

The food security situation stabilizes with some Heys/Dadaa rains

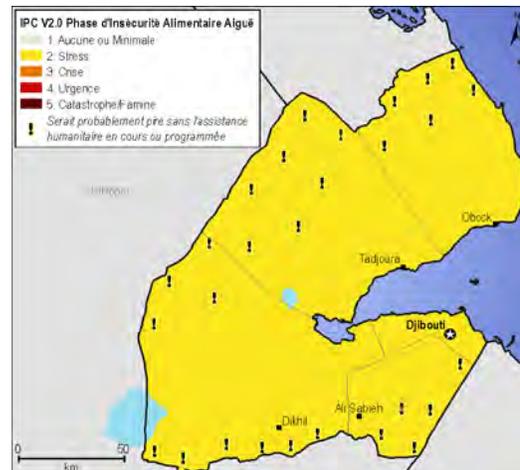
KEY MESSAGES

- Food security has improved compared to previous years in most rural areas of the country, primarily due to rainfall since March 2013 helping improve livestock body conditions, health, and herd size, along with supporting easier access to water. However, around 70,000 people remain food insecure.
- Following the adequate performance of the July to September *Karan/Karma* rains, the current October to February *Heys/Dadaa* have gotten off to a mostly normal start in coastal areas. This has allowed regenerated pasture to remain and has further replenished water resources, providing resources for rural livelihoods.

CURRENT SITUATION

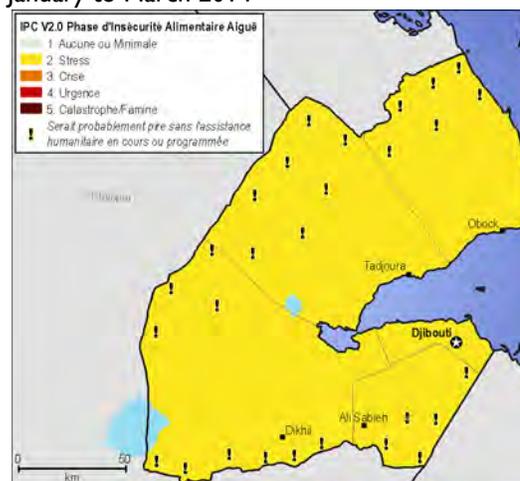
- In most pastoral areas of the country, food security has and is being improved by more water resources and livestock production supported by the July to September *Karan/Karma* rains and the recent start of the October to February *Heys/Dadaa* coastal rains. However, due to several consecutive dry rainy seasons, livestock ownership, other household asset holdings, and herd sizes still remain low while household debts remain substantial.
- In some areas of Southeast Pastoral Border livelihood zone near northwestern Somalia, abnormal livestock migration has been reported. Some households from Biidleh and Kabah Kabah have migrated to mostly typical grazing areas and a few have moved into northwestern Somalia. However, some unusual migrations were reported to areas not usually used during this season and during a time of year when migration is often more limited.
- The recently completed construction of infrastructure, some of which had been under construction since 2011, including dams, *berkads*, reservoirs, and other forms of water storage has contributed to more water resources being available.
- The rains have improved the production of goat milk, an important source of income and of food for households in the Southeast Pastoral livelihood zone. There was a fairly high level of goat births during the July to September *Karan/Karma* rains, and many of these females are currently still milking.

Figure 1. Projected food security outcomes, November to December 2013



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2014



Source: FEWS NET

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/FoodInsecurityScale.

- Staple food prices were generally stable from September to October, but they were still higher than prices from mid-2007, which preceded the food price spike of 2008. Indeed, national average prices have increased by 50 percent and 87 percent for wheat flour and *belem* rice since 2007.
- The number of productive assets at the household level remains very low. This probably reflects the recurrent droughts during which households have lost or needed to sell their assets. Despite currently being able to meet immediate food needs, households' income from their livestock remains inadequate to support non-food needs or to withstand even fairly small shocks, climactic or otherwise.
- Currently, most rural populations are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with the availability of resources preserved and income from the current season supporting minimal consumption requirements. However, in some areas rural households are Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only due to the continued presence of humanitarian assistance.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The current situation has not fundamentally changed the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for October 2013 to March 2014. Current conditions broadly match those used in the analysis and the main assumptions continue to support the most likely scenario as discussed in [the Food Security Outlook for October 2013 to March 2014](#).

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MARCH 2014

- Forecasts for the rest of the October to February *Heys/Dadaa* coastal rainy season indicate normal amounts of rainfall with normal distribution patterns, implying a continued stability of pasture, browse, and water availability over the coming months. Water availability will continue to improve due to the existence of greater storage capacity in reservoirs. Indeed, rural areas of the country have received rain regularly since last July. These rains have improved access to water and pasture, which will help maintain household's food security through improving the livestock body conditions and the availability of products from livestock production.
- With water and pasture available, livestock body conditions are expected to be maintained or improved. Better body conditions make livestock more saleable, and their prices are expected to slowly increase, increasing the terms of trade between livestock and cereals for pastoralists. Also, incomes of poor households are growing and expected to continue to grow from milk sales resulting from increased milk production. Some of the livestock that conceived earlier this year are expected to give birth in November, maintaining milk production in some herds.
- In addition to humanitarian food assistance, shipments of food from Djibouti City and from cities in Ethiopia to markets provide a key source of food. Some of the cash income used to pay for this food comes from resource-depleting, non-sustainable sources, such as selling charcoal. However, this income-generating activity remains commonly practiced in rural areas, despite the official ban.
- Current visible improvement and regeneration of pasture and water resources has not led to a full recovery for many households. Recurrent drought experienced by pastoralists and degraded soils leading to poorer pasture, even following rains, have all significantly reduce household asset holdings including livestock and other productive assets. Many households are still employing additional strategies to get food and income. Most rural households are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through at least March 2014.
- Poor households in Djibouti City's urban and peri-urban areas are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) until at least March 2014. Their consumption has been reduced somewhat as they still are recovering from seasonally high spending in September around the start of school year, which this year followed very closely after high expenses during Ramadan in July/August. Household resources are being devoted to repayment of debts. On the other hand, both major and minor income-generating activities have seasonally increased since October, with the return of the city's better off population from being out of the city during the period of high heat from June to September.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Food Security Outlook Update is a monthly report on current conditions and changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in Somalia. It updates FEWS NET's Food Security Outlook, an in-depth quarterly report that uses scenario development to forecast outcomes over a six-month period. These reports and details on methodology are available at www.fews.net