

Deyr season crop performance in South and Central Somalia

Key messages

- Despite on-going, large-scale humanitarian intervention, food insecurity remains at Emergency and Famine levels across most of southern Somalia.
- Crop production in southern and central Somalia is expected to be mixed. In **Juba** and **Gedo** below average harvests are expected, in **Bay, Bakool, Hiran and the central agropastoral** areas below-average to average harvests are expected, and in the **Shabelle regions** average to above-average crop harvests are likely.
- *Deyr* crop harvests are expected to be one to two months late compare to normal.
- Higher than usual off-season crop harvests are expected, mainly from Juba regions

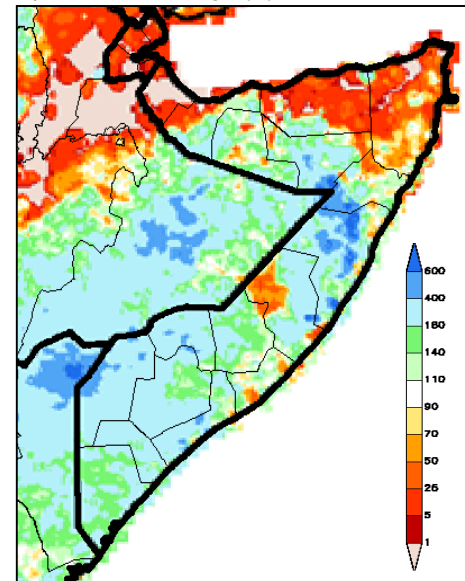
Seasonal performance

Deyr 2011/2012 rainfall performance has been average to above average in all districts of south and central Somalia (Figure 1). This has been largely beneficial for crops and livestock. However, field reports confirm that there are various districts in **Bay, Shabelle, Juba and Gedo** regions where flash floods from the heavy rainfall and river flooding have damaged standing crops, especially maize. This is likely to delay harvests and reduce yields during the *Deyr* harvests, though in some cases this excess moisture will benefit off-season harvests in March. Delayed planting, high levels of weeds and labor shortages may also affect crop harvests. In the Northern regions, rains started mid-October, but as the season advanced, rains lessened, became erratic, and ended earlier than expected. Overall seasonal rainfall was below average in most parts of the **Northeast**, parts of **Togdheer**, most parts of **Sanaag**, and **Nugal valley of Sool region**.

Deyr season production typically accounts for 30-40 percent of total annual cereal production in Somalia. Overall, harvest prospects in southern and central Somalia, which account for 99 percent of *Deyr* production, are mixed. In **Juba** and **Gedo** below average harvests are expected, in **Bay, Bakool, Hiran and the central agropastoral** areas below-average to average harvests are expected, and in the Shabelle regions average to above-average crop harvests are likely.

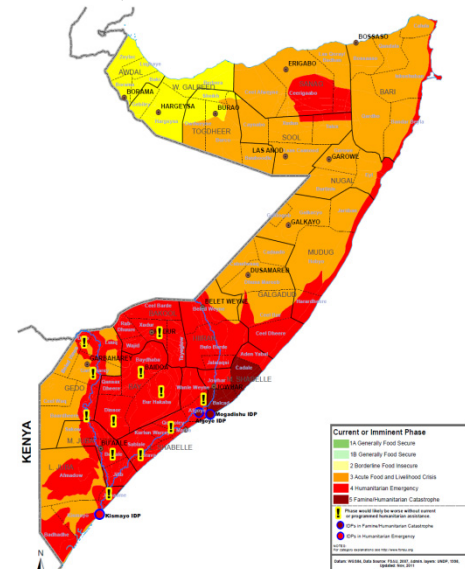
In a typical year, **Bay** region accounts for 44 percent of *Deyr* production in Somalia (Figure 3). This year, around 20 percent of farmers dry planted

Figure 1: Oct 1 – Dec 25 2011 Rainfall as a percent of average (%)



Source: FEWS NET/NOAA

Figure 2. Estimated food security outcomes, December 2011



Source: FEWSNET/FSNAU

before the rains began, while nearly 80 percent wet planted. This is not normal as most farmers dry plant in a typical year. The increase in wet planting was reportedly due to concerns about the performance of seasonal rains and seed availability. Planting was further delayed in some parts of **Qansahdere** and **Baidoa** districts due to heavy rains and pests during the peak of the planting season. Maize and sorghum were the main crops planted, however, cash crops such as beans, sesame and groundnuts were also sown. Dry planted crops (20 percent) and crops planted during the first dekad of October (30 percent) are at establishment stage. Crops planted in late October and in flooded areas (50 percent of area planted) are still knee-high though in good condition. Torrential rains in Bay region have flooded nearly 21,300 hectares of cropped area, damaging 5,560 hectares worth of crops in **Baidoa** (2,460 hectares i.e. 11.5 percent of cropped areas), **Dinsor** (932 hectares i.e. 4.5 percent of cropped area), **Qansahdere** (1,500 hectares i.e. 7 percent of cropped area) and **Burhakaba** (668 Hectares i.e. 3 percents of total cropped area). The damaged crops were 70 percent sorghum and 30 percent maize. These areas will be replanted with sesame and other cash crops as flood waters recede. Due to excessive weeds, farm labor demand has increased in many parts of southern Somalia, especially in Bay region where weeding activities increased by 30-50 percent compared to typical a deyr season. The cost for a farmer to have an area of 4m x 60m weeded costs 10,000 SoSh in a typical deyr season and 50,000 SoSh this year, suggesting that labor availability in Bay remains limited due to displacement over the last year. The impacts of weeds and the limited ability of farmers to control them this year are likely to reduce the overall expected harvest in terms of both quantity and quality.

Figure 3. Average contribution to overall Deyr production, by region

Region	Avg. Share
Bay	44%
L. Shabelle	24%
M. Shabelle	10%
Hiran	5%
Gedo	5%
M. Juba	5%
Bakool	4%
L. Juba	2%
North/Central	1%
TOTAL	100%

Source: FSNAU

In **Lower Shabelle**, due to good *Hagaa* rains, renovation of primary and secondary irrigation canals, increased social support, and humanitarian assistance, area planted during the 2011-2012 *Deyr* season is above average. Crops are at different stages of growth. In rainfed area of **Wanlawein**, **Afgoye** and **Qoryoley** crops are at tassling stage. Early planted irrigated maize at the riverine is nearly mature maturing despite some stalk borer damage. Coastal rainfed dry planted maize wilted, mainly due to limited rainfall, and prospects for harvest in this area are minimal. Maize replanted after flash floods in the riverine and agropastoral valleys are knee-high. An estimated area of 140 ha was flooded and is expected to be planted with sesame in mid-December once flood waters recede. Overall prospects for maize and sorghum production in Lower Shabelle are above-average, with the exception of small pockets in the coastal areas which could face poor harvests. Cash crop production is on-going and the level of sesame cultivation will be better assessed in the coming months as flood waters recede and more area is planted.

In **Middle Shabelle**, rainfed sorghum crops in **Balad** and **Jowhar** districts are in different growth stages but overall crop establishment is average. Cowpea establishment in **Adale** and **Adanyabal** district is also good. In the riverine areas, irrigated maize and rice planted area increased and crop establishment is good compared to a typical deyr season although maize crops were damaged by floods in certain villages. The prospect of planting sesame after flood waters recede is very high.

In **Hiran**, crop establishment in the agropastoral and riverine livelihood zones is good and prospects for sorghum and maize crop harvests are average. Other crops of economic importance are sesame, cowpea and cash crops such as onions, tomatoes, peppers and water melon for which the expected harvest is above average. In Hiran, agricultural activities, including planting and weeding in both riverine and agro-pastoral areas have increased, creating increased job opportunities and improved labor wage rates, subsequently strengthening the purchasing power of poor households.

In **Gedo**, flash floods from heavy rains in late September prevented early planting in most of the southern agropastoral areas. However, planting activities started in late October in riverine and agropastoral areas and planted area was near average for maize and sorghum. In addition, riverine communities planted significant amounts of cash crop such as onion, cowpea, tomato, watermelon, and lemon. However, due to heavy rains within the Juba river basin in the first week of December, coupled with river floods, 10 percent of the cropped area was damaged, mainly in riverine communities of **Luuq**, **Dolow** and **Bardhere** districts.

In **Lower Juba** agropastoral areas, crop planting started in the 3rd dekad of October, though in general, cropping activities have been very limited in the agropastoral areas of **Jamame**, **Kismayo**, **Afmadow**, **Badhadhe** and **Hagar** districts due to the

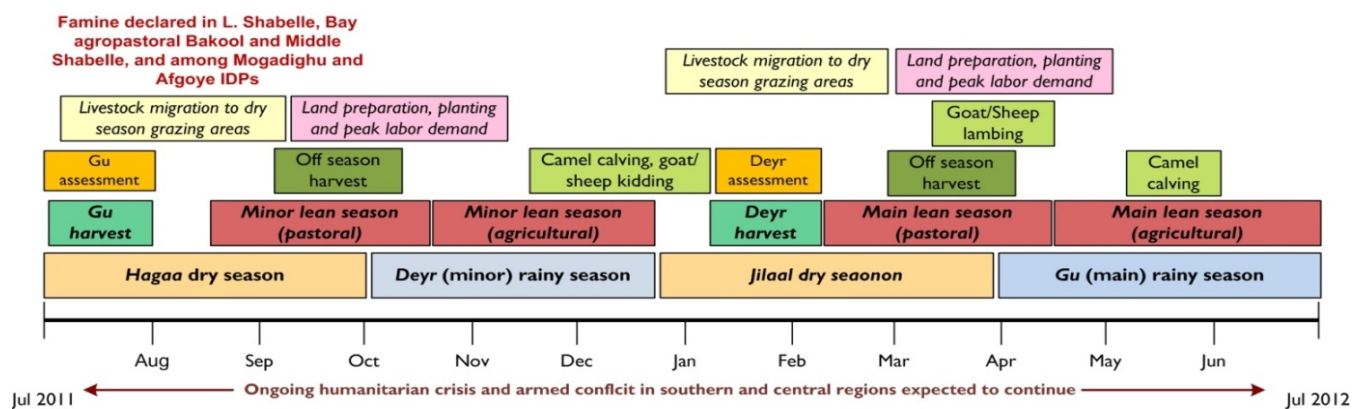
previous seasonal rainfall failures and the subsequent displacement of many agropastoralists to refugee camps in Kenya. Other factors have also had a negative impact on the season. In **Jamame**, the main maize basket, farmers and local authorities deliberately flooded farmland in an attempt to use these areas for flood-recession agriculture. However, given continuous heavy rains in the area, the floodwaters have not receded, preventing planting of approximately 10,000-15,000 hectares of farmland, and 50 percent of early planted crops have been destroyed. An additional 2,000-3000 hectares of standing crops (Maize, Sesame and cowpeas) were destroyed by flooding in different location along the river. Generally, those crops which have survived are well established, but the quantity of standing crops is small compared to a typical *Deyr* season. In Lower Juba, farm labor opportunities have improved, but remain low compared to a typical *Deyr* season. However, as recession cultivation is expected to start in December, both labor demand and wage rates are likely to increase.

In **Middle Juba**, an estimated 13,700 ha were planted on time with maize, cowpea, sorghum and sesame (10,600, 1,600 and 1,500 hectares in **Sakow/Salagle, Buale** and **Jilib**, respectively; 73 percent, 64 percent and 63 percent of *Deyr* 2010-2011). Crops are at establishment stage in agropastoral areas, though flash floods from heavy rains have destroyed 4,900 ha of standing crops. In riverine areas of **Sakow, Buale** and **Jilib** districts, 2,400ha, 3,000 ha and 6,500ha were planted, mainly with maize and sesame but reports indicate that the majority of crops in agropastoral areas were destroyed by flooding. Many unplanted cropped areas were flooded, hindering farm activities and reducing the expected *Deyr* harvest in January 2012.

In agropastoral zones of the **central regions**, cowpea and sorghum crops were planted at the onset of the rains. Crop establishment in this area is average despite localized pest damage. Sorghum crop is at establishment level and due to good soil moisture conditions the expected harvest is likely to be near average. In **Central** agropastoral areas, farm labor wages have increased from SoSh 60,000 to SoSh 70,000

Expected off-season cropping: Floods in **Juba, Gedo** and **Bay** regions, as well as in localized areas of Kurtunwarey (L Shabelle), inundated 21,000 ha of cropped area. These areas are likely to be replanted with sesame, maize and other cash crops. This will provide agricultural labor opportunities to poor households during the December 2011 - March 2012 period and the subsequent off-season harvests will improve market availability and household stocks.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET