

UGANDA Food Security Outlook Update

August 2010

Improvement in food security conditions expected in Karamoja

Key Messages

- Good rains throughout the cropping season in Karamoja are expected to result in above-average harvests of staple foods in September and October, improving food availability. In addition, good rangelands conditions are expected to ensure access to adequate milk for pastoral and agropastoral households through December.
- Good first season harvests in bimodal areas, including northern Uganda, have resulted in a decline in staple prices as the supply of food commodities to markets increases. This is likely to ensure food access for poor households that will rely on market purchases when stocks run low in October before the second season harvest expected in November/December.
- Evolving La Niña weather conditions are likely to result in enhanced rainfall across the country, benefitting second season crops. However, above-average rainfall could lead to landslides and flooding in flood-prone areas in eastern Uganda.
- Due to the good first season harvests, expectations for above-average second season harvests, and the likelihood of enhanced rainfall because of La Niña, no acute food insecurity is expected during the October to December period. However, many households in Karamoja and in northern Uganda remain at risk of food insecurity due to the impacts of several previous poor seasons, and limited resources available to sustain livelihoods.

Updated food security outlook through December 2010

Food security in most **bimodal areas** remains good as first season harvests have increased household access to food and increased supplies to markets. This is confirmed by the reduction in prices of staples such as sorghum, maize, matooke (cooking banana) and cassava, which are below the five-year average in most markets across the country.

Preparation for second season planting is on-going. Initial expectations of below-normal rains in these areas are likely to be modified by evolving La Niña weather conditions, minimizing concerns of a poor season in central, southern and western Uganda, where the second season is the main cropping season. La Niña episodes are typically associated with above-normal rainfall conditions in the western and northern sector of the East Africa region, including Uganda. However, the event may change based on sea surface temperatures (SST) in the Indian Ocean. If the warming trend in Indian Ocean SSTs continues,

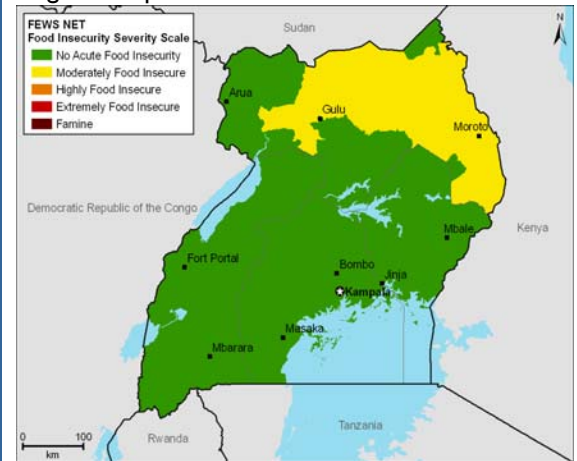
This report provides an update to the July 2010 FEWS NET Food Security Outlook report which estimated food security conditions in Uganda through December 2010. The next Outlook report will be released in October and will cover the October 2010 to March 2011 period.

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Figure 1. Estimated food security conditions, August – September 2010



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Estimated food security conditions, October – December 2010



Source: FEWS NET

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

it will moderate the precipitation impacts of the La Niña in East Africa, and the impacts of the event could be less severe (for more information, see the recent FEWS NET Executive Brief on “La Niña and Food Security in East Africa” at www.fews.net). If the La Niña event continues to be moderate, it is likely to be beneficial to crops, resulting in good harvests from November 2010 to January 2011.

However, enhanced rainfall conditions due to this phenomenon are likely to result in heavy rainfall in the mountainous Elgon region in eastern Uganda, which could cause landslides in these areas and flooding in flood-prone areas downstream. Heavy rains could also cause flooding in the flood-prone Teso subregion, and the southwestern regions, which are prone to landslides. This is likely to cause infrastructure and crop damage, impeding transport and causing losses.

Northern Uganda

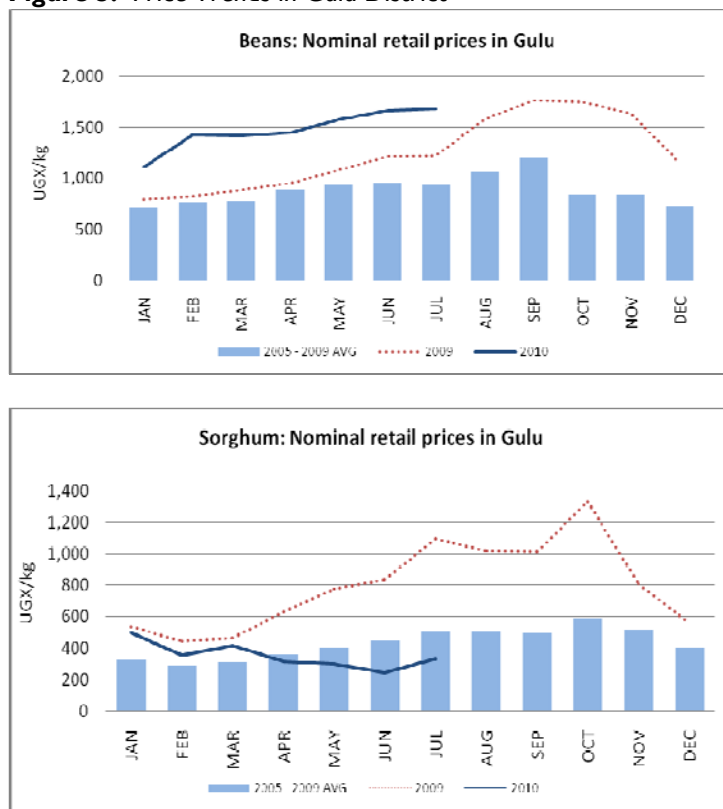
First season harvesting of cassava, sweet potatoes, beans, millet and simsim is continuing in **northern Uganda**, increasing market supplies, household food availability, and access. Some factors limiting crop production in northern Uganda are inadequate access to planting materials and inability to increase acreage under crop production, due to limited resources to pay for additional labor and lack of tools to clear land that has been fallow for more than two decades during the conflict. Various government and non-governmental organizations have provided support such as seeds to enable households to increase crop production. This, combined with good first season rains, has resulted in increased sorghum production, a staple crop in this region. Increased supply, in addition to available stocks from the second season of 2009, has reduced sorghum prices in Gulu to 35 percent below average in July. Though a moderate price increase is expected up to October, they will again decline in November when the main sorghum harvest is expected. Bean prices have remained nearly 75 percent above the average, as demand remains higher than supply (Figure 3). The yellow beans are typically traded as far as Rwanda where demand is high. Low staple prices are favorable for poor households that are likely to depend on markets to meet household demands when first season stocks run low between September and October.

Thereafter, these households will rely on second season harvests expected in November. Like other bimodal areas, northern Uganda is expected to benefit from enhanced second season rains. Overall, most households will be able to meet their basic food needs through December and are not expected to experience acute food insecurity. However, due to limited resources available to restore and sustain their livelihoods, these households are at risk of becoming moderately food insecure as second season stocks are depleted.

Karamoja

Pasture and water availability in **pastoral areas** of Karamoja continue to favor adequate access for livestock, ensuring milk availability for households and good livestock to cereals terms of trade. The dry season, characterized by reduced access to pasture and water necessitating livestock migration to dry season grazing areas, is expected to begin normally in October through December. However, it is likely to be tempered by evolving La Niña weather conditions that are likely to maintain adequate rangeland conditions, reducing the need for migration. In turn, this is likely to reduce the likelihood of conflict, raiding and loss of livestock that are associated with livestock migrations. The above-average rains could also delay

Figure 3. Price Trends in Gulu District



Data: UBoS; Graphic: FEWS NET Uganda

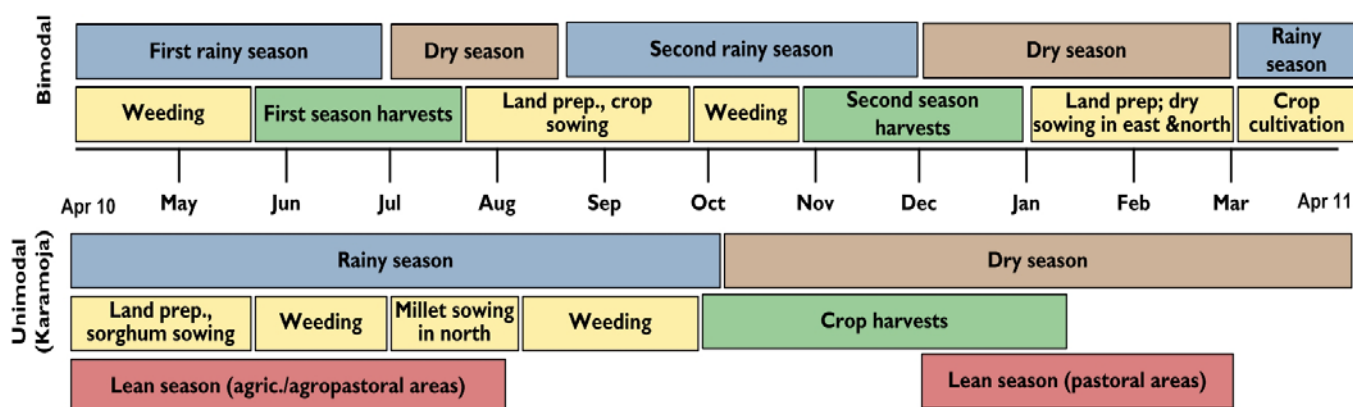
migration by two months up to late January/February. Therefore, households will continue to access adequate milk and other livestock products, which is likely to alleviate the impact of the lean season expected to start in December.

Generally, households are not likely to face acute food insecurity from September to December. Nonetheless, due to the slow rate of rebuilding livestock herds after three consecutive poor seasons, these households are at risk of becoming moderately food insecure early in 2011 due to the lean season in these areas.

Households in **agropastoral areas** are currently harvesting pulses such as beans and cowpeas and supplementing with cereals purchased from the market. Main cereal harvests are expected to begin in September, increasing household food access through December. As in pastoral areas, access to milk and other livestock products are likely to remain adequate through the dry season due to the influence of the La Niña weather phenomenon. Households are therefore expected to adequately meet their basic food requirements from September to December and are not expected to face acute food insecurity. These areas will remain at risk of acute food insecurity early in 2011, though, as most households endeavor to rebuild their livelihoods after three consecutive poor seasons.

July - December outlook assumptions	Progress of these assumptions to date
The first season harvest in bimodal areas in July is expected to be good.	Generally harvests have been good and are expected to end in August as second season planting commences.
Rainfall between July and August in Karamoja is expected to be favorable, resulting in a good September harvest in agricultural and agropastoral areas of Karamoja.	Rains have continued to be favorable raising expectations of good harvests.
High food prices will continue in Karamoja from July to September.	Staple prices have begun declining somewhat earlier than expected as harvests of pulses increase market supplies.
Pastoralist migration in Karamoja will begin normally in November. This typically results in concentration of animals in dry season grazing areas. Increased conflict tends to occur during the lean season as livestock raiders take advantage of clustering to carry out raids.	Still valid, however likely to be delayed or reduced due to La Niña conditions that will be favorable for rangeland conditions.
Normal livestock migration in agropastoral areas is expected to start in October when the dry season starts.	Still valid, however likely to be delayed or reduced due to La Niña conditions that will be favorable for rangeland conditions.

Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline



Source: FEWS NET