

GIEWS Country Brief

Kenya



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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Unfavourable prospects for 2012 crop output in south-eastern and coastal areas
- High prices of maize in most markets
- Food security situation expected to deteriorate in pastoral districts and south-eastern and coastal areas.

Late and erratic rains affected crops in south-eastern and coastal areas

In most cropping areas, the 2012 long-rains season (March to June) has started in April, with a delay of about 2 to 4 weeks. In bimodal south-eastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas, where harvesting is expected to begin in August, crop production is forecast to be below average as rains have been erratic during the season and ended in May about 3-4 weeks earlier than usual. In these areas, the August harvest usually accounts for 30 percent of annual output. Major soil moisture deficits have been reported in Taita Taveta, Kitui, Mwingi, Meru and Makueni districts, where the rainy season has been extremely poor leading to a complete crop failure in some areas.

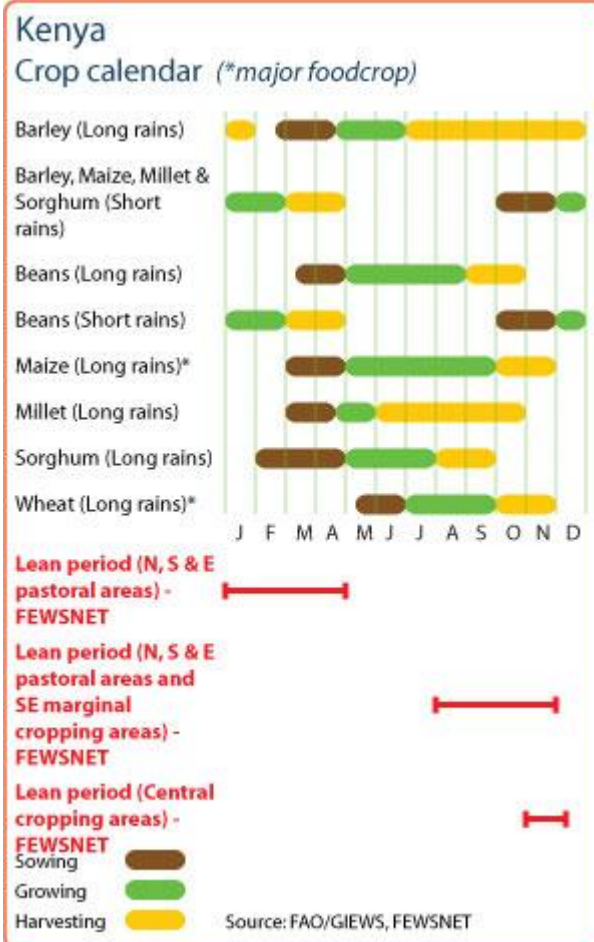
A late start and an early cessation have also characterized the long-rains season in some northern and north-eastern pastoral areas including eastern Marsabit, northern Isiolo, central Garissa, Tana River and southern Ijara where pasture conditions are below average and water resources have been only partially recharged. In other pastoral areas that received adequate rainfall, pasture availability is good and livestock productivity has significantly improved.

In the major cropping areas of the Rift valley, Western and Nyanza provinces, harvesting of the 2012 long-rains cereal crops is expected to begin in early October through December and crop prospects are generally favourable following abundant rains in April/May. However, the outbreak of the highly contagious Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease in southern Rift Valley province is raising some concern as so far nearly 300 000 farmers with slightly more than 15 000 hectares (almost 1.4 percent of total planted area) were affected.

Overall, the early forecast of the 2012 maize production (assuming an average output for next short-rains crops to be harvested in March/April 2013) is put at an average level of 2.7 million tonnes. Cereal import requirements for 2012/13 marketing year (July/June) are forecast at a high of 2.5 million tonnes (about 15 percent up on last year), including 1.15 million tonnes of maize, 900 000 tonnes of wheat and 400 000 tonnes of rice.

Maize prices on the rise in most markets

Maize prices have generally increased during the last three/four months by an average of 20-25 percent in main wholesale markets. In June 2012, maize was traded in Nairobi markets at USD 460, similar to the level of one year earlier, while in Kisumu, the second largest urban area after the capital city Nairobi, prices have reached the near record level of USD 570 per tonne due to the strong local demand. Maize prices are expected to remain high until August when the newly harvested crops



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Cereal production

	2007-2011 average	2011	2012 forecast	change 2012/2011
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	2 722	2 650	2 700	2
Wheat	319	205	225	10
Sorghum	133	200	200	0
Others	157	153	158	3
Total	3 331	3 208	3 283	2

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

enter the market.

Conversely, maize prices are stable or declining in pastoral areas. This trend is likely due to the low demand for maize following the good local availability of milk and the impact of humanitarian assistance through food aid distribution and food/cash-for-assets programs.

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance likely to increase by August

Currently the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is estimated at about 2.2 million. Most of the highly food insecure households are located in north-eastern and north-western pastoral districts and in south-east and coastal marginal cropping areas, including Wajir, Mandera, Moyale, Marsabit, Turkana, Mwingi and Tana River districts. Food security conditions are expected to deteriorate by September in some areas of south-eastern and coastal districts whose crops have been seriously affected by unfavourable weather conditions during the 2012 long-rains season and output is likely to be well below average. In northern pastoral areas, as the dry season has already entered, food security conditions will gradually deteriorate until November when the short rainy season is expected to bring some relief to depleted grazing resources.

According to UNHCR and OCHA, about 532 000 refugees, mostly from Somalia, are hosted in camps in Garissa district and access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, water and sanitation is often precarious due to the high concentration of people.

