

GIEWS Country Brief

Kenya



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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Favourable prospects for the 2010 long-rains season crops
- Maize prices continue to decline
- An estimated 1.6 million people is in need of food emergency assistance

Favourable prospects for 2010 long-rains season maize crop

The 2010 long-rains season have started 2-4 weeks earlier than usual with the onset of rains from mid-February and early March in most cropping areas. So far, precipitation has been generally abundant and well distributed, except in some pastoralist areas of Turkana, Marsabit and Isiolo that received lower than average long-rains. Harvesting of 2010 maize crop is expected to start at the end of September and early forecast of production points at 2.6 million tonnes, well above the last five years average and about 27 per cent more than the 2009 long-rains season production that was severely affected by drought. This positive outlook is due to the good weather conditions, but also due to the introduction of price subsidies for fertilizers by the government as well as the attractive maize prices registered in 2009 that induced farmers to increase planted area. About 200 000 small farmers received seeds and fertilizers through the National Accelerated Agricultural Input Access Program.

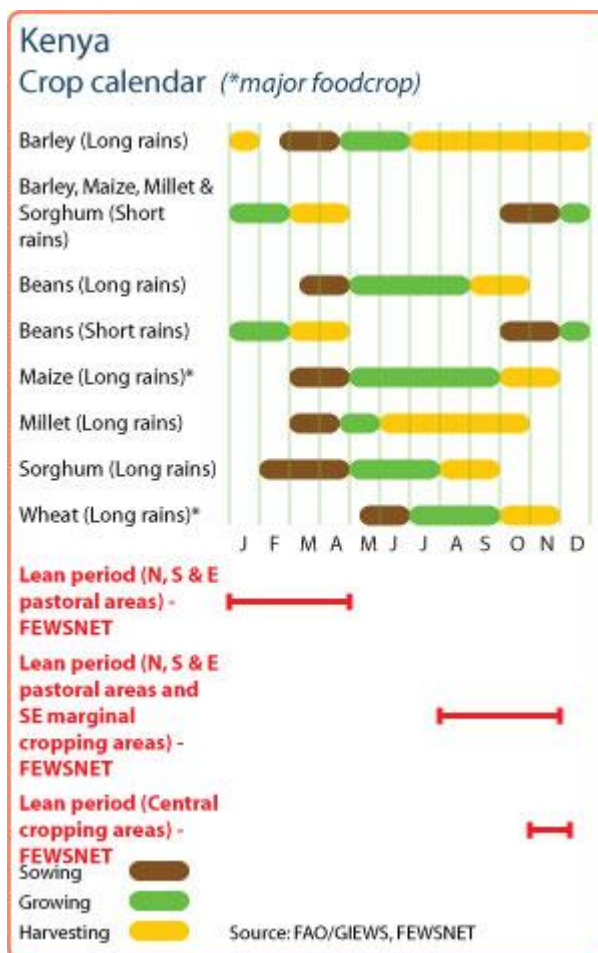
Heavy rains in April and May have caused localised floods around the Lake Victoria and along the Nzoia, Tana and Turkwell rivers, displacing about 20 000 people and causing losses of housing, infrastructures, crops and livestock.

Maize prices continue to decline

Prices of maize have continued their declining trend that followed the record short-rains season production from late last year. In May 2010, this trend was reinforced when the Government of Kenya decided to make downward revision of the purchase price of the National Cereals and Produce Board for both good and aflatoxin-affected maize crops. In Nairobi, the average wholesale maize price during July and the first half of August was about USD 170 per tonne, less than half of the value of the December 2009 peak and lower than the level of the end of 2007, just before the start of the food price crisis. The current decline in maize prices is improving food access, especially for low-income market-dependent households, in particular in urban and pastoral areas. However, this trend is likely to change in the coming months in pastoral and marginal agricultural areas that are not dependant on long-rains crops as the lean period approaches its peak and any reserves from the 2009 short-rains season maize output quickly runs out.

Food insecurity persists in some pastoral and marginal agricultural areas

Poor 2010 long-rains have hampered the recovery process that started with the abundant 2009 short-rains in some pastoral areas in Turkana, Marsabit and Isiolo. In these areas, availability of water, pasture and browse is expected to decline until October 2010 with the expected



Kenya
Cereal production

	2005-2009 average	2009	2010 forecast	change 2010/2009
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2630	2370	3000	27
Wheat	294	220	225	2
Sorghum	115	95	130	37
Others	172	135	129	-4
Total	3212	2820	3484	24

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

start of the 2010 short-rains season. Until then, trekking distances will gradually increase and the progressive clustering of livestock in areas with abundant water and pasture is likely to increase competition for resources with consequent higher risk of conflicts.

Overall, some 1.6 million people are currently estimated to be food insecure. Most food insecure people are pastoralists and agro-pastoralists concentrated in the districts of Turkana, Isiolo, Mandera, western Marsabit and northern Wajir, with three quarters of them in pastoral areas and the rest in marginal agricultural rural areas. In south-eastern and coastal areas, several poor households are highly food insecure, despite the 2009 short-rains bumper maize crop, because about 30 per cent of the production has been contaminated by aflatoxin which is not suitable for human consumption. The consequent loss of income due to reduced market price is expected to have also a negative impact on 2010 short-rains season that will start in October when poor farmers may not be able to properly buy seeds and fertilizers.

