

ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook Update

April 2017

Pastoral conditions deteriorate even further in southeastern areas

KEY MESSAGES

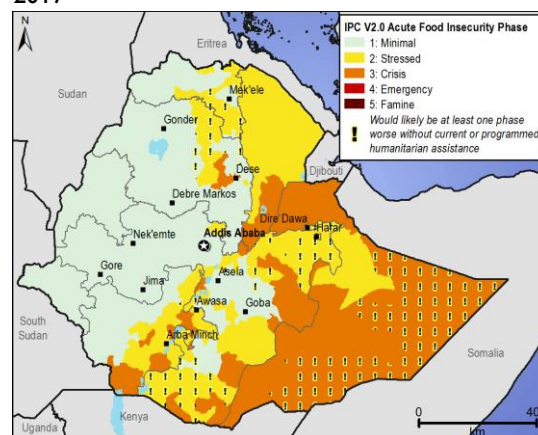
- Food security outcomes have deteriorated in southern and southeastern pastoral areas due to the worse than expected *Gu/Genna* rainy season, particularly in southeast Somali Region where it had not started by mid-April. As a result, the majority of these areas are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) in the presence of humanitarian assistance. Due to a lack of certainty about future emergency assistance in southeast Somali Region past the end of June and the atypical loss of livestock occurring, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are likely through September.
- The *Belg* rainfall performance has been mixed with more favorable conditions in eastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and western SNNPR but erratic and below-average amounts in central Oromia and eastern and southern SNNPR. As a result, long-cycle and root crops are likely to be negatively impacted, and households in portions of SNNPR have planted less, reducing the typical total area planted.
- Emergency humanitarian assistance by the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), WFP, and JEOP as part of the HRD are helping to mitigate the severity of acute food insecurity outcomes, particularly in southeast Somali, eastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and portions of Oromia and SNNPR. However, the needs still exceed the number of total targeted beneficiaries, and funding gaps are expected to persist through September, as the number of poor households facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and above is likely to increase due to the below-average *Gu/Genna/Belg* season.

CURRENT SITUATION

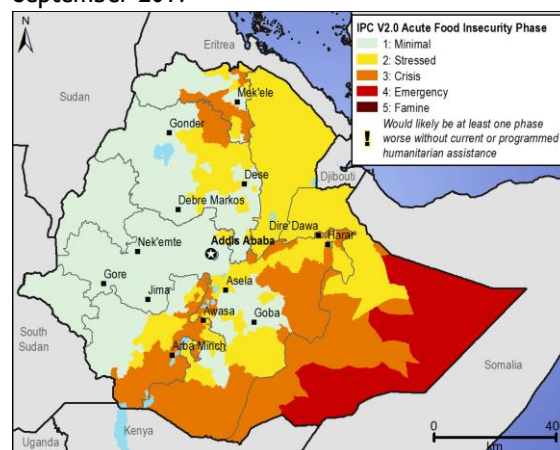
Southeastern and southern pastoral areas

- Seasonal progress:** In Lowland Hawd, Afder, and Korahe Gode pastoral areas in southeast Somali region, the March to May 2017 *Gu* rainy season still had not started by mid-April, which was already delayed by more than 10-25 days. *Genna* rainfall for the same time period in southern pastoral areas in Oromia had a delayed onset and its performance to date has been below average in most areas of Borena, West Guji, and Guji zones. Similarly, in Bale lowlands and most parts of pastoral South Omo zones, there was below-average rainfall at the end of March and early April 2017. As a result, pasture and water availability in South Omo, Borena, lowlands of Guji and Bale, and bordering areas of Somali Region is relatively better than the southeastern drought-affected zones in Somali Region as pasture for grazers and browsers has been exhausted and further rangeland deterioration has occurred with the delayed onset of rains. However, the short-term forecast shows there may be enhanced rainfall in southern and southeastern areas in early May, likely providing marginal improvements in pasture and water.
- Livestock:** Due to the persistent dry and poor conditions, livestock of all species have very poor body conditions, and pastoralists cannot move their livestock long distances in search of better pasture and water conditions. Increasing livestock

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2017



Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2017



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. To learn more about this scale, click [here](#).

deaths are occurring in Warder, Korahe, Gode, Shebele, and Afder zones of Somali Region. In Lowland Hawd pastoral livelihood zone, according to data from local officials, more than 368,156 livestock deaths have been reported in four woredas of Warder Zone and one woreda of Korahe Zone, representing approximately 35-55 percent of total livestock holdings prior to the start of the drought in these areas. Note, however, it is hard to verify the accuracy of livestock deaths. With minimal exceptions, most pregnant camels and shoats have either aborted or their offspring died soon after birth. Livestock productivity is marginal to non-existent. In addition, recent clan conflicts along the border of Somali and Oromia regions have restricted livestock movements, disrupted usual agropastoral practices of land preparation and planting of long-cycle crops harvested during the *Meher* season in Bale and Guji zones of Oromia near the Somali border, and resulted in displacement. Since livestock are so weak and unable to travel long distances for marketing, traders' involvement has declined in southern and southeastern Somali Region due to the atypically low supply in local markets, also discouraging exporters to buy from the area.

- **Prices:** During an early April FEWS NET field visit to Warder and Korahe zones, traders reported that the March price of a shoa in Warder fell by 20 percent compared to February, was 47 percent lower than March 2016, and was 52 percent below the five-year average. As livestock prices fall, the prices of staple foods are increasing. Data collected from community discussions showed that March prices for one kilogram of wheat flour, which is the most purchased commodity, increased by about 26 and 17 percent compared to the last five-year average in Kebridehar and Warder markets, respectively.
- **Malnutrition:** A joint UN agencies mission to Borena, West Guji, and Guji determined that data collected in February 2017 showed a rise in acute malnutrition admissions' screening for pregnant and lactating women and children under five years of age in all three zones, with the highest increase in Borena Zone where there was a 147 percent rise in admissions to therapeutic feeding programs from 119 in September 2016 to 294 in January 2017. There is no other recent nutrition data available for other areas of Ethiopia. Also, an outbreak of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) in Somali region has been reported in nine of the eleven zones in the Region, with more than 26,000 cases. The worst affected zones are in Korahe and Warder. Households, whose productive family members become affected by AWD, may face difficulties in accessing relief food at distribution points.

Northern pastoral areas

- **Seasonal progress:** Northern pastoral areas in Shinile zone of Somali Region and parts of southern Afar, following two consecutive favorable rainy seasons in 2016, have much better water availability and rangeland resources compared to southeastern and southern pastoral areas. Livestock prices are also much higher. For example, in Afar, according to the NDRMC, the February price of a shoa in Ayssaita market was 180 percent higher than at the same time last year when they were very low due to the drought and is 12 percent higher than the two-year average. These areas received below-average rainfall during the second half of March and average rains in early April, which helped regenerate pasture and water resources. In addition, the April rainfall has allowed planting of maize and sorghum in agropastoral areas.

Belg season areas

- **Seasonal progress:** The *Belg* rains, which began in February, have had a mixed performance over Ethiopia. The best conditions to date are in eastern Amhara and southern Tigray where ground observations indicate above-average rainfall for February and March, which led households to begin planting *Belg* crops. The crops are currently at germination and vegetative stages. The seasonal performance looks favorable, but further growth will be determined by rainfall through the end of May. In central Oromia, rainfall has been erratic and largely below average since February, which is likely to negatively impact long cycle crops, such as maize, that are typically harvested during the *Meher*. Sorghum, which is more drought resistant, is expected to perform better. In SNNPR, which harvests crops planted during the *Belg* in both the *Belg* and *Meher* seasons, western areas had above-normal rainfall in March but eastern and southern areas have experienced below-average rainfall and longer dry spells, particularly in Gamo Gofa and Segen zones. Rainfall since mid-February in these areas have allowed the root crops to recover, but total sweet potato production in March and April is likely to be below average due to early moisture stress and less total planted areas. The *Belg* 2017 total planted area in SNNPR, especially in Segen, lowlands of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, and Sidama zones, is below average. In addition to root crops, maize and haricot beans have been planted, but most were planted about two weeks later than normal. In March, a Fall Armyworm infestation was detected in Bench Maji and Kefa zones, as well as some localities of Konta, that has damaged maize and sorghum field crops. According to a recent NDRMC early warning report, about 12 percent of hectares in Bench Maji zone have been impacted and only about a quarter portion of the affected land has been sprayed to control the pest. The infestation is reportedly spreading to other areas of SNNPR and nearby areas in Oromia.

- **Prices:** Market supplies of staple foods are at seasonally low levels. The March EGTE wholesale price for maize in Hossana market in northern SNNPR has increased five percent compared to February, eight percent compared to March 2016, and is 14 percent higher than the five-year average.

Assistance

- Transfers of PSNP safety net assistance for nearly 8 million chronic food insecure people across 10 regions, which is planned, funded and likely through June 2017, occurred for the months of January, February, and March. April transfers are expected to be finalized by mid-May. Transfers of PSNP beyond those for the month of June are not expected to occur, but a portion of PNSP beneficiaries may be considered in humanitarian assistance plans after June.
- As of April 20, the NDRMC, JEOP, and WFP were able to reach 95 percent of targeted beneficiaries, over 5 million people, with emergency humanitarian assistance during the first round that began in February and more than 67 percent have already been reached during the second round. Dispatches for the second and third rounds are ongoing.
- For Somali Region, the area of greatest concern, WFP provided emergency assistance to about 1.5 million people during the first round in March and the second round in April. Even though humanitarian assistance, relief food and livestock feed, is ongoing through 58 distribution points across southeastern Somali Region, not all poor households in need are receiving this assistance, primarily due to the need to travel to acquire the assistance.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the [Ethiopia Food Security Outlook for February to September 2017](#) remain unchanged except the following assumptions have been added:

- Per the forecast by NMME and GFS, the March to May 2017 rains are expected to improve in SNNPR, southern Oromia and most parts of southeastern Somali Region in May. However, given the delayed and below-average start to rains in April, the key month of rainfall during the *Gu/Genna* season, total cumulative rainfall is likely to be more below average than previously forecasted. The *Gu/Genna/Belg* seasonal total rains in other areas of the country are expected to be near average, particularly in western Ethiopia.
- Due to worse than expected March to May 2017 *Gu/Genna* rainfall, there will likely be poor regeneration of pasture and water resources, further deterioration in livestock body conditions, and even more livestock deaths than anticipated, mainly in southern and southeastern pastoral areas.

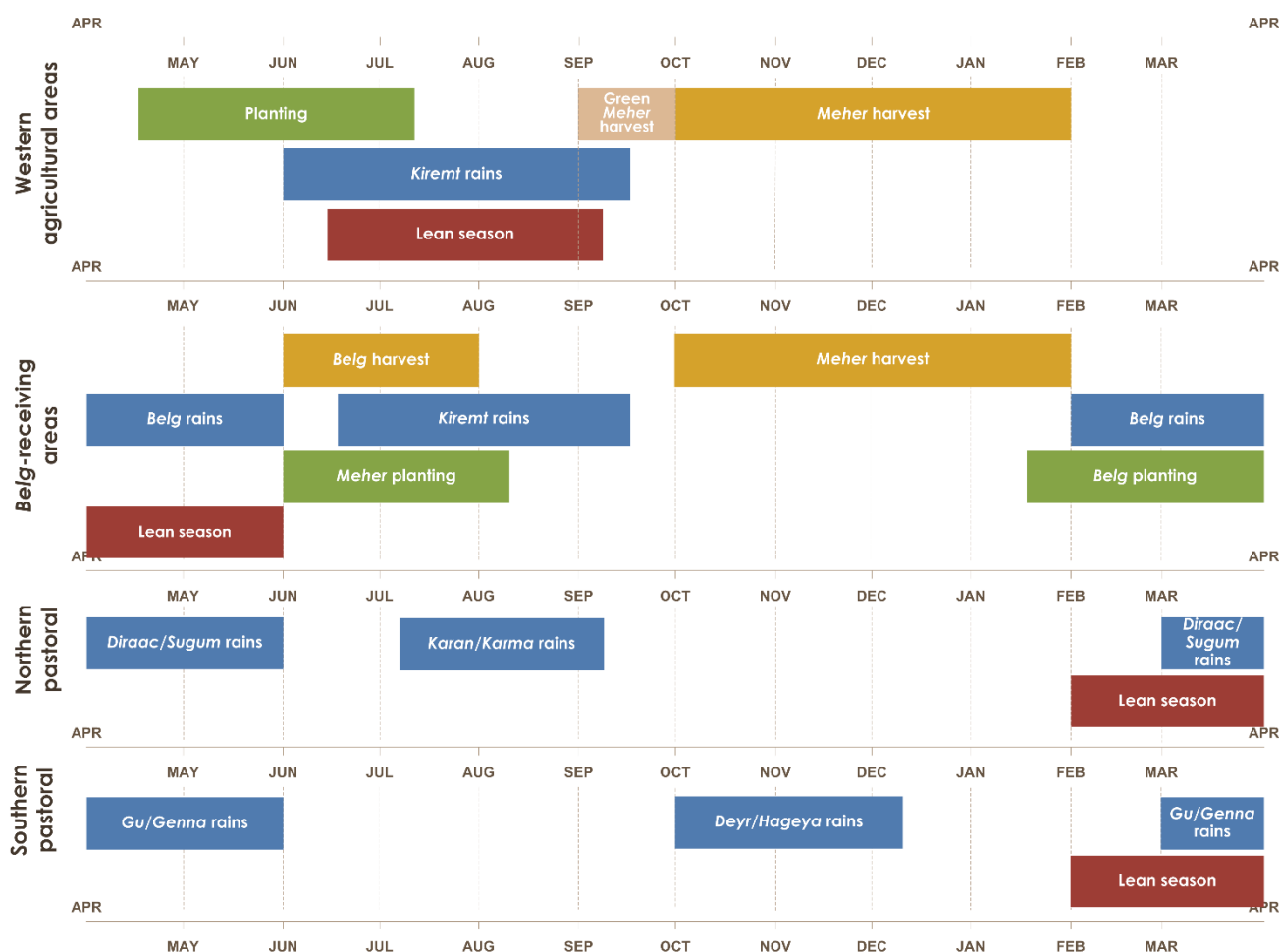
PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2017

- The lack of pasture and water improvements over southeastern Somali Region has atypically increased livestock deaths, and lowered livestock prices and income. As a result, terms of trade through September are expected to be lower than normal, significantly constraining poor household purchasing power. The accelerated loss of livestock has significantly reduced poor household milk and meat consumption and expanded food consumption gaps for an increasing number of households. Through September, acute food insecurity outcomes are not expected to improve. As a result, due to the uncertainty of planned, funded, and likely humanitarian assistance past the end of June, FEWS NET projects that these areas are likely to move from Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) in the presence of humanitarian assistance to Emergency IPC (Phase 4) from July to September 2017.
- Pastoral conditions in southern areas, including southwestern parts of Somali, South Omo of SNNPR; and in Oromia, Borena, lowlands of Guji, and Bale, are also poor but not as stark as in southeastern areas of Ethiopia, and some marginal improvements in pasture are occurring and are expected to continue. Livestock prices are expected to remain low through June 2017 since livestock body conditions are not expected to improve significantly. Meanwhile, staple food prices are expected to remain higher through the end of September, keeping TOTs lower than normal. Limited income earning opportunities from depressed livestock sales and poor livestock productivity and growing food gaps from reduced milk and meat consumption is likely to lead to Crisis IPC (Phase 3) through September 2017.
- Poor households in eastern Oromia, Wag Himera in Amhara, and southern Tigray are expected to continue facing limited incomes, following below-average 2016 *Meher* crop production, a reduction in agricultural labor opportunities for the ongoing

Belg season, and lower income from firewood, petty trading, and other self-employment due to increased competition. Due to JEOP partners' humanitarian response, these areas are expected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) through May 2017 and due to a lack of confirmation about planned and funded humanitarian assistance past the end of June, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected through September 2017.

- In lowlands of Gedeo, Sidama, Wolayita, Gamo Gofa, and Segen zones of SNNPR, poor households are expected to face constrained market access due to lower incomes and rising staple food prices. The anticipated below-average *Belg* rains have affected root crop production, and other crops, such as maize, haricot bean, barley, and sorghum, could also be potentially impacted. In the absence of sustained and adequate assistance, households are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from April through September 2017.
- In southern Afar and northern Somali Region, poor and very poor households are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through May 2017 due to poor livestock productivity. However, with the anticipated improvements from the forecast average *Diraac/Sugum* rains, acute food insecurity outcomes are expected to move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from June onwards as milk production increases with better livestock body conditions and improved livestock herd sizes, raising consumption and income levels.

SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET's quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work [here](#).