

DJIBOUTI Food Security Outlook Update

May 2011

Beginning in April 2011, FEWS NET is transitioning to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's (IPC) Household-based Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, which is scheduled for release with IPC version 2.0 in July 2011. For more information see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale.

Food security critical in pastoral and urban areas

Key messages

- Significant food deficits exist in all pastoral livelihoods due to a combination of two consecutive failed rainy seasons and high staple food prices. The situation is especially critical in the northwest pastoral livelihood zone and southeast pastoral border livelihood zone. Food security is not expected to improve through the end of the year though forecasts are favorable for the July to September season.
- Poor urban households face significant food deficits and their income is expected to decrease seasonably over the coming months, particularly for those who rely on petty trade activities. In addition, the high staple food prices are limiting the ability of urban household to assist relatives in rural areas.

Updated food security outlook through June 2011

The cumulative impact of ongoing drought has led to a food crisis (IPC phase 3) in two of the country's livelihood zones (northwest and southeast pastoral livelihood zones). In addition, staple food prices are higher as compared to both last year and the five-year average. Poor households in the central lowland pastoral livelihood zone and the central highland pastoral livelihood zone are facing stressed (IPC phase 2) food insecurity due to mainly a reduction in remittances and limited food and income from livestock. Water is very scarce in most livelihood zones and pasture and browse are extremely limited. Pastoralists are shaking the acacia trees to collect animal food, an indicator of a very serious situation. Malnutrition rates among children are expected to deteriorate in coming months due lack of milk, the main source of food for children under 5 years of age during this time of year. The food security situation in urban areas is also critical, with the majority of poor households are facing a crisis level of food insecurity due to high staple food prices and reduced employment opportunities and limited petty trade activities due to the upcoming summer holiday.

In addition to the failure of *Heys/Dada* rains (Oct-Mar), no significant rains have been recorded during the current *Diraac/Sougoum* season (Figures 3 and 4). There is consequently a significant water deficit in grazing areas of all pastoral zones, and water catchments are practically dry. This has led to irregular

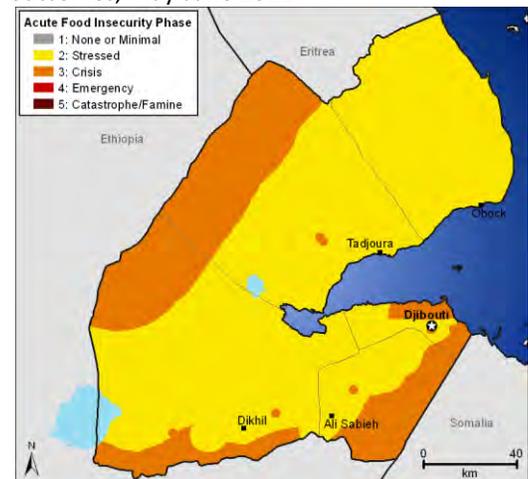
This report provides an update to the April 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions in through September 2011.

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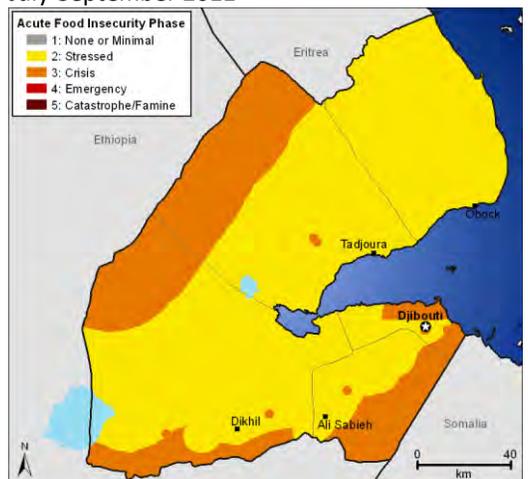
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Figure 1. Estimated current food security outcomes, May-June 2011



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Most-likely food security scenario, July-September 2011



Source: FEWS NET

For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see:

www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

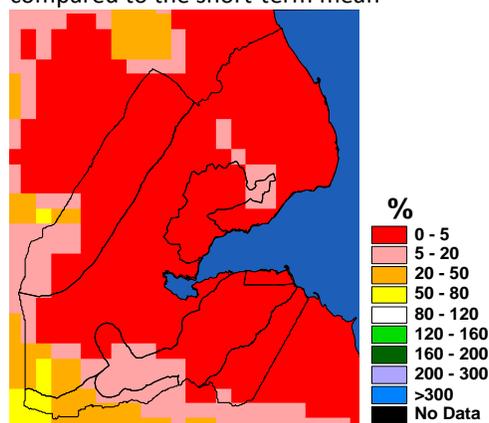
movement of livestock and concentrations of the remaining weak herds at permanent water points. Reports indicate a high incidence of waterborne diseases, leading to high livestock mortality. Extensive water tankering is needed to prevent further deterioration in food security conditions.

Although the next main rainy season does not take place until July (the *Karan/Karma* season), some localized showers may occur during the remainder *Diraac/Sougoum* rains (March-June) though forecasts indicate that drier-than-normal weather conditions over Djibouti and neighboring areas during this time.

Northwest pastoral

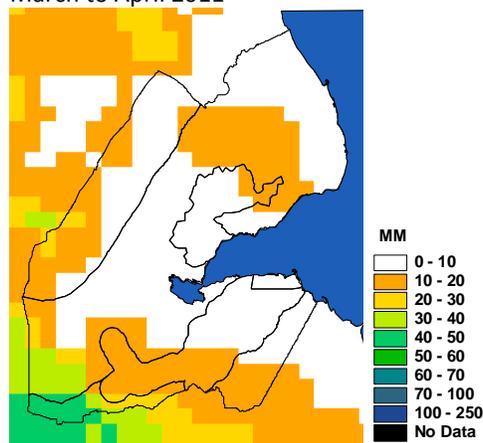
The population in this zone is chronically food insecure and depends entirely on livestock to obtain food and income. Abnormal migration of livestock to the coastal areas during the *Heys/Dada* season and high livestock mortality (5% for camels and 25% for goats) has been observed. Herd sizes are 60 percent of the baseline year (2003) for camels, while goats are only 40 percent as compared to the baseline year. has been reported. Milk and butter production/availability has declined significantly and remaining animals are very weak, depressing livestock prices and limiting income from livestock sales. Recent below normal rains (Figure 2) partially replenished the traditional water catchments in certain parts of the zone. Pasture and browse are very limited and are unlikely to improve substantially before July. The combination of low income and low milk production, together with high staple food prices in neighboring markets in Ethiopia is contributing to a significant food deficit that is likely to persist until September, assuming normal *Karan/Karma* rains.

Figure 3. March- April 2011 rainfall compared to the short-term mean



Source: USGS, Graphics: FEWS NET

Figure 4. Cumulative rainfall levels (mm) for March to April 2011



Source: USGS, Graphics: FEWS NET

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Far below seasonal average	Rainfall are not expected until July
Milk production	Far below seasonal norm	Little improvement is expected
Butter production and sales	Far below seasonal norm	Little sales this season
Livestock sales and prices	Decreased prices	Reduced sales and decreased prices
Palm leave collection and prices	Decreased prices	Increased collection, decreased prices
Cereal/salt exchange	Stable	Decreased prices
Staple food prices	Increasing	Increasing

Central pastoral

Animal body conditions are currently very poor and milk production is very limited. Livestock mortality has been estimated at 20% for cattle, 5% for camels and 20% for goats. The herd sizes are 60 percent of the baseline year (2003) for the camels and cattle, while goats are only 40 percent as compared to the baseline year. Recent below-normal rains in the upper escarpment of the central lowlands are expected to partially offset the limited pasture and browse in the short term. Livestock are following their normal migration pattern and will concentrate soon on the highlands as well as the plains in the Northwest Pastoral Zone (e.g., Andaba, Makarasou) to escape the summer heat.

The main source of food for the population in this zone is purchase. Cash income is obtained mainly from remittances and to certain extent livestock products. Livestock sales and milk production are expected to decline, resulting in a minor food deficit for the poor households in this zone from June to August. The prospects for the rest of the season are not promising and the minor food deficit, which is mainly linked to the reduction in milk, will have a negative nutritional impact on

children. The food security in this zone is currently stressed (IPC phase 2) and is expected to remain so during the coming months.

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Far below normal seasonal average	No rains until July
Milk production	Far below seasonal norm	Little Improvement is expected
Livestock sales & prices	Far below seasonal norm	Improvement in sales
Firewood sales & prices	Stable	Decreasing prices
Payment of Government salaries and pensions	Regular	Regular
Staple food prices	Gradually increasing	Gradually Increasing

Southeast pastoral

The prolonged drought and cold night temperatures during April further weakened the surviving herds in this zone. Livestock mortality has been estimated 5% and 3% for camels in the border subzone and in the roadside subzone respectively. For the goats the mortality rate has been estimated 20% and 25% for the roadside and border subzones respectively. The herd sizes are 60 percent of the baseline year (2003) for the camels and cattle, while goats are only 40 percent as compared to the baseline year. Milk production is significantly below normal. Pasture and browse conditions are expected to improve temporarily in the Southeast Roadside Sub-zone, however, the erratic below-normal rains are not sufficient to replenish the water catchments and regenerate pasture in the zone as whole, particularly in the *Diraa* grazing areas in the east of Dikhil District down to Obono in Ethiopia. Opportunistic tick borne diseases have been reported in Arta, Ali-sabieh and Dikhil.

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Below seasonal average	No rains are expected until July
Goat milk production	Far below seasonal norm	No improvement is expected until kidding in late July
Camel milk production	Far Below seasonal norm	Improvement is expected In June
Milk sales and prices	Far below seasonal norm. Stable.	No improvement until September. Prices likely to decrease
Livestock sales and prices	Decreasing	Increasing sales, low prices
Wood sales and prices	Increasing sales, low prices	Increasing sales, low prices
Charcoal sales and prices	Stable	Low prices
Payment of government salaries/pensions	Regular	Regular
Staple food prices	Gradually increasing	Gradually increasing

Most households in this zone obtain their food through purchase, relying on income generated mainly from milk and charcoal/firewood sales, depending on sub-zone. A significant reduction in milk production and sales, together with a decrease in charcoal prices due to oversupply, reduced the income of both poor and middle households by more than half, thereby reducing access to purchased food. As a result, poor households will experience a significant food deficit between June and at least August.

Recent rains are expected to improve temporarily the pasture, browse and water situation. Camel milk production will increase due to recent births, but the sales are not expected to increase due to reduced demand because of the upcoming summer exodus of wealthier households from Djibouti.

Food security in the southeast border pastoral livelihood is currently in crisis (IPC phase 3) the southeast roadside livelihood zone is currently stressed (IPC phase 2). Both are expected to remain so during the coming months.

Djibouti City

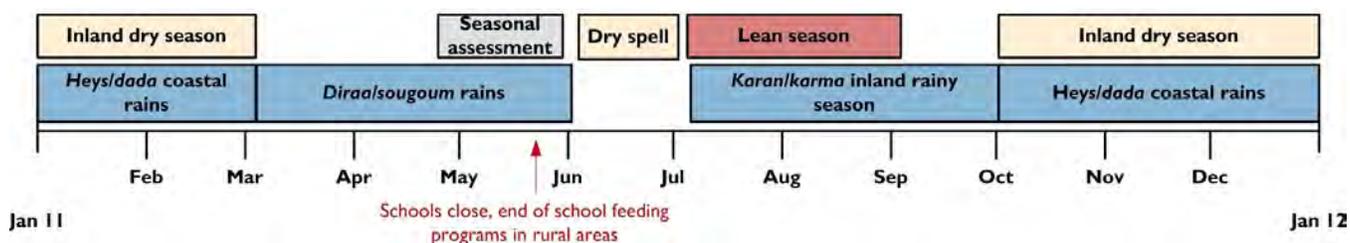
In Djibouti City, poor households are currently at crisis levels of food insecurity. Food insecurity is driven by high staple food and kerosene prices and a very high unemployment rate, particularly among the poor who depend on casual labor opportunities. Staple food prices are 68 percent above the five-year average. Kerosene, which utilizes more than 20 percent

of the income of poor households, is 47 percent above the five-year average. High levels of unemployment are ongoing and will be exacerbated during the summer season when school closures typically limit petty trade activities.

Water shortages prevail in Djibouti City, particularly in the suburbs of Balbala and PK12 and even in popular areas, where prices for this commodity have almost doubled. The situation will be serious as the demand will increase during the upcoming season, the peak period of water requirements.

Expenditure Indicators	Trend
Cost of staple food	Increasing
Cost of other food	Increasing
Cost of non-food items	Stable
Payment of government salaries and pensions	Regular
Cargo loaded/unloaded at Djibouti port	Unknown

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET