

## **Gu 2003 Cereal Forecast Southern Somalia**

### **1. Overview**

Erratic and un-even distribution was a common feature of the 2003 gu rainfall across southern regions of Somalia. Almost maize and sorghum are rain-dependent. Poor rainfall occurrence and distribution negatively affected rainfed-maize crop establishment over southern regions of Somalia. Besides uneven rainfall, regional insecurity negatively affected specifically the sorghum planted area of Bay-sorghum basket of Somalia. Furthermore, poor irrigation infrastructure and inaccessibility contributed to the poor and reduced irrigated-maize cropped areas of the 2003 gu compared to the 2002 gu at southern regions of Somalia. The poor crop establishment of the 2003 gu is also blamed to soil insects (white grubs), grass-hoppers, stem borers and rats.

The total cropped area of the 2003 gu at southern regions of Somalia is estimated at 388,100 Ha(54% sorghum and 46% maize).The total cereal production of the 2003 gu expected from southern regions of Somalia is estimated at 214,920 Mt(32% sorghum and 68% maize)-lower 17% of the 2002 gu expected cereal production. In fact, the Bay region expect less cereal production in the 2003 gu(30,400Mt) than it was in the 2002-gu(68,100Mt). Similarly, low cereal production is expected in the 2003 gu(108,450Mt) from Lower Shabelle than it was in the 2002-gu(120,050Mt). In normal gu season, the Bay and Lower Shabelle had been contributing significantly cereal production to southern regions of Somalia.

#### **1. 2 Effect of flood on cropped area**

The river Shabelle and Juba reached full crest last dekad of April and first May of 2003 from the upper stream to the down stream. In the 2003-gu, the river Shabelle reached high water level, highest peak level(6m) at the up-stream(B/Weyne). At Bardera the river Juba reached maximum level(5m). Maximum levels of the two rivers at the up stream, disaster flood were expected at the Shabelle and Juba valley regions. The flooding of the two rivers coincided at the time of rainfall halt across the Shabelle valley regions. Moreover, the full crest of the two rivers did not persist long enough on the cropland areas of the Shabelle and Juba Valley regions.

Similar water level has been recorded in the Elnino of the 1997-deyr. Historically past flood of the Shabelle and Juba regions were recorded on the Deyr seasons. The river bed and main irrigation canals were silted up during the years of the post war. For that reason river overflowing, seepage and fragile parts of river Shabelle and Juba endangered the Riverine community of Lower and Middle Shabelle. However, the flood effect of the 2003 gu on cropped area was minor and beneficial for cash crop production(sesame and vegetables) and accessibility of grazing at later dates of water receding.

#### **1. 3 Maize**

The total expected maize production (68%) from southern Somalia has been projected at high risk of failure or extreme poor production in the worst scenario. In fact maize crop entered development stage without enough assimilates for grain filling across southern regions of Somalia. Rainfall is main factor of the poor expected maize production.

Moreover, poor irrigation infrastructure or inaccessibility affected the major producing areas of maize at Lower and Middle Shabelle regions. Furthermore, expensive diesel prices affected pump irrigated areas of Hiran and Gedo regions. For the above negative factors, approximately half of the total expected maize production from southern Somalia has been projected at risk of failure.

## **1. 4 Sorghum**

The total sorghum production (32%) expected from southern Somalia is more secure than maize production in this 2003 gu season. However, following events is foreseen interfere to the expected sorghum production of southern Somalia:

Outbreak of birds

Grain eating insects at sorghum milk stage

Smut diseases on sorghum grain developing

Insecurity at Baidoa and B/Hakaba

If one of the above negative events would materialize, drastic decline of sorghum production at southern Somalia is, certainly, expected at the final harvest estimates.

## **1. 5 Summing up**

- ◆ Overall cereal production of southern regions of Somalia is expected to be below normal. Nevertheless, following are regional contribution of the 2003-gu expected cereal production from southern Somalia: Lower Shabelle 58%, Bay region 14%, Middle Shabelle 13%, Gedo 7%, Lower Juba 3%, Middle Juba 3%, Hiran 1% and Bakool 1%
- ◆ Less cereal production is expected from major producing areas of Bay and Lower Shabelle. The worst affected regions in terms of cereal production in the 2003-gu: Hiran, Bay and Bakool.
- ◆ Cereal prices rose up at the affected regions-due to poor expectation of cereal harvest. Besides poor production, price increase of local cereal commodities will also have negative impact on livelihood of the poor agro-pastoral and Riverine FEGs of southern Somalia. The area of concern in terms of food insecurity is prioritised as follows: Bakool, Hiran and Bay regions. Regional insecurity might also exasperate cereal stocks at household level.