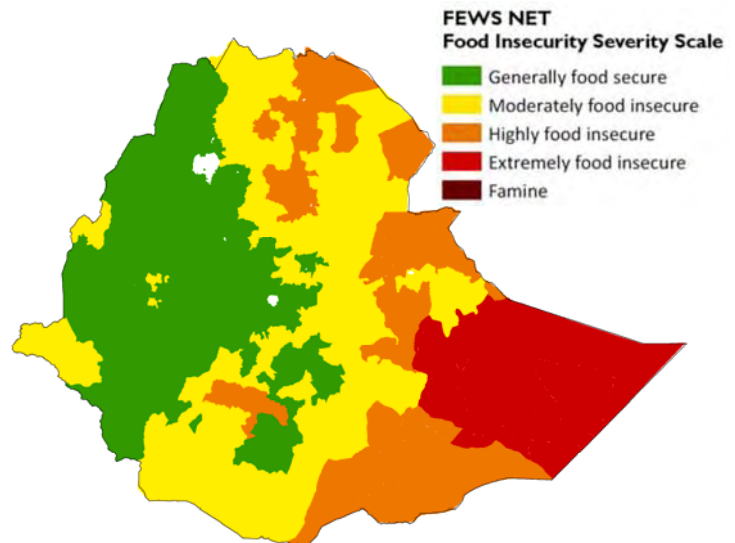


## ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook

April to September 2009

- Ethiopia continues to face high levels of food insecurity. A total of 7.5 million chronically food insecure people receive assistance through food-for-work under the Productive Safety-Net Program (PSNP). An additional 4.9 million people require emergency food assistance through June 2009. In addition, about 200,000 people have been displaced in the southern parts of the country due to clan conflict. In total, an estimated 12.4 million people are currently considered food insecure.
- Food security in the *belg*-crop producing parts of the country is expected to deteriorate further peaking during the July-September period. This follows a late start to the *belg* rains and an anticipated poor *belg* harvest. Food security in these areas is already poor following the near total failure of the *belg* harvest last year. Areas that most heavily rely on the *belg* harvest, like the northeast highlands, are expected to be the most affected.

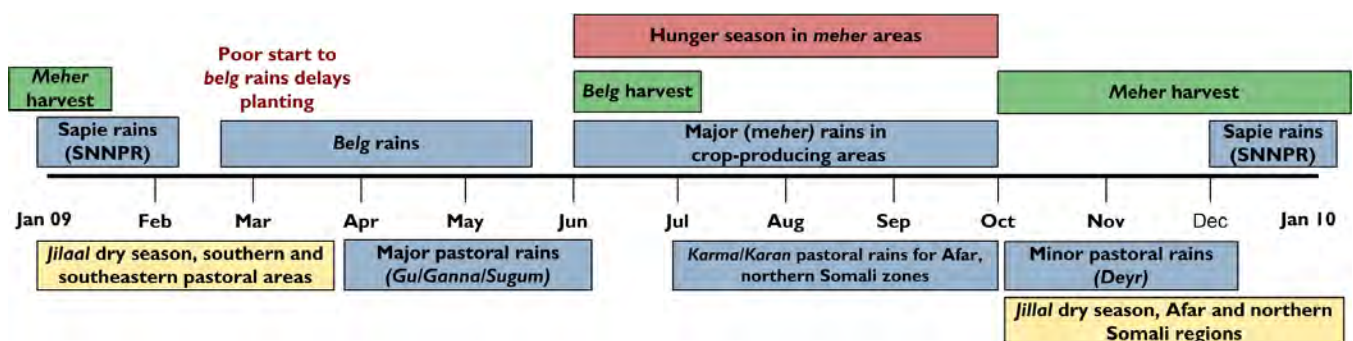
**Figure 1.** Current estimated food security conditions, April 2009



Source: FEWS NET and WFP

- In the pastoral region of Afar, an area where rains during the past two seasons have been below normal, performance of the current *sugum* (March to May) rains has been poor and the remainder of the season is expected to be below normal. Physical condition of livestock, livestock:cereal terms of trade, and livestock productivity are expected to decline until the main seasonal rains (*karma*) begin in July.
- Food security in the southern zones of Somali region, neighboring lowlands of Oromia and South Omo Zone of SNNP Region is expected to improve temporarily with the onset of the *gu/genna* (April to June) rains. However, because the forecast for the remainder of the season remains mixed, the respite will likely be short-lived and food security will continue to heavily depend on external assistance.

### Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

## Current food security conditions

Ethiopia continues to face high levels of food insecurity. A total of 7.5 million chronically food insecure people receive assistance through food-for-work under the Productive Safety-Net Program (PSNP). An additional 4.9 million people require emergency food assistance through June 2009. In addition, about 200,000 people have been displaced in the southern parts of the country due to clan conflict between the Somali and Oromo and require immediate humanitarian assistance. In total, an estimated 12.4 million people are currently considered food insecure.

The recent *belg/gu/genna* rains have partially replenished water sources in many areas easing water shortages. But there are still areas, especially in

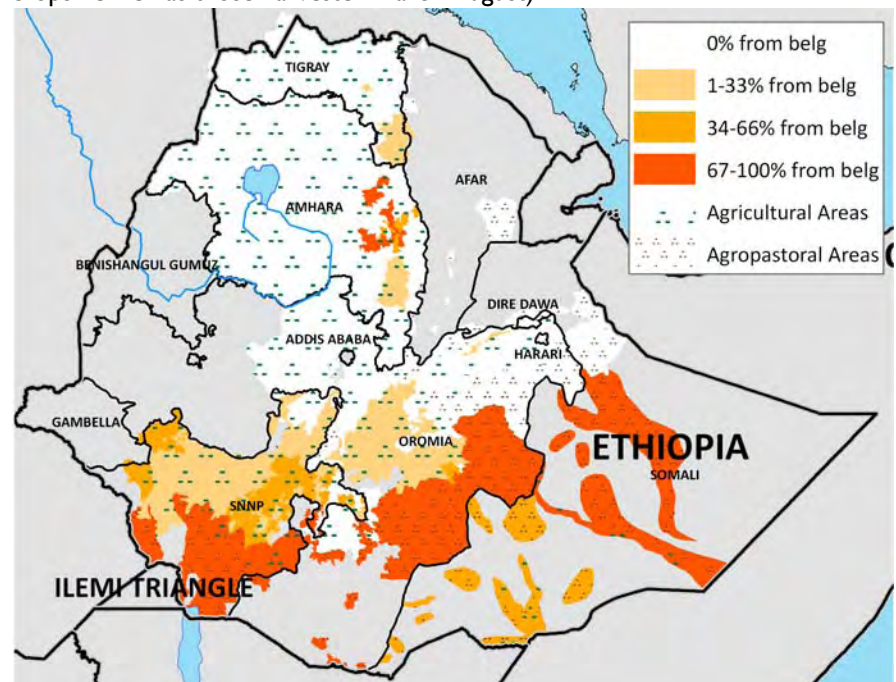
the lowlands of Tigray, and Oromia, and parts of Afar, Somali, and South Omo in SNNPR where the rains remain inadequate and critical water shortages still prevail in chronically water deficit areas.

Most agricultural *belg*-growing areas (Figure 2) are food insecure as a result of consecutive poor harvests during the last two years. With the *belg* rains not starting until the end of March, when most planting would normally be completed, area planted this year was below normal. For example, in **southern Tigray**, about 60 percent of planned cropping area was planted. In the *belg* dependent areas of North Wollo and South Wollo zones of **Amhara region**, and East and West Hararghe zones of **Oromia region**, *belg* planting was delayed by four to five weeks and the performance of *belg* crops is expected to be poor. Planting performance in *belg* growing areas of South and North Wollo of Amhara Region was 58 percent and 72 percent, respectively, by mid April. In the northeast highland areas that heavily depend on the *belg* season, the impacts of the poor *belg* season on food security will be particularly severe as *meher* production is limited, due to frosts which typically occur in October. There is a need to continue to monitor the *belg* rains and their impact on *belg* crop production, land preparation and planting of long season crops, and replenishment of pasture and water for livestock. A government led multi agency needs assessment of the *belg/gu* season is planned for early June.

In **SNNPR**, although planting has been delayed, households have planted lower yielding, short-cycle beans or short cycle maize wherever seed was available. However, although some *belg* production is still possible in these areas, food security conditions in this chronically food insecure, densely populated part of the country remain poor following below-average rains in 2008, reduced coffee labor demand, and overconsumption of enset by both humans and livestock over the last year. Consequently, increasing rates of admission to Out-Patient Therapeutic Centers (OTPs) and Stabilization Centers (SCs) are being reported in several woredas, including Boricha in Sidama zone, Gedeb and Bule in Gedeo zone, Tembaro, West Badowacho, East Badowacho, and Hadera Tunto in Hadiya zone, and Sodo Zuria, Boloso Sore, Damot Sore, and Boloso Bombe woredas in Wolayita zone. Similarly, a rapid increase in admissions to OTPs is reported in Siraro, Shalla, Shashemene, and Arsi Negele woredas of West Arsi Zone. These are also woredas that had high levels of acute malnutrition last year when the failure of the 2007 *sapie* (December) and 2008 *belg* rains led to a failure of sweet potato and *belg* maize production. A similar rise in admissions is also being reported in woredas of East and West Hararghe. Food security is likely to deteriorate further given the delay in the *belg* harvest, unless adequate assistance is provided.

*Sugum* (March to May) rains are the secondary rains for the northeastern pastoral region of **Afar** and the **northern zones of Somali Region**, Shinile and Jijiga. Performance of both the *sugum* and the *karma* (July to September, primary rains) rains

**Figure 2.** *Belg* grain production as a percentage of total grain production (*Belg* crops defined as those harvested March-August)



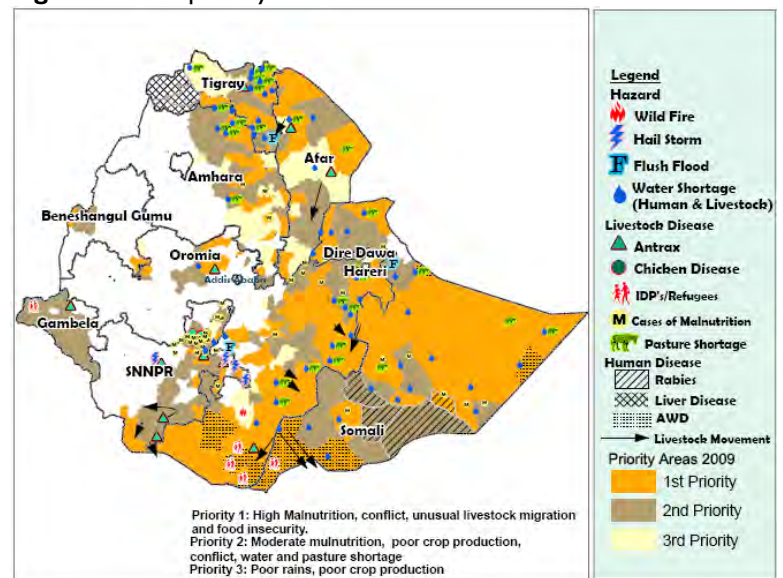
Note: *Belg* rains are known as *gu* rains in southern Somali region and as *gana* rains in Oromiya  
Source: Livelihoods Integration Unit, DMFSS, MOARD, Govt. of Ethiopia, Graphics: FEWS NET

were below-normal last year and as a result, pasture and water availability has been poor and milk production is abnormally low. This year, the *sugum* rains have begun, although they were delayed by about three weeks. These rains have brought some relief, with the exception of the northern parts of the region (Dalol, Berhale, Erebt, Bidu, Korre and Afdera) where the rains to date are still poor and water trucking is ongoing.

The April to June rains are the main rains for the **southern zones of Somali region**, neighboring **lowlands of Oromia region** and **South Omo Zone of SNNP region**. These pastoral and agropastoral parts of the country, especially those in southern Somali region, experienced below-average rains in 2005/06, 2007 (*gu* and *deyr*), and 2008 (*gu*), flooding in 2006, 2007, and 2008 in riverine areas, and conflict. The consecutive poor seasons culminated in unusually high livestock mortality and poor conception rates in 2008. The 2008 *deyr* rains were generally above-average and helped to improve water and pasture availability, but full recovery will take time, as long as three years, for those who lost livestock due to drought and disease. The 2009 *gu* rains have begun on time in different parts of the region and have improved water availability. However, pasture and water conditions have remained a problem in some areas and the rains have been erratic thus far. Improved food aid deliveries through WFP's hubs and spokes system have contributed to an improvement in food security and a stabilization of cereal prices.

Following resource shortfalls, reduced food rations have been distributed in some areas receiving assistance since July 2008, although areas identified by WFP as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> priority (see Figure 4) receive a full ration of cereals, pulses and blended food. The total relief food requirement for April and May (cereal, pulses, oil and blended food) is 188,111. Out of this, 72,502 MT (38.5 percent) is available and there is a shortfall of 115,609 MT. Unless the required food is made available, some beneficiaries will continue to receive the reduced ration.

Figure 4. WFP priority areas for food assistance



Source: WFP

### Most-likely food security scenario (April to September 2009)

Under this scenario it is assumed that households in the eastern agricultural areas will harvest below-average *belg* crops following the delayed start of the *belg* rains. Additional areas of the northeast, which are not *belg*-dependant, will also face increased food deficits following poor 2008 *meher* production. These two groups include South Tigray zone of Tigray Region; North Wello, South Wello, North Shewa, and Oromia zones of Amhara Region; Bale, Arsi, Borena, Guji, North Shewa, East Hararghe, and West Hararghe zones of Oromia Region, and Harari and Dire Dawa Regions. It is also assumed that cereal prices will remain much higher than the historical average and rise seasonably during the hunger period (June to September) as the stocks from the last *meher* season are depleted and because the 2009 *belg* harvest is expected to be low.

The *belg* rains in parts of SNNPR, including Wolayita, Gedeo, Sidama, Kembata Tembaro, and Hadiya zones began late and it is assumed that the performance of *belg* crops in these areas will be behind schedule and below average. In most lowlands, high-yield maize has been replaced by shorter-cycle, lower yielding maize or haricot beans following the season's late start. This is expected to lead to reduced availability of green maize for consumption between July and August and a reduced dry harvest in October. As in the northeast, prices of cereals are expected to continue to rise and be higher than the long term average as well as above last year due to reduced supply following reduced production from the *belg* season. Increased consumption of enset (a drought resistant alternative staple) to offset the expected poor maize harvest is less feasible this year due to over consumption last year by both humans and livestock following the failure of the sweet potato and *belg* crops. An increase in the number of people who require humanitarian assistance is expected from these zones of SNNPR.



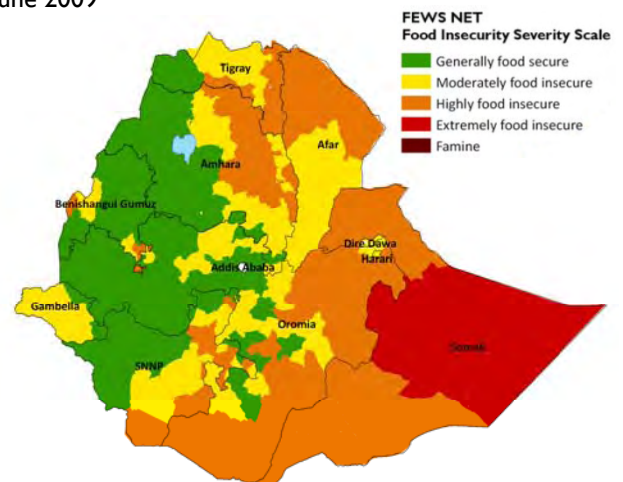
There is a need to conduct standard nutrition surveys, especially in the woredas where a rapid increase in admissions to OTPs is being reported. Unless sufficient assistance is provided on time, levels of acute malnutrition will deteriorate further.

It is also assumed that the performance of the 2009 *kiremt* (June to September) rains will be normal as information on the seasonal forecast for this season is not yet available. Although both the PSNP and the relief food distribution are expected to be carried out, use of negative coping mechanisms, such as increased sales of firewood and charcoal, increase sales of eucalyptus trees, and extended periods of labor migration will continue among poor and very poor households. Levels of acute malnutrition are also expected to increase especially among the vulnerable (children under five, pregnant and lactating mothers and the elderly).

For the northeastern pastoral region of **Afar** and the two **northern zones of Somali region**, Jijiga and Shinile, the *sugum* rains (March to May) began up to one month late and the season's performance is expected to be below average. However, although the current rains will likely be below average, they are expected to replenish water points and regenerate pasture in this part of the country, an area that has experienced two consecutive failed seasons. Meanwhile, as in the rest of the country, cereal prices are expected to remain high. These high prices are expected to depress livestock:cereal terms of trade for pastoralists and agropastoralists in these areas, though an improvement terms of trade is expected with the start of the *karma* (July to September) rains. These rains (which are assumed will be normal) will lead to improved animal body conditions and, in turn, higher livestock prices. Regular and adequate PSNP food transfers and stable security conditions are also assumed for Afar region. Until the *karma* rains begin and improve water and pasture availability though, food security will highly depend on the PSNP transfers and parts of the region will continue to be highly food insecure, especially the northeastern parts of the region where water trucking is currently ongoing. Full recovery of households in this area will, however, take a long time because it relies on the rebuilding of herds, a process which will take a number of consecutive average or above-average seasons.

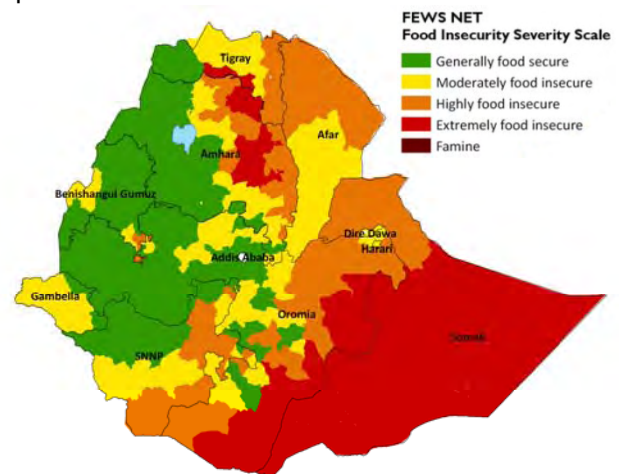
Performance of the *gu* (April to June) season, the major pastoral rains, for the **southern seven zones of Somali region** (Fik, Degehabur, Gode, Warder, Koraha, Afder and Liben), neighboring lowlands of **Oromia Region** (Bale and Borena lowlands) and **South Omo zone of SNNP region** has been below average to date. It is assumed that performance of these rains during the remainder of the season will be normal to below normal. Although there will be temporary improvement in the availability of pasture and water from the current rains, these improvements are not expected to last. Water shortages that are currently being reported in different parts of the region are expected to start again by August. Pasture availability will also decline quickly because rainfall will not have been enough for significant regeneration and the physical condition of livestock will deteriorate. Cereal prices are expected to rise seasonably, as in the rest of the country, especially from June to September, as stocks from the 2008/2009 *meher* harvest are depleted, and because security related market access problems are expected to continue in parts of Somali region. Both factors will contribute to deteriorating livestock:cereal terms of trade. Food security of the pastoral and agro pastoral populations in these parts of the country

**Figure 4.** Most-likely food security scenario, April to June 2009



Source: FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP

**Figure 5.** Most-likely food security scenario, July to September 2009



Source: FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP

will heavily depend on the level of humanitarian assistance provided. Beyond food aid, assistance in restocking is required by households who lost large numbers of livestock over the past year in order for them to regain their means of livelihood.

**Table I:** Events which could affect the food security outlook

Geographic Focus Area	Possible events in the next 6 months that would change the most likely scenario in this area	Impacts on food security conditions	Likelihood of occurrence*	Key variables to monitor
A. Afar and Northern Somali regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor sugum/gu rains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased water shortages</li> <li>Unusual migration of livestock</li> <li>Increased need for humanitarian assistance</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Seasonal rains
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor performance of the main karma/karan rains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High levels of livestock mortality</li> <li>Extreme water shortages</li> <li>Increased and unusual migration</li> <li>Critical shortage of milk</li> <li>Poor livestock:cereal ToT</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Seasonal rains Cereal and livestock prices
B. Southern Somali, Lowlands of Bale, Guji and Borena zones of Oromia Region and South Omo of SNNPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Below normal <i>Gu/Genna</i> rains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased water shortages</li> <li>Unusual migration of livestock</li> <li>Increased need for humanitarian assistant</li> <li>Extreme rise in cereal prices leading to poor ToT.</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Performance of <i>Gu/Genna</i> rains Prices of staples
North Eastern highlands, Parts of Rift valley, East and West Hararghe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced chat production in East and West Hararghe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decline in income further affecting purchasing power</li> </ul>	unlikely	Prices of staples Performance of chat production
C. Parts of SNNPR- Wolayita, Gedeo, Sidama, Kembata Tembaro and Hadiya zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor performance of <i>belg</i> rains up to the end of the rainy season in May.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor <i>belg</i> harvest leading to a large number of people requiring continued emergency assistance.</li> <li>Widespread high levels of acute malnutrition</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Kiremt rains Prices of staples Food aid distribution
All areas (A,B,C, and D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irregular and inadequate resources transfers through the PSNP and emergency programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unusually high levels of cereal prices</li> <li>Very high levels of acute malnutrition</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Food aid distributions (PSNP and emergency)
Areas B, C, and D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor <i>kiremt</i> rains in <i>meher</i> crop producing parts of the country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited access to <i>meher</i> agricultural labor for the poor and the very poor</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Performance of main seasonal rains

* Probability levels	Description
Likely	Likely to occur in the time period under current conditions
Unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed moderately
Very unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed significantly



Maize is the most widely consumed cereal by the rural poor. Sorghum is generally one of the cheapest cereals. Teff is also very important throughout the country. The most important markets for teff are the large cities including Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Makele, and Dire Dawa. Addis Abada is the capital city and Dire Dawa, Mekele, and Jijiga are major towns in the eastern, mainly food insecure, parts of the country. Bahir Dar is a major town in a surplus producing area. Jimma represents a generally food secure surplus area. Shashemene is an assembly, wholesale, and retail market and the main transshipment point for cereals from the south and southwest to the center and east. Sodo is an urban center located in the Wolayita zone, and is one of the most chronically food insecure parts of the region.

Monthly prices are supplied by FEWS NET enumerators, local government agencies, market information systems, UN agencies, NGOs, and other network and private sector partners.

