



FEWS NET

Monthly Food Security Report



Food Security Analysis Unit

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EDITORIAL

The *Gu* season crop assessment is ongoing. Concern has been expressed from many quarters over poor crop condition especially in the production areas of Hiran, Gedo, Bay and Bakool. Further FSAU analysis will need to consider normal coping strategies within the different Food Economy Zones and the varying vulnerability of a range of Wealth Groups in analyzing the impact of reduced grain production.

In a difficult year some flexibility will be found in access to food and income sources by adapting consumption and expenditure patterns. Other adjustments may include increasing income from petty trade and employment and some additional livestock sales. The impact of changing market prices for staples, currency fluctuations and general terms of trade will also need to be considered. An additional key issue will be the status of household (Hh) stocks, which are expected to be reasonable, as the earlier low demand for local grain surpluses resulted from overall good production last year and was also influenced by significant relief food aid distributions in Ethiopia and Kenya.

However in light of current conditions it is important to note that the relief food pipeline situation is reported to be close to 5000 MT. June/July rains will determine the level of recovery of the *Gu* crop. In the event of a disappointing harvest, poorer households may feel the greatest pressure towards the end of the year. Early contingency planning would need to take this into account. For poorer groups, greater access to income sources would be the crucial issue if normal coping mechanisms were to be supported. Increased population movements to urban centers can be expected as household members seek additional employment opportunities. In this regard, the FSAU Nutrition team have highlighted concern for IDPs and Urban Poor as it is the socially marginalized who become most exposed and are less able to benefit from kin-support including remittances.

Food Security Highlights

- **RAINFALL AND CROP ESTABLISHMENT :** The *Gu* 2001 cropping season started late, in the second half of April, when rainfall was reported almost everywhere in S.Somalia. However, May rainfall this year, has been poorly distributed. Well distributed rains were received in the Shabelle valley with the exception of Hiran. In the Juba valley, weather conditions have been favorable to agriculture from Lower Juba to south Gedo. Conversely, May has been abnormally dry in most parts of northern Gedo, Bakool and Bay seriously inhibiting crop establishment. Gedo remains the main area of concern. Adequate rainfall in June will be essential to allow partial crop recovery in those areas. Further information on rainfall estimates through satellite imagery are available at Fews Net. (E-Mail : somalia@fews.net.)
- **LIFTING OF LIVESTOCK BAN BY UAE :** A slight recovery of the Somali currency occurred, after the UAE announced the lifting of the ban. It is however expected that this will only have limited impact on the food security situation in northern Somalia. In normal circumstances, the Emirate market accommodates less than 5% of the total livestock exported from Somalia to Arab countries.
- **SEASONAL SEA-PORT CLOSURE:** As well as the impact of the UAE lifting the ban (see above) the slight recovery of the Somali currency in May can also be explained by seasonal sea-port closure due to the monsoon, which will reduce the demand for foreign currency.
- **BORDER CLOSURE BETWEEN DJIBOUTI AND SOMALILAND :** The border closure remains in place. In Awdal region, the poor urban food economy group who rely on petty trade have already felt the impact (all locally produced cereal and vegetables are usually marketed in Djibouti).
- **PRICE OF FUEL AND OTHER IMPORTED COMMODITIES INCREASE :** Over the last six months the price of fuel has increased dramatically, especially diesel, used in mechanized agriculture, water pumping and transport. Riverine and pump irrigated food economy groups are facing difficulties irrigating their farms in some areas. Imported food commodity prices are expected to increase further in the coming months due to the sea-port closure (monsoon).

Nutrition Update

Surveys. UNICEF has undertaken a nutrition survey in Bossasso in April and the results are expected soon. During June, a nutrition survey is planned in *Hargeisa*, led by UNICEF with technical support from FSAU. The ACF nutrition survey planned for *Luuq* in June has been postponed.

Following the recommendations of the nutrition survey in *Jamame*, targeted distribution of food-aid has commenced through Muslim-Aid UK.

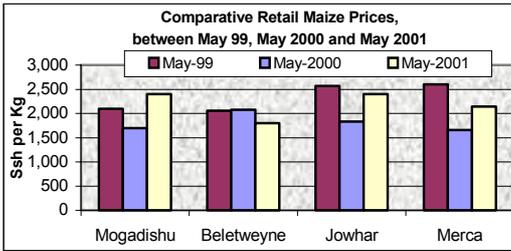
The Nutrition Working Group once again reminded organisations undertaking nutrition surveys of the importance of considering information from varied sources during nutrition surveys. Surveys that produce results on nutritional status in isolation of other contextual information on the population are of very limited use. FSAU nutritionists and food security experts are available to provide

support to organisations during nutrition surveys and food security assessments.

A review of the nutrition situation in *Bulla Hawa* in January 2001 showed that a substantial number of children were attending the MSF-Spain supplementary feeding programme in Mandera, Kenya. By April 2001, 45% of the project beneficiaries were from Somalia. MSF-Spain closed the feeding programme in April and the therapeutic feeding programme has been established in the Kenya Government Hospital in Mandera. The consequences of this at a time when thousands of displaced people from *Bulla Hawa* have settled in Mandera have yet to be determined.

The separate FSAU monthly publication 'Nutrition Update for Somalia' is available from noreen.prendiville@fsau.or.ke or info@fsau.or.ke

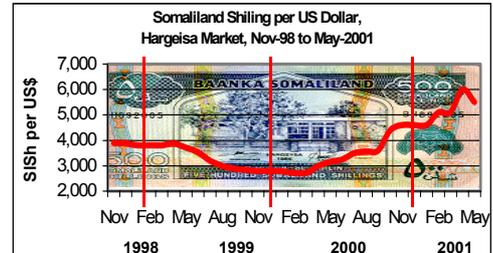
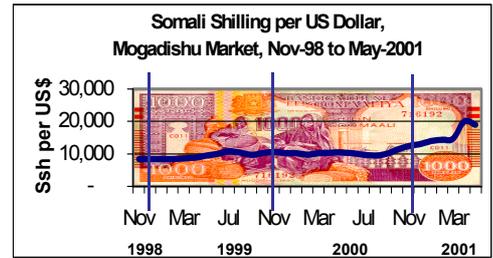
LOCAL CEREAL PRICES



Maize and sorghum prices have substantially increased since the beginning of the year in **S. Somalia**. Implications differ depending if the household is buying or selling cereals. **Maize prices**, which were very low since the last *Gu* 2000, only started to increase in February. Up to March, prices were still below or close to last year's level. Prices continued to increase gradually in April. In May, in M./L. Shabelle, it increased further by an average of 10% over last month's level. In Mogadishu, it reached 2,700 Ssh/kg at the end of May 2001 (compared to 1,700 Ssh in May 2000). At the same time, the lowest prices were found in Baidoa (1,600 Ssh/kg), Belet-Weyne and Bardera (about 2,000 Ssh/kg) and the highest in L.Juba (well above 3,000 Ssh/kg). In Somali currency, maize prices are now significantly higher compared to last year at the same period (see graph). However, due to the devaluation, the trend is totally different when we consider the prices in dollars: 0.14 USD/kg, 0.17 USD and 0.27 USD/kg respectively in May 2001, 2000, 1999 in Mogadishu. Since the last *Gu* 2000 harvest and up to January 2001, **sorghum prices** have been very low in the sorghum belt (400-600 Ssh/kg). The value of sorghum drastically increased in February/March. In Baidoa, the retail price reached 1,000 Ssh end of March. After having dropped moderately in April, it started again to increase up to 1,100 Ssh by the end of May. As opposed to maize, sorghum prices are still much lower than last year at the same period (2,000 Ssh/kg in Baidoa in May 2000). Taking the devaluation into consideration, the market situation is obviously less favourable this year compared to last year from the point of view of the cereal seller: 0.06 USD/kg in late May 2001 (19,000 Ssh/USD) compared to 0.2 USD/kg in late May 2000 (10,000 Ssh/USD). Even though the situation was excellent in terms of *Gu* 2000 crop production, the major source of income for most of the agro-pastoralist households in the sorghum belt has been threatened (crop sales). Elsewhere in southern Somalia, sorghum prices were relatively homogeneous in May and generally close to 2,000 Ssh/kg (exceptions: 1,500 Ssh/kg in Bardera/ south Gedo and 3,000 Ssh/kg in Afmadow/ L.Juba). In **northern Somalia**, the price of the 50 kg sorghum bag ranged in May from 115,000 to 150,000 Ssh. In Galkayo, the price of the bag progressively increased from 85,000 Ssh in January to 120,000 Ssh in April/May, which was still lower than last year at the same period (135,000 Ssh in May 2000). Sorghum was also cheaper than last year in Burao, although the recent increase in price was more significant (+58% between March and May). In Bossasso, the price of the sorghum bag drastically increased in late April to stabilize since then at about 150,000 Ssh. However, expressed in dollars, prices are significantly lower than at the beginning of the year.

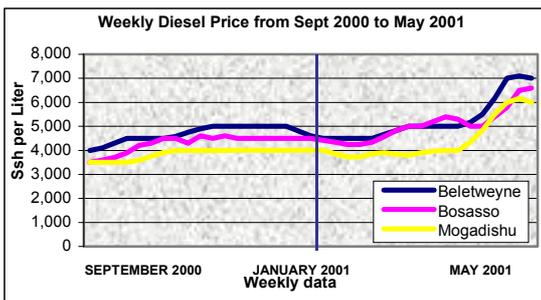
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EXCHANGE RATE



The value of Somali currency slightly recovered in May. In Mogadishu main Bakara market, the Somali shilling appreciated from Ssh 20,000 per dollar in April to Ssh 19,000 per dollar in May (+5%). In Hargeisa market, the Somaliland shilling appreciated by 9 % with respect to the previous month. This slight recovery has been mainly due to two factors. The first one is the lifting of the livestock ban by the UAE. In Bosasso and Las Anod, the value of the shilling rose respectively by 20% and 26% after UAE announced lifting of the ban. However, this will normally have a relatively little impact on the livestock market. Usually, the Emirate market accommodates only 2% of the total livestock exported to Arab countries. The second factor of temporary recovery is the seasonal sea-port closure, which will reduce further the economic activities as well as demand for foreign currency.

THE PRICE OF FUEL CONTINUES TO RISE



Fuel prices have increased dramatically over the last six months (see graph on the left), especially diesel which is the most used in agriculture, water pumping and transport. Riverine and pump irrigated food economy groups are facing difficulties irrigating their farms due to expensive diesel. This may lead to below normal *Gu* production in some areas. In Mogadishu market, diesel prices went from Ssh 4,000 a litre in January-March to Ssh 5,500 mid-April and reached Ssh 7,500 in the last week of May (it was only Ssh 3,000/l. in May 2000). As shown by the graph, this is a general trend applying to all Somalia from South to North. In the northern markets, diesel prices stabilized at about 7,000 Ssh per litre in May. Prices were slightly higher along the Juba river in South Gedo (Ssh 7,500 in Bardera) and M.Juba (Ssh 8,000/l. in Buale). Diesel prices were the highest in the sorghum belt (Ssh 9,000/l. in May in Baidoa). A rise of transport costs was

reported in most parts of Somalia. For instance, within Puntland, the cost of transport has doubled in one year : going from Galkayo to Garowe costs Ssh 60,000 now compared to Ssh 30,000 less than one year ago.

LIVESTOCK PRICES AND TERMS OF TRADE*

***TT**

As the start of the *Gu* rainy season, herders are generally not willing to sell their animals. In the northern and central regions, livestock prices expressed in Somali currency showed an upward trend in May (see graph/Galkayo market). In the northeast, livestock prices have risen by 10-20 % over last month (Bari, Nugal). The increase in price for local goats was less significant in Burao (from Ssh 170,000 per head at the end of March to Ssh 185,000 in May). However, expressed in dollars, goat prices are still well below last year's level: 10-11 USD in May 2001 in Burao and Las Anod compared to 15-18 USD in May 2000. In S. Somalia, goat prices remained relatively stable over the last three months (see graph). As in the North, goat prices expressed in dollars are abnormally low (11 USD in Baidoa this year compared to 18 USD last year). Goat/cereal TT are favorable in agro-pastoral markets, one local goat can fetch more than 2 sacks of sorghum in most southern markets. TT are the lowest in Belet-Wein, Buale, Afmadow and El-Der (1.3 sack). The price of export quality cattle generally decreased in May (maximum -23% in Baidoa).



FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION

Up to now, the level of ongoing food interventions in Somalia has been slightly lower this year than the previous year (almost 8,000 MT for CARE and WFP combined from January to April 2001 compared to 9,800 MT during the same period in 2000). Ethiopian food aid deliveries still represent a significant source of food (cereals) for populations living in the bordering areas in the NW.

From January to April, **CARE** has distributed a total of 3,335 MT in the South of which 43 % was relief food in Gedo region (1,450 MT in February and April). All this was mainly in the form of sorghum. In May, 757 MT were dispatched to Gedo region and the same quantity is planned to be distributed in June. Gedo will remain CARE's most important area of intervention in the next coming months. In other regions, the level of intervention was significantly lower and in the form of food for work.: 120 MT were distrib-

uted in May in Tieglow district (Bakool region), 240 MT in Qansah Dere and Baidoa districts (Bay region), 280 MT in Hiran region and 30 MT in Aden Yabal (M. Shabelle). Plans to distribute food in Middle Juba have been thwarted due to security reasons.

WFP distributed a total of 2,345 MT in the South and a total of 4612 MT in the North and South between January and April of which half went to the northern regions (less than 1/3 in the form of relief) and half in the southern regions. WFP distributed about 129 MT in Merca district in Lower Shabelle region in April 2001 in the form of food for work and social support. In Rabdure district, Bakol region they distributed 67 MT. In the Northwest 294 MT were distributed and 72 MT in the Northeast.

During the four first months of the year, **ICRC** has distributed a total of 177 MT, including non-food items and seeds.

HEALTH

Thus far in 2001, southern Somalia's annual *cholera* outbreak has generated only half the number of cases as last year. After a large increase in the number of cases in mid-March, the number of admissions to Cholera Treatment Centres (CTCs) has again reduced. Since 1 January, a total of 1256 cases and 104 deaths have been recorded, leaving an overall Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of 8.2 percent.

Following rumours of a *meningitis* outbreak in Hargeisa, only one of nine samples was confirmed positive for the disease. Since the start of the year, nine cases of *rabies* have been reported in Mogadishu, including two in the past month.

No significant changes in other key pathologies – including kala'azar and measles – were reported.

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

NW AND AWDAL

Rainfall received in May was good, following a late start in April. As a result both browse and pasture has improved. In contrast to this, peak planting activities of May (*Masiya*) were observed as below normal, due to declined economic capacity - mainly due to low income levels and inability to invest in tillage. Livestock migration is now taking place. Instability of the exchange rate has now lessened. A government ban on new construction activities is starting to have a serious impact on the availability of jobs. The border closure with Djibouti means a market has been lost to surplus sorghum producers but the lack of market keeps prices low in the region. A recent food aid shipment arrival in Berbera benefits the transport industry and related job opportunities, although rains in Ethiopia have limited transport movements.

SOOL

Overall *Gu* rainfall performance has been poor. Approximately 30% of the regional grazing areas are still dry or received little rain. Large-scale livestock migrations have taken place. Due to this high and unusual movement and the poor condition of livestock, the latter have not fully recovered. However milk production (camel) is relatively high, reflecting the high calving rate from last Deyr. Milk is now the main source of food and income. At the end of May, the SSh rate improved against the \$ from 19,000 to 14,000, due to UAE lifting the ban - but the impact will be short-lived as the market is small and the ports are closing. Price of food and non-food essentials remain constant and relatively high. Rains mean recovery for pastoral groups but not urban poor and IDPs. Sorghum and maize are in short supply in markets due to heavy rains in Region V, Ethiopia and therefore blocked transport routes.

SANAG AND TOGDHEER

Although late, *Gu* rains have been good in parts of the *Haud* area where rains were limited, livestock migration to Ethiopia and Odweine district has taken place. 70-80% of *berkads* and *balleys* are either filled or half-filled. Milk accessibility is therefore increasing in most pastoral areas. Late rains caused increased deaths of new-born sheep and the sale of breeding and pack animals. In agro-pastoral areas area, the cultivated area is severely reduced (by 65-70%) due to low income levels (livestock ban) and the late *Gu* rains. Poor urban families' are currently worst off as the rains have less positive impact on their livelihoods, compared to pastoralists - and inflation and lack of job opportunities continue. The lifting of the livestock ban by the UAE increased the value of the SSh. The recent border closure with Djibouti cut a small livestock marketing outlet. Fishing activities off the Sanag coast have stopped due to the seasonal onset of the high seas.

S NUGAL & N-MUGDUG

Gu rains were late and poor although migration possibilities exist, eastwards and westwards. High speed winds from south are blowing earlier than normal and induced early drying of both browse/pasture and soil moisture. Water availability is slightly below normal. There is a lack of run-off water used to fill most of the earthen dams or *Ballies*. Most *berkads* are 70 -80% filled in terms of volume with 20-25% of *berkads* holding less than a third their capacity. Compared to conditions experienced during April, the livestock condition has improved. Camel reproduction is at normal rates and milk production levels have increased due to improved pasture condition. However, it is much poorer than normal *Gu*' seasons and may dry up and deteriorate earlier than normal. Lack of access to livestock drugs due to the economic crisis may limit the control of any disease outbreaks.

BARI

The *Gu* rains and importantly the run-off from highland to lowland areas is generating pasture and livestock recovery and therefore milk production for consumption and sale. How long the positive effects of the rains will last is uncertain as the rainy season is not quite finished and the windy Hagai season not yet started. The seasonal increase of temperatures in Bosasso and closure of the sea-port have resulted in migrations of people to inland areas, where it's cooler and milk availability is good. The worst impact of these factors is felt by the IDPs for whom there are now less job or money making opportunities. In Bosasso labour rates have risen though job opportunities are few. The value of the SSh rose by nearly 20% after UAE announced lifting of the ban. This will have very limited impact as it is a small market. Local cereal prices remain constant while imported prices rose further. Livestock prices have risen by 10-20% as animals are being fattened and not sold.

N-NUGAL AND S-BARI

Overall *Gu* rains were late and mediocre. Stress was extremely high before the rains arrived and a lot of family credit was sought (particularly to pay for water trucking). Most *berkads* are now reported refilled. Concern exists about whether grass availability in the Hagai will be sufficient. Now livestock are recovering and milk production is again good in pastoral households, more food is available in the form of milk and meat. The price of livestock is rising. This climatically improved situation may not last long while inflation and the ban continues. Closure of Bosasso seaport will reduce further the economic activity. Over-fishing of lobster is evidenced by very small catches. Petty traders are earning little income and micro credit NGOs are recording a much higher default rate. Business failures are now common. Government employees and wage labourers are hardest hit.

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

GEDO

No *Gu* rains were received in May which is not normal and has adversely affected both livestock and crop production in the region. Most of the rainfed crops in northern districts have already failed. Most of the water catchments have dried up. Huge livestock migration, particularly in the northern districts of *Dolow*, *Bhawa* and *Lugh* have taken place as cattle herders search for better grazing opportunities. In northern Gedo, there was a sharp increase in local cereal prices by almost 50-60% and a decrease in the supply of maize which has squeezed the budget in poor households and will have nutritional implications. All Food Economy groups are all vulnerable in the current situation. In South Gedo, the market situation and the crop establishment conditions were much more favorable.

HIRAN

Rainfall has been poor and scatty, pastoral areas have received more than agro-pastoralists and riverine areas. River levels have been high but few people have benefitted (except vegetable growers) because of the cost of fuel. Pasture and grazing has improved but quantity and quality is poor compared to normal *Gu* season. The condition of cattle and shoats has improved slightly but the production of milk and meat are below normal as there is not sufficient pasture and grazing for both maintenance and reproduction. Prices are still high. Camels are fully recovered. Rain-fed crop situation is very poor and well below normal, crops have not fully developed. The price of pump irrigation is high. Skilled and unskilled labour opportunities are below normal compared to average *Gu*. Many people have resorted to collecting bush products, flooding the market. Cereal prices are steady although sesame has increased by 32% compared to last month. Terms of Trade remain normal and ratio of income from livestock, livestock products and employment is still the favorite method for poor households to get cheap cereals.

LOWER SHABELLE

Most parts of the region have received adequate rainfall improving water availability. Water catchments are full except in *Kurtun-warey*, *Brava* and *Sablale* where rainfall was below average. Pasture and grazing has improved but accessibility to the traditional grazing area towards *Wanle-weyn* is limited by cattle rustlers. The condition of Livestock, particularly cattle has improved, production is increasing, especially milk. Animals have moved away from the riverine area because of tse-tse fly infestation. The Price of live animals remain high. In both rain fed and irrigated areas, crop germination (maize, sorghum and cowpea) is good and they are well established. Farmers are still performing hand-weeding operations. Depleted cereal stocks have effected poor wealth groups but their food security position has improved by the availability of agricultural work involving weeding as well as the collection of wild vegetables, wild fruits, grasses and petty trade. Locally produced cereal has increased in price in local markets and the instability of the Somali shilling is continuing to create market disruption for imported commodities. Cholera, severe diarrhea and a deadly strain of malaria has also been reported in some districts.

BAKOL

The *Gu* rains were unsatisfactory in May particularly for many places in the high potential sorghum production area. Crop performance is likely to be poor due to moisture stress at the developmental stage. Already maize has reached wilting point and is unlikely to recover. If rains return by the end of the first week of June sorghum may make a recovery. Livestock condition is below normal because of the moderate availability of good pasture and grazing conditions. The purchasing power of labour dependent households who purchase the bulk of their food are feeling the stress and poor pastoralists and poor agro-pastoralists are also expressing concern if crops fail. The price of Livestock as well as their products remain favorable, although the price of cattle has started to decrease gradually due to the fear of drought. The price of imported commodities are still high and not affordable and the price of sorghum is increasing.

BAY

Scattered rain with low density has been reported throughout the region and cricket damage to crops has been observed in agricultural areas. Local catchments are empty due to low rainfall and some of the crops have already failed due to no rain at all. Agricultural employment has decreased as a result of low rainfall and this has affected the daily income of poor wealth groups. Local farmers started to reduce selling their stock due to rain scarcity therefore the price of stable food has increased by 30% compared to last month. Livestock condition is normal although cattle are decreasing in body weight and milk production. There has been some livestock movement as herders search for improved water and pasture. Somali Shilling devaluation is keeping prices high and affecting the poor and urban wealth groups. Population movements from Bay to Lower Shabelle, has been observed, particularly amongst young people searching for job opportunities. Overall the region is near crop failure (sorghum).

JUBA VALLEY

The overall food security situation is normal, despite the fact that the price of staple food is high. However possibilities of income opportunity and coping mechanisms are still functional. *Gu* rains were good, hence crop, livestock, pasture and grazing improved significantly. Inflation has caused high prices and affected the price of transportation. A major concern is the fall in price of cattle in Garissa due to seasonal demand. This may affect the purchasing power and TT for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Poor agro-pastoral groups have been very badly hit by inflation. They have little grain reserves due to the poor Deyr crop. In addition they are tied to their farms for weeding.

COWPEA BELT

There has been localized rains in *Hobyo* and *Harar dere* as well as in coastal settlement areas. Pockets of rain shortages have been reported from *Adale* to *Elder* as well as *Harar dere* to *Adado*, *Dusamareb*, *Abudwaq* and South-west of *Galkaio*. There has been availability of grazing pasture inland and at the coast but there are pockets which have not been replenished by rain. Food availability is moderate in central regions and higher prices have been experienced due to inflation and increased transportation costs. Livestock condition is normal and they are recovering from the vulnerability of the last *Jilal* producing meat and milk for local consumption. Farming activities including, weeding, replanting and fencing are taking place. Crop condition of cowpea, sorghum and water melon is normal for this time of year.

MIDDLE SHABELLE

Good rains have been received and water catchments are full, green pasture and good grazing are available in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Animals are gaining weight and the production of milk and meat has improved. The price of livestock is high. Irrigated and rainfed areas are requiring intense weeding and the rate per *jibal* for this work has increased greatly due to urgency and inflation. Maize and Sorghum are performing well. The river burst its banks in *Duduble Mahaday* and two other areas in *Jowhar* district. However, local people managed to shore up the banks but the situation will be monitored closely for further developments. Major staple foods are available in the local markets. The supply of maize and cowpea is continuously decreasing and consequently their prices slightly increased. Imported commodities and energy prices remain high which affects urban and riverine food economy groups.



GU Crop Establishment- preliminary review



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

ISSUED JUNE 2001

FOOD SECURITY ANALYSIS UNIT

Note: This summary should be considered an introduction to the *Gu* 2001 cropping season in S. Somalia. FSAU crop establishment field activities have taken place in late May and continue through early June. An updated report will be released by the end of June.

1. RAINFALL

The onset of the *Gu* rains took place in the first dekad of April. First rains mainly benefited pastoralists. The *Gu* growing season really started with the second and third dekads of April when light to average rainfall was reported almost everywhere in S. Somalia. This was late compared to normal, but not later than last year when rains also started in April. Rainfall in the third dekad was particularly well distributed and covered most agricultural areas of S. Somalia. Unfortunately, spatial rainfall distribution was much more disparate in May this year than last year. Intensity was also lower (last year, *Gu* rains were mainly concentrated during the first half of May). Significant areas have been reported to have crop emergence by the end of April followed by good rains sustaining the growing stages (L./M. Shabelle, L./M. Juba, south Gedo). On the other hand, shortage of water has had a decisive negative impact on crops during May in Bay, Bakool, north Gedo (see map).

2. IMPLICATIONS OF DEVALUATION ON CROP ESTABLISHMENT

Further extension of cropped area has certainly been hindered by the excessive rates that were requested for tractor hiring (sometimes above 100,000 Ssh /hour). Expensive fuel directly resulted from the devaluation of the Somali shilling (see market page in this monthly report). Agricultural labour such as land preparation and planting represented good opportunities to generate income for the poor riverine and agro-pastoral households. In the context of the devaluation, the rate of labour wages doubled in some places.

3. SUMMARY BY REGION

SHABELLE VALLEY.

In Lower Shabelle, the good start of the *Gu* rainy season encouraged farmers to plant more land. Agricultural activities started to be intensified during the last dekad of April. Hand-weeding operations went on in May. Maize in irrigated areas started to be planted earlier than cereals in rain-fed areas. In May, the rains concentrated in the first dekad. Adequate rainfall was received in most parts of the region. In general, crop situation was good, both in rain-fed and irrigated areas. Availability of agricultural employment was good and labor wages were favorable for job seekers. In Afgoi, where farmers mainly cultivate maize intercropped with cowpea, dry planting was marginal. In the Wanle-weyn area, sorghum planting started on dry soil and was generalized after the good rains that were received in the second half of April (high frequency, almost every day up to the end of the month). Sorghum crop establishment was successful. In Middle Shabelle, *Gu* rains started in April in the three agricultural districts of the region (Jowhar, Balad and Mahaday). This season, most of the planting has been done manually. Due to high fuel prices, tractor hiring became prohibitive for small-scale farmers (80,000–100,000 Ssh/hour). As a result, the potential cereal production of the region may be reduced. Good rains with good distribution were received in May. First weeding was progressing normally in both irrigated and rain-fed areas. Weeding rates greatly increased due to the concentration of work in a short period of time and due to inflation. All crops were performing well. In Hiran region, localized rainfall occurred in the second dekad of April and the heavy rains that were

received throughout the region on the 23rd of April were beneficial to crops. However, overall, rainfall can still be considered as poor in the region. The cropped area will be far below normal because of lack of water (poor rainfall, low level of the river) combined with high fuel cost (7,000 Ssh /liter). To achieve better results, late rains and easy access to water from the river will be essential during the growing period.

JUBA VALLEY.

Normal planting and crop establishment occurred in the Juba valley. In western Lower Juba, *Gu* rains started late March/early April. Favorable rain distribution in Badhade and Afmadow resulted in good germination. In eastern L. Juba, good rains were received in April. In Jammame, good rains were received from mid-April onwards. *Gu* rains were also normal in May. The crop situation is overall normal. However, poor agro-pastoral wealth groups had no cereal stocks while they were involved in weeding in their own farms. In Gedo, *Gu* rainy season has sporadically started in the second dekad of April. In the month of April, rainfall was close to normal in the southern parts of Gedo (south of Garbaharey). On the other hand, it was well below normal in northern Gedo where agro-pastoral populations had to face germination failure. In Dolo, only 80 mm were recorded in March/April. Compared to the previous *Gu*, less irrigated farms were active than during the previous *Gu* (low prices at harvesting time and absence of market acting as disincentives). In Bardera (southern Gedo), the well distributed heavy rains of mid-April were followed by sporadic rains. Cropped area was near normal in rain-fed areas. A slight decrease in irrigated maize planted area was observed due to high fuel prices. No *Gu* rains were received in May throughout the region. In the northern districts, most of the rain-fed crops wilted or totally failed due to lack of water.

SORGHUM BELT.

In Bakool region, the first rains were localized and unsatisfactorily, but it gradually improved in the third dekad of April. Spatial distribution was particularly poor (rains especially localized in the southern and eastern parts of Bakool). Well distributed rains across the region were only received on the 22nd of April. Germination started in dry planted areas, but rains ceased early in May. In some areas, no rain fell after April. In Huddur, the rain-gauge recorded 138 mm in April/May. Elberde recorded 110 mm in one day. Due to moisture stress, prospects for cereal production are bad for the high potential sorghum area of Bakool. In order to recover, sorghum would need rain with appropriate timing in June. In Bay region, *Gu* season started on the 13th of April in western parts of Bur/Hacaba district, followed by Baidoa, Q/dere and Dinsor on the 18-19th of April. The coverage of the rain was poor. Pre-rain plantings benefited from the first rains. In Baidoa town, rainfall recorded during April was slightly below 100 mm. No rainfall occurred in May in the surroundings of Baidoa. In May, only scattered rains with low density were observed in some localized areas. Poor crop standing was common due to lack of water and significant damages caused by crickets to seedlings. In some areas, crops already failed. Subsequently, the decrease in agricultural employment directly affected the daily income of the poor wealth groups. End of May, sorghum was generally at a critical point, but could still partially recover if good additional rains were received in June. The implications of a crop failure would expand to the neighboring regions (during the last *Gu*, Bay region provided almost 70% of the total sorghum production of S. Somalia). Household cereal stocks will definitely have to be considered as a key factor in the analysis of the food security situation in Bay region this year.

COWPEA BELT. *Gu* 2001 rains started on time in the second dekad of April. Late April, ongoing farming activities were sowing, replanting and fencing. Weeding went on in May.

Somalia: *Gu* Crop Establishment May 2001

