

# Food Security and Nutrition

## March 2005 Monthly Brief

### Highlights

**Political Developments:** The newly elected President, Prime Minister, and several ministers concluded a peaceful ten day tour to Jowhar, Beletweyne, Galkayo, Garowe, Bossasso, and Baidoa during the first week of March. The continued progress towards establishing a government within the country is encouraging and will have profound effects on food and livelihood security.

**Climate:** Most of the country remained dry during February as expected (middle of the long dry season-*Jilaal*). In the northwest, *Todob* rains began in the last few days of February, which is an indication of the start of the *Gu* rainy season in the area. Climate experts at the Fifteenth Annual Climate Outlook Forum (March 1-5) predict a high probability of near to below normal *Gu* 2005 rains (page 2).

**Markets:** The Somalia and Somaliland shilling remained fairly constant for the last two months, i.e. 15,500 SOSH/US\$ and 6,100 SLSH/US\$. Both shillings are still lower in value than in 2000 (50% and 100% for SOSH and SLSH, respectively), but have steadily gained in value since they reached a peak depreciated value. Imported commodities (i.e. petrol, sugar, vegetable oil, etc.) tend to follow the overall trend of both exchange rates (page 2).

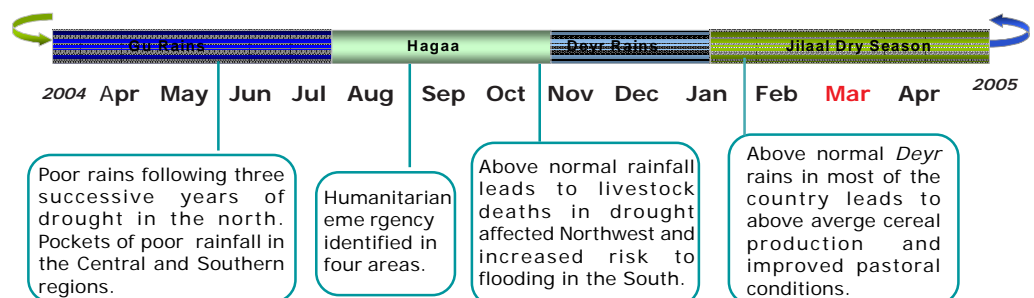
**Nutrition:** Acute malnutrition rates continue to remain high in Juba Valley, about 23% MUAC <12.5cm) and over a quarter of the children screened are at risk of malnutrition (MUAC 12.5-13.4 cm) (Jan.2005). Rapid nutrition assessments in Galgadud region (Harale and Balanbale) indicate high levels of acute malnutrition, between 19.5% and 24% (MUAC <12.5cm) (Nutrition Update, Feb. 2005) (page 2).

**Agriculture:** Harvesting of off season crops (sesame and maize) in Shabelle and Juba regions is ongoing and expected to continue through March and early April, however, production levels are less than anticipated due to insect damage, hot winds, and moisture stress. *Deyr* season sorghum production is in the markets and prices are significantly reduced. This has led to a significant improvement in terms of trade (sorghum to daily wage rates), a 70% increase over December 2004 (page 3).

**Livestock:** Rangeland resources throughout the region remain adequate, despite being in the middle of the long dry season (*Jilaal*). Livestock body conditions are good and improving overall. Shoaat exports declined 54% in February over January, following the end of the peak Hajj demand season. Export quality shoaat prices fell, following the decline in demand (page 3).

#### Emerging Regional Issues:

- Many pastoralists in **Humanitarian Emergency areas in the North** are unable to benefit fully from adequate dry season rangeland resources due to significantly reduced herd sizes, excessive debt levels and widespread and diffuse destitution (page 4).
- An estimated **22,000 people along the northern coast line** require sustained resource transfer for the next 8 months, according to the Inter-agency Tsunami Assessment Mission report (page 4).
- Civil insecurity continues to disrupt pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods in parts of Bakool (page 4).
- Clan conflict intensified from **Luuq and Garbaharey, thus worsening the Humanitarian Emergency** in this area by disrupting markets and livelihoods (page 4).



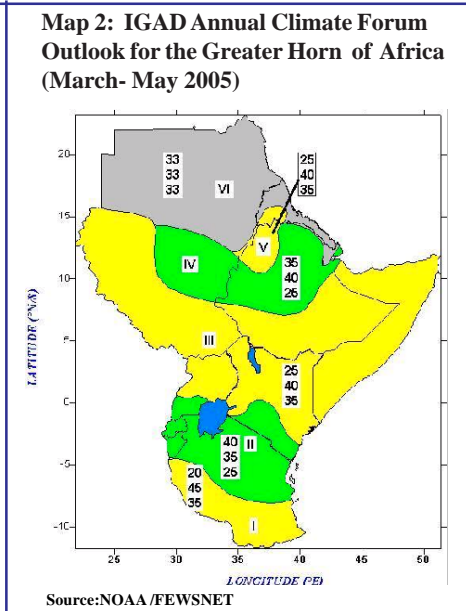
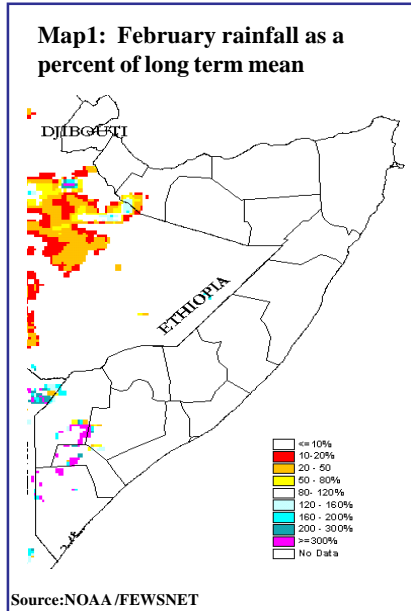
Somalia Seasonal Timeline & Key Events

## Climate

Most of the country remained dry during February, which is normal since it is the middle of the long dry season (*Jilaal*) and little or no rainfall is normally received during this month (Map 1).

Pockets in the south, especially in Juba Valley, received some light showers, which improved the off-season crop conditions, especially in parts of Bu'aale district (Middle Juba Region). In the northwest, Todob rains began the last few days of February, which is an indication of the start of the *Gu* rainy season in the area.

Climate experts predict near to below normal *Gu* 2005 rains. Climate experts in the Fifteenth Climate Outlook Forum (March 1-5, 2005) concluded that there is a high probability for near to below normal rainfall in Somalia during the coming *Gu* 2005 season. There is a 40% probability that *Gu* rains will be normal and a 35% probability that they will



be below normal (Map 2). *Gu* rains contribute to 70-75% of total annual food and fodder production, therefore are of significant importance to overall food security. If the *Gu* 2005 rains are below normal this will likely reverse the limited recovery achieved following the exceptionally good *Deyr* 2004/05 rains.

markets - nutrition - climate

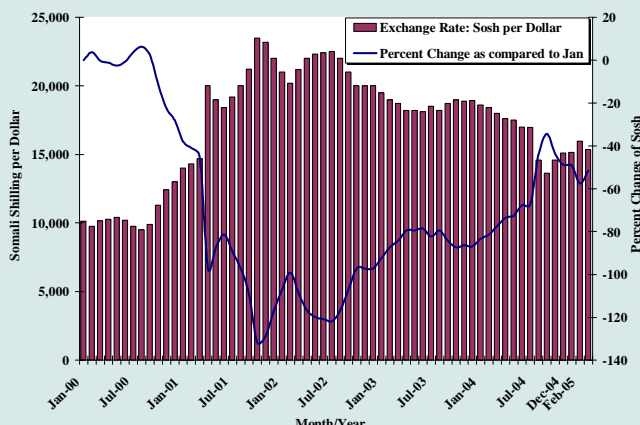
## Markets

The Somalia and the Somaliland Shilling remained nearly constant against the US dollar for the last two months (January and February 2005). Values ranged between 15,900 and 15,400 SOSH/US\$ and 6,020 and 6,150 SLSH/US\$. The Somali Shilling gained value at about 4% in February with respect to January, while the Somaliland Shilling lost value slightly at about 2% over the same time period (Figure 1).

Both currencies are still lower in value than they were in 2000, around 50% and 100% depreciation for SOSH and SLSH, respectively. The overall trend for both shillings, however, is that they are steadily gaining in value since they reached peak depreciation levels. The SOSH peaked at 23,500 SOSH/US\$ in October 2001, while SLSH peaked much later in July 2003 at 7,870 SLSH/US\$ (Figure 1).

Imported commodities such as sugar, vegetable oil, rice, and petrol are closely linked with exchange rate. For instance, in Shabelle Valley most imported commodity prices increased significantly following the SOSH devaluation, but began to decrease when the shilling gained value. It is expected that prices of imported commodities would continue their moderate decline in most markets if the shillings continue to appreciate.

Figure 1: Fluctuation of Somali Shilling in Mogadishu Market, February 2005



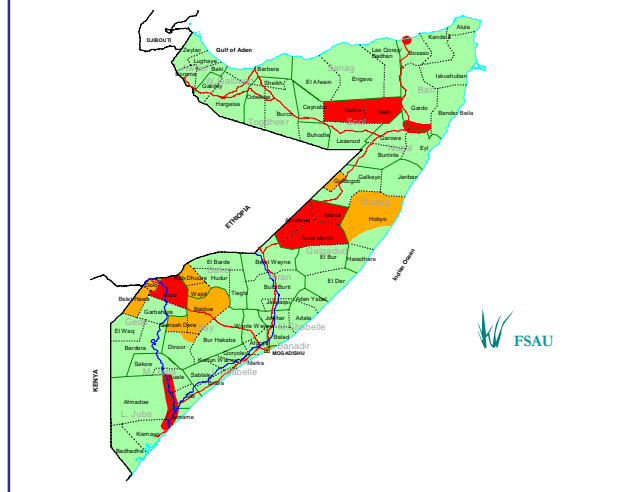
## Nutrition

**Galkayo:** The limited services available for the malnourished children in Somalia have forced families with severely malnourished children to travel long distances to Galkayo in search of therapeutic care. An increasing trend in the TFC admissions (from 51 in September 2004 to 176 in December 2004) was observed. Deaths within the TFC was also recorded with about 21 deaths reported in January 2005.

**Galgadud:** Rapid nutrition assessments conducted in Harale and Balanbale villages of Galgaduud Region in December 2004 indicate high levels of acute malnutrition (MUAC < 12.5cm or oedema) of 19.5% and 24% respectively.

**Juba Valley:** An FSAU rapid assessment in Badhadhe town (January 2005) using MUAC indicates total acute malnutrition rate of about 23% (MUAC < 12.5 cm) and over a quarter of the children screened are at risk of malnutrition (MUAC 12.5-13.4 cm). Qualitative information indicates an increased prevalence of common diseases in Badhadhe such as diarrhoea, malaria, ARI, skin infections and intestinal parasites. Bilharziasis cases have also been reported. MCH attendance numbers slightly declined since September 2004, but this is mainly due to exhaustion of some of the drugs and vaccines provided to the facility.

Map 3: Current Overall Nutrition Situation



## Agriculture

Off season crop production (maize and sesame) in Shabelle and Juba regions is expected to be less than anticipated due to losses incurred from dry hot winds, insect damage, and moisture stress. Off season crop harvesting is ongoing and is expected to increase through March and April.

In Shabelle, harvesting off season rainfed sesame is underway, but overall production is expected to be less than anticipated. Early planted sesame, especially irrigated sesame, was damaged by insects (*antigastara* spp.) that were prevalent due to high mist levels during January and early February. Farmers attempted multiple replanting, but without success. Late planted sesame is reported to be performing better in some areas. In pockets, off season standing maize crops, particularly where irrigation infrastructure is readily accessible, is at different stages of development and is performing well. In Wanle-weyn area harvesting of rainfed sorghum (the main crop for this area) is ongoing and is easily seen in heaps drying in the sun. Price of red sorghum is around 1,500 SOSH/kg, while maize is 2,500 SOSH/kg.

In Juba, harvesting off season maize and sesame crops is ongoing, but production is also less than anticipated because of heavy losses due to pest damage and moisture stress. Standing *dsheks* crops are at different stages (between vegetative to filing stages) and farmers are continuing to plant maize in areas where water is receding. Farmers are no longer planting sesame in recessionary areas, since the longer production cycle of sesame means it is at greater risk to spoilage if the *Gu* rains start in April.

*Deyr* season sorghum from Bay, Bakool, Gedo and Hiran is in the markets, leading to significantly reduced prices (Figure 2). For the poor, the drop in sorghum prices translates into a dramatic improvement in terms of trade, i.e. a daily wage now secures 21 kgs of sorghum, a 70% increase from December 2004 (Figure 3). Labour opportunities in

Figure 2: Average Cereal Prices (aggregated across markets)

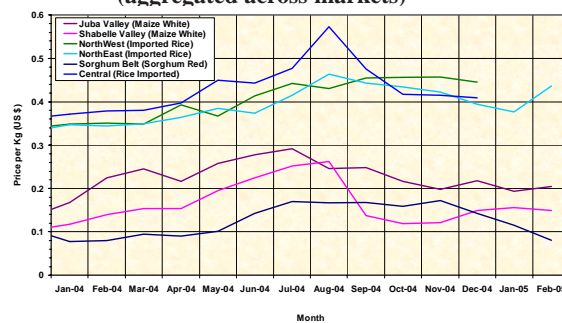
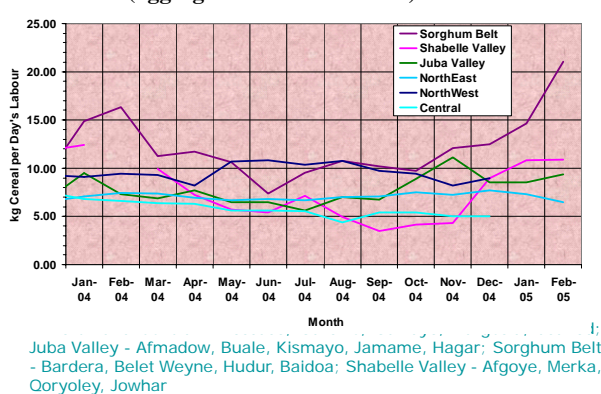


Figure 3: Terms of Trade Cereal To Labour (aggregated across markets)



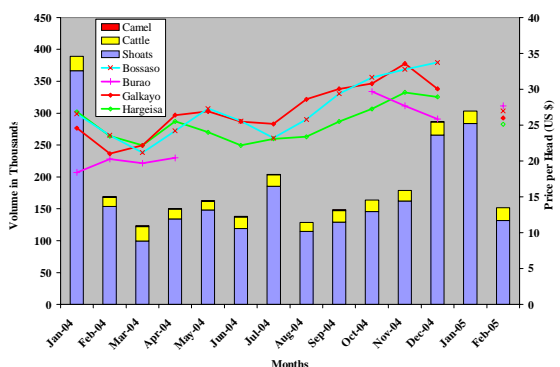
agricultural activities are fairly good as threshing panicles of sorghum, harvesting maize and sesame, as well as some planting and weeding are ongoing.

## Livestock

General pasture and water conditions throughout Somalia are still adequate despite being in the middle of the Jilaal (dry) season. Generally this Jilaal season for pastoralists is mild compared with similar past seasons. Livestock body conditions are reported to be good throughout in response to the improved range resources.

In the Humanitarian Emergency areas in the north, many pastoralists are unlikely to reap the full benefits from these positive trends because extremely reduced herd sizes have negatively impacted on herd and pastoral livelihood recovery. The general scarcity of pack camels is limiting pastoral mobility and is forcing many to stay near main water points. This limited mobility in turn is exerting excessive pressure on range resource around these points. Goat milk is reported to be available and supply is improving, but other essential livestock products, like camel milk are still not available in these areas. Given the large camel losses (up to 80%) camel milk is not anticipated until the end of 2005 when camel calving begins.

Figure 4: Livestock Exports from Berbera and Bossaso and Export Quality Prices



In the northwest Todob rains began in the last few days of February, which is an indication of the start of the *Gu* (long) rainy season in the area. Localized rains were received in the northwest in the areas adjacent to the Somali region of Ethiopia, such as Borama, Hargeysa, and Gabiley Districts on the 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> of February. The late February rains have replenished dry river beds and boreholes along the coastal belt of Awdal Region.

In the second week of February the immigrant livestock from Shinile area of the Somali region of Ethiopia left the coastal areas of Awdal region and returned to their own areas. This has relieved the additional pressure on the pasture and water conditions in Awdal. Livestock body condition and reproduction in Awdal Region is encouraging. Calving of camels has already begun and shoats are kidding. As a result of these positive developments, milk production and livestock marketability is reported to be normal.

In mid-February localized showers were received in parts of Sako and southern and western rangelands of Buale in southern Somalia. While water and pasture resources have improved, most areas are under warm, dry, and windy conditions associated with the Jilaal spell. Pastoralists in Buale, Hagar, and Sakow Districts are moving to areas of better water resources. In Hagar District, for example, pressure exerted on range resources is mounting, thus worsening the condition of these vital resources. Availability and prices of milk are regarded normal in the area.

As expected, livestock exports from Berbera and Bossaso ports are declining following the end of the booming Hajj season. A total of 60,556 and 70,834 sheep and goats were exported in February from the Berbera and Bossaso ports, respectively. This is a decline of nearly 54 percent over the number exported in January. Cattle exports declined in Berbera port from 14,695 head in January to 11,303 head in February (23% decline), while exports from Bossaso increased from 5,218 head to 8,658 head (66% increase). No camels were exported from Berbera in the months of January and February, while Bossaso exported 19 and 128 camels during the same period, respectively (Figure 4).



# Integrated Food Security Analysis: Emerging Regional Issues

## Northwest Region

Isolated solitary adult locusts are reported on the northern coast of Karin area (120 km east of Berbera). The Emergency Prevention System for Trans Boundary Animal and Plant Pests and Disease (EMPRES) in Hargeisa is planning a mission to assess the incidence and infestation levels. Overstretched rangeland resources in coastal areas of Awdal were relieved of in-migrated livestock when pastoralists from the Shinile area of the Somali Region of Ethiopia returned to their home areas in mid-February.

## Hiran Region

Social support activities in the region are at its peak due to Zakat payments on saved capitals in kind and in cash. Farmers (middle and better-off wealth groups) have donated 1/10<sup>th</sup> of their harvested grains to poor wealth groups for religious Zakat payments. Cereal prices have dropped due to the good *deyr* harvest in the south and Somali region of Ethiopia.

## Bakool

Civil insecurity continues to disrupt pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods in parts of the region. Abnormal livestock migration is reported in Raddhure and El-Barde. Sorghum is in the markets and prices are falling, leading to large improvements in terms of trade between shoats/sorghum and labour/sorghum. Shopkeepers and traders report debt levels are reducing.

## Gedo

Poor agro-pastorals received around 3-5 bags of sorghum and 2-3 heads of shoats as religious *Zakat* donations. Juba river water levels in Gedo dropped in February as compared to last month. Clan conflict intensified from Luq to Garbaharey district resulting in disruption of markets and other activities in the region.

## Juba

A high level of off-season crop loss (maize and sesame) is reported due to high infestation levels of insect pests. Some livestock movements in search of water and pasture is reported in Salagle, Nusdunia, and Basra. Civil insecurity has deteriorated and incidents of car hijacking, looting properties, and shootings have intensified in Bu'ale and Hagar districts.

## Northeast

Despite being in the middle of the *Jilaal* (dry) season, pasture and water conditions in most areas are good. Many pastoralists, however, are unable to benefit fully as the result of decimated livestock herds, excessive debt levels, depleted assets and widespread and diffuse destitution.

An inter-agency Tsunami Assessment estimates 22,000 people along the Tsunami affected coastal areas are in need of sustained resource transfer for the next 8 months. The most affected areas include Hafun, Bender Beyla, Kulub and Dharin Raqas.

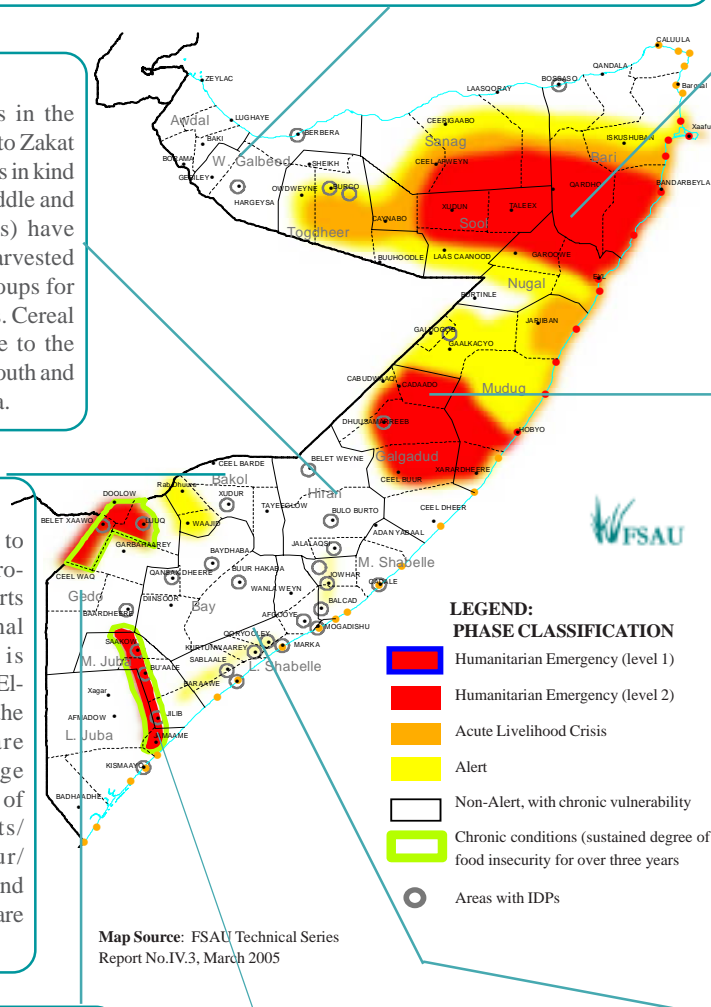
## Central Regions

In response to *Jilaal* (dry) season, livestock are migrating from southern to northern Mudug areas of Jariban and Goldogob. Warring factions in the region have agreed to an unconditional ceasefire, separation of the militia and nomination of committees from both sides for peaceful negotiations.

## Shabelle

The Shabelle river is at its lowest level resulting in limited and difficult gravity irrigations in Janale, Qoryoley and Kurtunwarey (Lower Shabelle), as well as in Jowhar (Middle Shabelle). Off-season crops are significantly reduced due to hot winds and outbreaks of insect pests. The export of dry immature limes and over 6000 MT of charcoal through El-ma'an Port were reported, indicating further environmental degradation between Shabelle Valley and Bay regions.

emerging regional issues



Map Source: FSAU Technical Series Report No.IV.3, March 2005

**FSAU's website:** FSAU's website will be launched in the first week of April ([www.fsasomalia.org](http://www.fsasomalia.org))

**Recent Reports:** *FSAU 2005 Post Deyr Analysis*, Technical Series Report No. IV.3, March 2, 2005. *Tsunami Inter Agency Assessment Mission Report - Hafun to Gara'ad, Northeast Somalia*, to be released 2nd week of March 2005.

**Workshops:** FSAU Nutrition Team Capacity Building and Planning Meeting, Nairobi, February 21- March 7, 2005.

*\*\* Agencies are encouraged to submit information on reports, surveys and forthcoming workshops to be highlighted in this section\*\**



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