

OVERVIEW

In north of the country, the area affected by the current drought has now extended to include greater parts of Sool as well as Bari, Nugal and Mudug. A number of interventions are in place aimed at maintaining the nutritional status of the child population. Monitoring of all areas has intensified and further assessments will be undertaken.

In Gedo, Gedo Health Consortium has reported a significant increase in the numbers of severely malnourished children during December 2003. Follow up on this situation will be undertaken in the coming weeks to identify the specific factors that have caused this increase.

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Details of the new FSAU Nutrition manual and the Nutrition calendar for 2004 are presented in this issue.

LOWER NUGAL VALLEY FACES FOOD INSECURITY

Between 14th and 16th December 2003, FSAU in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO mobile teams conducted a rapid nutritional assessment in Talex District using MUAC for both under-fives and women aged 15-49 years. Results of the assessment showed a global acute malnutrition rate of 27% (MUAC <12.5cm) and a severe acute malnutrition of 5.8% (MUAC <11cm) of 175 under-five children randomly screened during the assessment. Though not directly comparable, reports from UNICEF/MOHL in Talex (Nov/Dec 2003) during their on-going screening exercise within the area revealed similar levels of malnutrition. Malnutrition rates among the 201 adult women (15-49 years) was 24% (MUAC <21cm). Diarrhoea and respiratory infections were common among the children.

The late Deyr rains experienced in some parts of Sool plateau did not reach these areas. Most livestock had migrated towards the coastal areas of Bari Region and other parts of the food economy zone where Deyr showers had been received. Families lost nearly all their pack camels during the drought. Water shortage and pasture shortage is acute. Almost all the water points have dried up and the little pasture available in mid 2003 was exhausted by livestock from neighbouring Sool Plateau which has also been facing acute drought situation. Milk and other animal products commonly consumed by pastoralists are non-existent at the moment in the area. UNICEF has subsequently extended the coverage of their intervention to cover these areas in the second round of the exercise that was begun in the third week of January. ACF plans to undertake a nutrition survey in the area in the coming weeks.

SOOL PLATEAU - HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS

FSAU continues to closely monitor the situation in Sool plateau through sentinel based surveillance system in addition to regular surveillance outside the sentinel network. Malnutrition rates have been increasing over the months from about 12.5%¹ (weight for height <-2 z-score/oedema) in May 2003 to current rates of about 14 - 19% (Weight for Height <-2 z-score/oedema) in some locations within the plateau. For instance, in October 2003, FSAU's assessment in Dhahar District reported a 13.7% (weight for height <-2 z-score or oedema) while in December 2003, FSAU reported results of the first round of sentinel based surveillance system that showed deterioration in nutritional status with a global malnutrition rate of 18.9% (weight for height <-2 z-score or oedema).

The Deyr rains of 2003 were late, inadequate, uneven and not received in most areas of the plateau, water shortage continues and insignificant pasture improvement has been noted. The few villages that received the Deyr rains have attracted more livestock and fast depletion of pasture is imminent.

Interventions on the plateau

In November/December 2003, UNICEF, in collaboration with WHO and MOH expanded their integrated intervention in Sool plateau to cover 62 villages. A total of 6,890 under-five year old children were screened for registration into the supplementary feeding programme (4,841 came from Sanag Region and 2,049 were in Sool Region). The intervention package includes distribution of BP5 to all malnourished children reported during screening exercise; immunizing all children under five years and treating common ailments on OPD basis. They also provide antenatal natal care services and supplement children and

¹ Sool plateau Nutrition Survey collaboratively conducted by FSAU, UNICEF, MOHL, and SRCS in May 2003

The FSAU Nutrition Surveillance Project is funded by USAID/OFDA

SURVEILLANCE PROJECT PARTNERS INCLUDE MOHL SOMALILAND, MOSA PUNTLAND, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, SRCS/ICRC, SRCS/IFRC, WVI, GEDO HEALTH CONSORTIUM, IMC, MSF-S, COSV, AAH, MUSLIM AID-UK, INTERSOS, CISP, ZAMZAM FOUNDATION, COMMUNITIES OF WABERI, HAMARWEIN AND HAMAR JABJAB, IRC, ACF, COOPI, MSF-H, MSF-B.

pregnant women with Vitamin A and iron/folic acid respectively. The mobile teams also provide health and nutrition education on child feeding and environmental hygiene. UNICEF has commenced their second round of screening and intervention in the plateau in which they will increase the number of villages to include parts of lower Nugal valley, Sool Region.

WFP has also distributed 342MT of food in the form of cereals, beans and vegetables to about 35,820 families of malnourished children identified through the screening process, as well as destitute families in settled communities in Eastern Sanag. WFP will continue to target the destitute and families of malnourished children with 50kg of maize, 5kg pulses and 2.3kg of oil for each family.

Other interventions include cash grant to affected families in Eastern Sanag by Horn Relief and subsidized water trucking and water point's rehabilitation by NPA, UNICEF and Horn Relief. However, additional challenges with potential of impeding the much needed assistance is already presenting itself in the plateau as political tensions continue to build up between Puntland and Somaliland.

TOGDHEER ASSESSMENT: RESULTS OF AN INTER-AGENCY ASSESSMENT

Togdheer Region of Somaliland has an estimated population of 350,000 people (WHO NIDS). The majority (60%) of the inhabitants in Togdheer are pastoralists, 10% agro-pastoral and about 30% urban dwellers engaged in petty trade activities and sale of non food items like clothes and electronics. Livestock production is the key economic activity in the region providing food, income and employment to the population. The main animal species reared include shoats, camel and cattle.

Since 2002, the region has experienced good rain seasons with the exception of the 2003/2004 Deyr season when rains were delayed, inadequate and poorly distributed, negatively affecting the grazing land's potential to support the region's enormous herd. Overgrazing resulted and massive environmental degradation occurred. In addition, livestock diseases, high livestock consumption and disposal reduced livestock ownership. Livestock movement towards Ethiopian border in search of water and pasture (FSAU Nutrition Update, December 2003) was witnessed in November and December 2003. Consequently, Humanitarian Response Group (HRG) of Somalia Aid Coordination Body recommended an interagency multi-sectoral assessment to investigate the impact of the failed Deyr rains in Togdheer. The assessment was conducted between 21st and 31st Dec 2003 by FSAU, SC-Alliance, UNICEF, WFP, Oxfam, COOPI, Vetaid and government representatives. The assessment covered the south of Togdheer Region, particularly the Hawd Food Economy Zone.

The mission noted that with the decline in pasture availability, the livestock body condition had greatly deteriorated. Most poor pastoralists had lost some livestock while the better off managed to move their livestock towards Ethiopia. About 60% of these livestock have crossed the border into Ethiopia while the rest (40%) settled around the border villages that received some late Deyr in the first dekad of December 2003. Income from livestock and livestock products has greatly declined. Livestock reproduction and productivity has dropped with reduction in pasture. Due to reduced income, food access is on the decline. Food purchases for most households have declined from 80% (baseline) to about 50%, with an increase of gifts and social support from relatives in towns and diaspora increasing to meet basic food needs. Households that depend on self employment and casual labour are on the increase as those depending on livestock for income decline. In addition, no animal products are currently available for consumption.

Village name	Oedema Severe maln.	<11cm severe maln	≥11/ <12.5cm moderate malntn	≥12.5/ <13.5cm at risk	≥13.5 cm Normal	Total
Qoryale	0	0	5	5	28	38
War-cimran	1	1	3	6	24	34
Bali-Calanle	0	0	0	1	21	22
Q. Lugud	0	1	3	2	39	45
Bali-Hiille	0	0	3	4	22	29
Harada G.X	0	1	6	10	13	30
Nasiye	0	0	2	6	23	31
Duruqsi	0	0	0	1	16	17
X. Salax	0	0	1	1	15	17
Mulaxo	0	0	2	7	21	30
Dabagorayale	0	0	1	7	20	28
Sibidhley	0	0	1	0	20	21
Balidhiig	0	0	3	3	43	49
Total	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.5%)	30 (7.7%)	53 (13.6%)	305 (78%)	391 (100%)

Assessment of children's nutritional status using mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) was undertaken in the 12 villages during which all children aged 12 - 59 months were assessed. The MUAC results indicated that about 8.4% (MUAC <12.5cm or oedema) of the children screened (391) were malnourished, about 0.7% severely malnourished (MUAC <11.0cm or oedema) while 13.6% were at risk of malnutrition (MUAC ≥12.5 - <13.5cm). These MUAC results indicate no apparent variation in nutritional status from the August 2003 Hawd nutrition survey which indicated a global acute malnutrition of 10% (W/H <-2 Z score or oedema)².

During the assessment, it was noted that many children had moved with their families to major migratory destinations like Ethiopia. The MUAC results, further revealed some villages to be more affected than others, with as high as 23% malnutrition being documented e.g. in Harada Village. These are mainly villages which have not received rains at all in the Deyr 2003/4 seasons. Increased cases of infectious diseases (watery and bloody diarrhoea, measles, whooping cough, ARI etc) were reported.

To cope with the deteriorating situation, population and livestock movement has occurred. Households have split with some members travelling with livestock while others seek casual labour in main towns like Burao and Buhoodle. Reduced number of

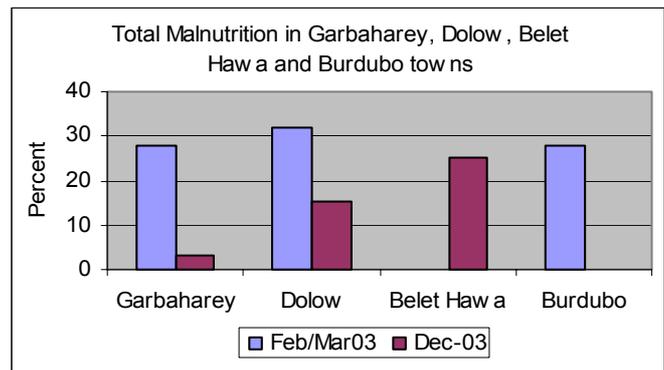
² MUAC assessment and nutrition survey results not directly comparable due to the difference in methodology, sample size and indicators.

meals to two (mainly consisting of rice, *Anjera*, tea and oil) compared to the normal 3 meals, from rich animal sources, in a day was also reported. Some households have turned to charcoal burning as a major income source.

Further deterioration on the already depressed food security indicators may impact negatively on the nutritional wellbeing of the population. Therefore, as the population struggles to cope (and before the current coping mechanisms reaches the level of collapse), mitigation efforts to avert further loss of asset and environmental degradation is necessary. Among the proposed interventions include water programmes like water trucking and rehabilitation of non-functional hand pumps and silted dams and provision of relief fodder for animals and basic veterinary drugs to control livestock diseases. For those with limited access to health services, intensification of EPI activities and provision of adequate medical supplies including drugs was also noted to be crucial. Chlorination of water points providing drinking water should also be considered. Meanwhile, FSAU will continue to closely monitor the situation in Togdheer, particularly as the dry Jilaal season sets in.

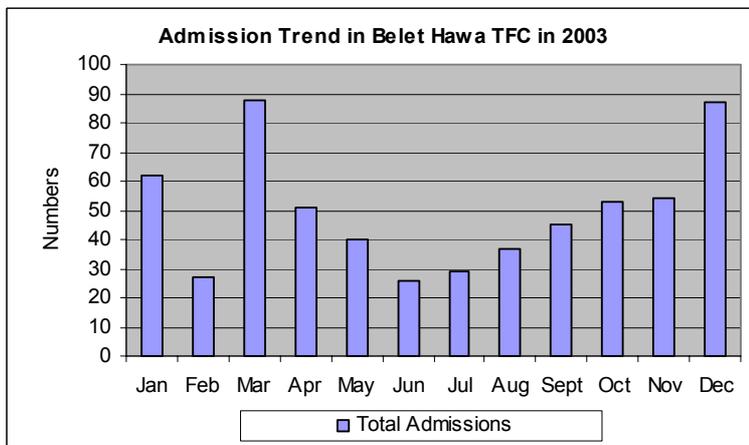
GEDO

Malnutrition rates in Gedo have remained among the highest in the country. Because Gedo is also one of the most insecure regions, nutrition surveys have not been undertaken since October 2002. As indicated on the figure, past rapid nutritional assessments using MUAC undertaken by FSAU in collaboration with GHC in February/March 2003 in Garbaharey, Dolow and Burdubo towns among children aged 6 – 59 months indicated a total acute malnutrition rate (MUAC <12.5 cm/oedema) of 28% and above in all three locations. Between 9th and 13th December 2003 FSAU in collaboration with GHC undertook a rapid assessment using MUAC among children aged 6 – 59 months in Dolow, Garbaharey and Belet Hawa towns. Using a random methodology, a total of 200, 201 and 400 children were screened in Dolow, Garbaharey and Belet Hawa towns respectively. The assessment results indicated a total acute malnutrition rate (MUAC <12.5 cm/oedema) of 3% in Garbaharey, 15.4% in Dolow and 25% in Belet Hawa. In Garbaharey and Dolow towns an improvement in the populations' nutritional status was noted when compared to the February/March 2003 assessment. In the current assessment, Belet Hawa recorded the highest levels of malnutrition.



Belet Hawa Therapeutic Feeding Centre (TFC) continues to admit high numbers of severely malnourished children with the

numbers increasing steadily since July 2003 to a total of 87 in December 2003.³ The majority of the beneficiaries were reported to have come from within Belet Hawa District with some population movement towards the town having occurred during the month.



Diarrhoea, ARI, malaria, food insecurity and civil insecurity have been highlighted as important factors in maintaining high levels of malnutrition in Gedo Region, Belet Hawa District in particular. Food security in Gedo Region was considered below normal following a poor Gu 2003 harvest and food aid deliveries have been interrupted because of insecurity.

Unlike other districts in Gedo region, *Belet Hawa hosts a significant poor population including IDPs who lack social support and are highly dependant on casual*

work and trade related activities. The insecurity in other regions and within Belet Hawa has had a negative impact on these activities. Disruption of the trade routes (Mogadishu to Gedo to Ethiopia) by the ongoing insecurity in Bay region has impacted negatively on the prices of goods in the region especially the imported commodities in addition to reducing the trade related activities.

Currently, pasture availability and access to water in all food economy zones in Gedo Region is considered slightly better than normal. Milk production, animal reproduction and the terms of trade for poor pastoral and agro-pastoral groups are considered good. Crop establishment is uncertain following the late onset of the Deyr rains.

³ The proportions of beneficiaries exiting the TFC due to recovery, death, defaulting or transfers are within the recommended criteria. The proportion of beneficiaries discharged after recovery was constantly above 90%, well above the recommended criteria of >75% as per the Sphere guidelines. On discharge, each beneficiary is given 10 kg of UNIMIX while a follow up on the cases is undertaken after a month. The proportion of deaths ranged from 0% to 5% with the highest proportion being in November 2003. Defaulting was rare with the exception of February 2003 when the default rate was 6%.

FAO ASSESSMENT ON FOOD PROCESSING AND PRESERVATION IN BAKOOL

FAO supports an integrated food security and nutrition programme in Bakool, Gedo and Bay Regions (Nutrition Update, August 2003). The interventions included promotion of improved processing, preservation and food preparation at the household level. Prior to the implementation of this intervention, a participatory assessment was carried out in Medaa and Kulanjerer villages of Tayeglow and Huddur Districts aimed at providing a deeper insight into food processing, preservation and preparation practices. The assessment also sought to identify possible ways of enhancing existing practices in order to maintain good food quality. The study focussed on cereals, pulses, oil crops and animal products and key findings are summarised here.

Cereals: sorghum was the most important staple food. Traditionally sorghum is stored in bakaars (an underground storage silo). However, a significant proportion of farmers in Medaa did not own bakaars with many selling their crop immediately after harvest or storing it in bags where destruction rate is very high. The maximum keeping time was less than two months. It was observed that most of the bakaars were poorly constructed with the walls made of sand/soil which is humid, a factor that accelerates grain destruction by pests especially weevils. Additionally, there was excess air circulation between the inside and the outside environment and the soil cover occasionally fell into the bakaar. (A standard bakaar should take into account insulation against humidity and temperature, seal against rodents, pests and air circulation). Cereals like maize are stored for only a short time as it is harvested in small quantities. Cowpeas are commonly stored in bags and may last for only up to two months. **Processing of sorghum to flour:** this was found to be time and energy consuming with mothers spending up to five hours processing sorghum to flour for an average family of six persons. Further more the *testa* which is a good source of fibre, vitamin B complex and minerals was normally removed.

Meat: the community had good knowledge on meat preservation with the meat usually cooked for at least an hour to kill all micro organisms and to denature the enzymes. It is then submerged in fat to ensure no microbiological decay as fat insulates the meat against air and water entry.

Fruits and vegetables: Although there are some traditional fruits and vegetables such as cowpea and pumpkin leaves they are rare in the diets and are not preserved.

Oil seed crops: Production of oil crops like sesame, sunflower and groundnuts is quite high in Tayeglow District. Processing is done by press machines but the farmers interviewed had to travel between 50 and 90 kms to Tayeglow or Baidoa towns to process the crop.

Milk is either taken fresh, naturally fermented or processed into ghee. However the unhygienic handling methods during processing were noted which were considered to be related to the many food borne diseases.

Some of the food preservation and processing methods in use were seen to reduce the quantity and quality (nutrient content) of foods at household/individual levels. To address these issues, the assessment recommended the following interventions:

- Capacity building of communities in construction of a standard *bakaar* that protects the grain from pests, rodents and moulds instead of using them only for preventing destruction by livestock and human beings.
- Promote community purchase of oil presses in order to increase production of the oil seed crops as they are a valuable energy source and unsaturated fatty acids.
- Train milk handlers on clean handling and processing of milk
- Introduce sun drying for vegetable preservation for use during the dry seasons
- Support community purchase of grain milling machines. Milling of whole grain will not only preserve nutrients but will also reduce the workload of women who are already overburdened by domestic and commercial chores.
- Train partners on simple storage, preservation, processing, food mixing, preparation and feeding of nutritionally vulnerable groups.

Based on these findings communities have been supported through partners with milling machines on a cost sharing basis, trained on business management to improve their entrepreneurship performance and also trained on preparation of various foods for nutritionally vulnerable groups.

STUDY ON DIETARY DIVERSITY IN SOMALIA

The FSAU Nutrition Surveillance Project is currently undertaking a dietary diversity study that will provide a better understanding of specific dietary issues at household level within the four major food economy groups of Somalia. They include pastoralists, riverine farmers, urban dwellers and agro-pastoralists.

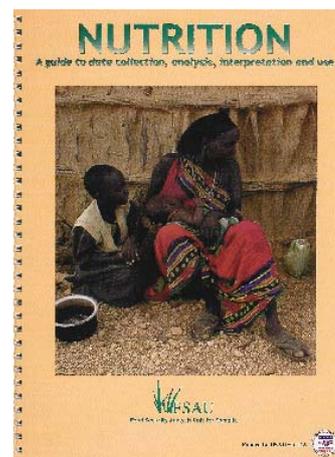
The study will provide baseline information on diversity of diets among the different groups, evaluate their nutrient adequacy, examine the relationship between diet and specific nutritional outcomes, study the use of dietary diversity as a food security indicator and determine variability of Somali diets through the seasons. Following the initial round of field work, a set of tools will be developed for use by FSAU and partners during future assessment exercises and during monitoring.

Data collection started on 12th January 2004 at two pilot sites: agro-pastoral villages in Dinsor District, Southern Somalia and pastoralists in Garowe District, Puntland. Further piloting of study tools will be conducted among the riverine in Juba valley and poor urban population in Hargeisa, Somaliland. Data from the two sites currently under pilot study is expected to be analysed during February 2003. Data collection will be repeated in the selected pilot sites to cover the main seasonal weather and food availability patterns in Somalia.

TRAINING MANUAL

FSAU has released a new publication on nutrition targeting partners in Somalia involved in collection and use of nutrition related information. The publication entitled ‘**NUTRITION, A guide to Data Collection, Analysis, Interpretation and Use**’ has been developed in response to partner needs for specific information on nutrition data management. It was developed using a wide range of materials, methodologies and guidelines that have been developed and standardized over the past three years through a process of consultations and field testing. Some of the materials referred to were designed and used during nutrition training sessions held in various locations throughout Somalia in 2003.

The manual targets mid-level managers in all sectors seeking a better understanding of nutrition information. Topics covered include the importance of good data, the use of nutrition related information, the overall concepts related to nutrition and the use of a conceptual framework in understanding the wide range of factors influencing nutritional status. The manual outlines methods used in the measurement of nutritional status and describes the quantitative and qualitative research methods used in data collection as well as stressing the importance of addressing malnutrition using a multi-sectoral approach. The publication is available from FSAU and will be circulated to partners.



NUTRITION SURVEYS UPDATE

Dates		Area	Organisations	Status 21 st Jan 2004
January 2004	South	Wajiid IDPs	UNICEF/ACF/FSAU	Draft report
January 2004	South	Jilib District	FSAU/MSF-H/SRCS	Underway
February 2004	Somaliland	Taalex	ACF	Planned
February 2004	South	Wajiid District	WVI/FSAU/UNICEF/ACF	Planned
2004	South	Haradheere	FSAU/CISP/UNICEF	Planned
2004	South	Gedo – Belet Hawa/Luuq	GHC/FSAU/UNICEF/CARE	Planned
2004	South	Rabdure District	MSF- B	Planned
April 2004	South	Buale District	FSAU/WVI	Planned
May 2004	Somaliland	Sool Plateau	FSAU	Planned
August 2004	South	Belet weyne	IMC	Planned
September 2004	South	Dinsor	IMC	Planned
2004	South	Jowhar District	FSAU	Planned
2004	Somaliland	Awdal	FSAU/UNICEF/MOHL	Planned
2004	Somaliland	All regions (IDD)	UNICEF	Planned
2004	Somaliland	Sanaag	UNICEF/MOHL/FSAU	Planned
2004	Puntland	Jeriban & Galgodob	UNICEF/MOH/FSAU	Planned
2004	South	Micronutrients survey all zones	UNICEF	Planned

WEBSITES

This ‘Nutrition Update’, along with other relevant materials, is available on:

UN Somalia Website. http://www.unsomalia.net/FSAU/nutrition_updates.htm

ReliefWeb. <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/Rwb.nsf/vLCE/Somalia?OpenDocument&StartKey=Somalia&Expandview>



Physical address: Peponi Plaza, (Block C), Peponi Road, Westlands, Nairobi.
 Postal address: PO Box 1230, Village Market, Nairobi
 Telephone: +254-2-3741299, 3745734, 3748297. Fax: 3740598
 General email: fsauiinfo@fsau.or.ke
 Comments and information related to nutrition: Noreen.Prendiville@fsau.or.ke

The calendar has been produced by FSAU in collaboration with UNICEF and the poster sized version is now available from FSAU.



2004

**Ibaaya, Hada billood oo ugu
horeysa ilaahda sii caanaha
maanka oo keliya**

*Infants give your child only breast milk for the
first six months.*

**In la illayn caanaha
caanoyis kala dawaa waaqay
kabeelaa caafimaadkeeda**

*Using unboiled a mixture of different foods
takes them grow healthy.*

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