

EDITORIAL

The food security situation in Somalia remains precarious despite a good *Deyr* season. With such a large percentage of livelihoods being dependant on livestock, remittances, and employment this may not surprise those who regularly follow the FSAU publications. The forecast for the *Gu* rains is favourable but the relief this could bring remains at least four months away and this represents the most critical period for many of the poor. The over-stretched resources of northern Gedo have been reported for many months as has the impact of the restricted livestock export trade to Saudi Arabian states. Any deterioration in security or other factors effecting access to trade, markets, and migration will further weaken the vulnerable groups identified in this report.

FSAU ACTIVITIES

***ASSESSMENT OF HOUSEHOLD FOOD ACCESS AND UTILISATION IN LUUQ DISTRICT, GEDO REGION (18 March-7 April).** As the title suggests, this interagency assessment will go beyond traditional post distribution assessments and aims to improve the current understanding of food security at household level. With CARE food aid distribution now redesigned to target all women with families in the district, food insecurity should be more effectively addressed. It is hoped that the assessment will guide ongoing programming decisions for those involved in both general and selective feeding programmes, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in the currently reported high numbers of malnourished children in the district.

*** AWDAL ASSESSMENT :** FSAU is intending to carry out a food security assessment in this region during the last week of April .

*** CENTRAL PROVINCES (JOINT ASSESSMENT MISSION)** Michele Nori, (michele.nori@fsau.or.ke) the FSAU Pastoral Livelihoods Analyst is co-ordinating a mission to the central provinces of Somalia. This will commence as soon as security clearance is given.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

AREAS OF VULNERABILITY FOLLOWING ABOVE AVERAGE DEYR HARVEST.

The total production of the *Deyr* harvest was slightly above average. This will alleviate some of the food security 'shocks' that the country has recently experienced. However, certain areas did suffer serious shortfalls, such as Gedo and are unlikely to recover before the next *Gu* harvest. In Bay and Bakol, some districts did not benefit from *Deyr* rains and even in those areas which did receive a good harvest, there are vulnerable groups of people that remain with a substantial food deficit. (Up to 50% in the next few months.) Middle and Lower Juba are also a cause for concern, particularly around Afmadow and Hagar due to poor maize production. In the short term food aid continues to be essential to protect both lives and livelihoods. (For more detailed analysis on the *Deyr* harvest see p2)

GEDO : FSAU estimates that 56,700 beneficiary households need about 2,840 MT per month of food aid in this region, while carefully targeted interventions in Bardhera to a small proportion of households would also be necessary once security improves. If conditions in the forthcoming *Gu* season allow it, interventions should not continue much after the end of June.

BAY AND BAKOL: The two districts of Berdale in Bay and Rabdhure in Bakol also received very poor harvests, while grazing did not fully recover either. These two districts should be targeted for general distribution.

EASTERN SANAG/SOOL PLATEAU: The situation (reported in last month's issue) is continuing to deteriorate. Animals are reported to be dying in large numbers while meagre incomes are diverted for water. Interventions are in the process of being assessed by NPA and Horn Relief. Food aid is recommended for 7,500 vulnerable households in Sanag, Taleh district of Sool and Bari.

AWDAL : The critical situation in coastal Awdal, where the main Hays rains failed for the third time in a row, has been partially buffered by UNICEF/Coopi interventions addressing nutritional and health related problems. Constraints to local livelihoods are nevertheless still reported, especially among pastoral households. There continues to be highly abnormal migration of animals to the sub-coastal belt, exceeding local carrying capacity and increasing the likelihood of livestock disease outbreaks. Consumption patterns are worsening because of poor milk production. There is out-migration of lactating animals and declining terms of trade. Local cheap cereal supply is declining, trade routes with Djibouti are still limited as well as livestock export options declining after the Haji peak . (See p4)

CLIMATE OUTLOOK FOR SOMALIA : The ninth Climate Outlook Forum held in Kenya during February 2002 has predicted near normal to above normal rainfall for most parts of Somalia during the months March to May 2002. However below normal rainfall is expected over the south-eastern coast of Somalia. For more details and analysis on the forum's predictions see p4.

Highlights from FSAU 'Nutrition Update'

In addition to an update on activities and interventions in Gedo Region, the February 'Nutrition Update' focussed on the latest reports on nutrition and related issues in Bay and Bakool. This information provides a relevant context for the analysis of the *deyr* crop harvest assessment presented in this issue. Both February and March 'Nutrition Up-

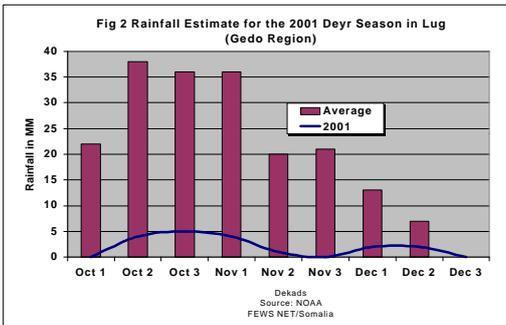
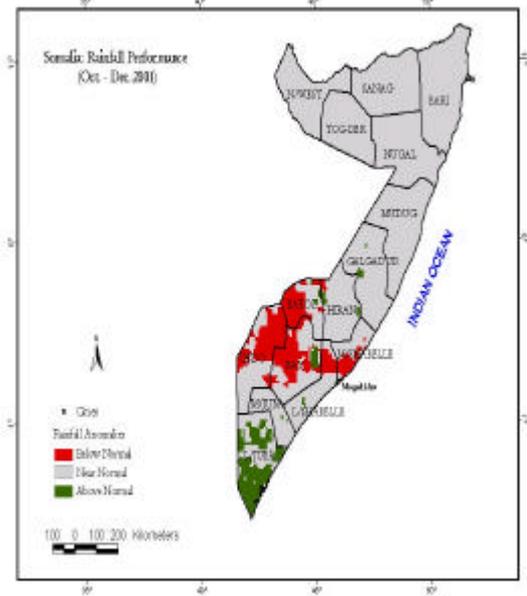
dates' also present special reports on those returning to Somaliland from refugee camps in Ethiopia along with information from areas inside the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders.

For copies of current and previous 'Nutrition Updates' and other information related to nutrition in Somalia, contact noreen.prendiville@fsau.or.ke

SUMMARY OF THE DEYR 2001 DEYR RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

Normally food security in Somalia is closely linked to the quality of the rain seasons. The rains will impact the productivity of both crops and livestock, which in turn provide households with their main source of food and income. FSAU and FEWS NET/Somalia carefully monitored rainfall conditions during the *deyr* 2001/02 season. Figure 1 (rainfall estimate from satellite imagery) compares the 2001 *deyr* season rainfall with the *deyr* rainfall historical average. Rainfall levels in most of the country were near normal, except Gedo and pockets of Bakool, Hiran, Bay and Middle Juba. In these areas and as can be seen in Figure 2 (Gedo Region), rainfall was not always consistent or well distributed. Only Lower Juba and parts of Middle Juba received above normal rainfall during the 2001 *deyr* season.

Figure 1. Source : FEWS



Despite local variations, satellite derived rainfall estimates largely confirmed the field observations during the season. Where the *deyr* rainfall distribution was near normal, it improved pasture and crops and replenished water reservoirs for livestock. The below normal *deyr* rainfall and distribution, particularly in Gedo which is suffering from three years of successive drought, has failed to replenish pasture and grazing for pastoralists.

SUMMARY OF FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH SOMALIA AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DEYR HARVEST

The total estimated cereal production of the *Deyr* 2001/02 is much higher when compared to the production of last year (+ 47%). It is also the highest production level reached during the post-war period (+76% when compared to the 1993-2000 average).

Deyr 01/02 cereal production in southern Somalia compared to the two previous years :

Deyr	Sorghum	Maize	Total
1999-2000	46,600	61,600	108,200
2000-2001	46,600	49,900	95,900
2001-2002	83,150	57,400	140,550

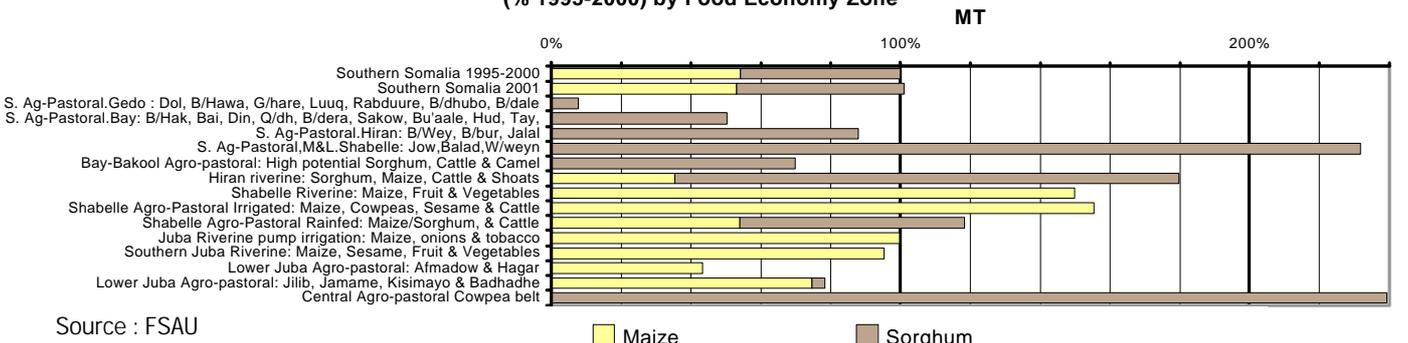
Figure 3 below shows the 2001 production for both seasons and the two main cereals, sorghum and maize. This is expressed as a percentage of the average production from 1995-2000. (see 100% line average) This year's total production is slightly more than average (see the first two bars of Figure 3). This is expected to alleviate some of the food security 'shocks' that the country has experienced. However, those areas that have suffered serious shortfalls (such as Gedo) are unlikely to recover before the next *Gu* harvest.

due more to the lack of pasture and grazing for livestock keepers (who comprise between half to three quarters of the population), than it is due to poor agricultural production. A smaller proportion of households in Gedo practice rain-fed farming in addition to livestock husbandry. The poor rains devastated their crops in both *Gu* and *Deyr* seasons, giving them a total production of less than 10% of the 1995-2000 average (see the third bar in figure 3 below). These agro-pastoral groups, together with the pastoral groups, face a deficit average –for the whole cropping year (the twelve month period from *Gu* 2001 to *Gu* 2002) of 40% of food energy needs, if they do not receive food aid. During the remainder of the year – from now until the *Gu* 2002 harvest -- the deficit is likely to top 70% for the poorest households. For these groups the continuation of food aid is strongly recommended to protect both lives and

NORTH GEDO

Without doubt, the area experiencing the worst food crisis in Somalia today is north Gedo, comprising the five districts, **Dolow, Belet Hawa, Luuq, Garbaharey and Burdhubo**. The crisis is

FIGURE 3- 2001 Gu and Deyr Sorghum and Maize Production compared to average (% 1995-2000) by Food Economy Zone



Source : FSAU

livelihoods. FSAU therefore wholly supports WFP's distributions as well as CARE's revised plan to provide general free-food distributions in the four districts in which they operate. Even with free food distributions, the poor, although not facing an average (over 12 months) deficit, may still have a small deficit over the next few months. The size and extent of this deficit will depend on the proportion of their food ration that actually gets consumed by the household members. In order to understand this, CARE and FSAU are jointly conducting a post-distribution survey in Luuq district that is designed to find out which households received and did not receive food aid and for those that did, how it was utilised. Food aid will need to be delivered until July, assuming that the next *Gu* rains are normal (and that the livestock return and normal cropping takes place).

The Riverine Farmers : (estimated at 10% of the five districts' population) managed to attain harvest levels that were very close to the 1995-2000 average. High input costs, insecurity (which restricts investment) and low product prices discouraged them from producing more (it is reported that many farmers found it more profitable to sell plant stalks for fodder rather than waiting for grain production). Nevertheless, surpluses from the Riverine groups would not have helped the others, who are facing an *access* problem. (i.e. limited ability to access staple grains through normal means such as purchase or exchange).

Two things are worth noting with regard to Bay and Bakol: first, that there are parts of Bay and Bakol that did not benefit from the *Deyr* rains and second, that even in the parts that did obtain a good *Deyr* harvest, there are groups that remain with a substantial deficit (15-30% over the whole year and up to 50% over the next few months).

The areas that did not benefit from the increased production in Bay and Bakol are most of **Berdale district in Bay region and Rabdhure district**, especially the agro-pastoral 'high potential' farming area around **Madaytu**, in Bakol region. From a food security point of view, these areas can be considered as the same as their neighbouring districts in north Gedo and will require substantial inputs of food aid (a general free-food ration would need to be delivered). The food aid will need to be delivered until July 2002, assuming that the next *Gu* season is normal.

Analysis shows that there is still an overall average deficit of 15-30% among the 'very poor' wealth group who comprise 5-20% of the population in the 'recovered' parts of Bay and Bakol. A small group of the 'poor' will also have a small deficit. Furthermore, as the this deficit tends to be concentrated during the period between now and the next *Gu* harvest, we could expect to see them facing a shortage of around 20% in energy needs. Hence, the High Potential Agro-pastoral areas of Bay, Bakol and Bardhera will need a well-targeted intervention to supply at least half of food needs to roughly 25% of the population.

BAY AND BAKOL REGIONS

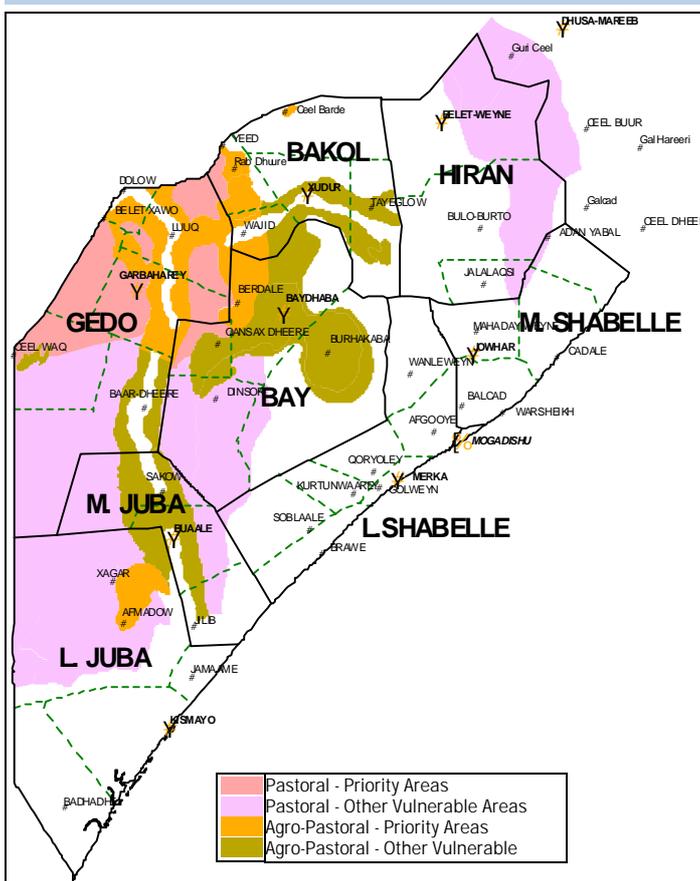
The very poor *Gu* harvest in Bay and Bakol regions, as well as in south Gedo, raised concern that food shortages would be acute in most of south Somalia this year. However, the good *Deyr* crop performance has, to a large extent, relieved the situation in many of the 'high potential' agro-pastoral areas, although the rainfall was very unevenly distributed.

MIDDLE AND LOWER JUBA

These areas have become cause for increasing concern, especially the area around **Afmadow and Hagar** an agro-pastoral zone where maize is the chief cereal crop. Erratic and unevenly distributed rainfall, coupled with the drying up of the *dhesheks*, resulted in very poor production. With a crop problem specification of 20% of the level in 1998, a high animal disease rate, competition over grazing in the pastoral areas and very few trained health and nutrition surveillance sites, food security is expected to be severely weakened. Consequently, FSAU are planning to carry out a rapid assessment in the area, and would encourage other agencies to investigate the possibilities for interventions, especially in health, water and sanitation, veterinary and in food aid.

Nearer the coast and along the river the production achieved levels of 80-100% of the 1995-2000 average. This should help food access and availability but poor infrastructure, insecurity and the lack of health facilities will compromise food security as well.

DEYR 2002 VULNERABILITY MAP FOR SOUTHERN SOMALIA



MIDDLE AND LOWER SHABELLE

The Central Agro-pastoral Cowpea belt and the Southern agro-pastoral group in Middle and Lower Shabelle both achieved relatively high production levels this year, although the former produces a small quantity overall. Both profited by growing their usual crop, sorghum, which survived the patchy rains later on in the season better than maize does. Other good performing zones were the Hiran Riverine zone (180% of Post War Average) as well as the two food economy zones that use irrigation in Lower Shabelle – the Shabelle Riverine zone (150% of PWA) and the Shabelle Agro-pastoral Irrigated zone (>150% of PWA). The Shabelle Agro-pastoral Rainfed zone was rescued by the farmers' switch from maize to sorghum, which enabled their crops to survive the moisture stresses brought on later in the season by erratic rains. Other crops and numerous trading and exchange possibilities exist along the Shabelle River, while from Kurtenwarey up to Jalalaqsi there is also reasonable access to health facilities with trained staff, so food security prospects for these groups are reasonably good. The two biggest threats to this are increased insecurity and banditry as well as influxes of displaced or impoverished households from other areas.

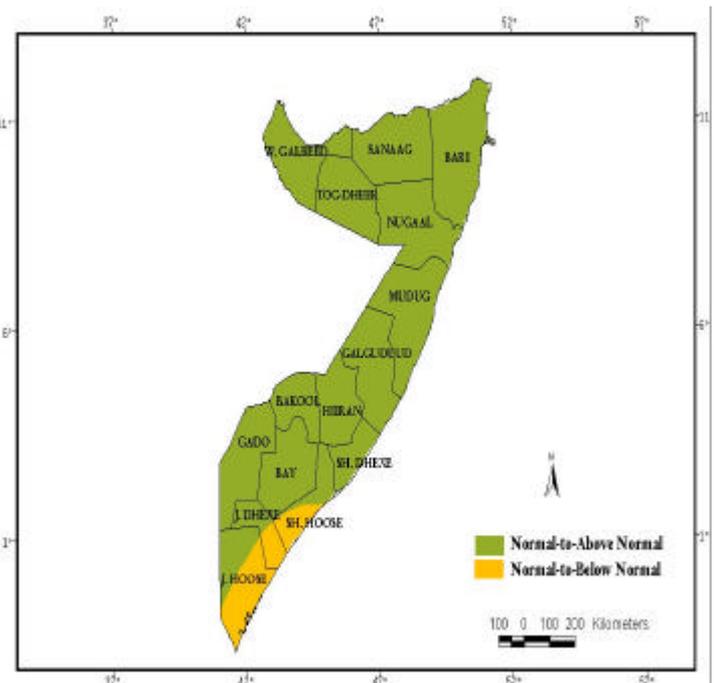
A SUMMARY OF THE CLIMATE OUTLOOK FOR SOMALIA FROM MARCH TO MAY 2002

Climate scientists from the Greater Horn of Africa gathered in Eldoret, Kenya, for the Ninth Climate Outlook Forum from 18–21 February 2002. Their aim was to reach agreement on the climate outlook from March to May 2002 in the East African Sub-Region. This time period corresponds to the beginning of the *Gu* rainy season in Somalia when 70-75% of Somalia's crops are planted. Any significant reduction in rainfall levels during this time has severe consequences on livestock and crop production. The principal factor taken into account and observed was the predicted Sea Surface Temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean and over much of the tropical Atlantic and Indian Oceans; as well as other factors affecting the climate in the sub-region. After four days of discussions, a seasonal forecast was made by establishing probability distributions, which indicate the likelihood of below-normal, near-normal or above-normal rainfall in the Eastern Africa Sub-region.

As seen in this map, (Figure 4) the forecast for Somalia divided the country into two zones. In the southern coast of Somalia bordering Kenya, there is an increased likelihood of normal to below normal rainfall in the coming months (March-May). In this zone, there is only 25% probability that rainfall levels will fall in the above normal category. In contrast, prospects seem relatively better for the rest of Somalia, where an increased likelihood of near normal (40% probability) to above normal (35% probability) rainfall is predicted. In this zone, the probability that rainfall will be below normal is 25%.

FSAU together with FEWS NET and its partners will carefully monitor rainfall levels, crop and livestock production prospects as the *Gu* season approaches.

Figure 4. Source : Ninth Climatic Forum, Eldoret, Kenya



EXPECTED FOOD NEEDS PER MONTH UNTIL END OF JUNE 2002 FOLLOWING THE DEYR 2002

AREA	POPULATION	No of households registered for food Aid (3)	Deficits (without food aid), % of min. cal	Food Needs until July, 2002 (MT, per month) (1)
Belet Hawa, Gedo	60,700 – WHO 2001	14,528 (CARE)	20-50% for majority Of population	730
Dolow, Gedo	20,870– WHO 2001	6,302 (CARE)	20-50% for majority Of population	315
Luuq, Gedo	64,840–WHO 2001	17,780 (CARE)	20-50% for majority Of population	890
Garbaharey, Gedo	52,300–WHO 2001	6,281 (WFP)	20-50% for majority Of population	315
Burdhubo, Gedo	16, 050–WHO 2001	3,987 (WFP)	20-50% for majority Of population	200
El Waq, Gedo	29,400– WHO 2001	7,820 (CARE)	10-40% for majority Of population	390
Rabdhere, Bakol	30,050–WHO 2001	616, include FFW and supp. (2) WFP	10-40% for majority Of population	250
Berdale, Bay	101,815–WHO 2001	FFW and supp. (2) (WFP)	10-40% for approx 50% of population	100
Rest of Bay, Bakol regions and Bardhera	845,285– WHO 2001	FFW and supp. (2) (WFP and CARE)	5-30% for approx 25% of population	500-600
Afmadow, Hagar	90,000-WHO 2001	None at Present	10-40% for approx 50% of population	75-100
Bari, Sanag, Sool and Awdal	891,030– WHO 2001	550 were registered in Awdal; none in Sanag/ Bari	50% for approx 12,000 households	300
TOTAL				3,365

(1) This is just the cereal component of any food basket. Actually, it is recommended that for every 50 kg of cereals provided, there should also be 10 kg of lentils and 1.5 - 2.0 litres of oil.

(2) Food delivered through Food For Work and as additional rations to families of children requiring supplementary feeding

(3) For definition of a 'household' contact information officers at either CARE or WFP

OUTLOOK REMAINS POOR FOR PASTORALISTS IN NE SOMALIA

Abnormal movements are reported all over North East Somalia due to drought conditions. A widespread shortage of water and pasture is curtailing milk production and the condition of livestock is deteriorating with animals becoming weaker and hence more prone to disease.

Drought conditions in Eastern Sanaag are serious and deserve close attention. Many livestock deaths are reported (including camels). The mortality rate of shoats that have remained in the area is between 20% to 30%. (According to FSAU Field Monitor) Scarce pasture availability and the increasing water price represents a major threat to the pastoral livelihood. Water-related interventions aimed at rehabilitating and maintaining existing water sources should be considered.

Even in Dharoor and Sool eco-zones livestock morbidity and mortality rates are of serious concern. In Bari the effect of inflation and the Somali shilling devaluation (8% in one month against US\$) are further limiting pastoral livelihoods, with water prices increasing and livestock market options decreasing. (This is normally the case after Eid-al-Adha, when demand drops.) Overall terms of trade for pastoralists have worsened and are becoming critical. Excessive pressure on limited water resources has led to the recent closure of boreholes in Iskushaban and Beyla districts. Pastoral households are reacting by selling animals in poor condition which fetch very low prices and are increasingly relying on the collection and sale of bush and coastal products, obtained through fishing.

AWDAL REMAINS AREA OF CONCERN

The critical situation on the coast of Awdal, where the main *Hays* rains have failed for a third time in a row, has been partially buffered by UNICEF and COOPI interventions addressing nutritional and health related problems. Constraints to local livelihoods are nevertheless still reported, especially among pastoral households.

- There is abnormally high migration of animals to the sub-coastal belt, exceeding local carrying capacity and increasing the likelihood of livestock disease outbreaks.
- Milk consumption patterns are worsening due to poor milk production, as well as out-migration of lactating animals and declining terms of trade.
- The local cheap cereal supply is declining, while trade opportunities with Djibouti remain limited.
- Livestock export options continue to decline after the Hagi peak. Export options continue to be reduced due to the Saudi Arabia livestock ban.

Pasture availability in the area is significantly below normal levels and distribution is patchy due to the erratic rains. It will not be long before the burden of consistent livestock in-migration to sub-coastal areas will deplete available resources.

Reports also confirm the spreading of (endemic) livestock disease which further weakens animal conditions and productive performance. The area definitely needs further monitoring in the coming weeks. Interventions aimed at supporting livestock condition through veterinary or water-related interventions should complement current human-focused assistance. Options to rehabilitate the Zeylac seaport should be considered for the longer term economic sustainability of communities in this area. (politically isolated and physically landlocked) These interventions should be complemented with initiatives aimed at recovering and improving rangeland as well as coastal natural resources management.

VSF SWISS LIVESTOCK-RELATED INTERVENTION IN GEDO REGION

The livelihood situation of pastoralists in Gedo (70% of the regional population) has severely deteriorated in recent months, due to the lack of proper *deyr* rains that has worsened the effect of a three-year drought. Other factors that have contributed to compounding the current difficult situation are the limited movement and marketing of livestock, as well as the livestock export ban to Saudi Arabia and insecurity in the region, aggravated from time to time by temporary closures of the border with Kenya.

VSF Swiss has identified the health of livestock as an entry point to assist Gedo pastoral communities. The rationale of this proposal is that by strengthening the community-based animal health (CAH) system, it will minimize the impact of drought and disease on the pastoral productive potentials. This in time will improve access to food and enhance terms of trade for pastoralists in the area.

Project activities will define appropriate ways to supply veterinary drugs to the areas of intervention, train and equip CAH staff (with a specific focus on antihelminthic –deworming– and curative treatments using antibiotics) as well as encourage fodder production through a pilot project with women groups.

The VSF Swiss proposal emphasizes participation and active involvement of local communities. The economic infrastructure of the project means that herders will have to pay for the services. (Cost-recovery with cash) VSF have submitted a proposal to ECHO for funds and implementation will be carried out with EPAG and COOPI and in coordination with other locally active agencies. Past experiences in this area means that project activities will be monitored closely and the outcome and impact on the local communities will be assessed.

RADIO INITIATIVES DISCUSSED AT SACB LIVESTOCK MEETING TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO PASTORALISTS

Several radio initiatives related to food security issues were discussed at this meeting held at UNDP on 11th March 2002. In recent months, more and more agencies and NGO's working at grass roots level with local communities in Somalia are expressing interest in using radio as a method of raising awareness as well as encouraging the discussion of food security issues. This will enable communities in the mid to long term, to be equipped with relevant knowledge and information to look at ways of improving their own local food security thus strengthening their own livelihoods in the future.

IRIN has formed partnerships with several stations in Somalia producing information in Somali aimed to inform and cover humanitarian issues relevant to the country. They are currently working with Radio Djibouti, Radio Hargeisa, Radio Galkayo, HornAfrik, STN, Radio Banadir, IQRA FM and Kenya Broadcasting–Somali Service. UNESCO have joined up with the BBC Somali Service to air a soap and magazine programme twice a week, which can also be heard over the internet. They too have also developed relationships with radio stations broadcasting within Somalia where their programmes are aired.

David Campbell from the Mediae Trust who has extensive experience producing radio programmes for rural populations stressed the importance of soap operas as a way of communicating information. It allows issues to be discussed over a period of time and from many different angles. He mentioned, that in his experience, technical food security information, that was presented in an unimaginative way was useless and the listener was most likely to turn the radio off. At this meeting, it was suggested to set up a SACB Food Security Radio Working Group, with representatives from all interested sectors, nutrition, health, livestock and agriculture, plus ngo's, donors and implementing agencies to discuss a co-ordinated approach to imparting relevant food security information to the Somali people.

LIVESTOCK EXPORT TABLE FROM BOSASSO AND BERBERA SEAPORTS

The table below shows how livestock exported from Bosasso and Berbera seaports started to pick up from May 2001. As can be seen in the first months of 2001 the export numbers are rarely above zero. However livestock exported from both ports did gradually increase when some Gulf countries lifted the ban, although recently Yemen banned cattle (due to Rinderpest) and Saudi Arabia continues with its total ban due to Rift Valley Fever. (Saudi Arabia imported sheep for the Haj from Sudan.)

Export figures from Bossaso market show a 20% increase compared to the 1999/2000 Haj market period. This occurred due to a widening market, including Egypt. There was also a trade shift from Berbera to Bossaso port which reflected the change in market destination from Saudi to the United Arab Emirates. However, overall Haj export data from the two northern ports are far below potential

figures due to the Saudi ban. (Roughly 30% of 2000 levels).

An ad-hoc committee of the OIE (Office International des Epizooties based in Paris) met in mid-February to review the OIE Animal Health Code chapter for Rift Valley Fever. A revised chapter was prepared and is now being formally circulated to OIE member states for comment. The revision takes account of new information regarding the epidemiology of RVF and makes recommendations that should facilitate trade from countries at risk. FAO and UNDP will continue to assist Somalia in the development of the meat export trade, the establishment of a national livestock body, improved capacity for livestock export certification and increased liaison between Somali and external stakeholders. The launching of PACE's programme in Somalia will compliment these efforts by addressing animal health related issues throughout the country.

BOSSASSO		May-01	Jun-01	Jul-01	Aug-01	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02
Camel		0	0	0	0	0	0	600	750	618	1020
Cattle		1300	3580	7479	17710	2114	2615	4205	3245	3540	1738
Shoats		13100	13415	39660	40600	93963	87864	137750	121401	159330	199840
BERBERA		May-01	Jun-01	Jul-01	Aug-01	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02
Cattle		0	2042	1977	1277	1629	3134	4463	NA	NA	NA
Shoats		5989	2161	2482	8249	3023	4013	14449	NA	NA	NA

TRADE AND MARKET PRICES

Livestock Prices and Trends

The trend in livestock prices continued to vary widely in pastoral markets during February. Figure 5 illustrates the trend in goat prices in Beletweyne and Galkayo markets. Livestock prices are higher in Galkayo and lower in Beletweyne. The higher prices during most of mid 2001 is attributed to the improved livestock conditions and favorable *deyr* in some pastoral districts, especially Galkayo and parts of Beletweyne, coupled with increased demand from Gulf countries, particularly for chilled meat. However, in Beletweyne, from January and February 2002, prices of local goat decreased slightly due to slow down market activities (interrupted trade routes) as a result of insecurity in Puntland regions. In Beletweyne, local goat prices decreased by 29 percent, from Ssh 197,625 per head in January to Ssh 140,000 in February. On the other hand, local goat prices in Galkayo market increased by five percent, from Ssh 233,667 per head in January to Ssh 235,000 per head in February.

Local Cereal Prices and Trends

As a result of the good *deyr* harvest in February, local cereal prices, especially maize, have remained moderately low during February in most riverine markets, although they have slightly increased in Buale and Beletweyne markets. (These are close to the river.) Maize prices remained stable or increased slightly in Beletweyne, rising 8% from the previous month. Similar trends were observed in Lower and Middle Shabelle markets.

However, in the rainfed markets, maize prices are very high and have maintained this trend from September 2001. (See Figure 6)

The favorable prediction of *gu* good rains (Ninth Climate Outlook Forum), mean that sorghum prices could be expected to reduce slightly, provided that farmers maintain production levels.

Figure 5

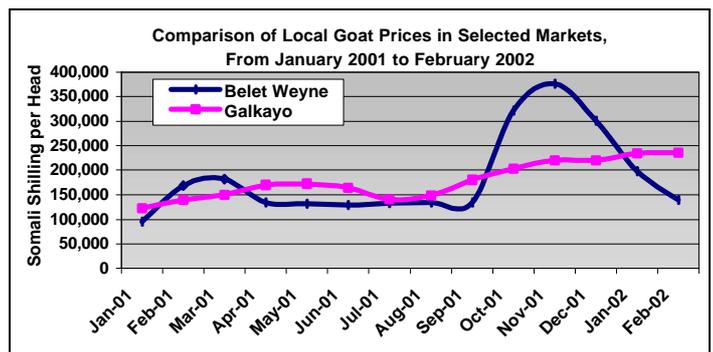
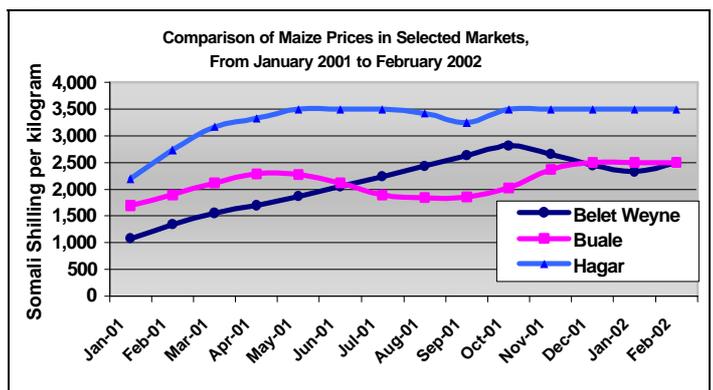


Figure 6



INTERVENTIONS IN THE SEED SECTOR—SOUTHERN SOMALIA

FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS

After the good *Deyr* harvest in most parts of Southern Somalia, requirements for external assistance in the seed sector are limited. In preparation for the next main cropping season (first *Gu* rains are expected in April), small-scale seed interventions will take place in well-defined areas.

FAO, through **InterSOS** is planning to trial a seed voucher scheme for the distribution of cereal seeds in parts of Bakol region (not in Wajid where World Vision is intervening) prior to the *Gu* 2002 season. The scheme offers key advantages over traditional seed distribution methods in that beneficiaries are able to access local seeds of their choice. Local seed traders are also supported which in turn supports the local economy.

World Vision plans to distribute non-cereal seeds to farmers in Bakol region (Wajid district) and Bay region (Bur Hakaba and Baidoa districts). World Vision's programme aims at improving the nutritional status of the population by providing assorted vegetable seeds. Cash crop seeds will also be distributed (mungbeans, sesame, peanuts, sunflower and soya beans) and it is hoped to start with some vegetable oil extraction in the near future.

Concern is planning to provide sorghum seeds on credit in Kurtun Warrey (Lower Shabelle).

SCF-UK continues to introduce improved seed varieties (cereal and non-cereal) through demonstration farms and extension workers in Belet Weyne district (Hiran region).

Gedo region remains the major area of concern. In February 2001 **WFP** distributed 653MT of food to Gedo region. 400MT in Garbaharey and 253MT in Burdhubo districts. The food basket was composed of cereal, pulses and oil. The estimated beneficiaries were 10,268.

CARE distributed 473MT in El Wak and 270 MT in parts of Belet Hawa (tentative figures as they wait for confirmation from the field). **CARE** are looking to carry out food for work projects in Bay, Bakol, Hiran and Middle Shabelle but surveys are still being carried out to identify suitable projects to be implemented. In March, **CARE** distributions went on in Gedo in Belet Hawa and Dolo. All this was in the form of relief food.

Between January and March 2002, UNICEF distributed 27MT supermix supplies to Bay region, 58MT to Bakol and 73MT to Gedo.

REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS >> P.7

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.

SOUTH NUGAL & N MUDUG

It would appear that most pastoral groups in this area are in a strong position to cope with the present *Jilaal* dry season, except further south where there has been a combination of poor rainfall and the recent clashes have left some families (estimated 250-300) homeless. There has been a resurgence of diarrhoea, respiratory infections and other diseases (confirmed by ICRC and MSF-Holland) and MSF-Holland have delivered some drugs and plastic sheets. Livestock demand picked up over the *Haj* season and export prices for shoats, cattle and camels were 7%, 3.5% and 6% higher respectively than January. Conversely, staple prices fell somewhat, boosting livestock for cereal terms of trade. Insecurity poses the biggest threat to food security at this stage.

SANAG & TOGHDEER

Overall, the situation varies from normal to far below normal. The drought in Eastern Sanag has continued the deterioration there, with high mortality rates of animals being reported for camels and cattle, while 80-90% of shoats cannot reach the water points. Water-trucking is essential, and the cost of this is forcing more and more diversion of household income away from food. Low incomes are exacerbating food shortages and the poorest are facing serious food deficits. It is estimated that if the *Gu* rains delay until mid-April, one-third of animals will die. FSAU met with two implementing agencies in the area and an assessment is underway on devising a suitable response. FSAU field staff are assisting in this. Elsewhere, the *Hawd* area is normal but there is some concern for agro-pastoral groups west of Burao. Trade picked up in Burao market, especially for livestock, following the lifting of the Yemeni ban. (other than cattle.

NW & AWDAL

Overall, the situation ranges from normal in the south and east, to well below normal in the coastal and sub-coastal parts of Awdal. UNICEF and COOPI have responded to the latter with the distribution to children of high energy biscuits, as well as health interventions. There are calls for improving water supply in the area. Pasture is also scarce. Elsewhere, especially on the *Hawd*, conditions are reasonably normal with option over the border for most livestock keepers. Some tillage and field preparation has been observed in the agro-pastoral areas. Prices for cereals remain high although trade for animals has improved with the *Haj* and the lifting of the Yemeni ban. Trading activity on the Djibouti border continued to be low. Government reforms aimed at improving monetary policy and management affected trading somewhat and there have been negotiations between traders and Government over tariffs at Berbera.

BARI REGION

Poor *Deyr* and *Hays* rains have continued to have a negative impact on food security for pastoral households in Iskushuban and Bosasso districts. 70-80% of the areas expecting to receive *Hays* rains experienced outright failure, while those areas that did receive some have suffered an influx of animals that has reduced benefits. The Sool plateau of Banda Beyla received sporadic rains this month providing a measure of relief to livestock keepers. Water shortages, livestock diseases and long migration distances remain as problems. Demand for livestock from the UAE, Oman and Yemen has increased this month, as has the price (15% for camels and 11% for goats, both export quality). Food prices fell, especially that of maize (by 17%), while imported commodities remained the same and fodder prices doubled. Wage rates and employment opportunities declined in the urban areas while shortages of charcoal have encouraged urban dwellers to collect and sell firewood.

SOOL

Overall food security varies widely across this region. In the south, the *Hawd* and the Nugal valley, there is still pasture and the *berkads* contain water, resulting in satisfactory animal condition. However there is some extra pressure as a result of the livestock influx from the Sool Plateau to the north, where conditions are considerably worse. Part of this plateau cuts through the north-eastern corner of Taleh district and consequently conditions there are bad. As in other regions, the *Haj* and the recent lifting of the ban by Yemen has improved livestock prices, although grain prices have also risen.

N-NUGAL & S- BARI

The FSAU FM was on mission in Ethiopia working with SCUUK on cross border issues

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HIRAN

The food security situation of the region is generally improving. After a poor *Gu* rainy season, good *Deyr* rains were received in the southern part of Hiran. Good yields have been observed for sorghum in the rain-fed areas as well as for maize in the irrigated areas. Crop production was better in the southern districts than in the northern part of the region where rainfall was not well distributed. Agro-pastoral and riverine areas of Belet Weyne district did not benefit from good *Deyr* rains and some areas remained relatively dry. Belet Weyne market is now partly supplied by Bulo Burti and Jalalaqsi, which is unusual. Food availability has greatly improved in general with the own crop production being complemented by supplies from the neighboring regions. Cereals prices are relatively low in the southern districts whereas they already started to increase in Belet Weyne. This is due to a combination of factors including lower crop production in the north of Hiran, less of supply from Ethiopia and higher demand from the Central regions. Animal body condition is particularly good for camels and goats (good browsing opportunities throughout the region). Cattle condition is near normal. However, in the driest areas, cattle are already migrating in search of better grazing opportunities with the lactating animals remaining behind and being hand fed. By the end of February, one local quality goat was exchanged for slightly more than one bag of local cereal (50 kg of maize or sorghum) in Belet Weyne, which is less than last year at the same period (almost 2 bags/ goat in February 2001). Terms of trade are more in favour of livestock sellers in Bulo Burti and Jalalaqsi.

LOWER SHABELLE

Food security situation is good in general. *Deyr* cereal production was well above average. As usual, the bulk of the maize production of southern Somalia came from Lower Shabelle (about 60%). Good yields were achieved except in Afgoye district where rainfall was less favourable to rain-fed maize. More sorghum was planted during this *Deyr* in most rain-fed areas of the region, which lead to a very good harvest. Maize prices stabilized at about 1,700 Ssh/kg in most producing zones since the end of December. This is slightly higher than last year at the same period and beneficial to the farmers. Sorghum prices are decreasing. Terms of trade are relatively favorable to livestock owners with one local quality goat fetching about 2 - 3 bags of maize or 3 - 4 bags of sorghum (50 kg bags). Water availability is still normal. Water catchments are full especially in the Wanle Weyne area (north of the region). Shabelle river water level is considered as normal. Land preparation for the coming *Gu* season has already started. Animals are concentrating in the riverine areas where fodder availability is high. The malnutrition prevailing in the region is more related to diseases than to lack of food access. Cholera has been confirmed in Marka.

GEDO

General food security situation of the region is deteriorating. The *Deyr* harvest was very poor in all parts except Bardhera district. Cereal stocks at household level are relatively good for middle and better off wealth groups in Bardhera and El Wak, were farmers also received some harvest. The situation was aggravated by insecurity, especially the recent fighting around Bardhera, which has restricted the movement of people, livestock and traded commodities including cereals. IDP's from Bardhera have been seen in Belet Hawa and El Wak. CARE's distributions, comprising the single largest component in many households' sources of food, are still continuing in their districts in north Gedo. The Dawa River has dried up and the Juba River has

JUBA VALLEY

Although *Deyr* crop results have been below normal in the region in general, the overall food security situation can still be considered as near normal in most parts of Middle and Lower Juba (positive impact of the reasonably good *Gu* 2001 harvest). Exceptions are Afmadow and Hagar districts in Lower Juba. Agro-pastoral population groups from Afmadow and Hagar, who are mainly rearing cattle and cultivating rain-fed maize, are the most at risk of food insecurity. After a very poor *Gu* maize harvest, those areas underwent another bad crop failure during the *Deyr*. The population of Hagar is already suffering from severe water shortage. Most of the livestock out-migrated from Hagar in search of better access to water and pasture (permanent water points of Afmadow or riverine areas). Transport of food commodities from the neighbouring regions to the affected areas is being hindered by insecurity. Cereal prices remain abnormally high in Hagar (amongst the highest prices of southern Somalia). Due to poor rains, *Deyr* crop production was also negligible in Jamame district. However, Jamame was the most productive district of Middle and Lower Juba during the last *Gu*. The situation of the livestock trade is slightly improving (good opportunities for camel exports, demand for cattle and shoats starting to increase in Garissa market after a period of low seasonal demand). The Gedo pastoralists, who are still present in some parts of the region, will not return before the start of the next *Gu* season.

MIDDLE SHABELLE

Deyr crop production was above average for both maize and sorghum. Household cereal stocks have greatly improved in both irrigated and rain-fed areas. In some areas, the harvested sorghum is still drying in the fields. Sesame has not been harvested yet and is performing well in general. Food availability is good in all main markets. Maize and cowpea are collected by traders and transported to Mogadishu, Hiran and the Central regions. After the slight decrease observed at harvest time (January), retail prices for local food commodities stabilized in February: at 1,800 Ssh/kg for maize and 1,400 Ssh/kg for sorghum (in average). Terms of trade are getting more favourable to the livestock owners. Pasture and grazing conditions are normal.

BAY

After a very poor *Gu* cropping season, the total *Deyr* sorghum harvest of the region was well above average. Crop failure was only observed in pockets. The poorest crop results were observed in the southwest of Berdale (neighboring Gedo). Sorghum yields were also lower in Bur Hakaba than in other districts. Sorghum prices have gradually increased in February, which is reflecting the high demand for local cereals and is advantageous for the farmers. In the absence of agriculture related job opportunities, self-employment has been intensified (selling of firewood, charcoal and water). As a result of the good *Deyr* rains, the water situation is normal in most parts of the region. However, water catchments are drying up in localized areas due to the lack of rains.

BAKOOL

In spite of the patchy *Deyr* rainy season, pasture availability is about normal throughout the region. The production of milk and ghee has been good. Cattle prices were still relatively low in February (low seasonal demand from Kenyan markets) whereas camels and goats gained value (high demand from Mogadishu market). So far, no abnormal livestock migration has occurred. Some animals have moved to the farming areas within Bakool, but also towards Bay in search of easier access to fodder. For the minority of agro-pastoralists, the total *Deyr* sorghum production of the region was near normal. However, crop failure was observed in some of the main agro-pastoral zones of Wajid and Raddure districts bordering Gedo region and to a lesser extent in Huddur district. Cereal markets are partly supplied by the neighboring Bay region and by Ethiopia (from Godey through El Barde).

COWPEA BELT

Weather conditions are the usual dry for the season, water is available on the coastal settlements and at wells inland, where prices are rising sharply. It is very scarce in the villages between Galkayo, Haradere and El Bur. Pasture is still available, although both quantity and quality are diminishing as normal for the time of year. Livestock condition is moderate and milk and meat production has reduced. Livestock prices rose slightly with demand from the peak of the *Hajj* season. Land preparation has begun in the farming areas, bush clearing, seed bed preparation, etc. Coastal fishing, some remittances and livestock sales form the main coping strategies. Health and nutrition for the poor has deteriorated with some malaria, coughing and fevers being reported.