decline in herd size in eastern Addun and Coastal Deeh will be particularly high. Despite the predicted below-average rains, though, herd size of camels is expected to be close to normal because of good camel conception levels during gu 2010. Milk production however, is expected to be below-average due to low availability of pasture and browse.

A significant decline in goat milk availability is expected until the gu rains begin in April. Availability of camel milk is also expected to be about 50 percent of the baseline; therefore milk availability for household consumption will be very low. There will be increased borrowing of food for consumption, especially among poor households.

Following the poor performance of the gu rains, no goat milk production is expected and camel milk production is expected to decline further. There will be increased atypical camel sales to purchase staples and water. Poor households are expected to reduce the number of meals consumed. Reduced water and milk availability are expected to contribute to increased levels of malnutrition during the hagaa (July to September) period. Some poor pastoralists will reach an unsustainable level of livestock holding and and move to areas of pastoral destitution, concentrated mainly in Abudwaq, Dhusamareeb, Galkacyo, and Guriceel towns of central region. There is an ongoing humanitarian intervention in all these areas, however, the assistance provided is reported to cover only about 40 percent of the population that requires assistance. In coastal deeh in particular, due to the significant loss of livestock, poor and very poor households will increasingly rely on charcoal sales and the social support system.

Most poor households in Somalia Hawd and Hawd of Somali region of Ethiopia will continue to be highly food insecure while those in Coastal Deeh and Addun pastoral will continue to be extremely food insecure between April and June. Food security in Hawd of Somali region is expected to deteriorate further between July and September to be extremely food insecure while the other livelihood zones will remain highly food insecure. Deterioration in Somali region of Ethiopia is expected due to the prevailing restriction on movement and trade that limits humanitarian access in these parts of Ethiopia while Hawd of Somalia receives continued food aid since 2008. Hawd of Somalia also has better access to cheaper imported commodities due to its proximity to the sea.

The Belg crop producing parts of Ethiopia

Belg season is the secondary season for most parts of Ethiopia except for the south and southeastern pastoral and agropastoral areas where the rains are the main season rains. Nearly one million people in Southern Tigray and northern Amhara regions rely on this season's rains to produce crops which contribute 40 to 85 percent of their total annual production. Similarly, populations in parts of Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regions (SNNPR) use the February to May rains to produce up to 80 percent of their annual food crops. In addition to the belg crops, many areas in central and eastern SNNPR produce root crops, mainly sweet potato, using the *sapie* rains (December/January), that is consumed between February and May during the lean season until the belg harvest begins in June.

Meher season harvest (the main season harvested between October and January) was normal to above normal this year in most of these areas. Performance of *sapie* rains has been below average and is expected to lead to reduced production of transitional root crops. Poor production or failure of transitional crops typically leads to rapid deterioration of nutritional status in these areas due to acute shortage of food in this extremely densely populated, chronically food insecure part of the country. Onset of belg rains is already late this year, leading to delayed land preparation and planting of belg crops. Prices of staples, especially maize and wheat, have started rising beginning in January and general inflation levels are also high. If performance of belg rains continues to be below average and staple prices continue to rise, poor and very poor households in belg crop producing parts of the country that are currently moderately food insecure are expected to deteriorate to highly food insecure between July and September. Poor and very poor households in the coffee-dependent livelihood zones of Sidama and Gideo of SNNPR are already highly food insecure due to poor performance of coffee during the meher season that led to reduced availability of coffee labor which is the main source of income for these groups of

people. Similarly, the belg-dependent population in parts of North and South Wello are also highly food insecure following below-average belg season crops in 2010. Most of the poor and the very poor households in these parts of the country receive assistance through the Productive Safety Net Program, the Government's multi-year assistance program for chronically food insecure populations.

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

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Pastoral areas of the Greater Mandera Triangle and the Greater Hawd and central Somalia region	Rainfall less than 50 percent of average in most areas and surface temperatures warmer than normal	• Further increase in water prices • Declines in livestock to cereal terms of trade in pastoral areas • Large-scale animal mortality and a substantial decline in livestock prices • Conflicts over resources expected to intensify • Most households become extremely food insecure
Marginal cropping areas of Juba and Hiran	Rainfall less than 50 percent of average	• Crop production less than 50 percent of average with significant drop in food intake • Localized famine conditions with significantly increased child mortality due to constrained humanitarian access and the current high malnutrition rates
Southeastern marginal agricultural areas of Kenya	Rainfall less than 50 percent of average	• Crop production less than 50 percent of average with overall reduction in incomes and food intake • Malnutrition rates to increase but unlikely to reach emergency levels and no mortalities anticipated due to ongoing food assistance program • Most households to become extremely food insecure
Belg crop producing parts of Ethiopia	Rainfall less than 50 percent of average and leading to near total failure of transitional root crops and belg crops	• Poor and very poor households in belg crop producing parts of Ethiopia will face extreme levels of food insecurity. • There will be a rapid increase in levels of acute malnutrition among children under five especially in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region. • Increase in the number of people who require emergency food assistance is also expected.