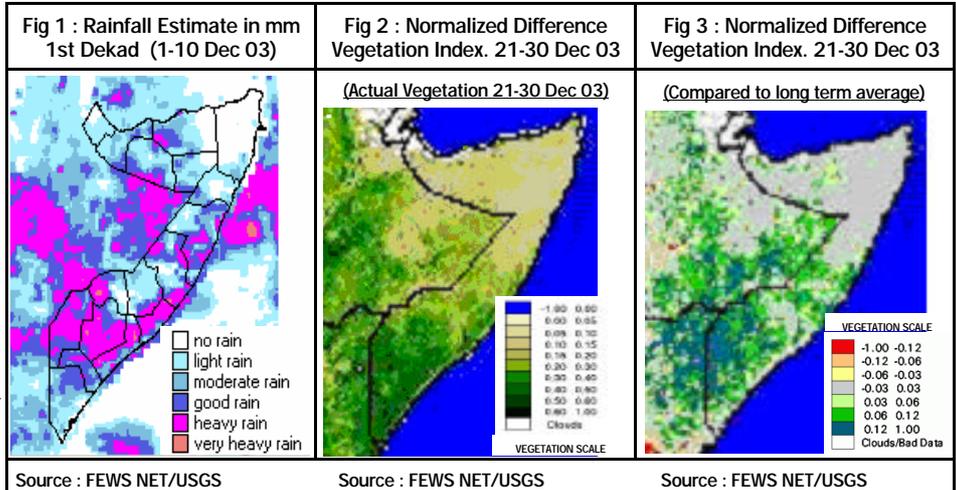


HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sool Plateau Update** : Rains of low intensity and limited spatial coverage fell in the first week of December but did little to alleviate the current humanitarian crisis in Sool Plateau. Nutritional status surveys reflect the deteriorating food security situation of residents. An acute malnutrition rate of 18.9% (W/H<2 z-score or oedema) was found during the first round of Sool Plateau sentinel site surveillance exercise in November/December 2003. A UNICEF led mission in mid-December 2003 also recorded an equally high malnutrition rate in Sool Plateau of Sanaag (4,841 children screened). The rate was significantly higher in Sool Plateau of Sool Region (2,049 children were screened). Civil insecurity in the area is now threatening to disrupt humanitarian relief operations in the region.
- **Drought in Hawd of Todgheer** : An inter-agency rapid assessment led by the FSAU found that the poor and lower levels of the middle wealth pastoral group are facing a high risk of food shortage, largely as a result of poor *Gu* 2003 and failed *Deyr* 2003 rains. Affected households will need to be closely monitored during the harsh, dry *Jilaal* season. For more information on the drought stricken region, see page 2.
- **Galgadud Region** : UN-OCHA Somalia and FSAU carried out a low level mission to Galagadud (13-20 December 2003) to districts where people had been displaced following civil insecurity in the region. This displacement, combined with a two month delay in the onset of the *Deyr* rains has undermined agricultural and livestock activities, increasing the risk of food insecurity. A Humanitarian Response Group (HRG) meeting to discuss the current crisis was held on 8 January 2004. For more information contact : calum.mclean@undp.org
- **Civil Insecurity** : Civil Insecurity continues to present a challenge to the people of Somalia and humanitarian organizations attempting to strengthen the livelihoods of the Somali people. As reported by IRIN at the end of December, militia from Puntland occupied Las Anod and other parts of Sanag region. The government of Somaliland has deployed troops to positions outside Aynabo. Also various incidents in Kismayo and Lower Juba suggest a worsening of civil insecurity, as does militia activity in El Wak town, Gedo Region, during December.
- **Somaliland *Gu/Karan* 2003 Crop Production** : The total *Gu/Karan* 2003 crop production is very good and the highest recorded figure in post-war years. The *Gu/Karan* season produced 24,915 Mt of sorghum and 3,289 Mt of maize. Some of the reasons for this good production are very good *Karan* rains, improved and dressed seeds provided by CINS, land preparation on time which was enhanced by IFAD providing tractors on credit. For a copy of this report please contact the FSAU Field Team Manager : Yusuf@fsau.or.ke
- **A series of FSAU field workshops in Galkayo and Garowe** from January 13 –16 2004 are being held to assess the severity of reported pastoral stress in the areas of Western Mudug and south of Sool and implications on food security. The results will be presented at the HRG meeting on North Somalia (20 Jan) and the SACB FSRDC meeting (21 Jan).

Summary of December Rainfall and Vegetation Performance

- Figure 1 shows that moderate to heavy rain fell in most parts of southern and central Somalia during the first ten days of December (1st dekad). There was insignificant rainfall in the second and third dekads of December throughout Somalia so these images have not been shown.
- In Figure 2 the NDVI satellite imagery (21-30 Dec 03) shows dense vegetation in Juba Valley, Gedo and Bay Regions.
- Figure 3 shows that vegetation conditions in southern Somalia are very good compared to the long term average (going back to 1981). However, vegetation and fodder conditions in the north and parts of central regions remain poor, compared to the long term average. *The situation of pastoralists living in these areas remains of great concern.*
- The early December rains also improved vegetation conditions in Hiran and parts of Galgadud region where *Deyr* rainfall were initially poor. However, insecurity in Galgadud may keep pastoralists from taking advantage of the improved grazing areas.
- In southern Somalia, the improved vegetative conditions will help moderate the normally harsh, dry *Jilaal* season beginning in January and ending in March.
- The *Deyr* Crop Establishment exercise is taking place in southern Somalia. Information from the field suggests crop performance is normal, despite the late start to the *Deyr* season. Exceptions include parts of Bakol, Hiran and Cowpea belt where insufficient rain fell. *Deyr* crop predictions will be issued in FSAU's February Monthly Report.



FSAU's Key Funding Agencies :

European Commission



United States Agency for International Development



FSAU's Key Technical Partners :



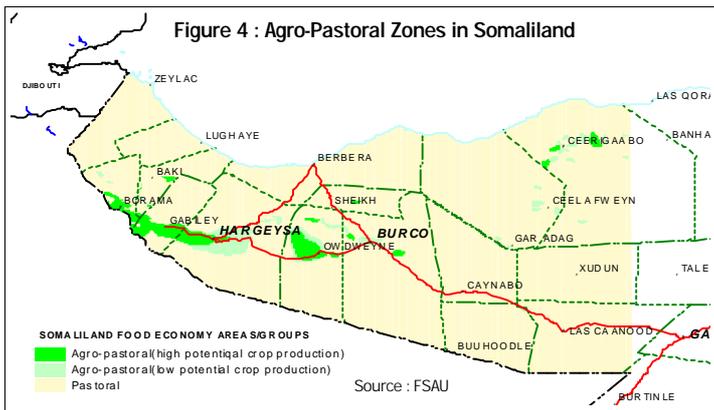
GU AND KARAN 2003 CEREAL PRODUCTION IN SOMALILAND

- The average cereal production of Somaliland amounts to about 17,000 MT per year (roughly 6% of the annual cereal production of Somalia).
- The total *Gu/Karan* 2003 crop production was very good and the highest recorded figure in post-war years. The season produced 24,915 Mt of sorghum (88%) and 3,289 Mt of maize (12%)
- Gabiley made a significant contribution to this total figure. An estimated 20,100 MT (71%). For in depth technical analysis on the successful harvest. Please contact : Yusuf@fsau.or.ke for the his *Gu/Karan* 2003 Somaliland Cereal Production Report.

SUMMARY OF INTER-AGENCY RAPID ASSESSEMENT FINDINGS OF THE DROUGHT STRICKEN REGION IN THE HAWD OF TODGHEER PASTORAL ZONE

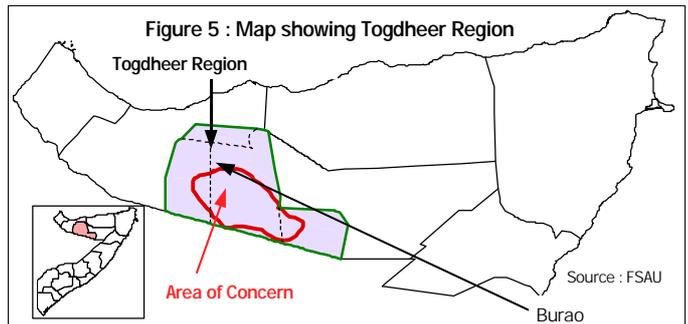
During November, Somaliland authorities and relief agencies working in the *Hawd* of Togdheer appealed for assistance for the Togdheer drought stricken pastoral area. This area had suffered poor *Gu* 2003 rains and failed *Deyr* 2003 rains. Subsequently, the SACB FSRDC and an HRG called on the FSAU to take the technical lead in an inter-agency assessment to determine how serious the situation was likely to become. As a result, the FSAU, SC-UK, FEWS-Net, Oxfam, COOPI, VETAID and relevant Somaliland Ministries participated in a rapid field assessment to the Hawd of Togdheer pastoral zone from 24-28 December.

The map below (Figure 5) shows the most affected area of Togdheer region. It is estimated that up to 10,000 households in this area, mainly the pastoral poor group and lower levels of the middle pastoral wealth group, will experience food shortages. Two consecutive seasons of poor rainfall have led to a deterioration in livestock body condition, in turn undermining livestock production (milk and meat) and access to income options (declining livestock prices). The middle and better off groups had already migrated out of the drought area to areas where grazing is better and have managed to preserve their livestock, but the poorer pastoralists were unable to pay transport costs to move their animals. During *Jilaal* these families are likely to face a food deficit and the situation will require close monitoring. For further details of the three stages of suggested interventions and a copy of the inter-agency rapid assessment report (to be released at the HRG meeting on 20 Jan), please contact Abdinasir.sobe@fsau.or.ke.



RESULTS FROM FIRST ROUND OF SOOL PLATEAU SURVEILLANCE

Results from the first round of Sool Plateau surveillance are now available. These statistics will be compared with statistics from the second round of surveillance, due to take place in January (security permitting). Trend monitoring and in depth analysis will be provided by the FSAU in February. For information on results from the first round of surveillance, please contact charles@fsau.or.ke



HIGHLIGHTS FROM FSAU NUTRITION UPDATE

In Sool Plateau, the ongoing sentinel nutritional surveillance indicates a worrying nutrition situation with an acute malnutrition rate of 18.9% (W/H <-2 z-score/oedema) (Dec 2003 Nutrition Update). See also the Highlights on Page 1.

In the insecure region of Benadir, (districts around Mogadishu) malnutrition is particularly evident among displaced persons and the poor. In one month, 30% of children attending health facilities in the area were identified as malnourished.

Recent nutrition surveys in IDP (Internally Displaced People) settings indicate a poor nutrition situation. Nutrition surveys amongst IDP'S conducted in Hargeisa, Bossaso and Burao between June 2001 and Oct. 2003 found global acute malnutrition rates ranging between 15.3% and 18.7%. An analysis of the various studies on IDP's in Somalia indicate that they are disadvantaged by a combination of factors including : poor shelter, poor sanitation, limited access to sources of income, weak coping strategies, limited access to remittances and social support.

It is estimated that 50,000 people, mainly pastoralists from Northern Somalia, have crossed into the Somali Region of Ethiopia (Region V) due to the delay and poor performance of the 2003 *Deyr* rains. However these areas are not much better off as parts of Gode, Warder, Afder and Degahabour zones have also been affected by drought. Recent nutritional surveys indicate that the situation continues to deteriorate in these zones.

For further information on FSAU nutrition surveys and related nutritional information : please contact : noreen.prendiville@fsau.or.ke

Terms of Trade in Burao Market - Togdheer Region

Maintaining good terms of trade between milk and/or livestock and cereals is critical for the survival of pastoral households, particularly in drought years and during the harsh, dry *Jilaal* season. As mentioned above, the drought over the past two seasons has adversely affected animal body condition in Togdheer, lowering livestock prices. Low prices have a direct impact on a household's income, particularly amongst poor groups who rely heavily on the sale of livestock and milk. Declining terms of trade for pastoralists are evident in Figure 6, which shows that it takes two or three goats to obtain a sack of rice now, whereas only one goat is required in a non-drought year.

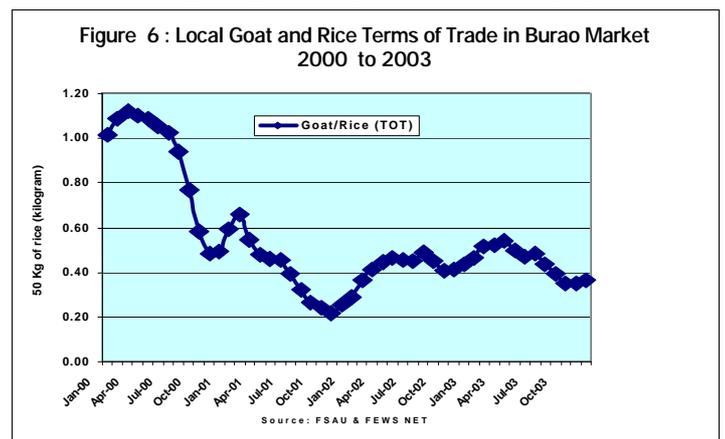


Table 1 : Livestock Export Table for December 2003

	September	October	November	December
Bossaso*				
Camel	618	160	8	514
Cattle	8,879	10,250	5,773	3,953
Shoats	110,380	161,795	114,832	114,890
Sub-Total Boss.	119,877	172,205	120,613	119,357
Berbera**				
Camel	3,144	2,775	0	1,507
Cattle	7,835	7,726	9,519	13,961
Shoats	49,863	40,262	72,819	76,720
Sub-Total Berb.	60,842	50,763	82,338	92,188
Total Number of Exports	180,719	222,968	202,951	211,545

* Bossaso Port Authority

** Berbera Port Authority

There was no significant increase in the total number of livestock exported during December. In parts of the north and central areas, livestock body condition has become so poor that when rain fell in the first dekad, pastoralists kept back their animals for fattening up. An increased demand for animals is expected before the *Haj* and fattened animals will fetch more money. The Somaliland authorities continue to visit Saudi Arabia to discuss the lifting of the Somali livestock importation ban. Rumours continue to circulate that Yemeni authorities are also considering whether or not to lift the ban.

Food Relief Distributions During December 2003

In the month of December CARE distributed a total of 1,410 MT to a total of 7,614 beneficiaries. This was in the form of food for work.

- 570 MT distributed in Hiran,
- 120 MT distributed in Middle Shabelle,
- 180 MT distributed in Bakol,
- 540 MT distributed in Bay.

In the first round of emergency food distributions to the drought affected Sool Plateau, WFP Somalia distributed 732 tonnes of mixed food commodities. For more information on WFP food relief distributions please contact : Lubna.alaman@wfp.org

REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS

References to Food Economy Zones (FEZ's) relate to information concerning different Food Economy and Livelihood Zones. For a map of these areas please contact : fsauinfo@fsau.or.ke or look at www.unsomalia.net under the 'FSAU' webpage and Maps.

AWDAL & NORTH WEST REGION

Good rains fell in the agro pastoral areas and both livestock and crop conditions were good during December. In the highland pastoral zone rains were also good and the area continued to host animals from *Hawd* pastoral zone and Ethiopia's zone V. Both the coastal and sub-coastal belts received rains during December. Heavy rains and low temperatures caused hundreds of deaths (according to elders) particularly of shoats. Many of these animals had been in a weakened state after long migrations. The area is currently hosting animals from *Hawd* of Hargeisa, Ethiopia and the Highlands. Like last year, many animals from Shinnile district in Ethiopia are expected to arrive in this area following a poor *Karan* season in Ethiopia's region V. Good amounts of rainfall fell in the *Hawd* Pastoral zone except in districts south east of Hargeisa.

NORTH NUGAL AND SOUTH BARI

Conditions have slightly improved as a result of good rains during December, although the food security outlook is mixed from district to district. Some pastoralists have been able to move from drought areas to those areas that received rainfall such as Bari, the coastal areas of Eil and Dangoroyo, Burtinle District and the coastal areas of Mudug. However, Lower Nugal and the *Hawd* of Garowe are still experiencing difficult conditions. The FSAU Field Monitor reports the observation of destitute pastoralists around Garowe town. A new trend in the pastoral lifestyle has emerged involving the availability of large two tier trucks which move animals quickly and efficiently to areas of rainfall. In recent months however, increased expenditure on water, truck hiring, reduced income from livestock and associated products has undoubtedly depleted livelihoods in this region. Livestock abortion due to hunger, trekking and fatigue has also been a severe problem. Despite these conditions the rains are improving the situation. Milk had become scarce—and expensive in markets but prices have started to drop again.

SOOL REGION

The severe drought in Sool Region continues and the latest nutritional situation (see page 1) reflects a deteriorating situation. On 4 and 5 December, the western fringe of Sool Plateau received showers which moved westwards to the Upper Nugal Valley. These rains triggered significant migratory movements. Prior to the December showers, a large proportion of Sool of Sanag pastoralists (45-55%) had made the longest-ever out migration to Sool of Bari and coastal grazing areas using trucks. The remaining Sool of Sanag pastoralists opted to move to the areas where it had recently rained mainly in the Sool plateau of Sool region. Pastoralists from Lower Nugal also moved to these areas. **Given the low rainfall intensity and limited spatial coverage the huge in migration has exceeded the rangeland carrying capacity and pasture regeneration has been stunted. These rains have had little or no impact on the humanitarian crisis and the food security situation is not expected to show any substantial improvement in the near future.** In fact rather than improving the situation, it appears that the incidence of disease and animal mortality is rising dramatically given the huge concentration of livestock, combined with the fact that large numbers of weakened livestock have assembled together in one place. In the lower Nugal of Taleh district the situation continues to remain serious with reports of destitute households collecting in main urban centres such as Taleh and Halin. Upper Nugal valley has benefited from sporadic rains, however, the majority of camel herders have already migrated to the *Hawd* in search of better pasture. In the *Hawd*, South of Las Caanood, received localised rains which replenished *berkads*. Buhoodle town however did not benefit from these rains and the price of water has soared from 7,000-10,000 Ssh per drum to 35,000 Ssh per drum.

BARI

In Dharoor Food Economy zone, rains fell in all districts apart from Aboob and Uur Aleed. Uur Aleed is suffering serious water shortages and transported water is very expensive, three times the normal cost for the time of year. Access to and availability of pasture and water has improved in Noobir, Haluule, Dul-Hafun, Maglal and Dharoor plains. *Berkads* and *Balleys* have been replenished. Improved pasture and grazing has enhanced animal condition, production and reproduction. Normal livestock conception and calving/kidding rates are reported but the survival rate of calves is below normal especially in herds that gave birth before mid November because pastoralists slaughtered calves as soon as they were born because of the delayed *Deyr* rains. In the coastal food economy zone and urban areas (Bossaso, Iskushuban and B/Beyla Districts) the situation is mixed but in general intensive and well distributed *Deyr* rains fell in November and early in December benefiting major grazing areas in the coastal and sub-coastal plains of the region. Livestock migration to the seasonal coastal plains has taken place. A good supply of milk has been reported in the markets of coastal towns/villages of Hafun, Hurdia, Ceeldhidir, Kulule and Bela Beyla. The increasing trend of livestock export has changed after the Puntland authority made a decision last month to limit livestock export to the UAE, Oman and Yemen. The decision aimed to improve livestock value in those markets. However, discussions with several livestock traders seems to indicate that the price of animals has not yet improved and some argue that Somaliland traders benefited from the Puntland decision and took up the excess slack. In Iskubushan and Beyla Beyla districts an influx of animals has created concern over early depletion of pasture and water. People have been migrating to the coastal fishing areas in search of self employment /labour.

REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS

MIDDLE AND LOWER JUBA

The overall food security situation of the region is normal. Good rains fell during the first dekad of December. These rains improved crop condition as well as pasture and browsing in the rangelands. Livestock productivity is normal with no outbreak of diseases. Initially the closure of Garissa cattle market created a low demand for animals in local markets thereby depressing prices. However the reopening of Garissa market is expected to improve livestock prices once again and increase overall cross border trade. Recurrent insecurity and clan conflicts in parts of Hager and Buale districts are likely to diminish pastoralists' access to the wet season grazing areas. According to information from MSF therapeutic Feeding Centre in Marerey (Jibil District), the trend of severe malnutrition cases admitted to their facility has been increasing in the past month. FSAU will follow up on the issue in next month's report.

BAY

Good rainfall fell in December although the intensity and duration varied from one district to the next. In Baidoa and Bur-hakaba crop performance was observed to be poor as a result of early moisture stress. The quality of pasture in these districts is also poor. However, in general rainfall replenished most water catchments in pastoral and agro pastoral areas. Well established crops have been observed in Dinsor and Qansx-Dheere. Livestock movements within Bay region continue and the area is still hosting animals from Bakol, where Deyr rains were poor. Market activities in the region are normal. Livestock prices are normal. The price of sorghum and maize has slightly increased due to demand from neighbouring regions (Bakol and Hiran). Imported food prices slightly increased in December due to the road closure between Mogadishu and Baidoa. Food security conditions are considered to be normal.

LOWER AND MIDDLE SHABELLE and COWPEA BELT

During December, the Shabelle river level rose, enhancing the use of gravity irrigation in the Lower and Middle Shabelle particularly for maize, fruit crops and vegetables. However, this unusual cresting has disrupted the flood recession cultivation in Kurtun-Warey agricultural area. Farmers are hoping that recession cultivation will start again in January 2004. Maize is at various stages in the crop cycle including the milk stage, full development and full maturity. Green maize cobs which have not reached full maturity are still being sold in markets as there is a demand for them. The coastal area of Merka and Brava are now experiencing two consecutive years of crop failure which includes the present Deyr season. In Middle and Lower Shabelle the area under cultivation will be less than usual this Deyr season for the following reasons : canals are silted over in Merka and Kurtun-Warey Districts; farmers have opted to grow sesame over maize as sesame is fetching a good price; an overlapping of the Hagai sesame and Deyr 2003/04 cropping seasons; recession cultivation in Sablaale and Kurtun-Warey has been delayed. The Deyr rains started late in the second dekad of Nov and ended in the first dekad of Dec. The localized heavy rainfall across the districts of Lower and Middle Shabelle encouraged rain fed farmers to plant sorghum and sesame. Sesame production is likely to be higher than a usual Deyr season. The cowpea crops in the cowpea growing areas of Central regions are expected to have a near crop failure due to insufficient rain for growth and development. Pasture is good throughout Lower and Middle Shabelle and parts of cowpea belt and cattle, camel and goats are recovering normal body weight. There are plenty of labour opportunities for poor riverine and agro pastoral groups and in general the food security situation in these regions is normal.

HIRAN

Even though Deyr rains were delayed by seven weeks, their intensity and coverage have been normal and water catchments have been replenished. The river level also slightly increased which has enhanced irrigation access for pump irrigation farmers. Irrigated crops are now established in different stages and in good condition and free of pests. Livestock condition has improved in the last month, pasture and grazing has also improved and split rural households have been re-united and returned back to their original grazing lands. The price of milk has declined by 60% as compared to last month. The continuous movement of livestock due to the prolonged dry spell has ended. Browsing animals have sufficient pasture and grazing for the next month, which should also be sufficient for the coming Jilal. The food security situation has improved with increased milk production and sales improving the purchasing power of the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist. Significantly, cereal access for poor households remains below normal.

GEDO

Overall Deyr rainfall in south Gedo was considered normal with the exception of Burdubo District. Pasture, grazing and access to water in all food economy zones is considered slightly above normal and should last until the end of the Jilal season. The crop establishment situation is looking mixed but in general the household food security situation is good for the end of the Deyr season. Terms of trade for poor pastoral and agro-pastoral groups are good. Milk production and reproduction is good. Trade routes have however been disrupted by persistent insecurity in Bay region, reducing the movement of trucks from Mogadishu through Gedo to Ethiopia and Kenya.

BAKOL

In general Deyr rains were below normal, however, parts of Rabdure, Elberde and Huddur districts received rains of good intensity. These rains improved pastoral grazing conditions. No significant rainfall fell in Tieglow District in December. The larger livestock herds had already moved out of Huddur and Tieglow Districts to Elberde and Rabdure and there are now fears of overgrazing. Crop conditions in the region are extremely poor, as insufficient rain fell. Food security indicators (rainfall, crop, pasture and migration) suggest that the poor agro-pastoral groups in almost all districts of Bakol are at risk of food shortage and they are coping by gathering and selling natural resources (sticks and poles), out-migration, selling of grass and wild fodder (from acacia) and reduced food intake. Cereal prices are steadily going up despite an increased supply of cereals from Bay region following a truce between factions fighting close to Baidoa. Cereals are moving through Bakol to neighbouring Ethiopia. Export quality male shoats and cattle are fetching better prices, following a large demand from the Gulf for the Haj and slaughtering houses in Mogadishu. The price of local goats has decreased. *In December, OCHA Somalia carried out a one day information gathering exercise on IDP's in two locations in Wajid district of Bakol Region. For a copy of the report and recommendations please contact calum.mclean@undp.org. Two other missions have also visited the four displacement camps. In total its estimated that 8,586 people have been displaced by civil insecurity in Baidoa (Bay region) since August 2003.*

GALGADUD

Deyr rains were delayed for two months but commenced in the first week of December and fell in the three largest food economy zones : Ciid Pastoral; Addun pastoral; and the Agro-Pastoral zones. However, this rain did not fully replenish *berkads* and *ballis*. However, the rains have improved water availability, grazing and pasture in the short term and expenditure on purchasing water is no longer occurring. However, persistent civil insecurity in parts of Ciid pastoral (Herale area) and Agro-pastoral (El-bur) is increasing the risk of food shortage, as the civil insecurity has constrained normal ways of accessing food and income, particularly following the delayed Deyr rains. Poor pastoral households continue to cope through the collection and sale of firewood, construction stones and charcoal burning. *OCHA Somalia and FSAU carried out a rapid assessment of Galgadud region between 13-20 December. For a copy of the report and its findings please contact alex.williams@fsau.or.ke.*