

EDITORIAL

After a measure of relief with a better than expected Deyr, the Jilaal season has placed increasing strain on many vulnerable groups. After the 2001 Gu analysis, the FSAU predicted that pastoralists in the North and Central parts of the country would become increasingly stretched if the Livestock Import Ban, particularly to the major market of Saudia Arabia, continued. This month field reports increasingly highlight the plight of small groups needing emergency relief. The insecurity in many parts of the country and particularly in Puntland as well as areas in southern Somalia have contributed to the problems and prevented essential seasonal activities that further threaten the food security of poorer groups. The timely arrival of good Gu rains and a period of reduced conflict will be vital if a further decline in the food security status is to be avoided.

FSAU REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

**** RAPID ASSESSMENT IN AFMADOW AND HAGAR** Carried out beginning of April .

**** FOOD SECURITY WORKSHOP FOR NGOS:** This is planned to begin in May.

To receive more information on the above or to request FSAU assessments or training, please contact alex.williams@fsau.or.ke

HIGHLIGHTS

SOOL and SANAG: The FSAU Field Monitor reported a few scattered showers on 19th March in *Dhahar* district of Sanag region but food insecurity remains acute in the *Sool Plateau*, with the long dry season compounding the failed *Deyr* rains. This has produced severe shortages of water, which is being trucked into the area, and pasture depletion, resulting in significant losses of cattle and shoats. It has also extended to the lower Nugal valley and the local consensus is that around 2,000 poor households in Sool Region now have inadequate food intake and require support. A similar situation exists in the Sool Plateau and Gebi Valley of Sanag region, except that WFP have been distributing food in this area which is ongoing at the time of writing.

GEDO : Food aid interventions are still going on. Relief food remains the main source of food in northern districts and blanket distribution through female household heads is being undertaken by both CARE and WFP. In Belet Hawa, Dolow and Garbaharey, the critical food insecurity and related malnutrition noted in December is likely to be under control although dependant on continued relief interventions.

AFMADOW/HAGAR: FSAU carried out a rapid assessment in Afmadow/Hagar districts of Lower Juba region from March 27 to March 31. The agro-pastoralists in this area have suffered two seasons of crop failure plus pressure from in-migrating Gedo pastoralists increasing competition for pasture and water. However, the rapid assessment found a situation where the agro-pastoralists were coping. This was mainly due to the fact that alternative opportunities to earn income had arisen and prices for livestock were good. A FSAU nutritional assessment carried out for this area at the same time did not find any significant malnutrition rates. However, water does remain a problem in Hagar and has prompted many families to move to more permanent water sources. These families have now been away from their land during the critical land preparation period and this is likely to result in late season planting.

RAINFALL : Most parts of Somalia remained seasonally dry and hot during March. Normally, rains commence in late March or early April. Field reports indicate that good rains fell over Bay and parts of Bakol regions and isolated showers fell in Hiran and Lower Juba. There has not been any significant rainfall in the north other than in the sub-coastal belt of Awdal. The Drought Monitoring Centre, Nairobi, updated the regional rainfall forecast, for the period from April- May 2002, but the outlook remained the same. There is an increased likelihood of near normal to above normal rainfall over most parts of Somalia during April to May 2002. Nevertheless, over the S. coast of Somalia there is increased likelihood of near to below normal rainfall (see March Monthly Report).

Assessment of Household Food Access and Use in Luuq District

18-26 March

FSAU, FEWS NET and CARE have jointly undertaken a survey in Luuq district to establish facts on :-

- ? Where households access different types of food and particularly relief food.
- ? How relief food is utilised by individual households.
- ? The exact size and composition of households in Luuq district.

Survey information from just under a thousand households will show the coverage of food aid distributions, the importance of relief food in household food intake and access to other foods. It will also provide greater understanding into future food relief interventions in Gedo region. The survey used two-stage cluster sampling. The household was defined in this survey as people who 'normally live and eat together'. Questions were asked about the size of each household now and before Ramadan. Households were broken down into the

following categories: children under five, children from five to fifteen, grandparents or elderly, adult males, adult females, – and number of adult females registered for food distribution. Follow up questions were asked on livestock holdings (livestock kept, not necessarily owned) and milk production.

Ongoing analysis will reveal the number of times a household has received relief food this year and the breakdown of how it has been used by the household: what remained of the food at the time of the survey, what was given out to others, what food was shared with livestock, and what amounts or quantities were used to repay debts. Finally, there were six questions on other sources of food for the household, including various purchases, food obtained from other households or through Supplementary Feeding Programmes's and the Luuq Therapeutic Feeding Programme.

Analysis is currently underway by FSAU, CARE and FEWS NET and final findings will be reported in the May Monthly Report.

Highlights from FSAU 'Nutrition Update'

April's 'Nutrition Update' focuses on nutrition and food security assessments in Luuq districts and reviews the progress of the various interventions in Luuq and other districts in Gedo Region.

An overview of the nutrition and food security situation in Lower Juba is provided along with some baseline indicators that will be monitored in the coming months.

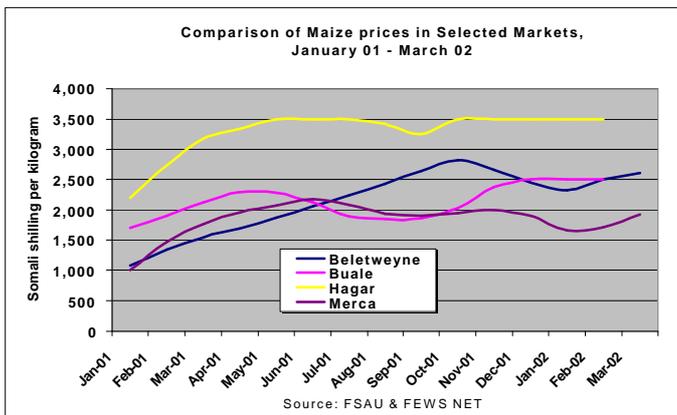
In Somaliland, the situation faced by returning refugees is highlighted again along with information on activities designed to improve humanitarian conditions.

For details on these and other issues related to nutrition in Somalia, see the January and February 2001 issues of 'Nutrition Update', or contact noreen.prendiville@fsau.or.ke

MARKET PRICES AND TRENDS

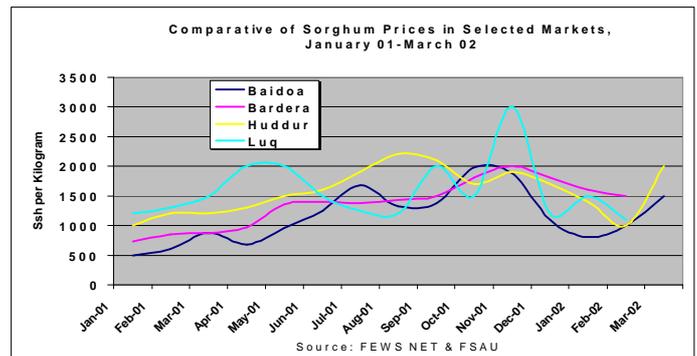
After the last good *Deyr* harvest, maize prices did not drop dramatically in the main producing zones of southern Somalia. In Merka, maize prices slightly declined in January before increasing again in February. When compared to the last month, maize prices increased by 12%. By the end of March, retail prices in Merka reached the same level as during the second half of 2001 (about 2,000 Ssh/kg, see chart). Farmers may only be willing to release their stocks if the coming *Gu* season is promising. In Belet-Weyn (Hiran) and Huddur (Bakol), maize prices stabilized at about 2,500 Ssh/kg. White maize prices are gradually increasing in Baidoa (Bay): from 1,800 Ssh at the beginning of the month to 2,200 Ssh at the end of the month. Maize prices are extremely high in the agro-pastoral area of Hagar (Lower Juba), which underwent a bad crop failure for the 2 last seasons (*Gu* and *Deyr*).

Figure 1.



Sorghum prices, which dropped after the generally good *Deyr* harvest, have increased significantly between February and March in all main markets of the sorghum belt (see figure 2.). In Baidoa (Bay), the retail price of sorghum gradually increased from 1,200 Ssh/kg during the first week of the month to 1,600 Ssh/kg during the last market of the month. The increase in prices is sustained by a relatively high demand (Mogadishu as well as pastoralists from northeast and central regions). Compared to Bay, local cereals are much more expensive in the neighboring Bakol region (2,100 Ssh/kg of sorghum). In general, sorghum prices are higher this year than last year at the same period. In Luuq (north Gedo), prices are greatly fluctuating according to the food aid distributions.

Figure 2.



IGAD ESTABLISHES CONFLICT EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

In many areas of the Greater Horn of Africa, conflict and political factors constitute major sources of vulnerability and risk of food insecurity – in addition to climatic, market and environmental factors. Yet most existing Early Warning Systems in the region do not adequately incorporate an analysis of conflict into food security information systems. Over recent years, substantial effort has been devoted to developing and disseminating Conflict Early Warning (CEW) approaches and methodologies, but little progress has been made in integrating conflict into food security early warning. However, in early 2002, the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) adopted the Khartoum Declaration for the establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for IGAD Member states—a major step toward improved Conflict Early Warning.

In the first instance, CEWARN will concentrate on gathering early warning information related to conflict in pastoral areas (livestock rustling, conflicts overgrazing and water resources, smuggling, illegal trade and banditry) However, the system is intended to facilitate action as much as it is to gather information. The decision to focus on pastoral conflict is recognition of the common problems that afflict pastoralists and of the potential for banditry and violence in sparsely populated pastoral areas to escalate into larger cross-border conflicts with much broader cross security implications. To date the process of setting up CEWARN has begun along the Kenya/Uganda border, with other cross bordering monitoring units expected. If the CEWARN mechanism is to be effective in reducing conflict in any meaningful way, it will not just require the provision of information from communities, it will require the participation of communities, their leaders and local and national administrations in addressing the issues that underlie conflict and which fuel violence.

LIVESTOCK EXPORT UPDATE

BOSSASSO *	Jan 02	Feb 02	March 02
CAMEL	618	1020	385
CATTLE	3540	1738	3977
SHOATS	159330	199840	102948
BERBERA **	Jan 02	Feb 02	March 02
CAMEL	1369	1922	1018
CATTLE	3324	3468	2390
SHOATS	23000	59349	22932

* Source : UNCTAD

** Source : Ministry of Finance

March is the last month of the dry season in Somalia. It is characterized by high temperatures and evaporation which causes pasture to dry out, depleting resources throughout the country. Underground water and rivers also decrease in volume. Natural water pools and man-made reservations usually dry up. As a result pastoralists and their livestock often face severe water shortages. NW Somalia, Puntland and Gedo Region are currently experiencing particular difficulty. In these areas, livestock are suffering from poor body condition and are in a weak nutritional state.

FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION

A total of 2,075 MT was distributed in Gedo region by CARE, between the 1st and 11th of March. A second distribution was carried out between the 22nd March and 30th March with a total distribution 2,860 MT, and a total of approximately 46,440 beneficiaries. The food basket consisted of vegetable oil, lentils and sorghum. This was in the form of emergency food distribution. CARE also distributed 317 MT of food to Hiran and 120 MT of to Bakol regions. This was in the form of food for work.

Between 3-6 April, WFP distributed 395 MT and 251 MT in Garbaharrey and Burdhubo districts of Gedo region, respectively. This was emergency relief food reaching a total of approximately 61,608 beneficiaries.

Reflecting the critical situation that many pastoralists are experiencing in NE Somalia, WFP began a food relief distribution towards the end of March continuing into the first week of April in Bari and Sanaag. In Bari 30 MT was distributed in Bossaso, 92 MT in Iskushuban, 23 MT in Kandal, 27 MT in Benderbeila and 76 MT in Gardo. In Sanag 61 MT was distributed in Dhahar and 78 MT in Badhan. On top of this WFP distributed 93 MT in March in north east Bari in the form of social support.

REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS >> P.3

Every month, the 22 FSAU Field Monitors provide in depth information on food security indicators in their area. If you would like to obtain a copy of their district report - please contact alex.williams@fsau.or.ke. The Regional highlights are a summary of this field information.

SOOL

Despite reports of a few scattered showers on 19th March in *Dhahar* district of Sanag region, food insecurity in the Sool plateau (NE of the region) has become acute, with the long dry season (called *Kaliil* locally) compounding the failed *Deyr* rains. This has produced severe shortages of water, which is being trucked into the area and sold at Sshs. 50,000 per drum or about three times the dollar-rate of this time last year. Pasture is depleted and this contributed to the death of a significant number of cattle and shoats. Shortages of milk have pushed the price of this commodity up to almost twice its normal rate. Reduced incomes for the poor, coupled with the large proportion of expenditure that is diverted into water purchases, has rendered cereal purchases inaccessible. Vulnerability has extended to the lower Nugal valley and the local consensus is that around 2,000 poor households in the region now have inadequate food intake and require support. The Hawd part of the region is now approaching this situation but this will depend on the coming *Gu* rains. Although goats have started kidding, the offspring are often destroyed to reduce stress on the mothers.

BARI REGION

Conditions continued to deteriorate this month, especially in the Kakaar-Dharor area and the Sool plateau. Animals have lost condition (many are emaciated or have died), due to depleted pasture and low access to water. Emergency water has been trucked by OTP to 97 locations throughout the region, bringing almost 2 million litres to around 40,000 pastoral households. This operation was enhanced by the arrival of the first *Gu* rains. Boreholes were maintained and repaired by OTP and UNICEF. Scattered rainfall fell in parts of Iskushuban and Bossaso, while run-off from the mountains into the Dharor valley has brought pasture regeneration. At this stage, the scattered nature of the rains has meant that patches that are starting to see recovery are likely to be depleted of pasture as herders rush in from neighbouring drier areas. Traders have replenished their grain stores following the livestock exporting season and the availability of food is said to be good. Food access remains a problem for the poor as livestock prices went down and most animals are still in very poor condition. In the urban areas, prices for food and labour are stable, although work has decreased following the end of main livestock exporting period.

SOUTH NUGAL & N MUDUG

For the time of year, this area appears to have sufficient pasture and water available for most pastoralist groups, except for the eastern and southern Addun and Deeh areas, where poor *Deyr* rains and insecurity have impacted on livestock production. Local showers were reported in Galkayo and some southern areas, as well as Burtinle district in the north. Animal condition and marketability is above normal. Goats are kidding, even in the areas affected by drought towards the south, increasing milk supply, and providing a boost to incomes, especially for the poor. The Hawd area and Burtinle are experiencing some relief as many of the pastoral groups from Sool are starting to return. Prices for livestock and milk have remained unchanged.

N-NUGAL & S- BARI

In southern Bari (Gardho district), the drought represents the most severe constraint to food security, affecting pastoral households, while in Nugal the continued insecurity in Garoowe affects the urban populations. In Gardho, the situation is quite similar to that of northern Sool region and eastern Sanag (they are all part of the Sool Plateau area). Poor *Deyr* rains and the prolonged *Jilaal* dry season are placing extreme stress on most livestock, large ruminants are said to be in very bad condition (reducing numbers of market-worthy animals) and milk production is also low – less than a quarter of what it should be for this time of year. Water has to be trucked into the area, and prices are correspondingly high (more than Sshs 45,000 per drum), diverting much needed expenditure from food and other essential purchases into water purchases. Some households in north Gardho are receiving water from OTP. There are signs of increased numbers of malnourished children. In Nugal, the situation for most rural pastoral households is normal, although the concentration of livestock in some places (parts of Iyah and even south into Galgadud) is depleting pasture rapidly. Sporadic rainfall on the 18th and 19th March as well as flash floods in the Buran and Durdur rivers has helped marginally, although the attention drawn by the rains has attracted livestock into the beneficial areas. Poor people in Garoowe and the main urban centres have suffered from job losses and the lack of income opportunities, following the recent political stand-off, that has resulted in the withdrawal of investments, the closure of all Government offices and low trade turn-overs. Many have fled to the more peaceful rural areas, where their opportunities for income are very limited.

NW & AWDAL

The onset of relatively minor rainfall (*Todob*) in the sub-coastal parts of Awdal provided relief to pastoral households in that area. Despite that, livestock condition is still poor. Elsewhere, scatterings of early *Gu* showers also helped replenish water supplies has raised the water levels for shallow wells. This has improved the availability and access to drinking water for both livestock and human populations. It has also led to farmers beginning their tillage activities. The supply of live animals to the main urban markets decreased, pushing up price towards the end of the month. Simultaneously, there has been a decline in the availability of cheaper cereals. This has resulted in weaker purchasing power for urban households, poor agro-pastoralists and returnees (those who lack significant numbers of livestock).

Zeila and Lughaya districts remain food insecure. Interventions in food aid, selective feeding and health are in progress. Nutrition status of children is being monitored.

SANAG & TOGHDEER

Starting in Togdheer around Burao, the food security situation is normal, becoming progressively worse as one moves east into Sanag and finally is critical in the area around the Sool plateau and Gebi valley. The latter are experiencing severe losses of income, which is being compounded by high prices for water that diverts expenditure away from food and other essential purchases. Water prices continued rise and the commodity is being trucked in from areas outside. Middle and better-off households have been able to move their livestock to other areas (thus increasing the stresses there) but the poor have had to remain where they are. Options for coping are very limited (gums and resins) and nutritional status among pastoralists is said to be poor. This has continued despite the erratic and scattered rains that have fallen in the Golis mountain range in the second half of the month. Livestock disease, compounded by animal malnutrition, is a major concern, as is the depletion of important rangelands. Cross-border trade (to Yemen and Egypt via Ethiopia and Djibouti) increased to a limit of 1,400 head per week. Animals are only expected to return from the Hawd once the *Gu* rains have become established. WFP have distributed food in Dhahar and Badhan districts – corresponding to the Sool Plateau and Gebi Valley respectively. UNICEF and FSAU will undertake nutrition surveys in Sanag, Sool and Bari when security situation allows access

>> P.4 REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS

BAKOL

At the end of the dry *Jilaal* period, the distance between pasture and water points is increasing in pastoral as well as in agro-pastoral areas. Milk and ghee production is seasonally decreasing. Cattle body condition is declining. Animals from the neighboring Gedo region have access to pasture in Bakool. Availability of cereals is close to normal (local cereals and yellow maize from Food For Work activities). Sorghum prices slightly increased in March (+15%, less supply coming from Bay region). Terms of trade are still favourable to the herders, one average local goat fetching about 100 kg of sorghum. Hhd stocks are minimal in Wajid and Rabbud districts (*Deyr* crop failure). (In both Bay and Bakool targeted relief interventions continue in some pockets with evidence that a number of households continue to have reduced access to food) Land preparation for the *Gu* cropping season is on-going, dry planting has started in some of the main agro-pastoral areas. Distribution of cereal seeds will be organized by FAO through InterSOS. Some localized rains were already received in Huddur district.

HIRAN

No rainfall was received throughout the region during the month of March, with the exception of parts of Jalalaqsi district which had one rainy day. Shabelle river level drastically dropped. Water availability became scarce in remote pastoral areas. Some of the pastoralists have been using water trucking for both human and livestock consumption. Free open grazing has already been depleted in most of the agro-pastoral and riverine areas. *Deyr* crop production was better in the southern part of the region than in the northern part. Maize and cowpeas are now mainly supplied to Belet-Weyn market by the most productive areas of the neighboring Middle Shabelle region. Sorghum is supplied from the southern districts to Belet-Weyn. Huge quantities of sorghum are also transiting via Belet-Weyn to the Central regions. Land preparation already started in the northern part of Hiran where the last *Deyr* crop production was relatively poor. Land preparation was not so active in the southern districts with grazing animals still occupying the fields. Terms of trade were relatively favourable to livestock keepers.

LOWER SHABELLE

This year, *Deyr* cereal production was well above average in the region (maize and sorghum combined). *Deyr* sorghum production was exceptionally good. In the rain-fed areas, most of the sorghum farmers have still stocks at household level. Some of the poor maize producers (riverine and rain-fed areas) are now relying more on purchase than on their own stocks. Maize prices, which stabilized since the end of December, started to increase significantly in March (15-20%). Dry conditions are still prevailing. No rainfall was received during the month of March, which is usual. Land preparation for the coming *Gu* season started in the rain-fed areas as well as in the irrigated areas. In some of the high potential irrigated areas, crop establishment related activities are below normal due to a combination of factors: high cost of tractor hiring, shortage of tractors, overlapping with late planted sesame, canals not fully rehabilitated or insecurity. Pasture availability is very low in the rain-fed areas and much higher along the main irrigation canals. Livestock condition is considered as normal in general. The Shabelle river level is extremely low.

GEDO

Food aid interventions are still going on. Relief food remains the main source of food in the northern districts and blanket distribution through female household heads is being undertaken by both CARE and WFP. In Belet-Hawa, Dolow and Garbaharey, the critical food insecurity and related malnutrition noted in December is likely to be under control although dependant on continued relief interventions. Food rations are shared with the remaining animals. To what extent will be determined by the results of the recent 'post-distribution survey' carried out by FSAU and CARE in Luuq district. Early rains were received in northern Gedo (about 20 mm during the last dekad of March). For the first time in many months, small quantities of sorghum from Bay have been seen in Gedo cereal markets. Some of the main grazing areas have received good rainfall. Water availability is slightly better than during the previous month whereas pasture conditions have not improved yet. No rainfall occurred in the surroundings of Belet-Hawa and El Waq only received showers. Limited livestock movements are now taking place within the region. In Bardera, animals are coming back from the neighboring regions (mainly camels). Most of the animals are still out of the region waiting for the effective start of the *Gu* rains. The Dawa river is still dry.

BAY

Early rains were received during the last dekad of March, particularly in the eastern part of Baidoa district (14 mm in Baidoa town) and in parts of Dinsor district. Land preparation for the next *Gu* season is on-going. Early planting has been observed in some areas. This resulted in better agricultural job opportunities for poor households. The price of staple food commodities has gradually increased for the last 2 months. Cereal traders are responding to the high demand for sorghum from Mogadishu. Although sorghum prices have almost doubled since the beginning of the year, they are still relatively low. Seasonal livestock movement started with the animals moving out of the farming areas (especially where early rains have been received). In the Offlow zone bordering Baidoa and Q/Dheere districts, clan fighting resulted in significant asset losses for a limited number of villages. Specific emergency assistance is required.

JUBA VALLEY

The overall food security situation is normal. The impact of the *Jilaal* is however being felt among cattle pastoralists whose livestock have started to loose weight due to the poor pasture condition around water points and where livestock concentration is high. Commodity prices remains high in all markets. However, the availability of a wide range of income opportunities and improved livestock prices (including camel) offsets any food security problem. Water remains the biggest problem in Hagar.

COWPEA BELT

Water availability is declining for both human and livestock consumption. Availability of water is still relatively good at the coastal shallow wells while prices at the inland water sources continue to rise sharply (boreholes and reservoirs). As it usually happens during the *Jilaal* and after the peak of the *Haj* season, animal body condition deteriorates and livestock production and selling decline. In spite of the last good *Deyr* crop harvest in the neighboring Hiran and Middle Shabelle regions, cereal prices are gradually increasing during this *Jilaal* period. One liter of camel's milk is now equivalent to one kg of sorghum (about 4,000 Ssh). Collection of bush product is still one of the most common coping strategies for the poor households, but the remuneration is generally very low (only 1,000 Ssh for one firewood bundle). Unskilled daily labour rates are relatively high (20,000 Ssh/day), but labour opportunities are very scarce.

MIDDLE SHABELLE

No rainfall was received during the month of March. Land preparation for the *Gu* cereal cropping season has already started. Harvesting and threshing of sesame is on-going (good yields are expected). At the end of this dry *Jilaal* season, poor pasture conditions are mostly affecting cattle. More animals moved to riverine areas in search of better grazing opportunities. Cattle milk production is decreasing. Browsing opportunities for shoats and camels are still plentiful (trees and shrubs). Despite the prevailing dry weather, livestock body condition remains good in general. Good food availability and accessibility in the region (maize, sorghum and cowpea) and nutritional status of young children appears relatively good. There is a continuous flow of food commodities from Middle Shabelle to Mogadishu and the Central regions. Local cereal prices have slightly increased in March (about 2,000 Ssh/kg for maize and 1,500 Ssh/kg for sorghum). Milk prices are also increasing (+25% compared to last month). In March, one local quality goat almost fetched 4 bags of sorghum (50 kg/bag). Unskilled labor rates stabilized at about 9-10 kg of cereal per day. River levels are seasonally low.