NIGERIA Food Security Outlook Update August 2010

High food insecurity persists in the extreme north despite favorable rainfall in August

- Abnormal flooding in July and August led to destruction of about one-third of standing crops in many northern states such as Zamfara, Katsina and Jigawa. Flooding is expected to continue in some riverine areas of major water points, leading to crop losses of up to 20 to 30 percent, increasing the number of highly food insecure households, who are in need of food assistance in the affected areas.

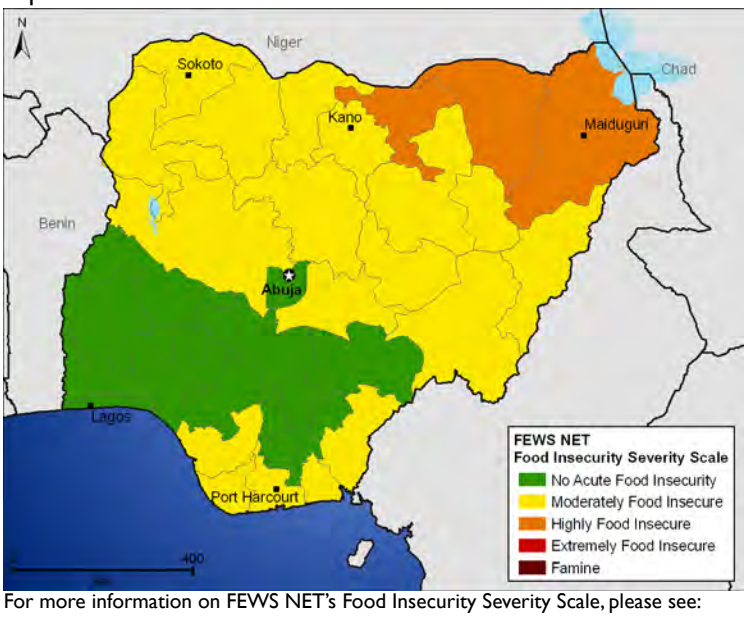
- In the South, gari prices in July dropped substantially in major markets, including Ibadan, in Oyo, where prices decline by 47 percent. This is the first significant drop in the price of gari since 2008. . Vegetables, fruits, and early yam and maize crops are widely available in households and on local and urban markets, easing the pressure on demand for gari, and improving poor-household food security throughout the South during the August-December period.

Updated Outlook through December 2010

In June and July, rainfall was erratic in most areas of the North, leading to moisture deficits near Dutse and southern Borno (Figure 3). In August heavy rains covered most parts of the North, improving the performance of the 2010 growing season. According to satellite imagery, and FEWS-NET enumerators, excessive flooding covers many northern states. In the states of Zamfara, Katsina and Jigawa, the early green harvest was delayed, and about one-third of standing millet crops was destroyed.

In the North West, in the states of Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara and Niger, where the season started normally in mid June, crop stand, in the field, is generally good with maize and millet, ranging from flowering to grain filling. In the northeast, comprising the northern parts of the states of

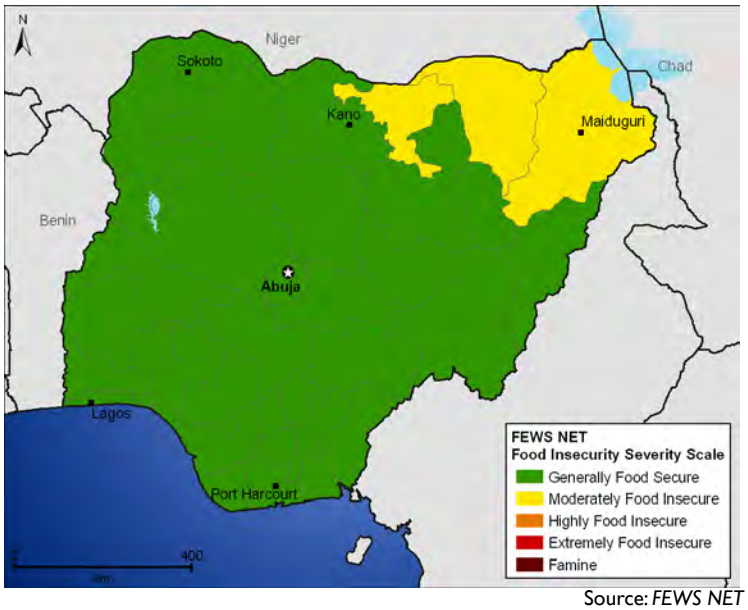
Figure 1. Map of most likely s food security conditions, August-September 2010



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

Source: *FEWS NET*

Figure 2. Map of most likely food security conditions October-December 2010



Source: *FEWS NET*

This report provides an update to the July 2010 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions in July through December 2010. The next Outlook report will be released in October and will cover the October 2010 to March 2011 period.

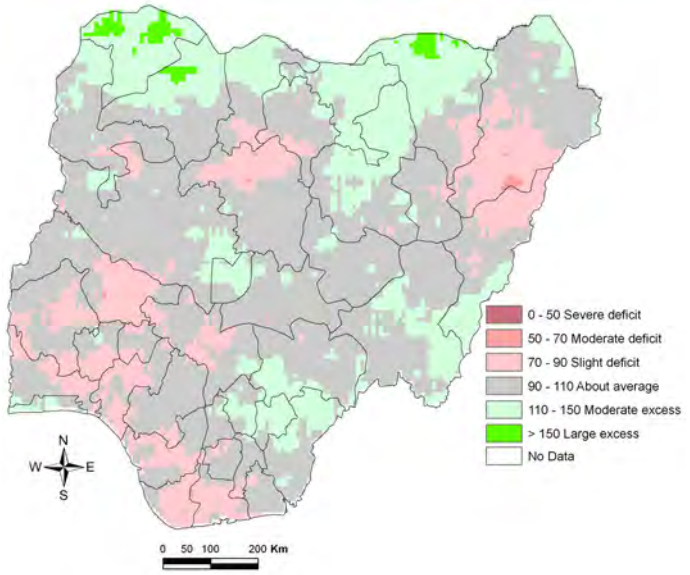
FEWS NET Nigeria
Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 461 4921
nigeria@fews.net

FEWS NET Washington
1717 H St NW
Washington DC 20006
info@fews.net

Borno, Yobe and Jigawa, where the season did not begin conclusively until the last decade of July, millet and sorghum crop growth are delayed and range from heading to flowering.

Recent forecasts indicate a high probability of excessive rains, in localized parts of the North Central and the Extreme North, and prolonged dryness, in few areas in the Extreme North. Abnormal flooding, particularly in the riverine areas of as the Niger River in Kebbi and Niger states, the Sokoto river in Sokoto and Zamfara, Hadeja Valley rivers in Jigawa, Benue River, in Benue and Nassarawa could lead to losses of up to 25 percent of millet and sorghum crops. Losses of maize crop will range from 10 to 15 percent, as the bulk of the maize would have been harvested by the first decade of September, and maize is resistant to flood. Production shortages will lead to a 20-percent reduction in agricultural households' own-production, compromising the recovery of poor households from poor 2009 harvests in the Extreme North. Demand for agricultural labor will decrease by about 30 percent, while labor supply will increase, reducing wage rates by about 20 percent. Flooding will restrict access to emerging pasture and water points. The number of highly food-insecure households in need of assistance will increase in the Extreme North.

Figure 3. Satellite-derived estimate of total cumulative rainfall anomalies for April 1 – August 10, 2010 compared to average (2005-2009)



Source: *FEWS NET/NOAA/USGS*

Above-normal rains during the first decade of August, combined with dirty runoff and poor sanitation, has led to an outbreak of cholera and an upsurge in malaria cases in many northern states, such as Borno and Bauchi. Given poor health infrastructure, high food insecurity and the expectation of additional heavy rains during the next dekad, it is likely that cholera and malaria cases will increase, accelerating the rate of acute malnutrition in the northeast and the northwest, where wasting is as high as 22 and 20 percent, respectively, according to a Food Security and Livelihood Assessment in Sokoto, Plateau and Borno states, conducted by Oxfam in June.

Recent forecasts from the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) reiterate the high probability of prolonged dryness in some areas of the Extreme North, such as Kebbi, Borno, Yobe, Plateau, and Taraba, and an early end of season in some states such as Katsina and Jigawa. Both will result in significantly decreased yields of millet and sorghum, if the of rains cease when cereal crops are at the critical grain filling stage. It is likely that pest infestation, particularly Queala bird attacks on millet and sorghum, will compound the impact of the early end of season, like last year in northern Borno when birds contributed to up to one-third of production shortages in the state. In the most affected areas, households will cope by overselling their livestock and intensifying labor migration of able-bodied young men during the October-December period. However, abnormally high livestock sales and remittances will not be sufficient to fill the food gap. Mild to moderate food deficits are likely to begin in April 2011, three months before the normal onset of the lean season.

Most pastoral areas of northern Borno, Yobe and Jigawa were not flooded; they received however above average rains in July and early August. Despite these rains, the lean season is still critical despite favorable rainfall conditions during the first decade of August, as livestock access to pasture and water has remained inadequate. Pasture regeneration is slower, in the extreme North, than the rest of the country because of chronic and structural environmental degradation, compounded this year by overgrazing due to very high concentration of livestock from Nigeria, Chad, and Niger in May-June. Low livestock prices continue to reduce poor pastoral households' income from animal sales, constraining their access to food. The price of an average male goat, which was only NGN 2500 in July, remained unchanged in August in Geidam (northern Yobe), while the price of millet increased slightly. As a result, goat-to-millet terms of trade fell from 50 kg to 43 kg. The recent rains have reduced expenditures on water for household and animal consumption, which have been abnormally high since May 2010. In late September, improved pastures and the presence of livestock near homestead will improve milk production, paving the way to a long recovery process.

Previous concerns expressed by some national and international stakeholders that food insecurity might deteriorate to emergency levels in the agricultural and pastoral areas of the Extreme North are not likely to materialize, as household food insecurity has reached its peak and is likely to decline in September.

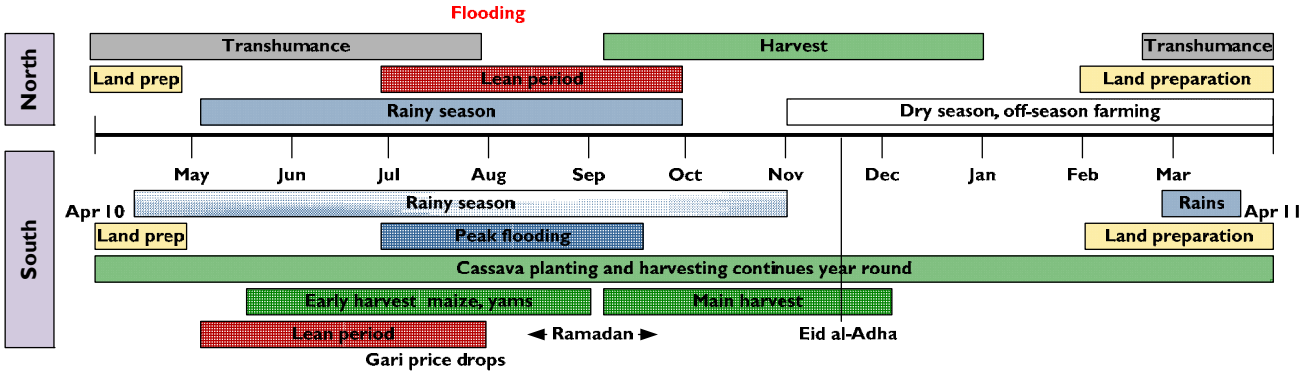
With the exception of sorghum prices, prices of all staples were stabile between July and mid-August, indicating an early peak of the lean period in the North. The departure from normal is due to an early arrival of a large green harvest into local markets. Quantities marketed are slightly above normal because household expenditures are high due to the Ramadan and fertilizer needs. Farm-gate cereal prices will decrease in early September by about 20 to 30 percent, as more producers expand their harvests, and prices of all staples will follow this downward trend, starting mid-September.

In the South, rainfall performance is above normal and crop growth generally good in most areas. Large areas in the southwest (Ondo, Osun, Ekiti, Ogun and Oyo) experienced erratic rains in late July and early August, consistent with normal seasonal pattern. The temporary absence of rains, usually called *August break*, has allowed local maize crop to dry and farmers to prepare for the second growing season. In some areas of these states, however, a prolonged dryness of about six weeks caused substantial damages to yam, threatening the harvest.

Rains resumed heavily during the first dekad of August, a peak period for flooding, in the coastal areas. Floods caused heavy losses of yam and maize crops in Lagos, Bayelsa, and Delta states, increasing the number of people requiring emergency assistance. More people are likely to need additional emergency assistance, as recent forecasts indicate an increased chance of above-normal rains into September. High moisture and reduced sunshine will hinder maize drying, delaying the arrival of the new maize into the markets and maintaining maize prices at high levels. Most poor households will remain moderately food insecure in the coastal regions of the country until October, when receding floodwaters will recede, offering access to fish and water plants, improved grazing conditions and recessional agriculture. These activities will be sufficient to compensate for localized crop shortages.

As the harvest progresses in the South, most urban and local markets experienced their first significant price drops. Though the price of gari remains slightly above the nominal five-year average (11 percent), the retail price of gari declined from NGN 105 the kilogram to only NGN72 in Bodija market, in Ibadan between late July and mid August. Such a sudden decline in gari prices is attributable to low household demand and high market supplies. As food becomes widely available in the South with the normal peak of the green harvest in August, the pressure on household demand for gari has eased. Most households will continue turning to cocoyam, a foodstuff for the poor and a substitute for gari, which is widely available both in local markets and among households, due to a good harvest, diverting pressure from gari to other crops. Given that very high price of gari has been a major driver of food insecurity since 2008, the 47-percent drop will improve substantially household access to food. Most households in the southeast and the southwest will remain food secure during the August-December period.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: *FEWS NET*