

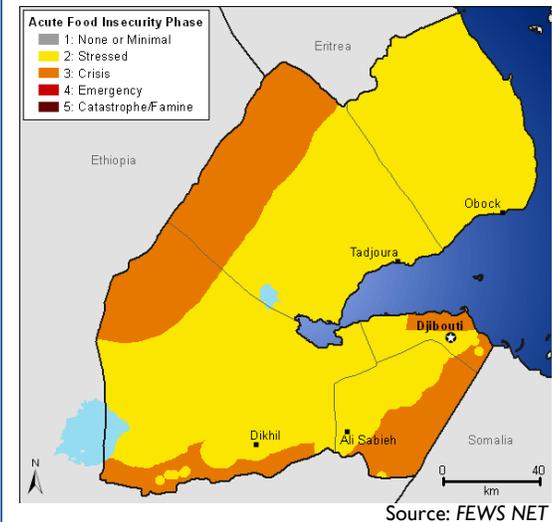
## DJIBOUTI Food Security Outlook

October 2011 through March 2012

### Key messages

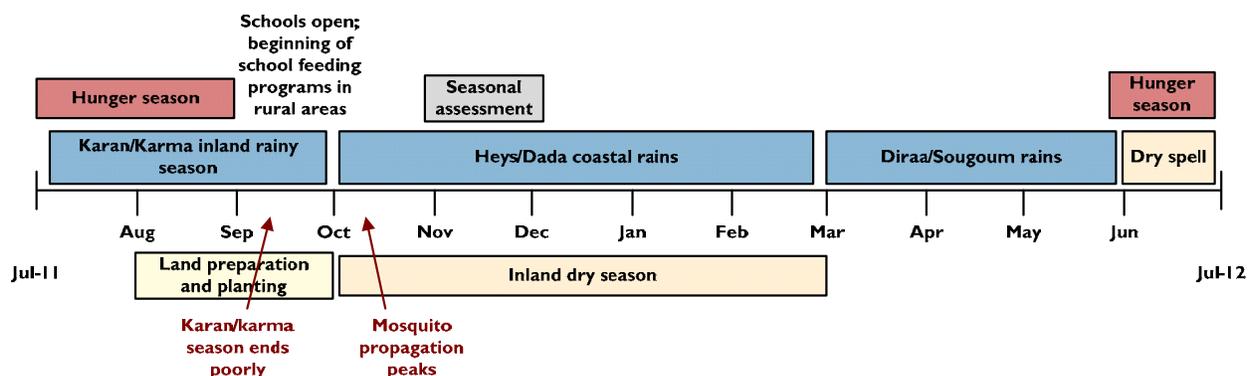
- Pastoralists in the northwest and southeast border pastoral zones currently face significant survival and livelihood protection deficits due to severe rainfall deficits over the last two years and high staple food prices. According to a seasonal assessment conducted by FEWS NET in early October 2011, the northwest and southeast pastoral zones face survival deficits of 36 and 50 percent, respectively, without accounting for current food aid distributions.
- In the northwest pastoral zone, improvements in pasture and water availability are not expected over the Outlook period, as the typical long dry period runs from October to March. As a result, animal production is expected to decline, and already poor livestock body conditions will deteriorate further. Food security will remain at Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) throughout the outlook period.
- In the southeast border pastoral zone, limited improvements are expected given the forecast for normal to above-normal Heys/Dada rains (October to March) due to a mild La Niña event. In eastern/coastal parts of the zone, better livestock conditions due to increased pasture and browse may improve pastoral terms of trade, though herd sizes are much below average. Incomes will continue to be significantly impacted by the ban on charcoal production and firewood sales, major sources of income for poor households. Consequently, poor households will remain at Crisis levels during the Outlook period.
- In urban areas, poor households also face significant food deficits due to high staple food prices and limited income from casual labor. The expenditure basket of the poor is 51 percent above the five-year average, due to staple food prices that are 80 percent higher than the five-year average. Urban areas are also expected to remain at Crisis levels through March 2012.

**Figure 1. Estimated food security conditions, October 2011**



For more information on the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table, please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

### Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

## Most likely food security scenario, October 2011 through March 2012

### National Overview

Pastoralists in the northwest and southeast pastoral zones currently face significant survival and livelihood protection deficits due to severe rainfall deficits over the last two years and high staple food prices. According to a seasonal assessment conducted in FEWS NET in early October 2011, the northwest and southeast pastoral zones face survival deficits of 36 and 50 percent, respectively, without considering current food aid distributions. Due to below-average rainfall over several seasons, above-average animal mortality rates have thinned herd sizes, and income and food sources from animals have declined significantly over the consumption year. Pastoralists have exhausted coping strategies and are meeting food deficits through the WFP Emergency Operations (EMOP) program, which will continue to provide a full ration to 70,000 people (88 percent of the rural sedentary population) through the Outlook period.

In urban areas, poor households also face significant food deficits due to high staple food prices and limited income from casual labor. The expenditure basket of the poor is 51 percent above the five-year average, due to staple food prices that are 80 percent higher than average. With a cost of 33,907 DJF/month, the basket is 12,550 DJF more than the average household income for poor households (21,350 DJF/month). Food assistance is not provided in urban areas.

Staple food prices, though above average, remained stable in September in most markets. However in Ali-sabieh market, which supplies the southeast border pastoral zone, prices increased by 7 percent for wheat flour, 19 percent for sugar, 6 percent for sorghum, and 22 percent for millet, compared to August prices. In Dikhil market, sorghum and bean prices increased by 7 and 13 percent, respectively. The current cereal export ban in Ethiopia, which supplies sorghum and maize to Djibouti, has decreased the volume of these cereals in almost all Djiboutian markets by approximately 25 percent, and caused prices to rise. However, as enforcement remains imperfect, some imports have continued through informal channels.

Karan/karma rains (July-September) performed poorly in most areas, with rainfall totals of 50-75 percent of the short-term average. Parts of the northwest (Asdora, Andaba and Madgoul) and the southeast in Alisabieh district received 75-125 percent of average rainfall, improving availability of pasture and browse compared to last season in a few limited areas. The current Heys/Dada rains (October-March) started with a two-week delay in all coastal areas. The ICPAC regional forecast calls for normal to above-normal Heys/Dada rains due to the mild La Niña event that is developing in the region.

An influx of Somali refugees into Djibouti continues, although the rate of new arrivals has decreased. In September, an average of 755 people arrived during the month compared to 978 people in August, and 1064 people in July. A total of 20,611 people are registered in Ali-Adde camp, which is over capacity by 14,000 people. A new refugee camp in Holl-Holl is over 50 percent completed. According to ONARS (Djibouti Refugee Agency), an additional 10,000 refugees are expected over the coming six months as insecurity and conflict are likely to prevail in south-central Somalia and Mogadishu.

### Outlook assumptions

The October 2011 to March 2012 Outlook is based on the following assumptions:

#### *Markets and trade*

- The Ethiopian ban on cereal exports will continue to keep prices high for sorghum and maize. As urban populations return in mid-September, increased cereal demand will also maintain high prices.
- Prices of rice, the main staple food of the poor in the southeast border pastoral zone, are expected to increase by 5-8 percent throughout the Outlook period due to the moderate increase in rice prices in exporting countries like Thailand and Pakistan.
- Wheat flour prices are expected to decrease over the Outlook period as wheat produced on government-owned Djiboutian farms in Ethiopia is expected to refill stocks by November.

#### *Income sources*

- Income from charcoal production and firewood collection (about half of the income of the poor in the southeast border pastoral zone) will be impacted by recent bans on these activities. Other income sources, such as salt sales in the northwest, will also be limited.

- In urban areas, casual labor opportunities in construction are expected to improve during the Outlook period, in line with seasonal trends.

*Rainfall performance and impacts*

- Above-average Heys/Dada rains are expected to improve pasture and browse as well as water availability in coastal areas.
- Following the start of the rains, massive migration of livestock to coastal grazing areas will increase competition for natural resources since the carrying capacity of pasture is very limited. High animal concentrations will increase the transmission of livestock diseases.

*Food assistance*

- Food assistance through the WFP EMOP is expected to continue for rural populations through the Outlook period.

The population in need of humanitarian assistance over the coming six months is expected to be approximately 210,000 people (120,000 rural, 60,000 urban and 30,000 refugees), according to estimates by partners during the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) workshop in October.

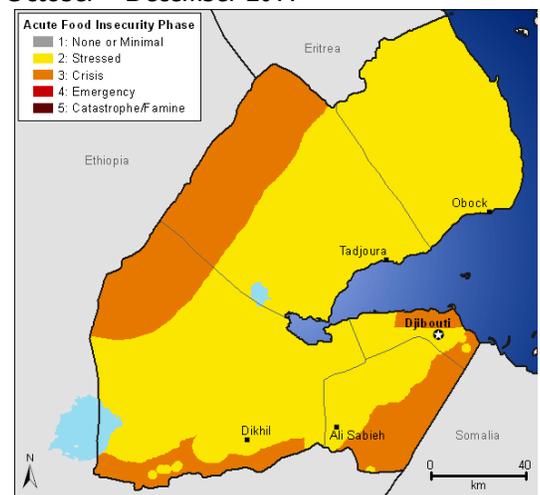
**Northwest pastoral livelihood zone**

Over the past two years, severe rainfall deficits in the Northwest have resulted in poor pasture conditions and limited water availability. The Karma/Karan rains that normally run from July-September started this year in August. The Karma rains are considered the main rainy season, contributing more than 50 percent of total precipitation in an average year. Half of the Northwest livelihood zone received below normal rains (50-75 percent) during the Karma/Karan season. In addition to being delayed, the Karma rains were poor in spatial distribution, duration and overall amount of rain received. The poor rains have led to increased livestock mortality and reduced income and food sources from animals. However, areas around Andaba and As Dora received near-normal Karma/Karan rains, and as a result, pasture, browse and water catchments slightly regenerated in these areas. Poor and very poor households are currently at Crisis food insecurity levels.

FEWS NET conducted a seasonal assessment in early October in the northwest and southeast pastoral livelihood zones to evaluate food security conditions. The assessment indicates the following changes in the Northwest Pastoral zone compared to the reference year (August 2003- July 2004):

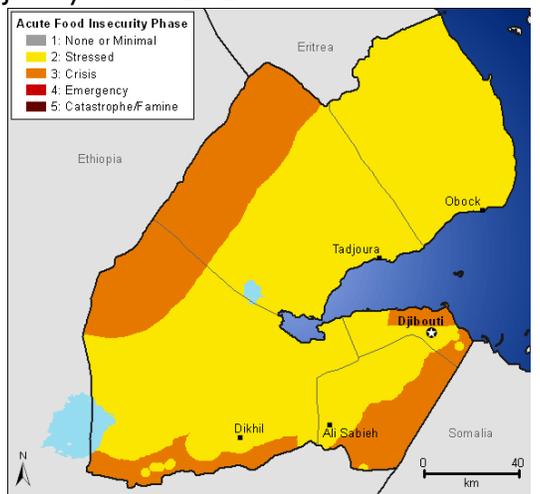
- Herd sizes have reduced dramatically to 24 percent for goats and 67 percent for camels.
- The number of lactating females has dropped from 6 out of 10 breeding females to 2 out of 10.
- Milk yields for this current Karma season are reduced by more than half and the duration of the lactation is reduced from 45 days in the reference year to 19 days in the current year.
- Primary staple foods increased by 205 percent.
- Livestock prices increased by 300 percent (1500 DJF to 4500 DJF).
- Prices of sugar, the primary non-staple food purchased, increased by 205 percent.
- Gifts of grain to poorer households from the better off reduced by 50 percent.
- Income from onga sales increased by 160 percent.

**Figure 2. Most-likely food security scenario, October – December 2011**



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 3. Most-likely food security scenario, January – March 2012**



Source: FEWS NET

The main changes since the reference year are an increase in the price of staple foods, major reductions in goat herd sizes, and a shift away from the barter of sorghum for salt. Without intervening food aid, households face an estimated survival deficit of 50 percent.

Due to reduced herd sizes as well as lower overall milk production, poor pastoralists who were able to earn over 60 percent of their total income directly from their goat herds (e.g., ghee and livestock sales) will see that income drop to less than an estimated 15 percent. Onga (leaves of the doum palm) sales now provide the bulk of income that households use to purchase food. As this is a finite natural resource, households will not be able to exploit this resource over the long term at current levels without some manner of resource management or controls. The demand for onga is also relatively fixed, further limiting the amount of additional income that could be earned from this type of self-employment.

The neighboring Ethiopian markets of Manda and Elidar are the main livestock markets for this zone. Households prefer to sell animals in these markets rather than locally in Tadjourah because while livestock prices are similar (even slightly lower), food prices are significantly lower in Ethiopia. It is estimated that households will purchase 80 percent of staple foods in Ethiopia. The remaining 20 percent consists of locally purchased sorghum, which is preferred by households but which costs about 60 percent more than maize purchased in Ethiopia. Gifts of grain, though reduced from reference year levels, are expected to contribute about 5 percent to total household food needs.

Food aid was reported by all of the sites visited during the seasonal assessment. WFP is the main provider of food aid for households. Using information on food aid distributions, it is possible to estimate that food aid is meeting approximately 50 percent of annual household food needs. This assumes that 58 percent of the population in need receive these monthly rations. It is further assumed that the food aid is redistributed by communities to cover 100 percent of households within the livelihood zone. At these estimated levels of food assistance, households would be able to cover their survival deficit, though a livelihoods protection deficit of about 10 percent would remain. This livelihoods deficit means that households would not have the ability to invest in additional livestock for example rebuilding herds that have been radically reduced over the past several years. The survival threshold is defined as meeting average minimum energy needs (2100 kcal/pppd) plus the water and energy required for meal preparation. The livelihoods protection threshold includes the survival threshold plus minimum needs for maintenance of livelihood assets.

Over the course of the Outlook period, food security conditions are likely to deteriorate as the zone enters the long dry period (October to March). Given poor pasture and water availability, animal production will decline from current levels, and already poor livestock body conditions will deteriorate further. Camels are currently in heat and as they are weaker than normal at this point of year, abortion numbers are expected to be above average. Furthermore, there have been very few goat births since August 2010 and very few births are expected through January 2012 again due to lack of adequate pasture.

Although food security conditions will deteriorate as the dry season sets in, households are expected to remain within Crisis levels of food insecurity throughout the Outlook period. Households will meet basic food needs largely through food assistance, along with food purchases from income derived from onga sales, gifts, and a small amount of livestock products from their own animals.

#### **Southeast pastoral livelihood zone**

The southeast border pastoral livelihood zone received Karma/Kiran rains from July to September rains at levels 20-50 percent below normal and with fewer numbers of rainy days. The extreme west part of this zone (around Lac Abeh) received marginally better rains that were 50-75 percent of normal levels. Areas around Yoboki remain particularly dry and a critical lack of water persists. Throughout the zone, pasture and browse are limited and will remain so through December. Livestock body conditions are poor and milk production is low, particularly for goats, which are currently in heat. Poor and very poor households are currently at Crisis food insecurity levels.

FEWS NET's assessment findings indicate the following changes compared to the reference year (August 2003- July 2004):

- Goat herd sizes have reduced by more than half to 48 percent.
- The number of lactating goats has dropped from 6 out of 10 breeding females to 2 out of 10.
- Milk yields for this current Karma season are also reduced by over a third and the duration of the lactation is reduced from 45 days in the reference year to 23 days in the current year.

- Prices of rice, the primary staple food purchased, increased by 213 percent (80 DJF to 170 DJF).
- Prices of sugar, the primary non-staple food purchased, increased by 250 percent (100 DJF to 250 DJF).
- Goat prices increased by 300 percent (2000 DJF to 6000 DJF).
- Government bans on charcoal production mean that it is no longer a source of income.
- Firewood sales increased by 135 percent, despite a government ban on this activity.
- Gifts of grain and sugar reduced by 50 percent.

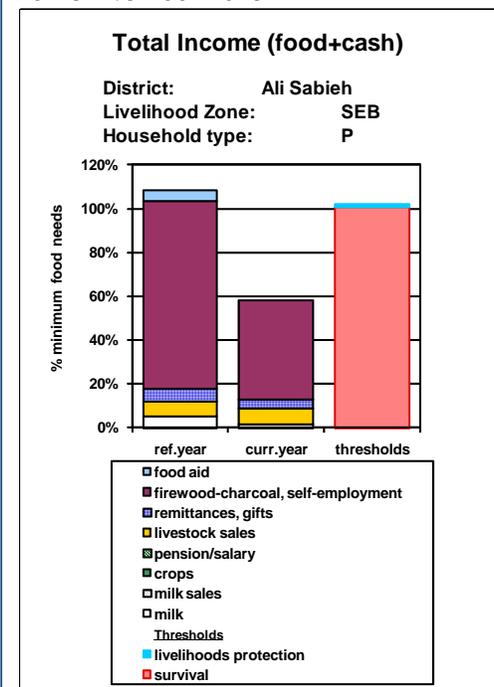
Livelihood strategies pursued by the poor are in the process of adapting in the face of a government ban on the production of charcoal and firewood collection. The ban has targeted charcoal production in particular and meant a huge loss of income for poor households (charcoal production made up 45 percent of total income in the baseline year; see Figure 4) and while some marginal production exists, it can no longer be considered a typical or significant source of income for poor households.

Despite lower livestock holdings, the percentage of total income from goat sales is projected to be about the same in the current year, due to the increase in goat prices (from 2000 to 6000 DJF) over reference year values.

The loss of income from charcoal sales is made up somewhat by the increased income from firewood sales, but income levels are not nearly what they were in the reference year. This, coupled with a doubling in the price of the staple rice, signifies a serious erosion in households' ability to access food. Based on the findings of this seasonal assessment, a survival deficit of 36 percent is projected for poor households in this livelihood zone.

Food aid was reported by all of the sites visited during this seasonal assessment and is not accounted for when calculating the survival deficit. As in the Northwest, WFP is the main provider of food aid for households in this livelihood zone. Using available information on food aid distributions, it is possible to estimate that food aid is meeting approximately 50 percent of annual household food needs. At this level of food assistance, households would be able to meet both survival and livelihoods protection thresholds. This demonstrates an important dependence on food aid. Without food aid, poor households in this livelihood zone would depend primarily on income from firewood which is now considered an illicit activity. As with charcoal, government restrictions on firewood collection signal that in the medium term, the income poor households will be able to earn from self-employment is expected to be further limited.

**Figure 4.** Total income (food and cash), poor households, Ali Sabieh District, Southeast Border livelihood zone



Source: FEWS NET

Over the course of the Outlook period, some minor improvements in environmental conditions in coastal areas of the zone are expected due to the Heys/Dadaa rains, which are expected to be above-average. Though the rains are normally light, they are important for the regeneration of pasture. With improved environmental conditions, animal body conditions and pastoral terms of trade are likely to improve. However, given significantly decreased herd sizes, income from livestock (both ghee and livestock sales) is likely to be minimal.

Households in this zone are expected to remain at Crisis levels throughout the Outlook period. Food needs for these households will largely be met through the provision of food assistance throughout the Outlook period. Some limited food purchases will also provide food, though income will be much lower than normal due to the decline in income from charcoal production and firewood collection. Access will be further restricted due to above-average food prices.

**Central pastoral livelihood zone**

Food security conditions for poor households will generally remain stable during the Outlook period. Milk production is expected to improve over the course of the Outlook period, as well as livestock sales. Income from firewood and charcoal sales will remain steady or increase, despite the government bans on these activities, as demand in urban areas remains

high. Government salaries and pensions, an important source of income for households in this zone, will also remain regular in the coming months. However, a slight reduction in remittances from urban areas (due to the decreased purchasing power of the middle class), the main source of cash income for most wealth groups in this zone, may impact access to food for some households. At present, the reduction in remittances has been offset by ongoing food aid distributions. In addition, staple food prices are expected to remain high during the outlook period. Overall, food security conditions will remain stable over the next six months, and both the central highlands and central lowlands pastoral livelihood zones will remain at Stressed levels.

### Djibouti city

The main sources of food for poor households in urban areas include purchases, based on income from petty trade and casual labor, and kinship. During the Outlook period, household access to food is expected to be constrained by higher than average prices because of international price trends and the Ethiopian cereal export ban. Commercial stocks of cereals are reported to be at critical levels in all urban areas due to the decline of stocks from Ethiopia because of the prevailing ban. Rice prices are expected to increase by 5-8 percent due to the Thai rice policy. The Eid festival in November will require additional resources at the household level. Peak mosquito propagation begins in late October, and a malaria outbreak is expected by December, as is typical. These outbreaks typically affect labor productivity and exacerbate low income levels and reduced food access, leading to declines in dietary intake.

Given the high cost of the expenditure basket and limited income, poor households are expected to rely more on kinship, to eliminate healthcare and education expenses, and to skip meals. However, external actors are likely to intensify therapeutic and supplementary feeding programs in Djibouti city over the Outlook period. Poor households are expected to remain at Crisis levels throughout the projected period.

### Market gardening livelihood zone

The prospects for the coming season are promising in this zone as farmers received certified seeds, pesticides and agricultural implements from the FAO in collaboration with the government. Average vegetable production is expected during the harvest, which normally starts in January. Though high fuel costs for pumping irrigation water are forcing poor households in this zone to cultivate less land, other production factors have enabled good vegetable production. Government law, which lifts the tax on agricultural inputs (seeds, fuel etc.), may help to spur private investment in the market gardening zone by reducing the cost of production. However, the law needs to be enforced, particularly the subvention of fuel for irrigation. Incomes in the market gardening livelihood zone tend to be lowest from October to December during the lean season, between the end of the summer harvest and the start of the winter harvest in January. Overall fruit production during this season, particularly of mangoes, lemons and date palms, is expected to be near normal. Therefore poor households in this zone will be at Stressed levels throughout the Outlook period.

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

Livelihood zone	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Northwest pastoral livelihood zone	Unseasonable rains between October and February	The food security situation will improve as the animal production improves due to unseasonal rains during the Heys/dada rains. Animal body conditions will improve and the sales as well as prices will be in favor of pastoralists. Milk production, the main source of food for the young children, will increase.
Northwest pastoral, Southeast pastoral, Central pastoral	Food aid distribution stops	This will reduce food access of poor households and will create a food deficit gap among most vulnerable, leading to increased malnutrition for children, pregnant and lactating women and elderly.
Coastal grazing areas	Below normal rains (Heys/Dada)	The food security situation would deteriorate in most pastoral livelihoods near the coastal belt, particularly the Central and Southeast pastoral livelihood zone which would shift from moderate to high food insecurity. Livestock would face a serious shortage of water and pasture/browse. Animal productivity will be limited and livestock deaths would be expected.
Central pastoral	Reduction in remittances	The purchasing power of poor households will decline, leading to significant food deficits among most vulnerable groups
National	Significant new influx in asylum seekers from Somalia and/or Yemen	They will share the limited resources and will create competition to the limited casual labor employment opportunities. There is a high risk of increasing civil insecurity.