



GIEWS Country Brief Namibia

Reference Date: 21-April-2020

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Generally favourable weather conditions support prospects of near-average cereal harvest in 2020
- In first months of 2020, prices of maize meal stable and lower year on year
- Food insecurity worsened in early 2020, reflecting impact of lower harvest in 2019

Cereal production in 2020 forecast close to five-year average

Harvesting of the 2020 cereal crops, mostly maize and millet, is expected to start in May and production prospects are generally favourable.

Following precipitation deficits at the start of the season, rainfall quantities increased from December 2019 to March 2020, boosting soil moisture levels and benefitting crop growth. At the end of March, remote sensing data indicated favourable vegetation conditions in the main producing areas in the north and northeast, where crops were severely affected by drought in 2019. Reports indicate localized outbreaks of Fall Armyworm and African Migratory Locusts (mainly in parts of Zambezi Region), which might have affected the productivity of cereal crops (millet and maize) and pasture availability.

The western and southern parts of the country, however, continued to suffer from rainfall deficits which have had a negative impact on pasture regeneration and related livestock production. These recent rainfall deficits are set against a context of recurrent droughts that the country has experienced in the previous ten years, limiting aquifer recharge rates and increasing water insecurity that poses a serious risk to agricultural production and domestic water consumption.

Overall, the 2020 national cereal production is expected at a near-average level, between 90 000 and 100 000 tonnes, which would mark a substantial recovery compared to the 2019 drought-affected output.

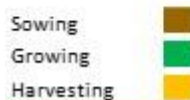
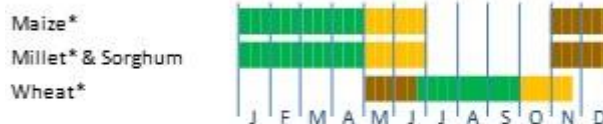
Increased cereal import requirements estimated in 2019/20 (May/April)

Reflecting the significant production decline in 2019, the cereal import requirement for the 2019/20 marketing year (May/April) is

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Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

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Cereal Production

	2014-2018 average	2018	2019 estimate	change 2019/2018
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	56	59	44	-26.5
Millet	43	84	9	-88.9
Wheat	9	6	6	0.0
Others	3	4	1	-75.0
Total	111	153	60	-60.8

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

estimated at 350 000 tonnes, an increase of about 40 percent compared to the five-year average.

Import requirements of maize, mostly sourced from South Africa, are estimated at 230 000 tonnes, nearly double the five-year average. As of March 2020, about 225 000 tonnes of maize grain had already been imported from South Africa. Imports of wheat are estimated at 95 000 tonnes, a near-average level.

In first months of 2020, prices of maize meal stable and lower year on year

Prices of maize meal remained generally stable in January and February 2020, following declines in the last quarter of the year, mostly reflecting well-supplied markets due to above-average imports from South Africa. As of February 2020, prices of maize meal were generally close to or slightly below their year-earlier values.

Food insecurity worsened in early 2020

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, released in January 2020, an estimated 430 000 people were estimated to be in IPC Phase 3: "Crisis" and Phase 4: "Emergency" between October 2019 and March 2020. This number accounts for about 18 percent of the national population and it is almost 70 percent higher than the estimated food insecure population for the corresponding period in 2018/19. The deterioration in the food insecurity situation was mainly the result of the negative impact of severe dry weather conditions in 2019 on agricultural production, causing a decline in households' food supplies from own production.

Looking further ahead, despite an expected seasonal improvement in food security with the main 2020 harvest, the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic could cause an increase in the prevalence of malnutrition. The effects of the pandemic are expected to be primarily channeled through a reduction in economic activities and associated income losses, while potential breakdowns in food supply chains is an additional concern for food security.

COVID-19 and measures adopted by the Government

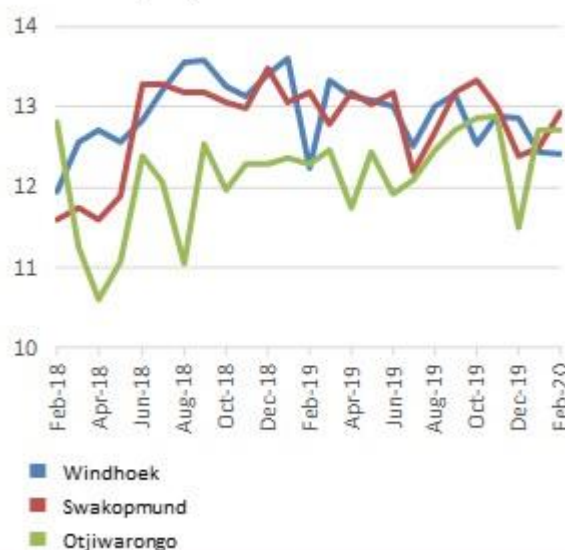
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and following a partial lockdown of the country in early March, the Government declared a nationwide State of Emergency on 28 March 2020, restricting the movement of people until 4 May 2020. The quarantine measures do not apply to agricultural production and associated supply chains, which have been categorized as essential services.

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Retail prices of maize meal

Namibia Dollar per kg



Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.