

## ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook Update

November 2011

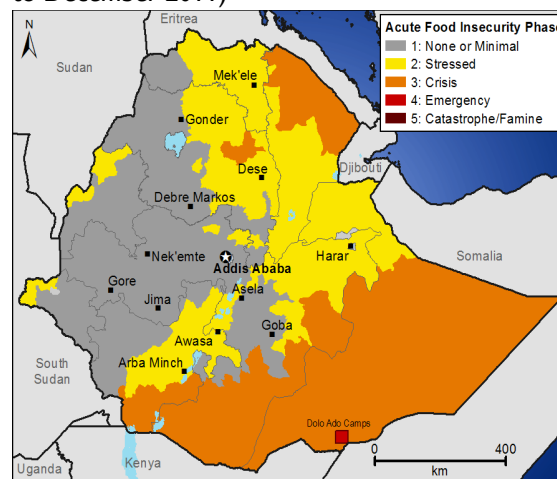
### Good rains likely to stabilize food security in the south

- The October to December *Deyr* rains are performing well in most parts of the southern and southeastern pastoral and agropastoral areas, easing the shortage of pastoral resources. This, coupled with ongoing humanitarian assistance, will continue to stabilize food security among poor and very poor households in these areas. Nonetheless, about 4 million people will continue to require humanitarian assistance through the end of 2011 across the country.
- Prices of staple foods have generally started declining following the fresh Meher harvest, although they remain higher than the five-year average. This will continue to constrain access to food over the coming months among the rural and urban poor who heavily depend on purchase to fulfill their minimum food requirements.
- During the January to March 2012 period, Crisis level food insecurity will extend to the dominantly *Belg* producing zones in the northeastern highlands as well as into some marginal *Meher* cropping areas due to the below normal 2011 harvests. Similarly, as the long dry season (December to March) progresses, deterioration in food security is likely in some southern pastoral and agropastoral woredas which were severely affected by the recent drought.

### Updated food security outlook through March 2012

Food security in most parts of the country has stabilized as a result of improved market supply and declining prices following the *Meher* harvest, ongoing humanitarian assistance, and the current good *Deyr/Hageya* rains in the southern and southeast pastoral and agropastoral. No Acute Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food insecurity will persist in most parts of the country through December 2011. Exceptions include poor households in the dominantly *Belg* growing areas of North Wollo, northeastern parts of Afar, southern and southeastern pastoral and agro pastoral areas who will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Moreover, the food security situation is likely to deteriorate in parts of the eastern marginal cropping areas, most of SNNPR and portion of the woredas in Borena zone of Oromia and southern Somali region over the January to March outlook period (Figure 2).

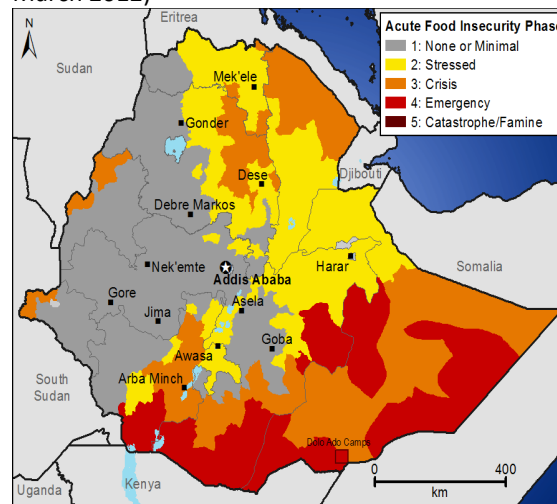
**Figure 1.** Most-likely food security outcomes (October to December 2011)



For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

Source: FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP

**Figure 2.** Most-likely food security outcomes (January to March 2012)



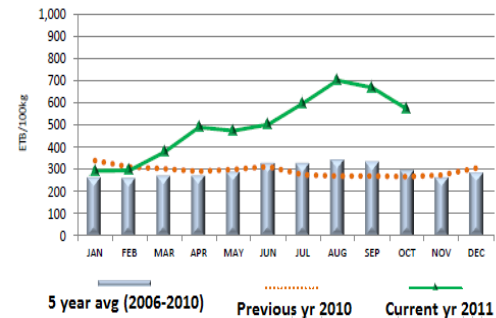
Source: FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP

The start of the new *Meher* harvests, improved market supplies, and the subsequent decline in staple food prices have begun to stabilize food security in the **eastern marginal *Meher* cropping** areas that rely on both *Meher* and *Belg* production. Food insecurity among the poor and very poor households in most of these areas, which include eastern parts of Tigray, Amhara and Oromia, is improved and these households will remain classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March 2012. However, food insecurity is more severe in some areas where *Belg* cropping failed or was below normal and where *Meher* planting was late due to poor rains during the beginning of the season. Crops were also affected by mid-season dryness, pest infestations and likely damage to crops by anticipated unseasonable rains and extreme weather events, such as frost in the highlands. These areas include most parts Wag Hamra (lowlands of Sekota, parts of Ziqualla, Abergele and Sahila), some woredas of North Wollo (Wadla, Gubalafto, Habru, Kobo, Gidan and Gubalafto), most of the woredas in South Wollo and Oromia zones of Amhara; some woredas in Southern, Southeastern and Eastern Zones of Tigray such as Alamata, Hintalo Wajirat and Ray Azebo woredas; many lowlands woredas in East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia including Burka Dimitu, Golo Oda, Midega Tola, Fedis, Melkabelo and Gemechis, Oda Bultum and Boke. For this time of the year, abnormal movements of people and livestock is also reported in many of the lowlands of East and West Hararghe (Kumbi, Golo Oda, Chinaksan, Babile, Midega Tola, Fedis, Burka Dimitu, Hawi Gudina and Oda Bultum) woredas due to critical shortages of water and pasture which are affecting livestock body condition. Poor households in the dominantly *Belg* growing areas of North Wollo will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) level food insecurity throughout the outlook period as a result of much below normal *Belg* harvest in the current year. Food security among poor households in South Wollo will deteriorate into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) level during the January to March scenario period following depletion of limited *Meher* stocks and rising staple prices.

Food security has improved seasonably in the **Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region (SNNPR)** as household food availability and market supplies increased following the fresh *Meher* harvests of maize, coffee, pepper, taro and cassava. However, there is growing concern about possible yield/harvest reductions due to dryness during the critical crop development stages of flowering and seed setting. The risk is reported to be greatest in the highlands and wet midlands of Gurage, Silite, Hadiya, Kembata Tembaro, Wolayita, Dawro and Gamu Gofa zones. But, the situation favors matured crops in the low and dry midlands. In the major root crop growing zones of Wolayita, Gamu Gofa, Dawro, Kembata Tembaro and Hadiya, planting of sweet potatoes, which is the major transitional crop during the March to May lean season, is constrained by inadequate moisture in October/November as well as shortages of cuttings as those which have been distributed were not sufficient. Diseases have affected coffee in the major coffee growing zones of Sidama and Gedio and pepper in Gurage and Silite zones. This will have a significant impact on the poor households whose major source of income is labor in these areas. The level of food insecurity will therefore continue to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through December in most areas but is expected to deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the January to March period. In the southern special woredas, where the *Belg* harvest performed poorly and food security is currently at Phase 3 – Crisis, this level of food insecurity will persist among poor households between now and March 2012 as the harvest from the *Meher* season is very minimal.

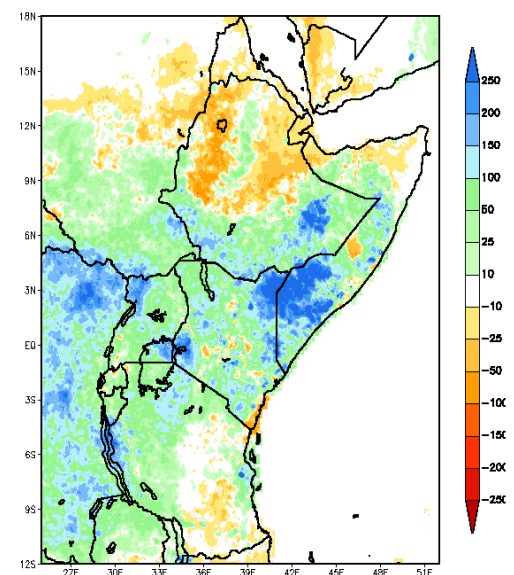
The current *Deyr/Hageya* (October to December) rains, which were forecast to be near normal to below normal in **southern Somali, lowlands of Oromia (Borena, Guji and Bale zones) and South Omo of SNNPR**, started on time in most parts of these areas and the performance to date is normal to above normal (Figure 3). This follows two consecutive poor seasons rains in 2010 and 2011 which resulted in a

**Figure 3. White maize: Nominal retail prices in Addis Ababa**



Source: FEWS NET/EGTE

**Figure 4. Precipitation Anomaly (mm) Based on NOAA/CPC RFE Climatology Method (Oct 1-Nov 21, 2011)**



Source: NOAA/FEWS NET

severe drought that exposed millions of people to emergency levels of food insecurity. The recent rains have eased critical water shortages and improved availability of browse for camels and goats. Pasture has also begun to regenerate and water ponds and *Birkads* have been replenished. But, the rains were reported to be below normal in woredas like Shilabo, Dobaweyn, Geladi, and parts of Warder and emergency water trucking is still ongoing in these areas. Woredas such as Salhad, Meyumuluke of Fik zone, Degahamadeow and Gunagado of Dagahbour zone received little or no rains until the end of the second dekad of November. On the contrary, the rains caused flooding in the flood prone areas in Gode zone (Mustahil and Kelafo woredas) affecting thousands of people, crops and planting activities in the agro-pastoral and riverine areas. The onset of the rains was also largely normal in the lowlands of Oromia in Borena, Guji and Bale zones, with the exception of some pockets such as Legehida in Bale zone. The rains were poor in the start, but improved since the second half of October in South Omo of SNNPR; improving water and pasture availability and thus close to normal livestock body condition is reported.

Improved market supplies from other cropping areas and reduced cereal prices (though not as low as usual for this time of the year due to inflation and high transport costs) will likely improve food consumption during the October to December period in most of these areas. The distribution of food aid will also improve household food access and the nutrition situation is expected to stabilize due to improved availability of milk and ongoing nutrition response, as most of the woredas in these areas are prioritized as hotspots. The start of restocking, especially for camels and goats, and improved water/browse availability is expected to favor high levels of conceptions. Food security during the October to December period will therefore improve to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels among the poor and very poor households. Such levels of food insecurity persist among poor households as their ability to fully meet their basic survival needs is still very limited, despite the current season improvement and ongoing humanitarian assistance, as they were the ones who were most significantly affected by the recent drought.

While poor households in most parts of these zones are expected to continue facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity over the January to March 2012 outlook period, deterioration to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels is expected in many woredas of the southern zones of Somali and neighboring lowlands of Oromia. These include Geladin, Warder, Shilabo, Shekosh, Fik, Segeg, Dehun, Hamero, Barry, East/West Emy, Dolo Odo; Dhas, Dire, Liben, Sewena, Legehida, Rayitu, Dawe Serer and Dawe Kechen. This is mainly due to the poor performance of the rains during the last two seasons, very poor availability of milk due low livestock births, limited humanitarian and market access in parts of southern Somali, loss of livestock due to the drought, poor purchasing capacity, and mediocre performance of the current *Deyr*.

Following below normal *Karma/Karran* (mid-July to mid-September) rains, the dry season has started in **Afar and northern zones of Somali region**. In northern and eastern Afar region, including the chronically water deficient woredas of Kori, Bidu, Elidaar and Erebt, emergency water trucking is ongoing. Harvests for sorghum and wheat have started in the agropastoral areas of Jijiga and Shinile zones of Somali region, but will be below normal due to inadequate rains since the last *Gu* (April to May) season which affected planting and crop development during the flowering and seed setting stages. Maize has been a total failure in these areas. Water and pasture availability is normal in the pastoral areas of Shinile and most of the areas in Jijiga zones that milk production is increasing.

The level of food insecurity among poor households in Afar and northern Somali is expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) throughout the outlook period due to some improvement in milk availability, livestock body conditions, and purchasing power, the current harvest in the agropastoral areas (though limited), and transfers of PSNP resources during the January to March period. However, woredas in northern and northeastern Afar will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) as water shortages will remain critical, affecting the body condition and productivity of livestock through the November to March dry period until the next rains begin around mid March 2012. Thus a food gap is expected to persist due to increased expenditure on water despite the fact that resources are made available through the PSNP and emergency programs which cover a significant proportion of the annual food requirement of the poor.

The start of the *Meher* harvests in **Gambella and Benshangul Gumuz regions** has improved food security. Livestock conditions are good as pasture and water are available across the regions, significantly impacting milk yields. However, there is a growing food security concern in some lowlands *Kebeles* in Dima, Jor, Gog, Gambella Zuria, Lare, Wanthoa, Jikawa, Itang and Makuwaye due to the flooding of the Baro, Gillo and Akobos rivers in Gambella. The floods were reported to have damaged mature maize crops, inundated grazing lands, and displaced thousands of people. Heavy unseasonable storms have also damaged matured crops, mainly sorghum, in Mengeshi, Godere and Gog woredas. Market supplies have

improved due local production and inflows from adjacent areas of SNNPR, leading to a decline in staple prices in Gambella. However, while cereal and livestock prices remained stable, a slight increase was observed in staple food prices in Benishangul.

Despite some improvements in the overall food security situation, the refugee influx into the bordering woredas of Kurmuk, Sherkolle and Guba woredas of Benishangul is threatening the food security of the host communities who are accommodating thousands of unregistered refugees who are not willing to be relocated to camps (they anticipate that the situation in their areas of origin will improve soon and that they will be able to return). Due to the impact of resource sharing with the refugees, an estimated 22,000 local people in 17 *Kebeles* were identified as requiring immediate food assistance. Food delivery and health care services have been initiated by the government and its humanitarian partners. A disease outbreak was reported among shoats in the refugee hosting woredas and vaccination is underway. According to OCHA, an estimated 20,000 refugees were registered as of the 16<sup>th</sup> of November excluding those who are staying with the local communities. However, as the fighting intensifies, the number of people crossing the border is expected to increase. In general, the situation is not likely to improve in the near term.

No acute food insecurity anticipated across Gambella and Benshangul Gumuz regions throughout the outlook period with the exception of the woredas in Benishangul bordering the Blue Nile State of South Sudan and Akobo, Wonhawo, Lare and Jikawo woredas of Gambella which will remain at Stress (IPC Phase 2) level of food insecurity during the October to December scenario period. The food insecurity in these areas is expected to deteriorate further to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) level in the second scenario period due to depletion of stocks from the current harvest, continued flows of refugee from the Blue Nile State of South Sudan into Benishangul and related impacts on resources (pasture), market and prices and health (outbreaks), continued instability due internal conflict in the border woredas of Gambella.