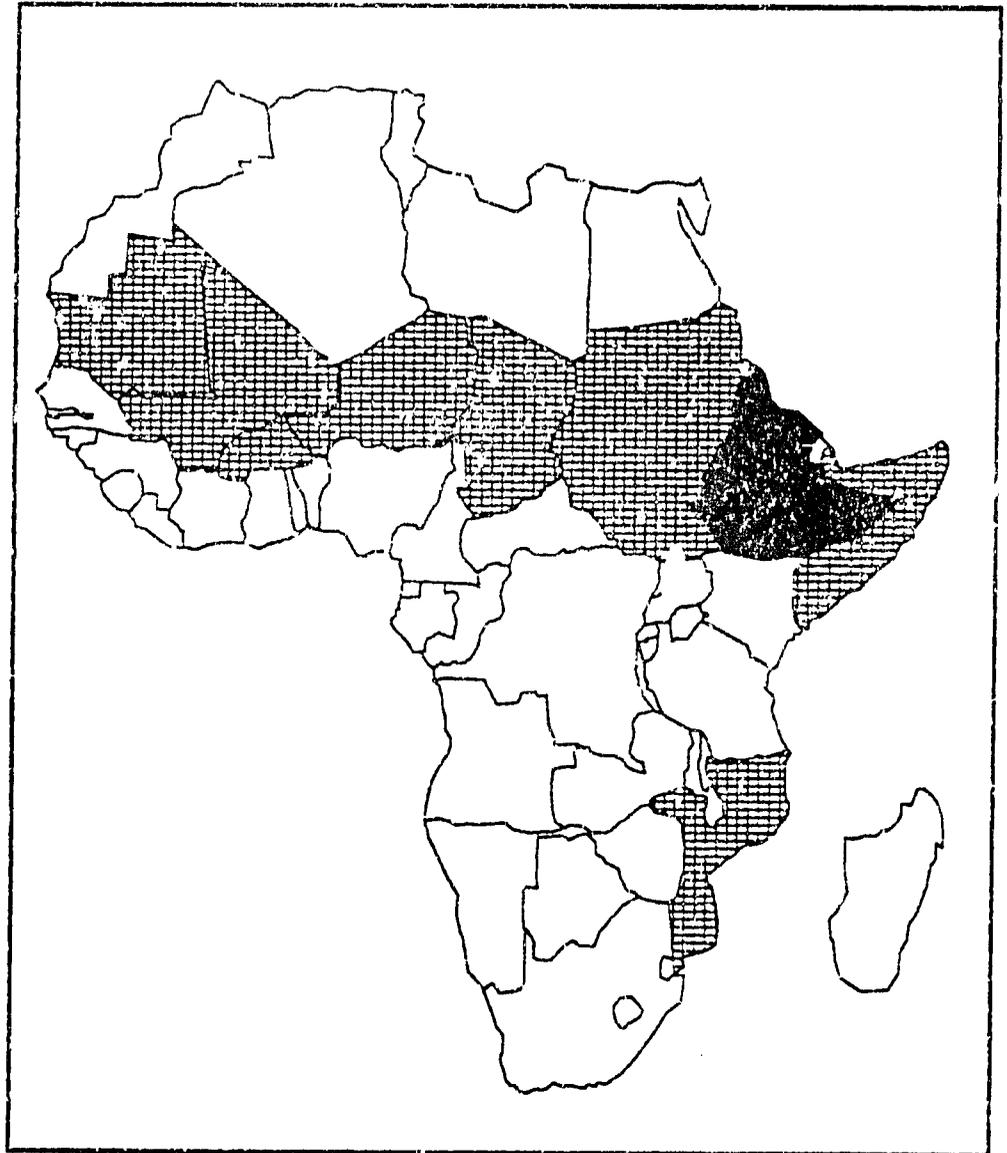


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Report Number 2  
July 1986

# FEWS Country Report

# ETHIOPIA



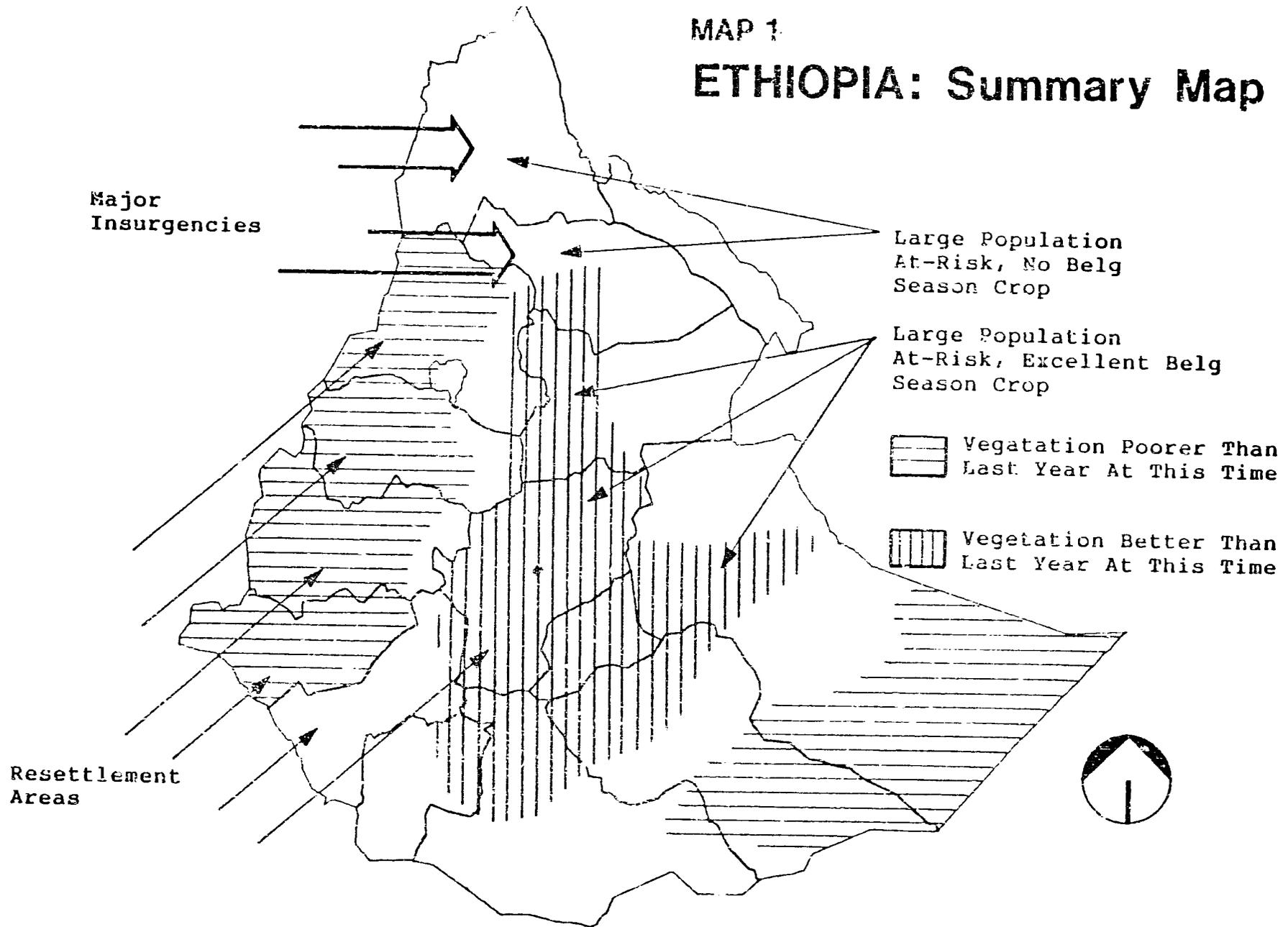
Africa Bureau  
U.S. Agency  
for International  
Development

Washington, D.C. 20523

U.S. Agency for International Development

MAP 1

# ETHIOPIA: Summary Map



Map: FEWS/PWA, June 1986

# ETHIOPIA

## Agricultural Outlook Good But Fragile

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Prepared for the  
Africa Bureau of the  
U.S. Agency for  
International Development

Prepared by  
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July 1986

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the second of a series of monthly reports issued by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) on Ethiopia. It is designed to provide decisionmakers with current information and analysis on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. Each situation identified is described in terms of geographical extent and the number of people involved, or at-risk, and the proximate causes insofar as they have been discerned.

Use of the term "at-risk" to identify vulnerable populations is problematical since no generally agreed upon definition exists. Yet it is necessary to identify or "target" populations in-need or "at-risk" in order to determine appropriate forms and levels of intervention. Thus for the present, until a better usage can be found, FEWS reports will employ the term "at-risk" to mean...

...those persons lacking sufficient food, or resources to acquire sufficient food, to avert a nutritional crisis, i.e., a progressive deterioration in their health or nutritional condition below the status quo and who, as a result, require specific intervention to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Perhaps of most importance to decisionmakers, the process underlying the deteriorating situation is highlighted by the FEWS effort, hopefully with enough specificity and forewarning to permit alternative intervention strategies to be examined and implemented. Food assistance strategies are key to famine avoidance. However, other types of intervention can be of major importance both in the short-term and in the long-run, including medical, transport, storage, economic development policy change, etc.

Where possible, food needs estimates are included in the FEWS reports. It is important to understand, however, that no direct relation exists between numbers of persons at-risk and the quantity of food assistance needed. This is because famines are the culmination of slow-onset disaster processes which can be complex in the extreme.

The food needs of individual populations at-risk depend upon when in the disaster process identification is made and the extent of its cumulative impact on the individuals concerned. Further, the amount of food assistance required, whether from internal or external sources, depends upon a host of considerations. Thus the food needs estimates presented periodically in FEWS reports should not be interpreted to mean food aid needs, e.g., as under PL480 or other donor programs.

FEWS is operated by AID's Office of Technical Resources in the Bureau for Africa in cooperation with numerous USG and other organizations.

MAP 2  
**ETHIOPIA: Administrative  
Regions**



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## SUMMARY

The population at-risk in Ethiopia numbers 5,818,455, a reduction of 620,000 people from the estimate reported in FEWS Country Report #1. Assessments of current satellite images of rainfall and vegetation during the first 10 days in July are good; vegetation and rainfall are generally heavier than during the same period last year, which promises good germination and early growth of main (Meher) season crops. As expected, the minor (Belg) season harvest, just ended, should be generally good to excellent, reducing the food needs of people at-risk in affected agricultural areas. Notwithstanding speculation on the effects of the availability of seed, tools and oxen for main season production (Meher), it is unlikely that such shortages--if they exist--will reduce the acreage under cultivation. Shortages of tools and oxen would, at most, limit the quality of cultivation and weeding. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) monitoring of last year's main season, when similar forecasts of shortages were made, showed no reduction in acreage attributable to seed, tool and oxen shortages. In general the Belg season rains were very good throughout the country and the Meher season rains have begun in the southwest and central areas of the country. The emergency food aid supply is unchanged from FEWS Country Report #1. Vast amounts of emergency food aid are in-country or projected to arrive, leaving a surplus of at least 456,000MT to carry over into 1987. Pests, particularly armyworm, grasshoppers and locusts, could be a severe problem in 1986.

## Issues

- The effect of villagization on agricultural production could be severe and the emergency food aid needs of persons coercively resettled from drought-affected areas are as yet unmet.
- Pest infestations could severely reduce the potential for Meher season production; the success of an international effort to combat locusts is essential.
- A widening of the conflict in Eritrea, Tigray, Gonder and Wello Regions could severely impact agricultural production and increase the populations at-risk.

## Key indicators

- The timing and duration of July rains: For many crops, germination and early plant development will be determined by rains in July.
- Vegetation indices: The extent of early greening and comparisons with previous years will allow an early forecast of Meher season crop potential.

- Reports of increased feeding rates: Reports from private voluntary organizations (PVOs) could help identify potential trouble-spots.

## RAINFALL AND VEGETATION

Belg season rains were generally excellent throughout the country, producing an above normal agricultural season and providing residual ground moisture for early Meher season cultivation and planting. Low rainfall in the west caused reduced yields and crop failure in some areas.

Current satellite images show vegetation indices lower than last year at this time in the lowland areas of Gonder Region and the Regions of Gojjam, Wellega and Illubabor. Early Meher season rains have been excellent in these areas; low vegetation indices are attributable to below average rains during the Belg season. In the southwest, especially in Hararghe Region, lowland pastoral areas show lower vegetation indices than last year at this time, even after this year's Belg season rains, due to poor early Meher season rains.

In the highland areas of eastern Gonder and western Wello Regions, vegetation indices are greatly improved over last year in those Awrajas most at risk from failures of last year's Meher season and this year's Belg season. Nonetheless, absolute vegetation indices for these areas are low. In the rest of the highlands and mid-altitude areas of Wello and Shewa Regions, vegetation appears excellent, showing great increases over last year. This region of improving vegetation already extends north into Tigray Region.

In the highland and mid-altitude areas of Hararghe Region, vegetation indices are increased over last year and promise much better agricultural production for the Meher season. The same is true for the rift valley, where improved vegetation indices promise increased production in some areas at risk from poor production last year.

Meher season rains have begun as far north and east as Tigray and Wello Regions. Early indications are of normal rainfall with adequate moisture for germination and crop development.

## LOCUSTS

Migratory and Desert locusts pose a potentially serious threat to agriculture in both Ethiopia and Sudan this year. The risk is probably greatest in Eritrea, Gonder, and Wellega Regions although historically locust plagues

have been observed almost everywhere in Ethiopia. Active international control measures must be undertaken to mitigate this threat. Above normal seasonal increases in Desert locusts, due to good rains early in 1986 along the Red Sea coast, will add to the threat from potentially massive increases of Migratory locusts. The latter are expanding out of their recessional areas in Sudan. A swarm of a billion locusts would consume 1.5 times its weight in food daily or about 2,250MT. Migratory locusts are primarily grass and grain eaters. Desert locusts will consume a wide variety of plants.

## CROP PRODUCTION

Last year's poor Belg harvest put people at risk in those areas where it provides an important portion of people's food supply. The Belg season harvest generally takes place in late June and July, although Belg season rains also support the germination and early growth of crops for the September harvest. The current estimate of Belg season production is 278,500MT, reduced from 350,000MT estimated in FEWS Country Report #1. This number is substantiated by a June (1986) Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) estimate of between 250,000 and 300,000MT.

Normal Belg season production is generally estimated at 250,000MT, apportioned among the regions as shown in TABLE 2. Current mission estimates of this year's Belg production are given as 200,000MT, about 17% below normal. The source of this estimate seems to be the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), sometime prior to May 1986. The FAO's forecast of the 1985 Belg season was also 200,000MT (their final estimate was reduced to about 90,000MT; the RRC later estimated actual production at 163,000MT; See Atwood Report), limiting the credibility of their 1986 forecast. The most important reasons given for the low forecast are shortages of seed, tools and oxen. Other reasons given are the disruptions caused by villagization, resettlement and drought-driven population movements. Seed shortages can be overstated due to lack of knowledge of traditional farmers' seed security practices and stocks. Except in limited areas, such as those affected by conflict in Tigray and Wello Regions, it is unlikely that traditional farmers would consume their seed supply, or would not maintain sufficient seed stock to weather a drought year. Shortages of seed for distribution in commerce, government programs or by donors is sometimes equated with shortages of seed for normal planting. Seed, tool and oxen shortages were advanced as the rationale for low forecasts of last year's Meher season, yet FAO monitoring showed no reduction in planted acreage attributable to such

shortages. Hand labor can partially substitute for tool and oxen shortages. The average household has only from 0.21 (Sidamo Region) to 1.33 hectares (Arssi Region) under cultivation. Land preparation and weeding by hand, however, are less thorough than would be possible with adequate tools and oxen and this could lead to lowering of potential yields. Disruptions due to population movements are more difficult to gauge

TABLE 1: FACTORS POTENTIALLY CONSTRAINING 1986 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Region	Average Rural Plot (HA)	Farmland/Work-Seed er (HA)	Reported Tool/Oxen Shortage	Reported Shortage
Arssi	1.33	.54	NO	NO
Bale	.95	.45	NO	NO
Eritrea	.52	N.A.	YES	TOOL/OXEN
Gamo Gofa	.54	.28	NO	OXEN ONLY
Gojjam	1.16	.53	NO	NO
Gondar	1.05	.57	YES	NO
Hararghe	.45	.26	YES	TOOL/OXEN
Illubabor	.59	.32	NO	OXEN ONLY
Keffa	.45	.29	NO	OXEN ONLY
Sidamo	.21	.16	NO	TOOL/OXEN
Shewa	.84	.36	NO	TOOL/OXEN
Tigray	.52	N.A.	YES	TOOL/OXEN
Wellega	1.05	.45	YES	TOOL/OXEN
Wello	.79	.12	YES	TOOL/OXEN

SOURCES: RRC "1986 Food Supply Prospect (1st Report)", USAID "1986 Emergency Food Need Assessment for Ethiopia" (Sept. 1985), and USAID Mission reports.

Seed shortages are most serious in Eritrea and Tigray Regions, in the easternmost Awrajas of Gonder Region, in the westernmost and northwestern Awrajas of Wello Region and in Hararghe Region. In Wellega Region seed shortages appear to exist only for the 1% of the population said to be drought affected.

Descriptions of actual Belg season cropping areas--at least by Region and often by Awraja-- were prepared by the USAID mission in Ethiopia during May 1986. It is clear from those descriptions that the Belg season was successful everywhere except in Wellega Region and in areas where production is not significant in Wello Region. (See Appendix A and Map 3)

# MAP 3 · ETHIOPIA: BELG SEASON CROP

BELG CROP QUALITY BY AWRAJA AND REGION (NOT ALL PARTS OF AN AWRAJA HAVE A CROP)  
BELG HARVEST

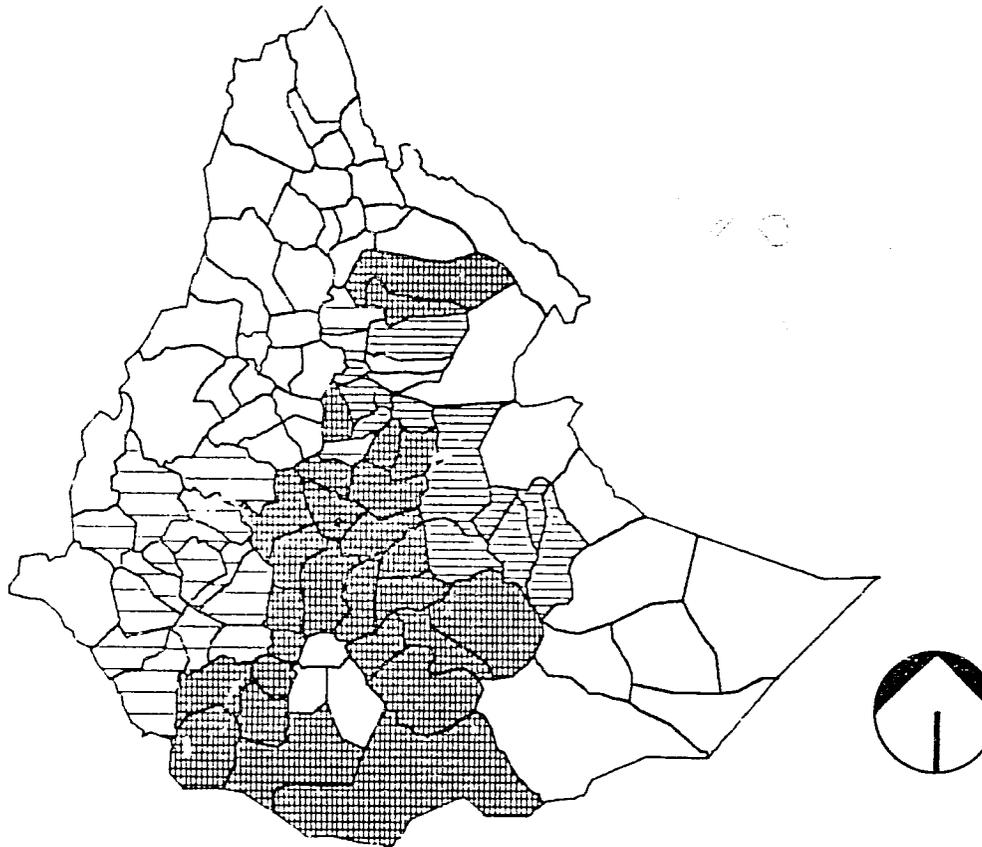
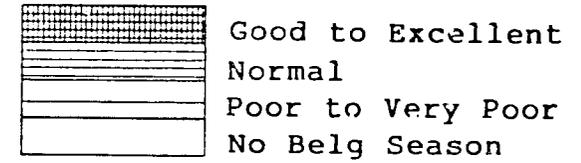


TABLE 2: ESTIMATE OF BELG SEASON PRODUCTION BY REGION

Region	Normal % Belg Crop	Est. 1986 Belg Crop (MT)	Est. % 1986 Belg Crop	Four Months Rations From Belg Harvest
Arssi	4%	12,000	4.3%	230,769
Bale	7%	21,000	7.5%	403,846
Eritrea	--	-----	-----	-----
Gamo Gofa	8%	28,000	10.1%	538,462
Gojjam	--	-----	-----	-----
Gondar	--	-----	-----	-----
Hararghe	4%	10,000	3.6%	192,308
Illubabor	3%	6,000	2.2%	115,385
Keffa	3%	6,000	2.2%	115,385
Sidamo	2%	7,000	2.5%	134,615
Shewa	20%	70,000	25.1%	1,346,154
Tigray	3%	9,000	3.2%	173,077
Wellega	11%	22,000	7.9%	423,077
Wello	35%	87,500	31.4%	1,682,692
TOTAL	100%	278,500	100.0%	5,355,769

Although the estimate of Belg season production is down from the 350,000MT level of FEWS Country Report #1, total food availability is unchanged from that report. The current estimate of commercial food imports has been increased by 100,000MT. The current forecast of emergency food aid stocks in-country at the end of 1986, available for distribution in 1987, remains at a minimum of 456,000MT and could reach as high as 678,000MT, as described in FEWS Country Report #1. Reductions in estimates of the number of people at-risk, which would lead to an increase in food aid availability, must be balanced against the uncertainty of such estimates, especially in Tigray, Wello and Eritrea Regions.

#### POPULATION AT-RISK

The population at risk is estimated at 5,818,455, a reduction of about 620,000 from that reported in FEWS Country Report #1. This estimate is based on RRC and USAID mission reports. This reduction is ascribable, in part, to Belg season production in those areas with large populations at-risk. It is also due to a reduction in the estimate of people at risk in Wello Region (reported by the USAID Mission) back to levels originally estimated in September 1985 (See Appendix A).

Nevertheless, food shortages in varying degrees are beginning to develop in several regions in Ethiopia. Severe malnutrition persists in isolated pockets and serious feeding problems have arisen in some resettlement areas. The capacity and professionalism of the RRC is

deteriorating, leading to concerns over its ability to respond to new areas at-risk.

Belg season production adds food resources to many areas with large at-risk populations (See Map 4). In those areas where Belg season production is an adjunct to the main season, the Belg harvest is used to carry the population over to the main harvest--approximately four months away. The number of people that can be fed from the Belg harvest for those four months is shown in TABLE 1. This mitigates the risk for affected populations.

While not described as at-risk, those people coercively resettled from chronic drought areas to "under-populated" areas in the southwest quadrant of the country are now reportedly requiring food aid. They number approximately 600,000, and to provide them with food aid (at a level of 13KG of grain per month per person) would require 93,600MT over 12 months. As some of these people will have a harvest in the fall, 93,600MT is probably close to the actual requirement until the Meher (main season) harvest in 1987.

#### PORT SITUATION

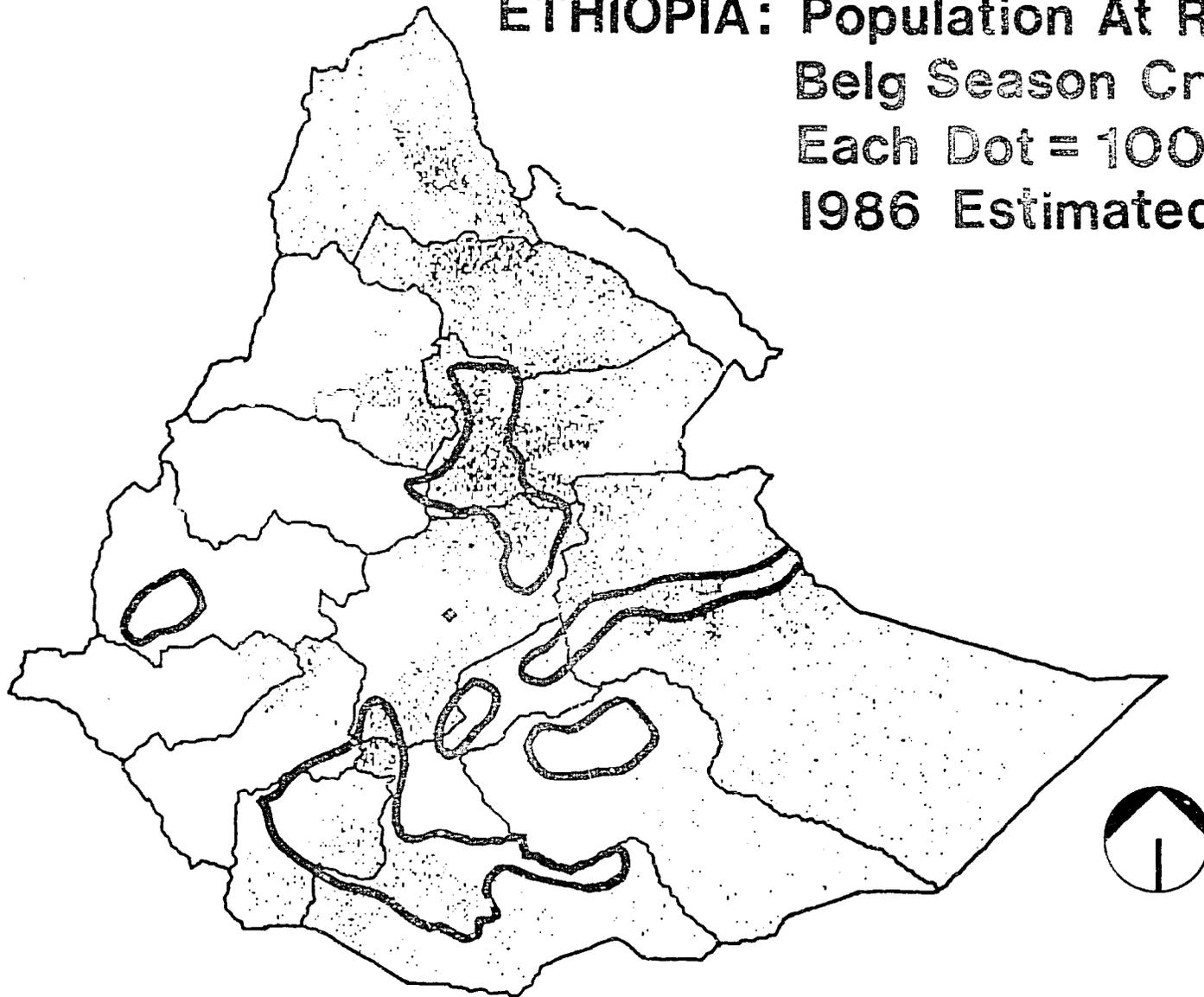
Although new food aid arrivals have fallen dramatically this past month, port congestion remains a serious problem. The congestion is attributed to sluggish offtake rates due to continuing land transportation difficulties and a decreased need for food aid. (See Appendix B for details.)

MAP 4

**ETHIOPIA: Population At Risk Density/  
Belg Season Crop Areas**

Each Dot = 1000 People

1986 Estimated



## APPENDIX A

### REGIONAL DETAIL

ARSSI--Production during the Belg season is described as excellent in two woredas where production is significant and in other areas where the Belg season is less important. Estimate: Better than normal.

The population at-risk in Arssi is estimated at 19,670, although no feeding programs are in place. The Meher season prospects appear favorable and there is no constraint on agricultural production predicted. Although villagization is described as extensive, there is no prediction that it will adversely affect agricultural production in the Region.

Bale--In two Awrajas, the Belg season rains determine the success of the primary crop later in the year and production promises to be excellent. In two other awrajas, where the Belg season is of lesser importance, the description of the Belg season is also very good. Estimate: Better than normal.

There are 84,000 pastoralists reported at-risk in southern Bale, but only 25,620 people (including 10,500 not counted at-risk) are receiving food aid. Villagization has been in place for several years and access to shared tools may actually benefit production. Seed, tools, traction, pesticides and fertilizer are adequate for a good Meher harvest in Bale.

Eritrea--There is no Belg season in Eritrea.

The population at risk for Eritrea Region is estimated at 998,896, while 945,200 people are receiving food aid. The food supply situation appears good with large amounts of sorghum arriving from Sudan through a "parallel market". There are an estimated 100,000 displaced people in Eritrea.

The primary agricultural zones of Eritrea are awaiting the Meher rainy season, while along the Red Sea coast corn and sorghum crops received adequate rainfall during February and March. The primary constraint on agriculture continues to be conflict.

Gamo Goffa--Indicators point to an excellent Belg harvest in those highland areas where it occurs. Estimate: Better than normal.

The population at risk in Gamo Goffa numbers 153,470 with 131,000 people receiving food aid. Only a very small

number of children are said to be malnourished.

Agricultural prospects look good for the Meher season. Although seed and tool supply appears normal, a shortage of oxen does exist. The government will combat armyworm, an especially worrisome pest, while farmers are expected to purchase pesticides to combat other pests. Villagization is minimal in the Region as people already naturally cluster themselves as the government requires in other Regions.

Gojjam--There is no Belg season in Gojjam.

No one is at-risk in Gojjam. There are 78,000 people who have been resettled into the Region and require food aid.

The rainy season has begun for the Meher season and, while early indications caused some concern, the Meher season should be normal. There are indications that villagization hinders land preparation in Gojjam, however, the program is progressing at a more moderate rate than elsewhere. Agricultural inputs are in sufficient supply for a normal Meher season.

Gonder--There is no Belg season in Gonder.

There are 225,340 people at risk in this Region according to the Gonder RRC, but only 105,000 are programmed to receive food aid. Conflict has displaced 50,000 people.

The Meher rainy season has begun in Gonder and agricultural prospects are reasonable in all but the easternmost Awrajas.

Except in the easternmost Awrajas, agricultural inputs should be enough to provide a reasonable crop production. Seed shortages reported for the east are probably not as worrisome as has been projected.

Hararghe--Indications are that the Belg season harvest is good or better in the highland areas of the five awrajas where it occurs. Estimate: Normal.

Food aid reaches approximately 1,200,000 people, which is also the number estimated to require aid by the RRC. The Belg harvest should reduce the population at-risk by approximately 200,000 over the next four months, leaving 1,000,000 people at-risk until the Meher harvest in the fall. Childhood malnutrition is practically non-existent except in Gara Muleta Awraja. Serious food shortages exist in two sub-districts in the Gara Muleta awraja and many deaths have been reported. The affected areas are

inaccessible by road and the RRC is arranging for a military helicopter to airlift food. Although the Belg rains have been good in Hararghe, food needs in this region are predicted to be serious through December. Villagization has been extensive in the highland areas and led to the departure of up to 60,000 Oromo farmers to Somalia. There is little indication of the effect villagization will have on either the Belg or Meher harvests.

Agricultural aid has been provided and there is no indication that there is a seed shortage or other shortage that will reduce the area planted.

Illubabor--Little information is available for the Belg season harvest in the highland areas of the four Awrajas where it occurs (there are five Awrajas in Illubabor Region). Mission estimates repeat the FAO assertion that production is down 17%. Estimate: Down 17% from normal.

Currently 25,000 people are estimated to be at-risk in the Region, while 31,500 are receiving food aid. There is no explanation for the delivery of food aid to more people than have been identified as at-risk. A total of 93,518 resettlers in integrated projects are said to require more food aid than the five to six kilograms per person supplied each month by the RRC. If supplementary rations of 8KG/Month (over the amount currently received) were supplied, the increase would total 2,992MT through the Meher harvest in October.

The rainy season has begun in the Region and Meher season crops could be affected by what are reported to be below normal rains. Villagization is said to be extensive in the Region and farmers must walk long distances to their fields. The main constraint on agricultural production is said to be oxen.

Keffa--Little information is available for the Belg season harvest in Keffa Region. Mission estimates repeat the FAO assertion that production is down 17%. Estimate: Down 17% from normal.

The number of people at-risk in Keffa is 75,270, while 68,000 people are receiving food aid, at least until harvest in October/November. An additional 80,000 resettlers are said to require food aid through harvest. This would add 4,160MT to the total required.

Villagization is reportedly taking place on a massive scale and severely hindering production of cash crops in the northeast. The main constraint on production is an

apparent shortage of draught animals attributed to endemic trypanosomiasis.

Shewa--Belg season production takes place in all eleven of Shewa's Awrajas. Two Awrajas, described as being almost totally dependent on the Belg season, show signs of having an excellent harvest. The only Awraja where the Belg harvest is less than good is Merhabate, which is only partially dependent on the Belg harvest. Estimate: Better than normal.

The population at risk in Shewa Region is estimated at 587,540; in April only 198,000 people were receiving food aid. Given the good Belg season in those northern Awrajas with high numbers of people at-risk, it is likely that a large proportion of the 355,910 people identified as requiring food aid later in 1986 will no longer be at risk, thereby reducing the net total population at-risk to approximately 300,000. In any case, there is a suggestion that food aid was over-prescribed last year in at least one Awraja.

Although villagization has been described as extensive, there is not enough information to judge its effect on agricultural production. While farmers complain about inadequate seed, tools and oxen, there is evidence that more than sufficient seed has been distributed and that shortages of tools and oxen will not affect the area planted.

Sidamo--In the three Awrajas where the Belg season is important, indications are that the harvest will be excellent. Estimate: Better than normal.

The population at-risk in Sidamo Region is estimated to number 464,500, but only 222,500 are receiving food aid. It is likely that the 34,000 people in Wolayita Awraja thought to require partial assistance this year, will no longer be at risk due to the success of the Belg season. This leaves a net population at-risk of 430,500.

The rainy season bodes well for the Region. Pasturage has improved and the milk supply for pastoralists is good. The outlook is excellent.

Villagization is not yet implemented in Sidamo Region. Constraints on agricultural production are described as a shortage of tools and oxen.

Tigray--Only two Awrajas in Tigray have a Belg harvest and reports indicate excellent production in both of

these. Estimate: Better than normal for the limited area where a Belg harvest occurs.

Tigray is severely affected by drought and conflict. The population at-risk there is estimated at 1,186,309 with only 561,000 people receiving food aid at the beginning of May 1986. It is likely that a successful Belg harvest in the two Awrajas could reduce this number, at least until the Meher harvest, but to count on this relief would be unwise since the estimate is based on insufficient data due to the conflict. The central Awrajas of Tigray are severely affected. Severe childhood malnutrition is extensive. The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) estimates 2,000,000 people will need food aid during 1986. The most critical food shortage areas are Temben Awraja and around Mekele in the center of the Region. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates 45% of the population in central Tigray is moderately to severely malnourished.

Insufficient rainfall, a poor harvest, and a growing Desert locust problem have contributed to the food shortage. Armed conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian Army has greatly impeded relief efforts. A shortage of trucks, the virtual absence of roads in Temben, and difficult terrain have compounded the situation. As a result, Tigray is experiencing extensive migration to food surplus areas in the west. Airlift efforts are currently underway for Mekele and areas to the north.

The potential for the Meher harvest is uncertain. Agricultural inputs are severely restricted and it is likely that seed, in particular, will be in short supply, especially in the central areas of Tigray.

Wellega--The Belg season is described as poor but relatively unimportant to total production. Belg season production is only a fraction (unstated) of the 83% of normal asserted by FAO. This is not congruent with other information. Estimate: 17% below normal.

A total of 20,000 people are estimated by the RRC to be at-risk while 27,500 are receiving food aid; an additional 30,000 are said to require some food assistance. It is thought that all 240,476 resettlers in the area require some food aid--although the level of that aid is not known.

The rainy season has begun in the Region but estimates of its sufficiency for the Meher harvest are not yet available. Villagization is occurring, but its impact on

agricultural production is not known. Constraints on production are said to be seed, tools and oxen with the latter especially in short supply due to endemic trypanomiasis.

Wello--Indications are that the Belg harvest will be good in the three Awrajas that provide the most significant part of normal production. In those Awrajas that make up a smaller part of the Belg harvest, indications are that it ranges from very poor to good. Estimate: Normal.

The population at-risk in Wello is estimated to number 1,300,000, while only 700,000 people are receiving food aid. Conflict in the northern Awrajas appears to be the primary constraint to food aid distribution. Given the good Belg season in the three Awrajas where it is most significant, the number of people at-risk could be reduced; however, the 1,300,000 figure (as estimated by the RRC, and reported by the USAID Mission) is already an unexplained reduction from the 1,926,950 people estimated at risk by the RRC in January 1986.

The Region will be dependent on good Meher rains to provide a harvest adequate to carry it into 1987, but security constraints in the north and the probability of seed shortages there limit the degree of recovery possible. In other parts of Wello, shortages of seed, tools and oxen are also reported.

## APPENDIX B

### PORT DETAIL

A decreased food aid need, and thus a reduction in offtake rates have contributed to serious port congestion. Transportation problems continue to jeopardize relief efforts. The figures reported below are as of the week July 1, 1986.

Massawa-- Very little improvement in port conditions is reported from last month. Port stocks of food aid and commercial imports remain high at a combined 47,300MT with the expected arrival of an additional 34,400MT of food aid by the end of July.

Djibouti-- Port congestion is beginning to ease but food stocks are still too high for rail offtake to handle. Food aid stock in port is 26,100MT with an additional 16,000MT of food aid scheduled to arrive by the end of July.

Assab-- No improvement in the port situation is reported. Berthing delays have increased to eight weeks and offtake rates continue to plummet. Port stocks of food aid, commercial food imports and fertilizer are very high at a combined 250,000MT. An additional 77,000MT of food aid and 30,000MT of commercial food are expected to arrive by the end of July. No current information exists on the status of the 12 barges aground/submerged at Assab.