

BURKINA FASO Food Security Outlook

January through June 2011

Key Messages

- With the replenishment of household food stocks and current trends in market prices for grain, there is a good food security outlook for potential problem areas through April.
- Certain very poor and poor households impacted by last year's harsh lean season in pastoral areas and/or by this year's floods could be facing food shortages beginning in June, which will be addressed with food assistance.
- The satisfactory physical condition of livestock should help terms of trade continue to favor pastoralists into June.

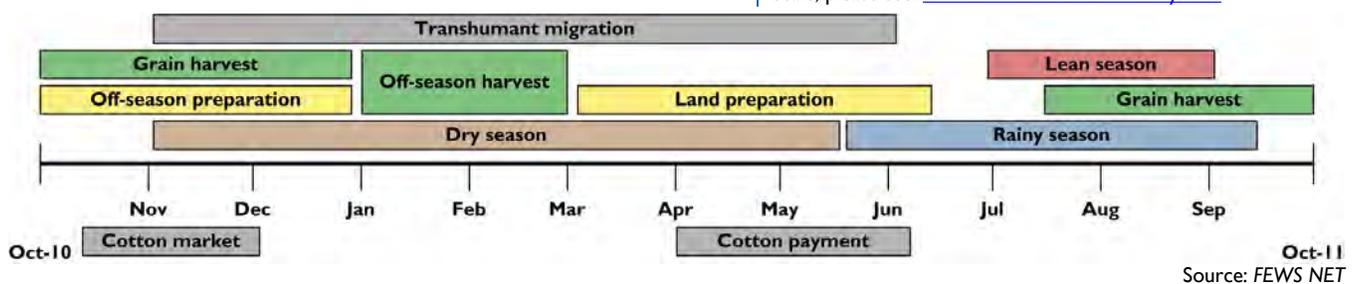
Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, January 2011



Source: FEWS NET

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

Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Source: FEWS NET

Most likely food security scenario, January through June 2011

Without significantly impacting potential problem areas, the heightened crisis in Ivory Coast is adversely affecting the industrial fabric of Burkina Faso's western region whose supplies of staple commodities were coming from Côte d'Ivoire. While there has been a continuous flow of trade, there was a noticeable decrease in exports to that country in 2009 and 2010. The sole exception were cowpea exports, whose share of total exports jumped from 38 percent in 2009 to 54 percent in 2010 with the increased production of that crop in recent years. The 10 to 30 percent rise in the price of oil between November and December in markets across the country is one sign of the impact of this crisis, since a good portion of the country's oil supplies is imported from Côte d'Ivoire. The groups liable to be affected by the crisis in that country are cowpea producers, for whom Côte d'Ivoire is a major market for their crops, growers of market garden crops in the western part of the country hurt by the lack of the usual competition between buyers from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and very poor and poor households in livelihood zone four (West cereals and remittances) relying on relatives working in that country for a large part of their income.

Current calls for bids by the National Food Security Reserve Management Company (SONAGESS) for the rebuilding of the national food security reserve should help keep prices from plummeting and encourage farmers to ship their grain to markets. This, in turn, should help supply structurally deficit areas of the North, the Sahel, North-Central, and the East with grain.

The most likely food security scenario in potential problem areas is based on the following assumptions:

- Compared with figures for an average year, more of the marketable grain surplus will be sold in markets in the country's different livelihood zones during the course of the outlook period.
- Continuing efforts to replenish household food stocks throughout the month of January and the rebuilding of institutional reserves between February and May of this year should not disrupt normal market operations. There should be a normal flow of domestic and foreign grain trade. However, there will be a larger than usual increase of approximately 25 percent in exports of cowpea crops to neighboring countries (Ghana, Benin, and Togo), as well as to Nigeria via Niger. There should not be any restrictions on trade or any changes in foreign trade policy.
- The currently good conditions for livestock should continue through the first quarter of the year and beyond, shortening the lean season for the animal population. Markets are reporting a small contraction in supplies and expecting a normal domestic and foreign demand. On the other hand, the rise in livestock prices will continue beyond the end of January, jeopardizing any chances for certain very poor and poor households to rebuild their livestock herds after having lost some (up to half) of their animals as a result of last year's pasture shortages and floods.
- In general, the larger than usual influx of returnees and/or refugees from Côte d'Ivoire should not affect market operations and/or food security conditions during the outlook period.
- Provinces with large unmet grain needs as of the end of the 2010/11 agropastoral season or at-risk areas for food insecurity will be singled out and furnished with government assistance through the mobilization of the national intervention stock in July and August.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) will continue to provide assistance to some 65,000 flood victims under cash-for-work or cash transfer programs through the end of March. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will furnish 1,250 poor households with three breeding animals and assist 2,100 households with animal feed or with the harvesting and storing of fodder.
- Middle-income and better-off households will not face acute food insecurity during the outlook period and may even make it to the next round of harvests without facing any major food shortages.

Figure 2. Livelihood zone map



Source: FEWS NET

The size of the food insecure population, estimated at approximately 360,000 in an average production year, should be smaller than usual throughout the outlook period and concentrated in areas with grain production deficits and/or impacted by climatic hazards in 2010.

Livelihood zone seven (North and East livestock and cereals)

More than 60,000 members of very poor and poor flood-stricken households and/or households impacted by production shortfalls will require food assistance in this area with an estimated total population of approximately 1.8 million rural dwellers, 40 percent who are classified as poor and 15 percent as very poor.

Household food stores have already been rebuilt by farming households and are in the process of being replenished by market-dependent households with income generated by sales of livestock, gold washing activities, and sales of market garden crops. There is good household food availability, even for the poor, thanks to on-farm consumption by very poor and poor households.

Grain markets are well stocked with local crops. December prices for white sorghum were down by 10 percent from the previous month, while prices for local millet crops were up by 10 percent and prices for both crops were lower than at the same time last year.

As usual, very few animals offered for sale in livestock markets at this time of year are from the small animal herds of poor households. These animals, which are a form of savings, are currently being conserved to help facilitate herd-rebuilding efforts after last year’s losses and mass sales between April and July. The efforts of very poor and poor households to rebuild their small animal herds as a source of income for buying grain during the harsh lean season in July/August are a continuing source of concern.

Food security outcomes for most very poor and poor households in January were marked by a normal seasonal decrease in malnutrition rates, which may drop even further than usual thanks to good household grain availability, large supplies of vegetables on local markets at affordable prices, and the availability of milk for pastoral households, though supplies are increasingly limited. Most households are not facing acute food insecurity.

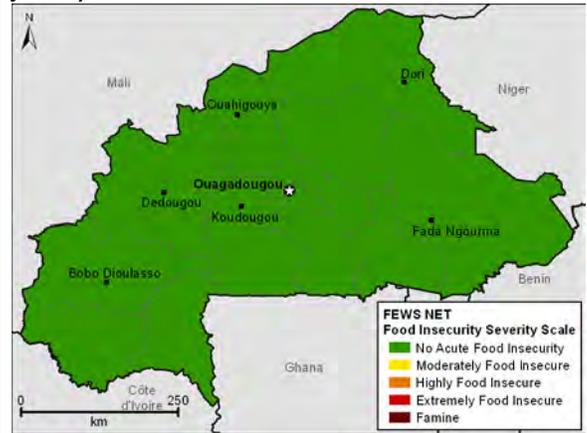
The assumptions underlying the food security scenario in this livelihood zone for the outlook period are as follows:

- Household stores of millet and/or sorghum will be at least 20 percent larger than last year.
- Construction/repair work on flood-damaged homes and other community infrastructure will extend into March and require additional funding from wage income earned from employment in market gardening operations and/or assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in this area after last year’s floods.
- Market gardening activities will be increased in order to generate additional income, with at least 20 percent more acreage planted in crops.
- Livestock prices will stay slightly or two to four percent higher than last year throughout the outlook period.
- Seasonal migration by cattle and sheep will begin on time in April with the usual tightening of milk supplies for pastoral households at that time of year.

Household stocks of millet and/or sorghum from good harvests will extend the on-farm consumption period for poor households by one to two months. As a result, the lean season will start at least a month later than usual, delaying the seasonal increase in malnutrition rates and rise in the number of admissions of malnourished patients to health facilities. Market dependence for the purchasing of food supplies will be delayed by at least one month and, as usual, sales of livestock for the purchasing of grain will be limited.

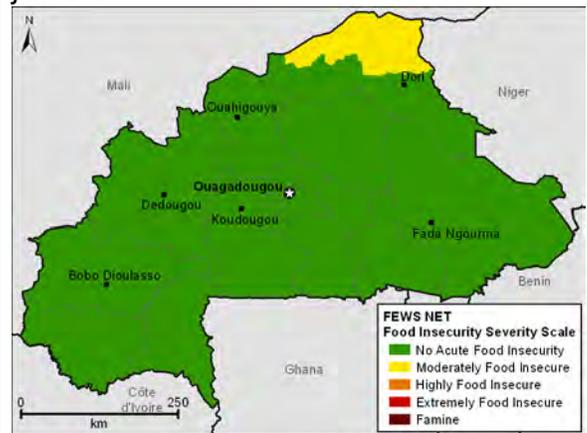
Repayments of debts in-kind or with income earned from sales of cash crops (cowpeas, market garden produce, etc.) will continue and the prepayment of outstanding loans will mean less social pressure from borrowing. There will be more grain consumption than usual by households with production surpluses for traditional ceremonies between January and April. This could shorten the duration of the grain stocks of this group of households by up to one month and draw down on the grain reserves of poor households to near-normal levels, with the lean season for this group of households and their market dependence beginning on schedule. Higher construction costs for flood-stricken poor households will be covered, in part, by the sale of approximately 25 percent of their cash crops and by reductions in nonessential expenditures by poor

Figure 3. Most likely food security outcomes, January-March 2011



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 4. Most likely food security outcomes, April-June 2011



Source: FEWS NET

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

households. This will reduce inventories of cash crops, whose prices will increase in the face of a sustained demand for these crops. Efforts by poor households to make their own bricks will also reduce construction costs to some extent.

Construction/repair work on flood-damaged homes and other community infrastructure will extend into the month of March, increasing reconstruction costs and demand for local labor at more attractive daily wage rates, along with the incomes of poor households, through cash for work programs in flood-stricken areas.

Stepped-up market gardening activities and the expansion of the area planted in crops by at least 20 percent should heighten demand for local labor, raise daily wage rates, and produce a good harvest.

Livestock prices are expected to be higher than last year throughout the reference period, limiting possibilities for poor households to rebuild their herds by purchasing animals and using other strategies. Terms of trade for livestock/grain will continue to favor pastoralists. Market-dependent poor households may end up selling one of their small animals in order to maintain their grain access. Efforts by poor households to rebuild their small animal herds will focus on promoting new births from remaining animals after the last consumption period.

In sum, poor households will make normal use of their usual income-generating strategies during the outlook period (migration, sales of straw, gainful employment as laborers in market gardening operations, etc.) and increase their migration to gold washing sites in order to quickly replace lost animals. The government and its partners will donate breeding animals and animal husbandry inputs to poor households between January and March, targeting disaster victims in particular, assist women's groups and organizations with the drying of vegetable crops during this same period to ready them for sale during the rainy season, and donate improved seeds to poor and flood-stricken households in May/June for the growing season for rainfed crops. The sale of grain from the government's national intervention stock at subsidized prices beginning in June/July should help improve grain access for poor households.

Markets should continue to function normally and should be well stocked with local crops through March/April and, afterwards, with crops shipped in from southern farming areas, with these shipments reaching their peak in July. Grain prices should continue to be affordable for most households.

Very poor and poor households should not face any food gaps between now and April. However, there could be food shortages beginning as of May, which will be partially offset by normal household coping strategies with no adverse effects on livelihoods. In general, household livelihoods should function normally, though livelihood outcomes for flood-stricken households will be below-normal. Most very poor and poor households will not face acute food insecurity.

Livelihood zone eight (North transhumant pastoralism and millet)

As one of the country's highest risk areas for food insecurity, by April, livelihood zone eight will have as many as 115,000 poor rural residents and close to 57,500 very poor residents accounting for 40 and 20 percent, respectively, of its total population.

The current food security situation is marked by the stockpiling of crops and the building of new granaries in localized areas, a good supply of natural pasture and surface water resources, the normalization of the physical condition of livestock, and the return of transhumant animal herds (from Mali, eastern Burkina Faso, and Niger) since November to take advantage of the good pastures in this area and take part in so-called "salt cure" festivals. Households have replenished 30 to 50 percent of their grain stores from on-farm production and/or through market buying with income earned from sales of livestock. Household food availability is good, even for poor households, thanks to on-farm consumption by very poor and poor households. Grain markets are well-stocked with local crops and December grain prices were down from the previous month, as usual, and were lower than at the same time last year.

Supplies in livestock markets were normal for the month of December and prices were advantageous for pastoralists. Poor households are selling very few animals as part of their herd-rebuilding efforts after last year's losses and mass sales of livestock between April and July. The high prices of livestock are bringing in substantial amounts of income for pastoral households, which are benefiting from favorable terms of trade for livestock/grain.

Current livelihood conditions are marked by normal rates of migration by women and youth to traditional gold mining sites and, since December, by above-normal rates of migration by youth to neighboring countries and large cities for domestic employment with better-off households in order to earn enough income to contribute to rebuilding their livestock herds. The normal season downturn in admissions of malnourished children to treatment centers has begun.

Assistance efforts continue, with food for work programs and school meal programs operated by the WFP, government assistance, and donations of breeding animals and animal husbandry inputs by the FAO. Targeted recipients include larger than usual numbers of very poor and poor flood-stricken households and households having lost part of their herd during last year's lean season in pastoral areas.

As of January of this year, most poor and very poor households are not facing acute food insecurity. Based on data for admissions to treatment facilities, global acute malnutrition rates are presumably normal if not below-normal. Poor households are not experiencing any obvious food gaps, and, in general, are engaging in their normal livelihoods. Any negative effects of the coping strategies of poor households badly hurt by large losses of livestock or emergency slaughters during last year's lean season on their livelihoods are not yet visible.

The assumptions underlying the food security scenario in this livelihood zone for the outlook period as follows:

- Household stores of millet will be above 2009 figures by 30 to 50 percent and the five-year average by 15 to 25 percent.
- 90 percent of all locally grown cowpea crops will be sold on the market.
- In spite of the good harvest, prices for local grain crops will be similar to figures for the same time last year.
- Prices for livestock will stay 10 to 20 percent higher than last year and five to 10 percent above the five-year average throughout the outlook period.

The thirty to fifty percent larger food stores of local households will extend the on-farm consumption period by an average of two months, delaying the usual start of the lean season by at least one month. There will be more grain consumption than usual between January and April in connection with social events (such as marriages, baptisms, deaths/funerals, and festivals), drawing down the grain reserves of corresponding households by up to 10 percent. Market dependence for the purchasing of food supplies will be delayed by at least one month, which means that, as usual, sales of livestock for the purchasing of grain (beginning in April) will be limited. Sales of part of the grain harvest and repayments of debts in-kind or with income earned from selling cash crops such as cowpeas will draw down household grain inventories by approximately 20 percent. Together with the sale of grain inventories, this will bring the grain reserves of poor households back down to near-normal levels, extending the on-farm consumption period for certain households by a maximum of one month and delaying the start of the lean season, also, by one month (until June instead of May), with more or less normal market dependence for the purchasing of food supplies. The increase in admissions of malnourished patients to health facilities will also be delayed.

Markets should function normally and should be well stocked with local crops through March. Shipments of crops to local markets from southern farming areas will begin in April, reaching their peak in July. A small number of poor households able to earn enough income between December and February will buy grain in anticipation of the seasonal increase in prices.

Efforts by poor households to rebuild their livestock herds through purchases and the increase in the use of other strategies will be limited, with the main focus on new births by remaining animals after the last consumption period. There will be a few minor purchases of two to three small animals by poor households in January and February, whose maintenance will be facilitated by the availability of natural pasture and residual crops.

The government and its partners will assist poor households through donations of breeding animals and animal husbandry inputs and donations of improved seeds for poor and flood-stricken households in May/June for the growing season for rained crops (the FAO, the government, and NGOs). This assistance will be accompanied by government subsidies for improved seeds and fertilizer to make prices more affordable to other households. The sale of grain from the government's national intervention stock at subsidized prices beginning in June should help improve grain access for poor households. This sales program will target at-risk departments for food insecurity identified by the food security monitoring mission in February of this year.

Poor households will make normal to above-normal use of their usual income-generating strategies during the outlook period (migration, sales of straw, gold washing activities, craft-making activities, gainful outside employment, etc.) in order to earn enough income to buy grain during the lean season. Other coping strategies will involve pooling the livestock herds of poor households or inserting the female animals of poor households into the herds of middle-income and better-off households tended by the poor to help increase the number of new births. There should not be any food deficits through the end of April. On the other hand, there will be food shortages beginning in May, which will be partially offset by normal household coping strategies, with no adverse impacts on livelihoods. Social marketing programs will help narrow the large food gaps expected in June. Livelihoods will continue to function more or less normally, and there will be fewer than usual acutely food insecure poor households. Malnutrition rates should be normal.

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

Area	Event	Effects on food security conditions
Nationwide	Continuing political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire	Activation of the contingency plan for the likely repatriation of between 75,000 and 235,000 returnees. Decrease in cash remittances from that country, larger numbers of poor households to feed in receiving areas, and outbreak of land disputes with the beginning of the rainy season in May/June in receiving areas .
Livelihood zone eight (North transhumant pastoralism and millet)	Threats from AQMI (Al Qaeda in the Maghreb) in border areas of the Sahel (Mali, Niger)	Less tourism income used for the purchasing of grain in local markets to round out the household diet.
	Unusually large volume of grain exports to Niger and/or grain imports from Mali to meet a growing sub-regional grain demand	Likely rise in prices in border markets, deterioration in grain access for poor market-dependent households beginning in February (with prices peaking in August).