

ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook

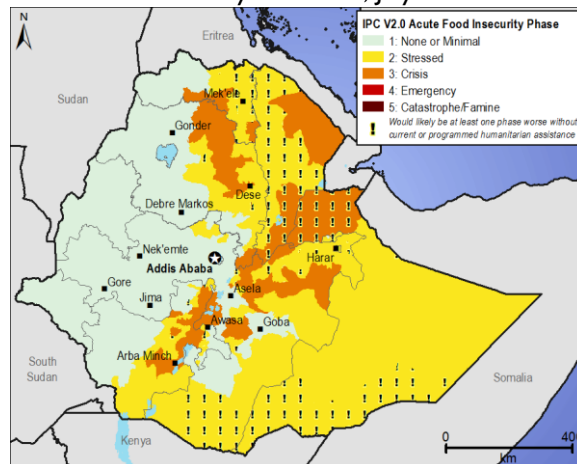
July to December 2015

Belg-producing areas, southern Afar, and Sitti Zone will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3)

KEY MESSAGES

- The *Belg* harvest has been delayed, extending the lean season from its usual end in June into September in *Belg*-producing areas in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), northeastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and some areas in central and eastern Oromia. With little income from labor and high staple food prices, poor households in these areas will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from July to September.
- With humanitarian assistance, poor households in SNNPR, northeastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and some areas in central and eastern Oromia will be able to address their minimal food needs from the delayed *Belg* and the anticipated below-average *Meher* harvest, right after that harvest ends. Poor households in these areas will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) from October to December.
- Household access to food and income from livestock has been reduced in southern Afar and Sitti (formerly Shinile) Zone of northern Somali Region. Dry conditions have led to poor livestock body conditions, declines in livestock production and productivity, and a high number of unusual livestock deaths. With below-average rainfall likely to continue for the rest of the rainy season through September, poor households will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) only with the presence of humanitarian assistance through at least December.
- The forecast average to above average October to December *Deyr* rains are expected to further increase pasture and water availability in southeastern pastoral areas in southern Somali Region. As a result, livestock body conditions will improve, and livestock production and productivity are likely to increase. These will increase food and income from livestock. Therefore, with the presence of humanitarian assistance, southern Somali Region will have a large majority of households able to address their food and nonfood needs and be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) from October to December.

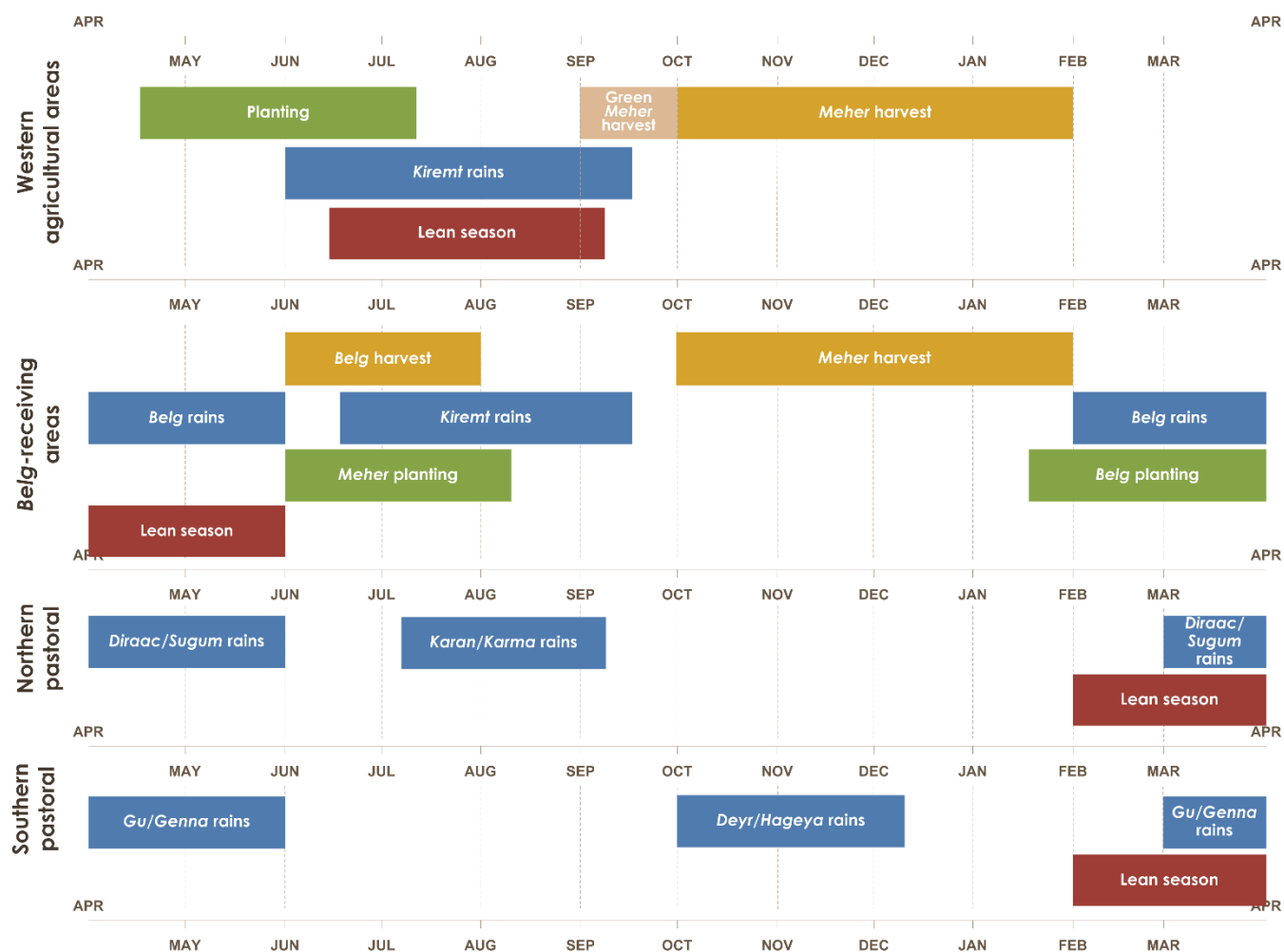
Current food security outcomes, July 2015



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](#).

SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR



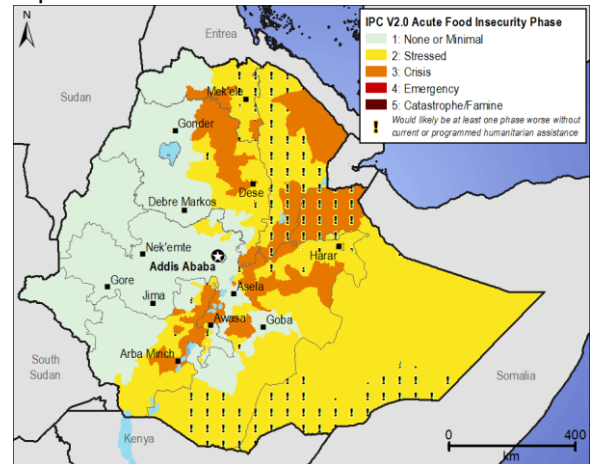
Source: FEWS NET

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

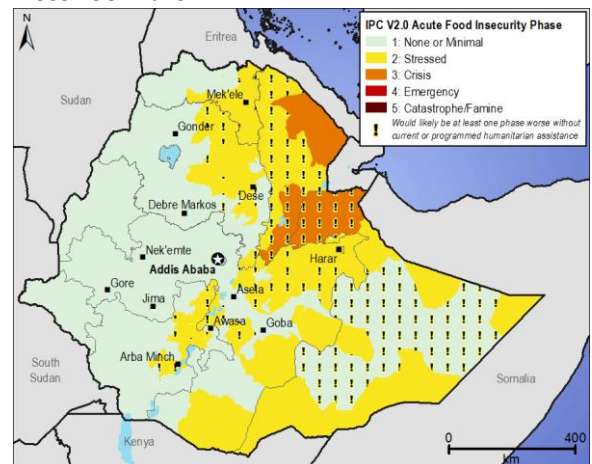
- In SNNPR, northeastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and central and eastern Oromia Regions, the February to May *Belg* rains started up to six weeks late. March and April had long dry spells. [Cumulative rainfall](#) was as little as less than half of the 1981-to-2011 average in some places.
- Belg* crop planted area was around 60, 48, and 40 percent below average in eastern Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR, respectively. During the dry spells, many crops did not germinate. In many areas, it was too dry to plant long-cycle crops in April, so instead, lower-yielding, short-cycle varieties were planted in June. *Belg* crops are currently underdeveloped, and they will not be able to be consumed green in June/July. This has extended the lean season, as no green or dry harvest is expected before September.
- In most of Afar Region and Sitti (formerly Shinile) Zone in northern Somali Region, the March to May *Sugum/Diraac* rains were [far below average](#). With little pasture regeneration or refilling of water points, most areas remained in the dry season. Accordingly, livestock body conditions have deteriorated, and livestock production and productivity have declined. Unseasonal livestock migration has occurred, reducing milk access for most household members. A large number of livestock deaths has been reported from Sitti Zone of Somali Region and southern Afar Region, which along with an unusually high number of sales for this time of year is reducing herd sizes.
- On the other hand, most of southeastern Somali received average to slightly above average cumulative March to May *Gu* rainfall with typical spatial and temporal distribution. The rains regenerated pasture and refilled water sources that helped improve livestock body conditions and increase livestock production and productivity.
- Seasonally, staple food prices are higher than in recent months. According to the [Central Statistical Agency \(CSA\)](#), food price inflation in June was 12.4 percent at an annualized rate up from 10.1 percent in May. On the other hand, due to poor livestock body conditions, the price of livestock in June was less than the same time last year in Afar Region, northern Somali Region, and the southern and eastern lowlands in Oromia Region. This has reduced household purchasing power.
- Increasing malnutrition has been reported in different parts of the country. For instance, the May admissions rate of malnourished children under five to therapeutic feeding programs (TFP) was 19 and 24 percent above last year in SNNPR and Amhara Region, respectively. Similarly, total outpatient therapeutic program (OTP) admissions from January to April in Gabi and Awsi Zones in Afar Region was 56 and 51 percent higher than last year, respectively.
- Households in most western, surplus-producing areas are able to meet their essential food and non-food needs from their own production from last year's *Meher* harvest. Some March to May *Belg* rains as well as the timely start of June to September *Kiremt* rains have helped the normal agricultural activities to occur at normal times. These areas are currently at Minimal (IPC Phase 1).
- Due to late start and below-average cumulative February to May *Belg* rains, the *Belg* harvest has been delayed from June/July into September. This has caused poor households in *Belg* producing areas in northeastern Amhara, central

Projected food security outcomes, July to September 2015



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October to December 2015



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](#).

SNNPR, and some areas in eastern and central Oromia to have large food consumption gaps. With seasonally increasing cereal prices and less income from agricultural labor than usual, poor households in these areas are currently in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

- Following the long October to February dry season, the below-average March to May *Sugum/Diraac* rains in Afar and northern Somali Region led to further deterioration of livestock body conditions and declines in production, reducing households' food and income access from livestock. With high staple food prices and declining livestock prices, household purchasing power has fallen. A large number of unusual livestock deaths occurred in March and April, so herd sizes are smaller, and households have few saleable livestock. In Afar, most areas are Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only with the presence of humanitarian assistance. Poor households in southern Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) but only with ongoing humanitarian assistance.
- Despite average to above average March to May *Gu/Genna* rains in southeastern and southern pastoral areas, households still lack enough income to pay all essential non-food expenses to protect their livelihoods due to high staple food prices. Poor households are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2). However, in southern Shebelle, southern Afder and Liben Zones in Somali Region, and in the lowlands in Borena Zone in Oromia Region, livestock body conditions and production has not recovered well as pasture and water availability have remained lower than usual due to the below-average March to May rainfall in these areas. Households' food and income access from livestock still remains lower than normal. Therefore, these poor households are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) only with ongoing humanitarian assistance.

Assumptions

From July to December 2015, the projected food security outcomes are based on the following assumptions:

- According to regional and international forecasts, the June to September *Kiremt/Karma/Karan* rains are likely to be near average to below average in cumulative amount, but in some southwestern parts of the country, cumulative rainfall is expected to be average to above average.
- An average *Meher* harvest is expected from October to January in southwestern parts of the country. However, *Meher* production is expected to be below average in most northwestern, southern, and eastern parts of the country.
- With a high chance that El Niño conditions will continue through March 2016, the October to December 2015 rains in southern and southeastern parts of the country are likely to be above average in terms of cumulative rainfall with a near normal timing of the start of the rains.
- Staple food prices are expected to increase from July to September due to seasonally rising demand and tight supply. In particular, in *Belg*-producing areas in SNNPR, northeastern Amhara, Southern Tigray, and central and eastern Oromia Regions, prices are expected to be unusually high through September due to delay of the *Belg* harvest and it likely being well below average. Staple food prices are likely to decline slightly from October to December as supplies from the *Meher* harvest enter markets.
- The number of opportunities for agricultural labor in general and harvest labor, in particular, are likely to be less than normal in most northwestern, southern, and eastern parts of the country due to the anticipated below-average *Meher* production through December.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In the western and central surplus-producing areas, households will continue to be able to meet their essential food and nonfood needs and remain at Minimal (IPC Phase 1). However, in northwestern Tigray and Amhara, the *Kiremt* rains are likely to be below average to average in amount. This will mean there is likely to be less sesame planting and production, reducing household income in these areas and in areas where labor migrants go to work the harvest or planting in these areas.

Due to the delayed *Belg* harvest, households in *Belg*-producing areas in SNNPR, northeastern and southern Tigray, and some areas in central and eastern Oromia are expected to have an extended lean season through September. With no own produced crops or income from crop sales, households will need to continue to buy food from markets. With the expected increase in staple food prices through September, households are expected to have food consumption gaps. Therefore, poor households in SNNPR, northeastern and southern Tigray, and some areas in central and eastern Oromia will be in Crisis (IPC

Phase 3) from now until September. However, household food access is likely to improve following the late *Belg* harvest in September and then the *Meher* harvest in October. Accordingly, the level of food insecurity in these areas is expected to improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) with the presence of humanitarian assistance from October to December.

Household food access in the Tekeze River catchment in Amhara and Tigray Regions will not improve until the next *Meher* harvest in October. With low income from livestock sales due to poor livestock body conditions, few opportunities were available to do agricultural labor due for land preparation due to the low amounts of March to May rains, and high staple food prices, households will likely be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from July to September. However, despite and the expected seasonal decline in labor opportunities through December, households in these areas will move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December during the *Meher* harvest, which is likely to be below average.

With no significant increase in water and pasture availability expected during the likely below-average July to September *Karma/Karan* rains, income and food from livestock will remain very limited in most parts of Afar and northern Somali. As cereal prices increase, households' purchasing power will decline. Households have few saleable livestock. Poor households in Sitti Zone in Somali Region and southern p Afar Region will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) only in the presence of humanitarian assistance. Poor households in central and western Afar will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but with only with continued humanitarian assistance from July to September. While July to September *Karma/Karan* rains are expected to be below average in amount, s water and pasture availability will likely increase slightly. Livestock production including milk production will increase slightly. Therefore, food insecurity in southern Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), but poor households in in most parts of central and western Afar will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December. With high staple food prices and fewer saleable livestock due to recurrent high sales and losses of livestock in previous season, poor households in northeastern Afar will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through December.

The expected average to above average *Deyr/Hageya* rainfall is expected to increase water and pasture availability in most southern and southeastern pastoral areas. With anticipated improvement in livestock body conditions, and a near normal rate of births expected during the *Deyr/Hageya* due to a normal rate of conceptions during the March to May *Gu/Genna*, household food and income access from livestock will likely increase. Therefore, these areas will move from Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from July to September to Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) with the presence of humanitarian assistance from October to December. On the other hand, southern Shebelle, southern Afder, and southern Liben Zones in Somali Region, and the lowlands of Borena Zone in Oromia Region will improve from Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) only with the presence of humanitarian assistance from July to September to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Afar and Sitti (formerly Shinile) Zone of northern Somali Region

Current Situation

Cumulative March to May 2015 *Sugum/Dirac* rains were far below average with only two to three days of rains in many areas. These rains started late. They were erratically distributed over space and time. There were long dry spells. There are some places in southern Afar and the lowest elevation kebeles in Aisha, Afedem, Erer, Hadigala, and Shinile Woredas of Sitti Zone that did not receive any rain.

While there was some unusual rainfall in June, when these areas would typically be in their short dry season, the lack of rainfall means that pasture and browse did not regenerate, and water points were not refilled. As a result, there is almost no forage available for livestock. Forage is most difficult to find in the lowest elevation areas in Aisha, Shinile, Afedem, Erer, Hadigala, and Meisso Woredas of Sitti Zone in northern Somali Region, and Gewane, Amibara, and Awash Fentale Woredas in Gabi Zone in southern Afar Region. Some grazing areas in Afar Region have been abandoned due to lack of forage like Halydege in Amibara, Duba in Chifera, and Teru and Halayten in Erebt, as this is the third season in these areas of very low forage availability. Unusual livestock forage, feed, and fodder interventions are occurring in Amibara, Awash Fentale, Buremoditu, Gewane, and Dulecha Woredas of Gabi Zone of Afar Region.

Abnormal livestock migration has occurred from most parts of Afar and Sitti Zone since January. Moreover, cattle, goat, and sheep deaths have continued to be reported from the lowest elevation areas since April 2015. Many deaths have been reported among mature, pregnant female livestock and newborns. Household herd sizes, particularly for cattle and small ruminants, have fallen due to the livestock deaths. In many cases, households are culling in order to save the lives of the mature female. There has also been a higher than typical need to sell livestock, in order to buy food. Moreover, livestock body conditions are very poor, and livestock products like milk are not widely available. Most cattle and goats are not milking. In Shinile Pastoral Livelihood Zone (SHP) in Sitti Zone, camels are only milking half of less the amount they normally would. Similarly, the number of births of camel, cattle, and sheep have been very low, and herd sizes have fallen significantly since April.

In agropastoral and agricultural areas, rainfed crops largely did not survive this season. Planted area under irrigated crops along the Awash River was very low due to the low volume of water in the river.

Water for human or livestock consumption is difficult to find. Most water points like perennial rivers, *ellas*, *birkads*, ponds, hand-dug shallow wells, and even deep wells with motorized pumps are running dry. In Sitti Zone, 95,165 people are being targeted for emergency water assistance. The Afar Regional Government is still operating water trucks in Elidar, Kori Dubti, Gewane, Berhale, Bidu, and Dalul Woredas.

While cereal prices are increasing due to seasonally low supply and high demand, livestock prices are declining due to poor livestock body conditions and households selling an increasing number of livestock on markets in order to purchase food. As a result, livestock-to-cereal terms of trade have declined. For instance, sorghum prices in Asaita in June were 60 percent higher than last year, but an average-sized goat in June was worth 27 percent less than last year. Similarly, in Shinile, the June sorghum price was 16 percent higher than last year, but an average-quality sheep was worth 43 percent less than last year.

The nutrition situation has deteriorated due to low milk availability and food access. Total OTP admissions from January to April in Gabi and Awsi Zones in Afar Region were 56 and 51 percent higher than this time last year, respectively.

Most poor households in southern Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region have few livestock on hand that could be sold. As a result, households are unable to purchase adequate quantities of food. Poor households are currently in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) but only with the presence of humanitarian assistance. However, poor households in most parts in central and northern Afar are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2!). Poor households in northeastern Afar are also in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

In addition to the national assumptions above, the projected food security outcomes for Afar and Sitti Zone in Somali Region are based on the following assumptions:

- Due to likely continued poor livestock body conditions, livestock prices are expected to decline even further through December.
- More livestock deaths are likely in the lowest elevation areas of Sitti Zone and southern Afar due to the large number of very weak animals, which increases the risk of death from disease outbreaks and from the stresses associated with abnormal migration.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Livestock body conditions are anticipated to slightly improve, and production to increase in September due to the rains. However, the likely below-average July to September *Karma/Karan* rains are not expected to significantly increase pasture, browse, and water availability. Livestock body conditions are not expected to improve, and livestock production and productivity are not expected to increase. Households will have neither additional food from milk or additional livestock to sell between now and December. Livestock migration is expected to further intensify, as households lead their livestock even farther away in search of pasture and water. Malnutrition will likely rise. Poor households in Sitti Zone and southern Afar will continue to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) only with the continued presence of humanitarian assistance. Households in central and northern Afar will be Stressed (IPC phase 2!) but only with the continued presence of humanitarian assistance from July to December.

Poor and very poor households in northeastern Afar have few livestock left, and more of their income comes from salt mining and other forms of self-employment. However, income from these sources is likely to decline from now to December, as more people look for more work in order to pay higher food costs. Poor and very poor households in Elidar and Afedera Woredas will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through December 2015.

Lowlands of Sidama, Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Hadiya, Kambata Tambaro, Gurage, and Silte Zones, and Halaba Special Woreda in SNNPR

Current Situation

The February to May *Belg* rains started late. There were long dry spells in April and May, and the cumulative rainfall was below average in most of the eastern half of SNNPR. However, there was relatively more rain with even spatial distribution towards the end of May. The *Kiremt* rains started in June and continued into early July, as is seasonally expected. With the resulting moisture, households have done land preparation and planted short-cycle *Meher* crops. There were a period of heavy rainfall in mid-June in most of SNNPR. This allowed for the planting of short-cycle *Meher* crops. However, the heavy rains in mid-June resulted in the Bilate River flooding. The floods damaged 1,330 hectares of planted crops, and they displaced 170 households in Humbo Woreda of Wolayita Zone. Similarly, in many areas of Yirga Cheffe, Wenago, Dila Zuria, and Kochere Woredas of Gedio Zone, hailstorms and strong winds around that time destroyed both perennial and *Meher* crops.

The late start of the rains delayed planting, reduced area coverage, reduced input utilization, and retarded the growth of *Belg* crops. This also reduced the amount of land preparation and the planted area for long-cycle *Meher* crops like maize, sorghum, finger millet, and hot peppers in most of central, northern, and eastern SNNPR. Planting of *Belg* crop was mostly done from last week of April through the first week June, up to two months later than usual. Instead of high-yielding, long-cycle maize, many people switched to planting low-yielding, short-cycle haricot beans, particularly in the bimodal areas of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Sidama, Kambata Tambaro, and Hadiya Zones. Total planted area was around 40 percent less than average and 30 percent less than last year. Most *Belg* crops are far behind in their development. Accordingly, rainfed, green maize is not yet available. There are almost no sweet potatoes to harvest in Wolayita, Kambata Tambaro, and Hadiya Zones. Coffee plants are also not growing normally, and many are wilted or even withered in midlands of Sidama and Gedio Zones. Bacteria blight of coffee (BBC) has also spread.

There is little pasture or water available in the lowlands along the Rift Valley. As a result, livestock body conditions have deteriorated, and milk production is below-average due to the low number of recent births. Livestock mortality was reported in April and May due to the low availability of forage. Therefore, livestock herd sizes and the number of milking animals are fewer than usual, and milk yields are atypically low.

Staple food prices in June continued to increase. The increase is associated with the seasonal drawing down of market stocks in June and July. Prices for most staple foods have been above their five-year averages since February. The prices of most staple foods have increased by 20 to 30 percent from February to June. Pulses and pepper prices in Gurage have doubled for some varieties from March to June. On the other hand, livestock supply and prices remain stable.

The number of children under the age of five admitted to therapeutic feeding programs (TFPs) increased 15 percent from April to May, and May admissions were 19 percent higher than last year.

In the absence of the *Belg* harvest in June and July with above-average staple food prices and below-average availability of labor opportunities since March, poor households have food consumption gaps and are currently in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

No additional assumptions other than the national assumptions described above have been used.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Due to the late start of the below-average *Belg* rains, no harvest is expected prior to September. This is two months of delay. While the *Kiremt* rains started on time, allowing planting of short-cycle *Meher* crops in June and July. However, these rains are likely to be below-average in cumulative amount through September. They are also likely to end early cessation along the Rift Valley. Not all crops will reach maturity, and overall *Meher* production in November/December will likely be below average.

The bacteria blight of coffee (BBC) along with inadequate growth and wilting of plants in Sidama and Gedio Zones is likely to cause a well below-average coffee production. This will reduce incomes both for households who grow coffee and those who provide day labor during the October through December harvest. While incomes will remain low, food prices are likely to increase further through September. Below-average *Meher* and *Belg* production will cause fewer harvest labor opportunities in Sidama, Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Hadiya, Kambata Tambaro, Gurage, Silte Zones, and Halaba Special Woreda. Harvest labor is a key source of income for poor and very poor households.

Poor households in these areas will likely be unable to purchase adequate quantities of food from July to September. In response to this, most poor households will use coping strategies, such as increasing livestock sales and intensification of charcoal making and firewood collection. Some households may reduce the number of meals that they consume each day. These areas are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from July to September. After the delayed *Belg* harvest in September and the start of green consumption and dry harvesting of *Meher* crops from October through December, food availability and access will temporarily increase. Therefore, these areas are likely to move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only with the presence of humanitarian assistance from October to December.

Lowlands of Wag Himra and neighboring areas in North Gondar Zone and Tigray Region

Current Situation

The February to May *Belg* generally has little impact in this area for crop production, though it does contribute to pasture and watering point regeneration for livestock and also helps for planting of long-cycle *Meher* crops. Nevertheless, the cumulative amount of *Belg* rainfall in these areas was below average and its distribution was poor. July to September *Kiremt* rains did not yet started in most parts of this area with the exception of light and erratic rainfall received in localized areas in early July. On top of missing long cycle crop planting due to poor *Belg* rains, farmers did not get enough precipitation to carry out land preparation and planting of *Meher* crops. However, some farmers did undertake dry planting or used the light erratic rains obtained in localized areas to plant short-cycle sorghum.

Poor rainfall also affected the pasture and water availability for livestock in most lowlands of Waghimra and neighboring areas in North Gondar Zone and Tigray Region. Localized areas did, however, receive light rains in early July. Farmers rely on digging wells or travel longer distances to river valleys for water and feed. Currently, livestock body conditions are below normal.

Due to decline in supply, market price for major staple cereals has continued increasing seasonably. This has brought households to revert to buying a cheaper variety sorghum locally known as 'wodiacre'.

Household incomes from the sale of livestock declined due to poor livestock body conditions. As households are currently relying more on purchase, low cash incomes and increased staple food prices affected household market access. Incomes from agricultural labor employment remain low as the poor rainfall limited agricultural activities. Thus, poor and very poor households in lowlands of Waghimra and neighboring areas in North Gondar Zone and Tigray Region are currently in Crisis (IPC Phase3).

Assumptions

No additional assumptions other than the national assumptions described above have been used.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The anticipated below average June to September *Kiremt* rains are likely to affect area planted and harvest of *Meher* crops. As usual, no harvest is anticipated to come in July to September in these areas. With the likely increase in staple food prices through September and below-average cash incomes, households will not be able to meet their minimal food needs. Thus poor and very poor households in lowlands of Waghimra and neighboring woredas in North Gondar Zone and Tigray Region are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from July to September.

Despite an anticipated below-average *Meher* 2015 harvest, the limited harvests are expected to improve food access for households beginning in October/November. Cash incomes from harvest labor opportunities, in particular from migration labor, and income from livestock sales are also expected to improve food access from purchase and poor and very poor households in these areas will likely be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) with humanitarian assistance from October to December.

Belg-producing areas of northeastern Amhara and Tigray Regions

Current Situation

February to May *Belg* seasonal rainfall was delayed, poorly distributed and the accumulation was below average in *Belg* dominant areas of northeastern Amhara and Tigray Regions. Thus, planting and growth of *Belg* crops has been affected continued poor rainfall. According to the findings of *Belg* 2015 multi-agency seasonal assessment, area planted by *Belg* crops in Amhara Region this year decreased by about 45 percent compared to normal. In Southern Tigray Zone, the *Belg* harvest is estimated to be a complete failure despite the fact that farmers planted 50 percent of their normal *Belg* area.

Though the dryness in *Belg* areas resulted in a shortage of pasture and water for livestock, households are trying to cope through the purchase of animal feed or by using crop residue reserves from the 2014 *Meher*. Moreover, the late rains received in May did favor the regeneration of pasture for livestock. After seeing deteriorating body conditions for livestock in February through May 2015, currently livestock body conditions are improving, but are still below normal.

Market prices for most cereals have increased compared to last year. Recent data indicates that market prices for wheat and barley have increased by 33 and 12 percent respectively in Gubalafto market in North Wollo Zone.

Currently, no *Belg* harvest stocks are available in North and South Wollo Zones and poor households have limited own production stocks to consume. Increases in market prices since January, coupled with limited agricultural labor opportunities, are contributing to keep poor and very poor households in North and South Wollo Zones in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

No additional assumptions other than the national assumptions described above have been used.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

According to findings from the recent multi-agency *Belg* seasonal assessment, *Belg* harvest production is expected to be only about 15 to 20 percent of average in *Belg*-producing areas in Amhara Region. Moreover, the harvest will be delayed until August/September. The likely below average *Meher* planting and below normal *Belg* harvest are also likely to affect agricultural labor demand, resulting in below-average incomes for poorer households. Anticipated staple food price increases through September will also reduce food access through purchase. Poor households in *Belg* dominant areas of North and South Wollo Zones of Amhara Region are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from July to September.

Although below normal, the 2015 *Meher* harvest is likely to come in November/December 2015. Although income from local agricultural labor will be below average due to below-normal area planted and limited harvests, poor households will have seasonably good access to migration labor opportunities. Though staple food prices will be higher, cash incomes from employment will increase households' ability to purchase foods on markets. Therefore, food security for poor and very poor households in this areas is likely to improve, but households will still not be able to cover their essential, non-food needs

and likely be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) from October to December. In the absence of humanitarian assistance, however, households would be in at least one Phase of food insecurity worse.

Lowlands of East and West Hararghe, East Shewa, and West Arsi Zones

Current Situation

Following two consecutive poor seasons, lowlands in eastern Oromia again suffered below-average rainfall accumulation and erratic distribution for February to May 2015 *Belg* rains. The recent multi-agency seasonal assessment report indicates in East Hararghe Zone *Belg* planted area is only 18 percent of the normal and planting of *Belg* crops was not totally carried out in West Hararghe Zone due to moisture deficits in the zone.

Livestock body conditions have been affected due to drier weather conditions between February and April 2015. Livestock in lowland Woredas in West Hararghe Zone are the most severely affected. Milk yield has reduced by more than 50 percent. Over 885 cattle deaths have been reported due to limited pasture availability in different woredas in West Hararghe Zone. Although limited, there has been livestock feed intervention in some affected woredas. Unseasonal livestock migration took place in March and April to the commonly known river valleys and beyond towards Afar and North Shewa Zone of Oromia Region along the Awash River. The rains in late May improved the pasture availability and pastoralists are migrating back to their villages with their livestock.

The *Belg* failure and seasonal decline in maize supply from source markets in western Ethiopia led to a decline in the local market supply of staple cereals in this area, which resulted in price increases. For instance, in May 2015 maize prices in Haromaya market in East Hararghe increased by about 30 to 35 percent compared to February. Maize prices were, however, still down 5 to 10 percent compared to the same time last year. Livestock market supply appears to be stable or slightly increasing, with prices down compared to the same time last year mainly due to poor livestock body conditions.

There are indications of increased malnutrition in eastern and central lowland Oromia. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) admissions in East and West Hararghe Zones increased between January and May. In East Hararghe Zone, total SAM admissions, which were 1,361 in January, increased sharply increased to 4,549 in May 2015. Similar trends were also observed in West Hararghe Zone of Oromia Region.

The delayed *Belg* harvest contributed to limited food availability for poor and very poor households in most parts of East and West Hararghe Zones and Arsi Zone in Oromia Region. Low household incomes, increasing market prices, and limited food from livestock and livestock products also contributed to poor food access and availability. Poor and very poor households in these areas currently remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

No additional assumptions other than the national assumptions described above have been used.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The *Belg* harvest is anticipated to be significantly below normal. In East Hararghe Zone, the *Belg* production is estimated to only 30 percent of the normal. Moreover, limited cash incomes from reduced labor employment opportunities and increased staple food prices are likely to further restrict food access. Decreases in livestock productivity and low cash incomes from the sale of livestock, which have poor body conditions, are also contributing factors. Poor and very poor households in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe, East Shewa and West Arsi Zones are likely to continue to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from July to September.

Although limited, harvests from the 2015 *Meher* are likely to improve food availability. Cash incomes from the sale of livestock whose body conditions are likely to improve, as well as incomes from agriculture labor employment, are likely to increase food access from purchase. This will likely allow poor and very poor households in this areas to meet their minimal food needs

and be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) acute food insecurity from October to December, though only due to continued humanitarian assistance efforts.

Southern Shebelle (Kelafo, Mustahil, and Ferfer Woredas), southern Afder Zone (Bare and Dolo Bay Woredas), Liben Zone in Somali Region, and the lowlands in Borena Zone in Oromia Region

Current Situation

Gu/Genna 2015 rains started late by about four weeks across much of this area. Moreover, rain accumulation was below normal in Dolo Ado, Hudat and Moyale woreda in Liben Zone and Ferfer and Mustahil Woredas of Shebele Zone. Although the rains started on time in most parts of Liben Zone in Somali Region and Borena Zone in Oromia Region, the season has been characterized by long dry spells of about one to two weeks.

Despite some improvement in pasture and water availability livestock body conditions and productivity have not fully recovered in Borena Zone, which was affected by a poor *Hageya* season. Therefore, household milk and income access from livestock is still low. Moreover, following the improved rains in late May and April in Southern parts of Afder, unusual livestock migration has been observed from Rabdhurre and Bakool Regions of Somalia, as well as from northern parts of Afder Zone (Elkare, Hargele and Cherati Woredas) to border woredas of southern Afder (Bare and Dolo Bay). Some internal and external migration has been reported in Liben Zone as well. Accordingly, livestock from Dolo Ado and southern parts of Hudat Woreda in Liben Zone migrated to Dawa and Genale River areas of Filtu Woredas in Liben Zone. Due to poor performance of the *Gu* rains, migration of livestock from Hudat Woreda to Miyo Woreda in Borena Zone in Oromia Region has also been reported. This unusual migration occurred starting in late May and has been putting stress on the available resources.

Due to failure of local crop production along the Shebele River and delay in humanitarian food distributions, cereal prices are increasing in most of the markets in Shebele and Afder Zone. For instance, compared to prices in May, June sorghum prices increased by about 6 and 21 percent in Gode market in Shebele Zone and Cherati market in Afder Zone respectively. Similarly, wheat prices in June increased by about 28 percent in Cherati market in Afder Zone compared to May. Furthermore, due to the seasonal decline of imported foods, prices for imported food (wheat flour, rice and sugar) also increased in June in most of Afder, Shebele and Liben Zones. On the other hand, due to the limited number of external traders, livestock prices are not showing the usual increase expected this time of year. In addition, poor livestock body conditions in Borena Zone have also contributed to the decline of livestock prices in the zone. Therefore, with high increasing food prices and with no significant increase in livestock prices, purchasing power for pastoralist in most parts of Shebelle, Afder, Liben Zones of Somali Region as well as Borena Zone in Oromia Region has been affected.

Poor *Gu* rains in 2014 affected calving of camel and cattle, reducing the number of livestock births. Due to limited production from livestock and below-average livestock to cereals terms of trade, poor households in Southern Shebele, Southern Afder Zone, Liben Zone in Somali Region, and lowlands in Borena Zone in Oromia Region are only able to address their minimal food needs with the assistance of humanitarian intervention and are currently in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!).

Assumptions

No additional assumptions other than the national assumptions described above have been used.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The unusual internal and external pastoral migration occurred starting in late May in Liben and Afder Zone will contribute to the early depletion of available pastoral resources, which may also cause some conflict over resources. No improvement in the number of milking livestock is expected due to the below-normal calving levels during the 2014 *Gu*. Moreover, the late and below average 2015 *Gu* rains will also reduce milk yield for the late lactating animals from July to September 2015. Below normal crop harvests are expected in agropastoral areas in Liben and Afder Zone of Somali Region and lowlands of Borena Zone in Oromia Region due to poor agricultural performance related to delayed, below average and erratic *Gu* rains. Moreover, the increase in cereal prices and decline in external livestock traders is expected to negatively affect household's purchasing power.

Poor households in Southern Shebele (Kelafo, Mustahil and Ferfer Woredas), Southern Afder Zone (Bare and Dolo Bay), and Liben Zone in Somali Region and lowlands in Borena Zone in Oromia Region will continue to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) from July to September, relying on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic food needs. A slight improvement in household food access owing to improved livestock production and sales is anticipated following the expected normal October to December *Deyr* rains and households will be able to meet at least their minimal food needs, even in the absence of humanitarian assistance, as they continue to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December.

OTHER AREAS

Segen, Gedio, highlands of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Sidama, and western SNNPR

Despite the late start of 2015 *Belg* rains, the distribution and accumulation of rainfall in Segen, Gedio, highlands of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Sidama and most of western SNNPR were about normal. This was followed by timely start of *Kiremt* rainfall that helped to complete the *Belg* planting, although it was late. The *Kiremt* rainfall also assisted in the timely planting of short maturing *Meher* crops. Most crops planted are at their normal growth stage and are likely to lead to average production in November and December.

Although the elongated dry period in February and March led to greater depletion of pasture reserves, the good rainfall after its start in mid-March favor to regeneration of pasture and water sources. As a result, current livestock body conditions are normal and are likely to continue to improve due to the anticipated average *Kiremt* seasonal rains, particularly in the western part of the Region. Therefore, livestock conditions are likely to improve through December and beyond.

The supply of staple cereals to markets declined in June and July due to the delay in the *Belg* harvest. Prices for staple foods increased and are likely to continue to be higher than normal through October. This will have an impact on the purchasing power for poor households. Livestock prices are likely to increase, though, from September through December, related to the seasonal increase in livestock demand for the Ethiopian New Year Festival.

Due to the anticipated staple food price increases from July to September and the below-average and delayed *Belg* harvest, households will likely face difficulty meeting their basic food needs in Segen, highland areas in Gamo Gofa, and Wolayita Zones from July through September. Therefore, these areas are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from July through September. Following the harvest in October they will likely move to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity, which will continue through December.

Fafan (formerly Jijiga) Zone of northern Somali Region

Most parts of Fafan Zone, except Harshin Woreda, experienced normal cumulative March to May 2015 *Dirac* rainfall. This has contributed to good pasture, browse and watering point regeneration. Livestock body conditions remain normal. *Gu* seasonal agricultural activities performed normally except for some decline in planted area as a result of the late onset of the *Dirac* rains. Livestock prices in June remained stable compared to the same period last year, whereas cereal market prices declined slightly compared to the same time last year. Poor households' purchasing power still remains low, however, due to their limited availability of sellable livestock.

The anticipated below average June to September 2015 rains will likely lead to below-normal local crop production in agropastoral areas of the zone as well as nearby highland areas in Oromia Region from October to December. Cereal supplies on markets are not expected to improve, nor effect significant price decreases from October to December. Therefore, poor and very poor households in Fafan Zone of Somali Region will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through December.

Other areas of southern Somali Region

2015 *Gu* rains started on time and accumulation and coverage was normal in most southeastern parts of Somali Region. This has improved water and pasture availability, contributing to good livestock body conditions and production. However, calving rates for camel and cattle was still below normal due to poor 2014 *Gu* rains, while kidding and lambing rates were normal to

above normal. Following the normal performance of 2015 *Gu* rains, conceiving for livestock will be normal in most of these areas.

Despite these improvements, household income and food access is going to be affected by high cereal prices and a decline in livestock prices due to increased supply. Milk yield will also decline during the dry season from July to September. However, the anticipated normal to above normal rains from October to December is expected to contribute to improved livestock body conditions. Livestock that conceived following the normal 2014 *Deyr* rains are expected to give normal births in October to December that will further improve herd size as well as milk access. Therefore, while poor households in most of southeastern Somali region remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between July and September, the food security situation is likely to improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1!) with the presence of humanitarian assistance from October to December.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 1: Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Western <i>Meher</i> -producing areas	Poor performance of the June to September <i>Kiremt</i> rains	Poor performance or early cessation of the <i>Kiremt</i> rains would affect national <i>Meher</i> production. Less production would likely lead to increases in food prices and decreased labor demand. This would affect migratory laborers from other parts of the country and most cereal prices on markets would be affected.
Eastern and Southern <i>Meher</i> crop producing areas	Normal to above normal June to September <i>Kiremt</i> rains	With the improved rains, <i>Meher</i> agricultural activities would be expected to improve, increasing labor opportunities and therefore improved income from labor. With normal to above normal <i>Kiremt</i> rains, total <i>Meher</i> production in October/ November will likely improve, further improving household income and food access from crops.
Pastoral areas	Livestock disease outbreaks	With poor livestock body conditions and productivity already prevalent, in particular in Afar and northern parts of Somali Region, large-scale livestock deaths could occur. This could further reduce household food access.
Pastoral areas in southern parts of Somali Region	Below-average October to December <i>Deyr/Hageya</i> rains	The dry season would be extended and livestock body conditions and productivity would reduce household food and income access from the likely significant reduction in livestock body condition and production.
Pastoral areas in southern parts of Somali Region	Well above-average October to December <i>Deyr/Hageya</i> rains	During an El Niño, heavy rains and associated river flooding are possible. Along the Shebelle River, flooding would damage crops planted along the banks and cause temporary waterlogging and likely even displacement.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming six months. Learn more [here](#).