

FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Localized rainfall reported in parts of north and central regions during late March and early April is encouraging but it is still too early to be indicative of good *Gu* rains.
- Sool Plateau, North Nugal and South Bari, and parts of North Mudug and South Nugal remain in a state of humanitarian emergency. In some areas destitute pastoralists have congregated steadily to form camps in villages, along roads, and at permanent water points in Sool and Nugal. Water shortages, depleted pastures and exorbitant water prices still affect much of the region. See Regional highlights on page 3.
- In response to localized rainfall, better off pastoralists have begun to move with their livestock in search of improved pasture and water. See Table 1 below of rainfall by area and related livestock movements.
- Purchasing power of the poor in Bakol, Hiran, and Bay is significantly below normal as compared to the three year average. Unskilled laborers, dependent on sorghum purchases to meet their staple food needs have reduced purchasing power as compared to 3-year average, see page 2.

GU RAINS COMMENCE SPORADICALLY IN NORTH AND CENTRAL SOMALIA

Figure 1 : Total Precipitation (mm) 1st Dekad April 2004

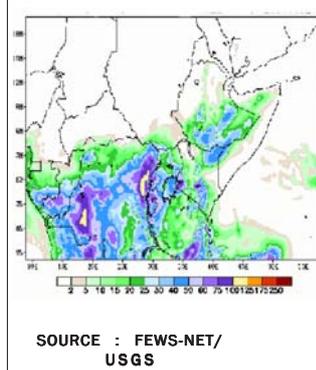
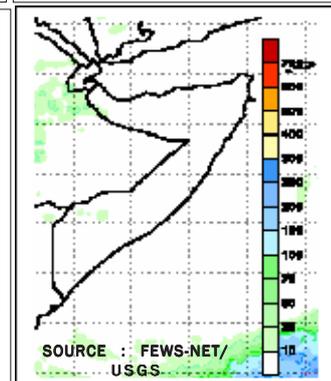


Figure 2 : Total Precipitation (mm) for March 2004



The harsh *Jilaal* season prevailed throughout most of Somalia in March (see Figure 1) except for localized rainfall reported in parts of Awdal, Galbeed, Sool and Nugal regions, see Table 1. In the first *dekad* of April a wider coverage of light to moderate rainfall was reported from the field in north and central regions.

Table 1 : Overview of Recent Rainfall and Livestock Movements in North and Central Regions (Up to First Week of April)

Region	Rainfall	Start Date	Livestock Movement
Galbeed and Awdal	Both regions received substantial amounts of rainfall but earlier than usual.	Rains began on 20 March in Awdal and western parts of Galbeed which is earlier than usual. Awdal received three days of rain in the third week of March. Both regions received rain between 28-31/03/04 and more rain received between 2-4/03/04	Livestock from <i>Hawd</i> of Hargeisa started to return from coastal areas to their home areas. Other pastoralists from these two regions are on their permanent settlements.
Togdheer	All drought affected areas received moderate rainfall.	Togdheer regions and the area along the border received moderate to heavy rains at the end of March.	Those livestock that had moved early to highland areas started to move towards the plains and rained areas.
Bari	Iskushuban district received moderate rains although it is not a potential grazing area. Some areas of Qardo district such as Waiye also received rains.	Rains fell in the first few days of April.	Livestock from Sool Plateau of Sanaag remain stuck in Benderbeyla district, their animals are emaciated and unable to walk and the pastoralists have lost pack animals. Water trucking is in progress
Sool	In Taleh district and Sarmanyoo village and its environs received two days of rains.	During the third week of March (<i>Todob</i>) rains were reported in this area.	These rains attracted livestock from Sool Plateau of Sanaag. Overgrazing in areas receiving some rains expected due to overstocking.
Nugal	Some rains were reported in Sool of southern Bari and reached 76 Km North of Qardho.	Rains started third week of March. Light rains were also reported in north western <i>Hawd</i> of Burtinle and in adjoining areas along Ethiopian border.	Livestock started to move to the rained areas to satisfy their need for water which is their main problem.
Sanaag	Rains fell in Carmale, Ballibusle and Hadaftimo villages.	Rains fell in the third week of March and first days of April.	Livestock movements were observed towards the rains areas.
Mudug	Rains were received around Galkayo town.	Rains fell in the first few days of April	Livestock are benefitting from the rain water.
Galgadud	Light rains were received around Dharab/Mareb, Guricel and Balanballe districts.	Rains fell in the first week of April	Livestock started to move to the rained areas in search of pasture and water.

FSAU's Key Funding Agencies

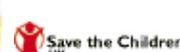
European Commission



United States Agency for International Development



FSAU's Key Technical Partners



MARKET PRICES AND TERMS OF TRADE

Sorghum prices started to increase in March, especially in Baidoa, Bardera, Huddur and Beletweyne markets, as a result of the poor Deyr 2003/4 harvest in the sorghum belt regions.

In Baidoa market sorghum prices increased by 10% from last month, in Huddur 14 %, and in Beletweyne 6 %. The current terms of trade (TOT), as defined as the amount of sorghum (kg) one can purchase from one day's wages, is below average in most markets, except Bardera market. Unskilled workers in Beletweyne and Huddur had the lowest terms of trade, about 7 and 6 kilogram, respectively for one day's work, while Bardera and Baidoa is around 18 kilogram.

Terms of trade in Huddur market have seen the most severe deterioration as compared to the average, at 25 % below the average, followed by Beletweyne at 15 % and Baidoa at 14 % (see Figure 3 and Figure 4 below). Bardera's is the only market where TOT has shown an increase over the average.

Figure 3 :

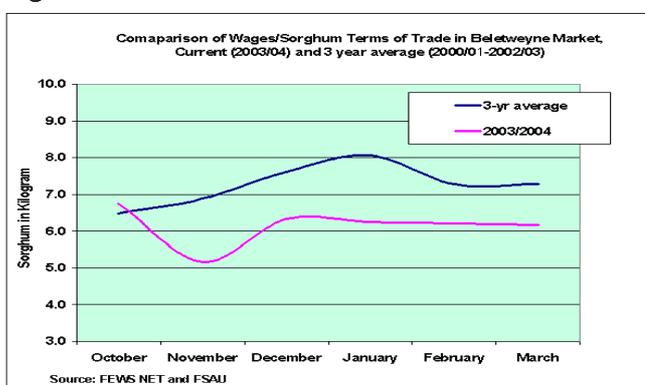
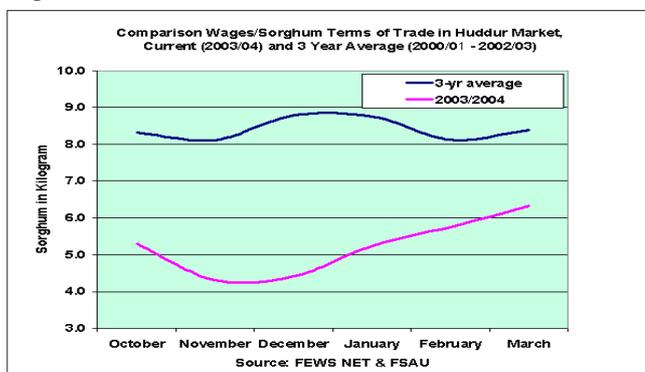


Figure 4:



FOOD RELIEF DISTRIBUTION FIGURES

- In March, CARE carried out food for work activities in southern Somalia, distributing 600 MT of food in Hiran to 3,244 beneficiaries, 180 MT in Middle Shabelle to 972 beneficiaries, 240 MT in Bakol to 1,296 beneficiaries and 540 MT in Bay to 2,916 beneficiaries. A total of 2,190 MT was also provided through general free distributions in Gedo Region to 4,427 beneficiaries as free food distribution, of this 843 MT went to Luuq, 416 MT to Dolow, 576 MT to Belet Hawa, and 355 MT to El Waq.

- UNICEF undertook an emergency distribution of plastic sheeting, blankets and collapsible 20 litre jerry cans in Mandere village 10 km from Jowhar which had been destroyed by a fire. A total of 650 households were directly assisted. UNICEF is continuing to monitor the situation. The Middle Shabelle highlight on page 4 has more details.

- Implementing agencies were unable to provide updates of interventions carried out in the country during March.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NUTRITION UPDATE

In Huddur District of Bakol Region, the nutrition situation remains one of concern. Since August 2003, data from the MSF-Belgium managed therapeutic feeding centre indicates an increasing trend of malnutrition. Since 2003, the Huddur Mother and Child Health Centre has also persistently reported a high proportion (over 35%) of malnourished children among those attending the MCH. Various short and long term interventions addressing food security, health and water continue in this region.

In January 2004, FSAU conducted a seasonal dietary diversity study in agro-pastoral areas of Dinsor District in Southern Somalia and the pastoral areas of Dangorayo District in the North. Preliminary findings indicate a strong relationships between malnutrition, diversity of diet and frequency of consumption. Overall, dietary diversity at household level was associated with the nutritional status of under-five year old children. Almost 30% of children from households consuming two or less food groups were malnourished as compared to 10% of children from households consuming four or more food groups. Analysis of these results is ongoing and further studies are planned in other areas in the coming months as part of a series of seasonal dietary diversity assessments.

A recent evaluation of the nutrition and food security projects in Bakol and Gedo Regions highlighted two issues that require more attention. One is night blindness as reported in some agro-pastoralist communities in Bakol and the possibility that this could be related to limited consumption of milk or ghee due to insufficient access and sale of the produce. The second issue is the possible link between kwashiorkor and liver damage to the consumption of moldy sorghum. Poor underground storage conditions contaminate sorghum with aflatoxins.

LIVESTOCK EXPORT ANALYSIS

The FSAU field monitor in Bossaso reports that the total number of livestock exported through Bossaso reduced during March, due to a reduced demand from the Gulf States. In Berbera, the total number of livestock exported also declined, for shoats quite significantly by 29% while cattle and camel exports from Berbera increased slightly by 14% and 12% respectively.

Table 2 : Livestock Exports for March 2004

Bossaso*	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Camel	514	99	52	175
Cattle	3,953	7,944	5,041	11,842
Shoats	14,890	89,167	18,014	74,257
Sub-total Bossaso	119,357	197,210	123,107	86,274
Berbera**				
Camel	1,507	0	1,108	1,250
Cattle	13,967	14,972	9,435	10,782
Shoats	76,720	177,376	35,573	25,207
Sub-total Berbera	92,188	192,168	46,026	37,239
Grand Total	211,545	389,378	169,133	123,513

*Bossaso Port Authority

**Berbera Port Authority

Regional Highlights From The North Of Somalia

SOOL REGION

Sool plateau FEZ remains in a state of humanitarian emergency. The shortage of water is alarming and costly trucked water is the sole means to have access to drinking water for both human and livestock. Pasture available is extremely limited and has reached its lowest level through out the traditional grazing areas. As a result of these conditions, livestock are weak, malnourished, and there have been significant deaths within the herds. Given the overwhelming loss of livestock conditions, market prices have fallen significantly. The magnitude of the problem in the plateau has gone beyond the traditional coping mechanisms of the pastoralists. People have resorted to indiscriminate, large scale charcoal burning which promises to result in environmental damage that will affect long term rangeland productive potentials. There has been a fresh outflow of poor pastoral households flocking as destitute into urban centres. If the *Gu* rains do not start within the first two weeks of April, it is likely that the humanitarian crisis could worsen. In the Nugal Valley FEZ livestock are severely malnourished and related deaths is on the increase for all species. Destitute families have steadily congregated to form shanty settlements in villages, water points and towns within the three districts of Taleh, Huddun and Lasanod.

AWDAL AND NORTH WEST

During March, there was some very localized rain in the coastal and sub-coastal belt around Berbera, which improved pasture, browse and water and kept the food security situation normal. Some pastoralists who had migrated into this area started to move out before it became too hot and because some rain had already been received in their home areas, i.e. the highland zone agro pastoral areas and Region V. Unusual and off season rains were received in agro pastoral areas during the middle of March, which elders considered to be early. Land preparation has commenced and land clearing of maize and sorghum stalks in fields of last cropping season is still ongoing. Livestock body condition and production is good. In the highland pastoral zone the situation is good as this area also benefited from the mid March rains and the livestock body condition and production is normal. In the *Hawd* pastoral zone, most of the pastoralists had moved out and by March only the poor families remained in this hot and dry area. Water is not a problem due to the unusual amounts of rain which were received in January 2004. Camels, however, that have been left behind and did not move out are weak due to a reduced amount of pasture and browse. Charcoal production and sales were observed as a major coping mechanism during March in these two regions.

BARI

The food security situation in the Sool FEZ of Bari Region (Iskushuban and Bender Beila districts) has steadily deteriorated with the progression of the long dry season. About 40% of the pastoralists have returned to grazing areas close to permanent water points, while the remaining 60% have opted to graze their herds in pasture lands between the sub coastal plains and inland areas where there is some pasture but little water. Some in-migrated pastoralists from Sanag and Nugal can not return to their original home areas, because they have no pack camels left and they cannot afford to hire transportation trucks. Water prices have risen to the the highest level in 'living' memory. A timely arrival of *Gu* rains will be critical to ensure that pastoral livelihoods are not further depleted. The food security situation in the Dharoor FEZ (Bossaso and Iskushuban Districts) is normal. However, the situation of the immobile pastoral communities in Ur Aleed eco-zone still remains of concern and many of the pastoralists in this community are at risk of total destitution if the *Gu* rains fail. In general the food security situation of the coastal and urban communities in Bari region is stable.

NORTH MUDUG AND SOUTH NUGAL

The food security situation in this region is deteriorating, particularly in the eastern *Hawd* of Burtinle and north and central parts of Jariban and Galkayo, where rains have failed over several consecutive season and most of the pastoralists have already out-migrated to the southeast or to western *Hawd* in search of better pastures. Poor households have lost most of their livestock and remain in the villages with permanent water, while some of the household members have migrated to main towns and villages. For those who have remained behind, the situation is critical. Most have very few shoats remaining, receive little kinship support, and are faced with water prices that are now 5 to 6 times higher than normal and cereal prices which have increased by 10-15%. These poor households are increasingly unable to cope and are moving to towns and along tarmac roads forming destitute camps, e.g. Mergaga and near Ba'adweyn

The western parts of the *Hawd* of Goldogob, Galkayo and Burtinle remain normal, though overgrazing has depleted pastures. Some of the in-migrated pastoralists with stronger animals are migrating back home where there are some *berkeds* with water. The price of livestock has decreased. Tension is increasing in Goldogob as a result of the conflict in neighboring Galgadud Region and the in-migration of pastoralist households from the conflict zone.

NORTH NUGAL AND SOUTH BARI

In Lower Nugal, an area currently characterized as a humanitarian emergency, the urban community with pastoralist relatives is carrying the burden of assisting distressed pastoralists. Livestock with improved body condition have been observed in the area; these animals are likely to have returned from coastal areas or Region V of Ethiopia, gambling on the arrival of the *Gu* rains. In the Eastern *Hawd* and Eastern Sool, all the *berkeds* are empty and most of the pack camels have died. The most affluent pastoralists, and particularly those with urban associations, have been taking their animals to distant grazing areas where water is delivered to a specific location. The less affluent pastoralists have had greater livestock losses and have stayed close to permanent water points, where pasture is already depleted. Unless water trucking is started immediately in this area, pastoralists will become even more impoverished. The districts of Gardo, Eil and Dangoroyo continue to suffer from pasture depletion and environmental degradation. Poor pastoralists stranded in this area (who originated from Lower Nugal, Eastern Sool Plateau and Eastern *Hawd*) are also disadvantaged by being far away from their community connections and unable to get loans and credit for expensive water. Currently OCHA, Diakonia and UNHCR are assisting with water trucking to alleviate the situation in this region.

TOGDHEER AND SANAAG

During the last week of March, Golis highlands of Togdheer and Sanaag received localized rains, improving water supplies. Likewise some areas of Togdheer and along the border with Ethiopia received rains. Large numbers of livestock have begun to move into these areas expecting to benefit from the water and the regeneration of pasture. In the last *dekad* of March, Horn Relief distributed subsidized fuel to water tankers to help reduce the costs and buffer pastoralists against rapidly increasing water prices. Water prices have decreased by 50% in the pastoral sites of Sool plateau and 95% of the pastoralists have benefited from subsidized trucked water. Livestock sales increased because pastoralists were selling more animals to bridge the imbalance between their income and consumption of food and water, with breeding animals being sold in some cases – a sign of real desperation. Demand for local quality and export animals is low; one export shoat can fetch 50 kg of rice in the rural markets, while the daily unskilled labor wage fetches 5 kg of rice.

Regional Highlights From Southern Somalia

BAKOL

The overall food security situation for all livelihoods (pastoral and agro-pastoral) is of concern in the region. Agro-pastoralists report that lack of seed stocks are of great concern due to the last *Gu* crop failure. The water situation is deteriorating in the region. In Elberde the situation is critical and the photo below shows how only one shallow well is serving Elberde town and the surrounding area.



MIDDLE SHABELLE

Dry, hot and dusty weather has prevailed with the normal *Jilaa* season continuing. The sesame crop harvest is almost complete and *Gu* land preparation has begun in both irrigation and rain-fed areas. The river level is very low and stagnant. Maize and sorghum prices have increased by 13 percent and 17 percent respectively compared to last month due to low supply and high demand from the other regions. Overall, household cereal stocks in the irrigated areas remain normal. Pasture and grazing are below normal and most of the cattle have moved to riverine areas for water and grazing while sheep have moved to the coastal plains, where water from shallow wells is available. Camel and goats are concentrated near boreholes in the inland areas. Labor opportunities are scarce. A major fire destroyed the entire village of Mandera (located 15 km south of Jowhar town) on March 15, making homeless an estimated 650 households. The fire destroyed other assets, including nine grinding mill machines and all underground food storage pits.

JUBA VALLEY

No rains were received during the month of March. The food and nutritional status of the western Juba riverine community continues to be of immediate concern due to the poor food intake and the increasing disease incidence. Important coping options used by this group to compensate for food gaps, i.e. fish and wild food consumption, are scarce. Maize prices increased 20% during the month, with the highest increases in Kismayo and Badade. Ago-pastoralists are better off as livestock condition is generally considered to be normal with no disease outbreaks reported. Decreased availability of and access to pasture and grazing was observed around water points and permanent sources; in the inland scarce water areas, pasture conditions were relatively normal. Prices for camel and cattle are reported to be normal, but shoaat prices declined as demand decreased from Kismayo, the main market. The terms of trade (TOT) are well below average (a shoaat can fetch only a bag of maize and a litre of milk trades for one kg of maize).

LOWER SHABELLE

The usual dry weather (*Jilaa*) prevails in the region. Most middle and better off households have enough cereal stocks, except for households located along the eastern riversides and in flood affected areas of Kurtun Warey district. Households in the rain fed maize areas of Afgoi and along the coastal areas extending from Merka through Brava are still remaining with cereal shortfalls. Most households, however, mainly derive their calorific daily intake from expanding their coping options, such as labor migration within the region. Maize prices increased by 10-12 percent compare to last month due to the presence of a large number of herders in the region and imposition of high taxation. The river bed is almost dry and the little water that is remaining in the river has turned green due to contamination and is unfit for human and livestock consumption. High priced water trucking has already commenced in most parts of the rain dependent areas. Cattle are still reliant on purchased fallow fields, crop stocks and sesame residues for fodder, while browsing conditions for camel and shoats are normal.

GEDO

The region remained extremely hot with no reports of rainfall during the month. In the northern parts of the region, the Dawa pastoralists encountered difficulties accessing water and pasture, with exception of good pasture found in the Humbale Highland areas. The predominate livestock of the region, shoats, require more watering intervals as the *Jilaa* continues and are therefore now concentrated around Juba riverine areas. The southern inland pastoralists are relatively in a better position as they have access to enough pasture and water throughout the rest of the region. Livestock body condition, terms of trade and marketability remain satisfactory and no disease outbreaks have been observed. The volume of the livestock sales decreased following the depreciation of the dollar and the reluctance of local traders to absorb the required supply. This is placing some stress on the pastoralists who rely on livestock sales to exchange for other items required by the family at this time.

BAY

Typical dry and hot *Jilaa* conditions prevail. The water situation for Baidoa and Buk-Hakaba towns is deteriorating and in the Ufuraw area (Kansahdere) and Tugugarhosle area (Dinsor) water catchments have dried up due to heavy use by humans and livestock. Pasture and grazing conditions are normal for the time of year. Land preparation activities have started in most areas, increasing job opportunities for poor households. Food availability and access are normal. Tension remains in Baidoa and civil insecurity is undermining food security due to the displacement of people from Baidoa to Wajid (Bakol), and the limited accessibility and mobility of food within the region and between neighboring regions.

HIRAN

The food security situation of agro-pastoralists remains stressed. In the rain fed areas, where the majority of the agro-pastoralists live, *Deyr* crop production completely failed. The condition of cattle condition, the main asset of agro-pastoralists, continues to deteriorate as result of the growing hardships of the *Jilaa*. Cereal is available in the markets, but supplies are below normal and prices are 40% higher than normal. The volume of cereal supplied from Ethiopia and neighboring regions is normal, however, cereals coming from Bay Region, which is the main market shed for Hiran Region, has been reduced due to insecurity, abnormal roadblocks and high taxation. Market purchases provide most of the food for the agro-pastoral at this time, but income is currently limited due to constraints on employment and sales of livestock and livestock products. The poor and very poor urban dwellers are also vulnerable due to market fluctuations, poor purchasing power and limited income earning options. The food security situation of the other food economy groups is near normal. River water is stagnant, contaminated and unfit for human consumption.

GALGADUD

People in northeastern Abudwaq, southwestern and eastern parts of Adaado, east of Addun, and IDPs in south and north El-bur are facing increasing food insecurity. Income and food sources are reduced due to a decline in livestock production and poor livestock condition. These areas have been affected by long periods of drought, no *Deyr* rains and insecurity. Water scarcity is a problem in Galgadud Region, where the price of water is two to four times above normal, depending on distance from the water points. There is increased water trucking and all main boreholes are being utilized both night and day. Adubwaq and Adaado are the most affected by the water scarcity. Livestock condition is deteriorating due to the dry harsh period of *Jilaa*. There are reports of cattle mortality in Ballicad and Godane areas 18 km north of Adudwaq. The price of cereal in east Addun is high due to insecurity and poor infrastructure.

COWPEA

The region has experienced two years of poor rains, leading to water shortages and an increase in water prices, mainly due to drying of boreholes and *berkeds*. The hardest hit villages are Cali-yabal, Haji Iman in Elder District; Caga-cade, and Ris villages in Galhareri; Dhalwo, Jawle, Dinco and Warshubo in Hara dhere District; and Gawan, Xabal Xaji and Xaaro villages in Hobyo District. Livestock body condition has steadily been deteriorating, with increased livestock deaths reported. Many of the livestock were too weak to travel to the coastal areas where rains occurred. Livestock sales, bush product sales, employment, and kinship support are low because of the harsh dry season. Crop production has also been affected by two consecutive years of poor rains. The next harvest does not start until July.