

UGANDA Food Security Outlook Update

September 2012

Food security situation stable as heavy second rainy season expected

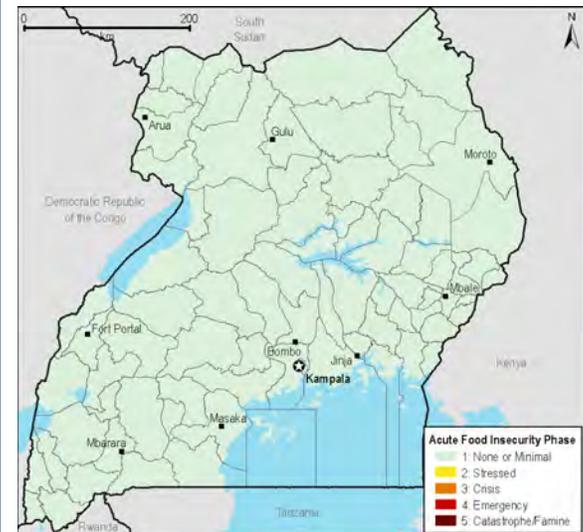
Key Messages

- Harvesting countrywide is almost complete in bimodal parts of the country with exceptions in eastern and northern Uganda. Household food stocks have been replenished, and crop sales have supplied markets from the new harvests. Harvesting is ongoing in the unimodal areas of the country, and near average harvests are expected. Minimal to no acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) is expected throughout Uganda from October to December.
- The second season rains began in September, and the forecast suggests normal to above normal rainfall will be received due to the expected onset of mild El Niño conditions. Normal land preparation and planting activities have already occurred. Staggered planting occurred as some farmers planted earlier to take advantage of the unseasonal rains in August. The second season harvests are likely to start early if the season continues to progress normally.
- The near conclusion of the primary harvest for most staple crops has supplied markets, causing the retail prices of maize, beans, and cassava to significantly decline in Masindi, Lira, Soroti, Arua, and Kampala. However, prices in August remained above last year despite following normal, seasonal trends.
- The food security outlook for the Karamoja region has consistently remained favorable over the July to December outlook period. Pasture and water availability is supporting livestock growth and enabling households to access food through livestock sales, on an as needed basis. Households are replenishing their food stocks from their own harvests, which continue through October. Near average harvests are expected in Karamoja this year.

Updated food security outlook through December 2012

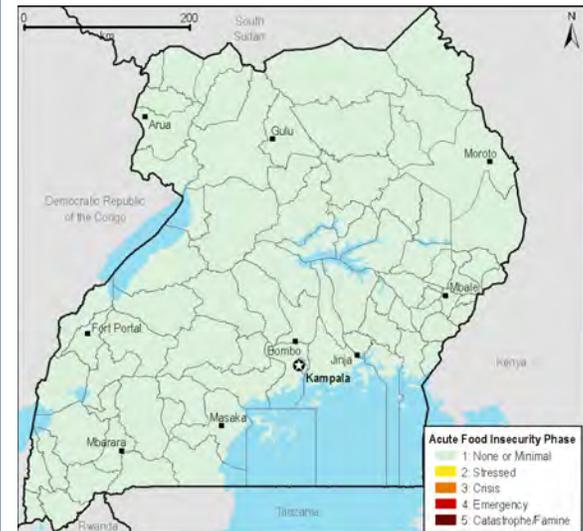
The assumptions detailed in the July Outlook remain valid. Household food stocks countrywide have been replenished as the first season harvest is completed, except for the eastern highland maize-growing parts of Kapchorwa and Bukwo Districts. Crop sales

Figure 1. Projected food security outcomes, October 2012



Source: FEWS NET Uganda

Figure 2. Most-likely food security scenario, November to December 2012



Source: FEWS NET Uganda

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision making, and does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. For more information on this scale, please visit www.fews.net/IPC.

have followed normal seasonal trends, but some poor households may sell so much of their production to cover cash-based expenses including school fees, which could potentially result in short-term food deficits. Harvesting for cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, and sorghum is on-going in the northern districts of Acholi region. In the western districts of Mbarara, Isingiro, Ibanda, and surrounding districts of Bushenyi, the A banana harvest was a bumper harvest. However because of the temporary nature of the banana harvests which occurred in July and part of August, banana supply has already significantly reduced, causing prices to increase by 60 percent from July to August in producing districts around Mbarara. In Kampala, banana prices have risen by 36 percent from July to August.

As expected, the retail prices of several commodities have continued to decline following the new harvests. In comparison to prices in July prices, the August maize retail prices in Kampala and Masindi markets have modestly declined by six to 10 percent, respectively. Bean prices have been relatively stable since July in Kampala, Gulu, and Soroti. Cassava chips for modestly declined by eight to ten percent in Arua and Soroti markets, respectively, from July to August. August millet prices in Lira and Soroti declined by 25 and 32, respectively, from July to August. Sorghum prices however significantly increased in Lira and Gulu by 38 percent and eight percent owing to the high demand, as contract farming for the larger brewing companies has reduced the sorghum sold on the spot market. The sorghum price in Soroti declined from July to August by three percent, as harvesting has only just begun in that area. These prices remain above the previous years' prices. For staples that are being harvested in northern Uganda, prices are expected to decrease following seasonal trends as stocks increase on the market. Regional demand from South Sudan, Kenya for maize and beans among other commodities, and local demand for the animal feeds and food processing industries will keep prices on the high side. Kenya is having a significantly below average maize harvest following the long rains, and the conflict and flooding situation in South Sudan has affected crop production. Trading activities for the last six months have been normal, but exports are increasing without any significant interruptions. During the month of September, over four in five households have been able to meet their essential and non-food needs without engaging in atypical, unsustainable coping strategies to access food or income. They are therefore classified at the None or Minimal (IPC Phase 1) level of food insecurity (Figure 1).

Generally, most parts of the bimodal areas of the country continued to receive unseasonal rains in the months of July and August. This is atypical as these months are usually a dry period, and seasonal forecasts for June to August generally predicted a normal dry period. As a result of early rains, a number of farmers did early planting a week or two earlier than the normal time, often starting by mid-July to take advantage of the rains. With relatively heavy rains in September, the second season rains have began, in earnest. Staggered planting for the different crops has occurred, which will result in a staggered second season harvests towards the end of November through to January. The seasonal forecast by the Uganda Department of Meteorology predicts that most parts of the country will receive near normal to above normal rainfall from September to December. Mild El Niño conditions are also forecasted to start, and they are a driver of the potential for above normal rainfall. Typical livelihood activities are being carried out throughout the period between now and December including land preparation, drying, and other postharvest and storage activities for crops including beans, maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, *simsim* (sesame), millet, and sorghum.

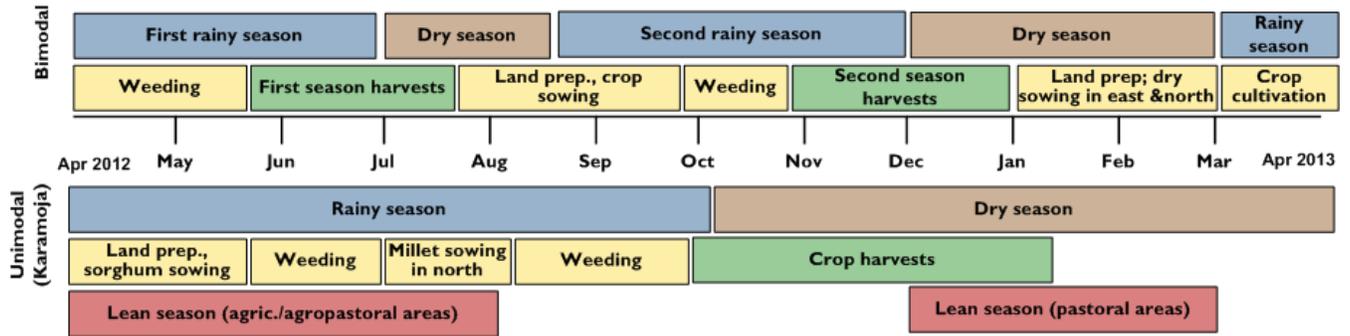
For the agropastoral and pastoral zones of Karamoja, the outlook has continued to be favourable. The cumulative rainfall the region has experienced in the August to September period has been near normal to above normal which has enhanced the availability of pasture and water resources. Livestock are generally in good condition, but incidences of livestock diseases like brucellosis, worms, and contagious bovine pleural pneumonia (CBPP) may affect productivity although, usually, the months of October to December are low disease incidence periods. Harvesting in the agropastoral zone is ongoing for crops including maize, sorghum, and beans. The harvest is replenishing household food stocks. Own production by households accounts for up to half of the seasonal food needs. Heavy rainfall has also supported the production of wild vegetables, which supplement the diets of poor and very poor households who constitute 60 percent of the population in the Karamoja region. Seasonal income sources between now and December include sales of charcoal, firewood, grass, and poles, and these have been normal, so far this year. However, this income may be slightly reduced during the rains when feeder roads make it difficult for rural households to reach markets to sell their commodities and purchase other essentials.

The prices of cereals in Karamoja are expected to decrease after the harvest is complete in October. Trading activities are expected to behave normally except for the deterioration of roads into the region which may hinder the flow of food stocks from surplus production areas. Karamoja depends on surplus production from other regions for food from December to March, the lean season for agropastoral households. Livestock sales peak in the month of December in a normal year.

Assuming no serious outbreaks of livestock diseases between now and December and the continued rains as forecast, poor households are expected to access adequate food supplies and incomes from crop sales and livestock sales.

Overall, the households in the country for the period November to December will maintain no or minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) (Figure 2).

Seasonal calendar



Source: FEWS NET