

UGANDA Food Security Outlook Update

February 2011

Livestock disease threatening livelihoods in agro-pastoral areas

Key messages

- An outbreak of foot and mouth disease in some districts in the cattle corridor and the restriction on livestock movement out of the affected areas are causing concern as livestock sales are a major source of income at this time of the year. Also, vaccination is still inadequate due to resource limitations, further threatening future livelihoods in these areas.
- Food stocks from the second season of 2010 in addition to market purchases will enable the majority of households to meet their basic needs through June 2011. Moderate food insecurity is persistent in northern Uganda where the population, previously displaced by prolonged conflict, is rebuilding their livelihoods.
- Though markets are well supplied, prices of some food commodities are above the five-year average.

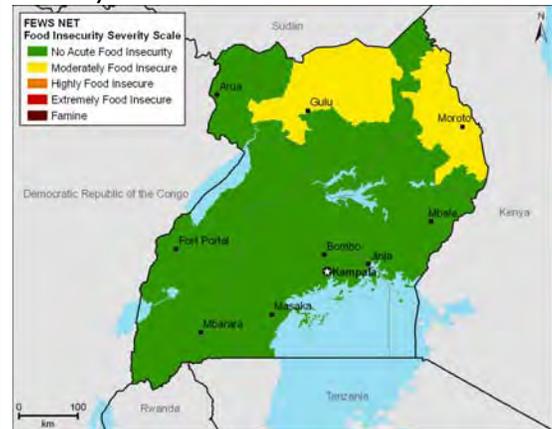
Updated food security outlook through June 2011

The dry season, characterized by strong winds and high surface temperatures, is ongoing across the country. This is causing some water sources to dry up and pastures to deteriorate especially in the “cattle corridor” which stretches from Karamoja in the northeast to Isingiro in the south. Nonetheless, livestock are able to access water, albeit in reduced amounts. Pasture is also still available in dry season grazing areas and the animals have reasonably good body conditions.

There is still uncertainty about the impact of the current La Niña on the first season rains that are expected to start in March. Nonetheless, the potential for below-average rains is likely to reduce crop performance in bimodal areas leading to below-average harvests in June/July. This would in turn reduce supplies of staples to markets resulting in sustained above-average prices similar to trends observed in 2009.

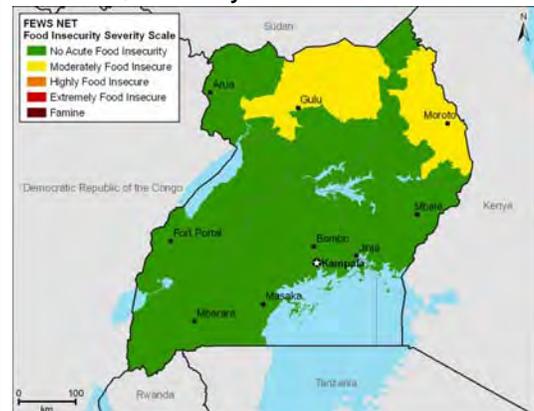
Although markets are well supplied from the 2010 second season harvest, the prices of most staples such as maize, millet, sorghum, matoke and beans remain above the five-year average, sustained by high demand. However, prices of dry cassava chips in eastern and northwestern markets, where it is a staple, are lower than the five-year average and 2010 prices. For instance, in Katakwi district, cassava prices are at their lowest in three years, an indication of the availability of food and good production in 2010 (Figure 3). Generally, as stocks are depleted, prices of most food commodities are expected to rise further until the next harvest due in June/July 2011.

Figure 1. Estimated food security conditions, February 2011



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Estimated most likely food security conditions, March – June 2011



Source: FEWS NET

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

This report provides an update to the January 2011 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions in Uganda through June 2011. The next Outlook report will be released in April and will cover the April to September 2011 period.

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An outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) between December 2010 and January 2011 in Amudat, Amuria, Bukedea, Gomba, Isingiro, Katakwi, Kitgum, Nakapiripirit, Pallisa, Rakai and Sembabule districts is causing concern. FMD, which affects cattle and shoats, causes significant losses in livestock productivity by causing abortions, death of young animals, infertility, loss of milk production and loss of draught power. The majority of households in these affected districts rely on livestock for sale to meet their basic necessities, especially currently in the dry season. In Amuria, Bukedea, Katakwi, Kitgum and Nakapiripirit districts, livestock are important for draught power for clearing land for cropping, thus determining acreage that households can utilize to plant crops. A reduction in availability of draught power is therefore likely to limit cropped area in March/April which would reduce household harvests starting June. This could increase household vulnerability to food insecurity.

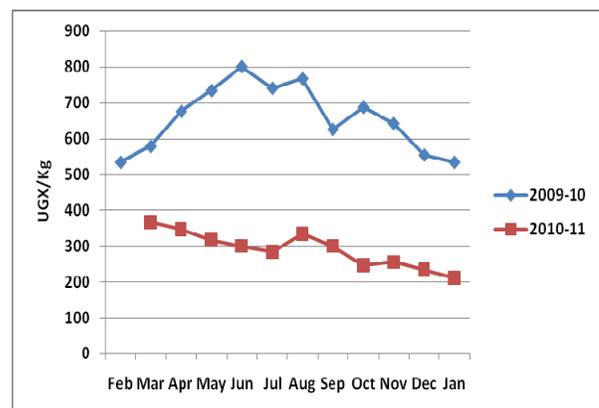
A quarantine has been imposed in most of the affected districts to restrict movement of livestock out of the affected areas so as to minimize the spread of the disease to other parts of the country. Although some doses of the vaccine necessary to vaccinate the livestock have been procured, it is inadequate to cover all the animals in the affected areas. This implies that the ban is likely to remain beyond the initial six months unless more resources are availed for vaccines to control the disease. Monitoring of the impact of the disease on livelihoods of populations in the affected areas is necessary to prevent deterioration in food security.

Karamoja Region

Markets in Karamoja remain well supplied from neighboring Acholi, Lango, Teso and Mt. Elgon areas. Though prices of cereals are increasing, the terms of trade of livestock to grain are more favorable than for the same period in 2010 (Figure 4). This indicates better purchasing power for households selling livestock and consequently better access to food. However, a ban on livestock movement out of Nakapiripirit and Amudat districts due to FMD is likely to reduce household cash income at a time when livestock sales are the main source of income for the majority of households in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas.

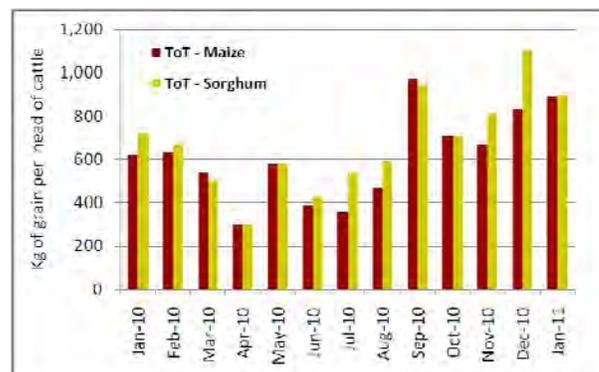
The quarantine in Amudat and Nakapiripirit means that livestock sales will be significantly reduced through June 2011 when it is likely to be lifted. This implies that agro-pastoral and pastoral households in these districts will not be able to sell adequate livestock to meet their needs, increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity. It is therefore imperative that livestock are vaccinated as soon as possible to control the disease so that the quarantine can be lifted. However, vaccinations have to be carried out before conception otherwise the vaccination itself may be harmful to the pregnancy and result in abortion. This would affect households' ability to rebuild their herds and secure their future livelihoods. Controlling the disease before the next peak conception period in March/April would allow households to sell more livestock starting in November, if the crop harvests are low as forecast, knowing that they will be replaced during the next calving, lambing and kidding cycle.

Figure 3. Cassava price trends in Katakwi district



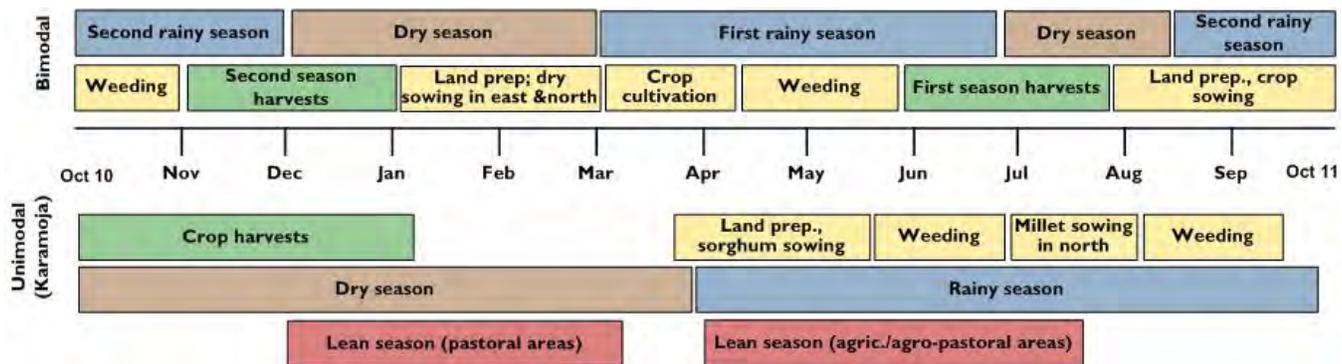
Source: LWF

Figure 4. Terms of Trade: Price per medium heifer to sorghum and maize grain in Nakapiripirit district



Source: UN WFP

Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Source: FEWS NET