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Rainfall situation.....	2	<p>The cumulative impact of continuous droughts has led to a food crisis in five livelihood zones in Djibouti. A total of 5,000 MT of food aid is required to meet the critical food needs of around 47,000 people for a period of six months starting in June. Of these, around 9,500 are undernourished children. Urgent medical care is needed for around 5,000 people. High livestock deaths have been reported and opportunistic diseases are further weakening the remaining herds. Around 50,000 head require veterinary care and fodder support for three months. Recent intense rainfall will temporarily improve pasture and water availability, but full recovery will take some time. The ongoing food aid effort by the government and WFP is designed to cover needs only through May. Current pledges are far below the estimated requirements for the period starting in June.</p>
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NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Djibouti City
Food security in Djibouti city has been stable, with food prices declining. During the summer season, poor household incomes typically decline. The current cost of the poor expenditure basket is higher than poor households could afford with a drop in income. However if kerosene price control measures are put in place, this will ease the expected burden.

Southeast Pastoral Zone (Border Sub-Zone)
Alert Status: Warning

The weak *Heys* and the delay of *Diraa* rains caused high livestock mortality rates in this zone. Livestock are currently very weak and no milk is being produced. The current rains are expected to improve pasture, browse and water conditions. The migrating population returned to the *Diraa* grazing areas in the Ali-sabieh and further inland in Dikhil. Food assistance has so far not been sufficient to meet the 40% food deficit projected until August.

(Roadside Sub-Zone)
Alert Status: Warning

Milk production, the main income source for the population in this zone, is currently very limited due to the prolonged droughts. Livestock sales diminished due to poor animal body conditions.

Camel milk production is expected to increase due to recent births, but sales will diminish due to low demand during the summer period. A seasonal food deficit (40%) is projected up until the beginning of September.

Central Pastoral Zone
Alert Status: Watch

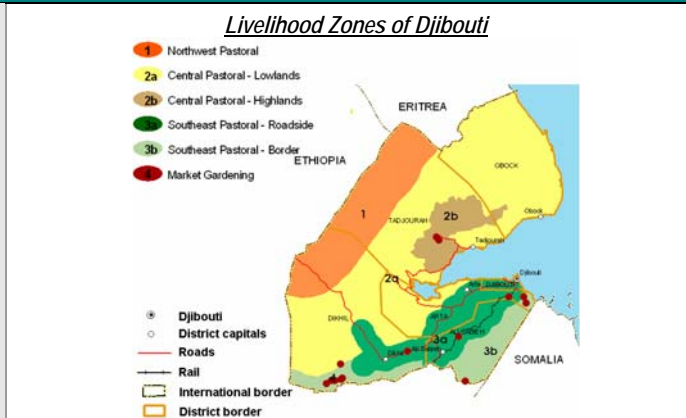
Though a seasonal food deficit of 5% is expected for the poor population in this zone, the food security situation is near normal. However, the nutritional status of the children needs close monitoring due to inadequate milk production. Browse and pasture are expected to improve.

Northwest Pastoral Zone
Alert Status: Warning

Above normal rains in late April helped address a serious water shortage. Surviving animals will recover soon from the drought stress. Milk and butter production will remain limited until the next delivery period (July), and improve then only if the onset of *karma* rains is timely. High staple prices in the neighboring markets in Ethiopia will have a negative impact on the food security of the population in this zone.

Market Gardening Zone
Alert Status: Watch

The poor population in this zone is currently facing a seasonal food deficit of 17%, due to a significant reduction in vegetable production



this year. Agriculture in this area is fully dependent on ground water pumping, and production costs are rising as fuel prices increase. No improvement is expected until the next vegetable harvest. Timely planting with adequate agricultural inputs is required.

Border Areas of Neighbouring Countries

Eritrea:
Recent above normal rainfall in areas adjacent to Djibouti is expected to improve pasture conditions and limit livestock distress sales in areas where successive droughts reduced the livestock herds.
Source: FEWS NET Eritrea

Ethiopia:
The food crisis in Ethiopia is worsening, due to in part to the

inadequate response to both chronic and emergency food needs. Areas adjacent to Djibouti received below normal rains during the *Diraa* season. Given that the cumulative impact of previous shocks has severely limited household coping mechanisms, pastoralists in the border areas will either have to go further inland in Ethiopia or come back to coastal areas of Djibouti.

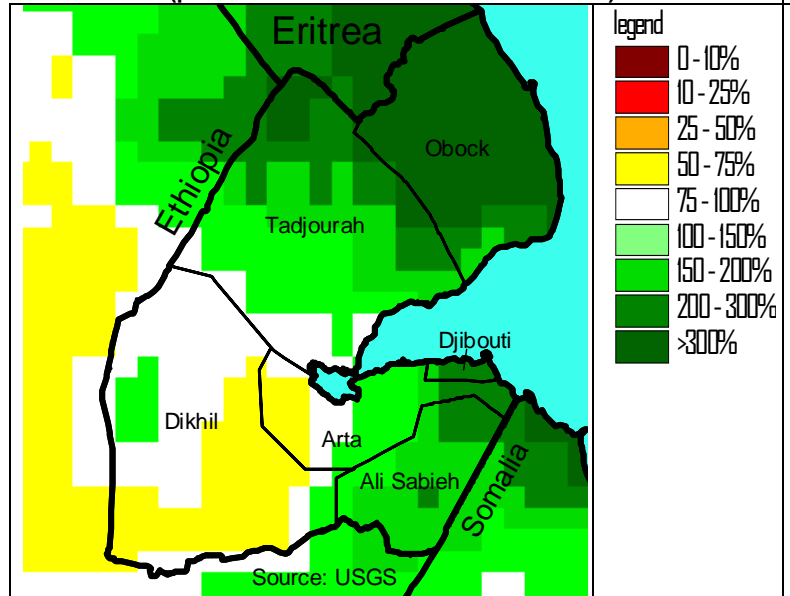
FEWS NET Ethiopia /SC-UK

Somalia
Above normal rains in the neighbouring coastal areas will improve both pasture and water. Most pastoralists moved to the *Diraa* grazing areas in Ethiopia and Djibouti to escape the summer heat. Prices of cereals are expected to increase due to high summer demand.
Source: FSAU/ FEWS NET Somalia

NATURAL RESOURCES (RAINFALL, WATER AND PASTURE) SITUATION

This year's *Diraa/Sougoum*¹ rains were poor, delayed in their onset, and poor in spatial distribution once they started. The rains were abnormally intense but sporadic and erratic along the coast, causing erosion and high surface runoff, which resulted in flash flooding. The coastal areas of Arta, Djibouti, Tadjourah, Obock and Alisabieh received above normal rains during the last ten days of April. However, the main *Diraa/Sougoum* grazing areas in the southeast pastoral zones (Dikhil and Arta Districts) and on the Ethiopian side of the border received below normal rains. With the approach of the hot season in late May, there is a likelihood that pastoralists in the southeastern zones will opt to move back to the coastal areas in search of pasture and water, contrary to their regular migration pattern towards inland areas. This will result again in overgrazing and competition over the limited pasture. The high scorching heat of the summer will take a toll on livestock. The current rains improved temporarily water availability by filling the traditional water catchments in the Northwest Pastoral Zone and some parts of the Southeast Pastoral Zone. However, the quality of water is not safe for human consumption. Pasture and browse in the floodable plains in the North is expected to improve the coming month, but will be limited around the hilly areas in the major grazing areas in the south because of soil's low water retention capacity and the fact that the rains have been intermittent and brief. Lambing is taking place for sheep that conceived in early November.

Figure 1: Estimated rainfall for Diraa/Sougoum 2005 (percent of short term mean: 1996 – 2003)



Notes: ¹Diraa in Somali, Sougoum in Afar.

URBAN FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY

Key Indicators at a Glance

Expenditure Indicators	Current Situation	Key Indicators Explained
Cost of staple food	Decreasing	In the city, most necessities are purchased, and thus the key indicators to monitor are those linked to expenditure and to income. The main sources of income for poor households are casual labor, petty trade, low paid employment and pensions.
Cost of other food	Decreasing	
Cost of non-food items	Increasing	
Income Indicators	Current Situation	
Payment of government salaries and pensions	Regular	
Cargo loaded/unloaded at Djibouti port	Not Known	

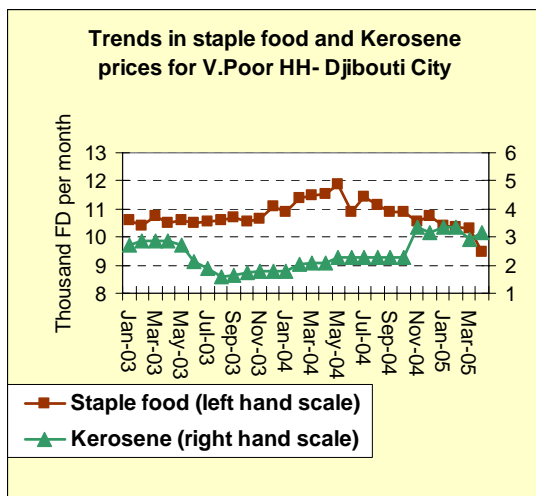


Figure 2

Source: DISED/FEWS NET

Notes: Figure 2 shows trends in the cost of staple food and kerosene prices for 'very poor' households.

Current Hazards

The cost of the poor basic expenditure basket declined 3% from last month, due mainly to the decrease in the cost of the staple foods (-8%). Both rice and flour prices declined by 11% and the cost of other food items declined by 2.4%. Milk powder is currently 11% higher than at the same time last year. These staple food price decreases have been offset in part by the increase in the cost of non-food items, which are 8% higher than last month and 50% higher than at the same time last year. Kerosene alone currently absorbs around 15% of the total income of the poor urban population. The government announced recently an action plan to put a brake on the increasing kerosene prices fixing them at 114 Fd/litres. Poor incomes generally decline in the summer months, and will not be sufficient to meet expenditure requirements at current prices.

Possible response options

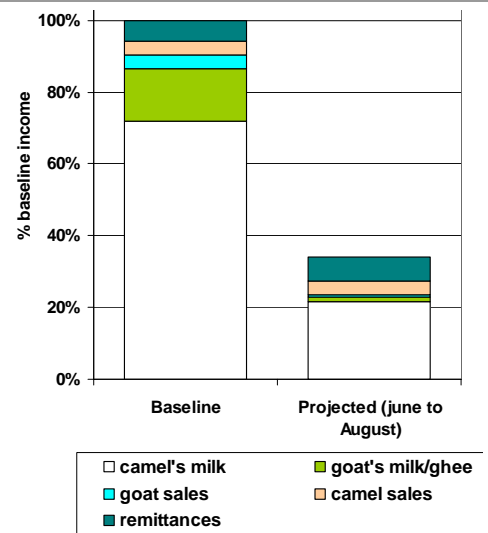
- Strengthening institutions responsible for price control ;
- Extension of school feeding to poorer urban areas; and
- Measures to reduce staple food prices during the summer months.

SEASONAL ASSESSMENT: SOUTHEAST PASTORAL ZONE

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Below seasonal average	No rains are expected until July
Goat milk production	Far below seasonal norm	No improvement is expected until kidding in late July
Camel milk production	Far Below seasonal norm	Improvement is expected In June
Milk sales and prices	Far below seasonal norm. Prices stable.	No improvement until September. Prices likely to decrease
Livestock sales and prices	Decreasing	Increasing sales, low prices
Wood sales and prices	Increasing sales, low prices	Increasing sales, low prices
Charcoal sales and prices	Stable	Low prices
Payment of government salaries and pensions	Regular	Regular
Staple food prices	Gradually decreasing	Gradually decreasing

Fig: 3 – Income for middle households



Animal Production

The prolonged drought followed by erratic rains, and cold night temperatures during the last ten days of April further weakened the surviving herds in this zone. Milk production is significantly below normal. Pasture and browse conditions are expected to improve temporarily in the Southeast Roadside Sub-zone, however, the erratic below normal rains are not sufficient to replenish the water catchments and regenerate pasture in the zone as whole, particularly in the *Diraa* grazing areas in the east of Dikhil District down to Obono in Ethiopia. Opportunistic tick borne diseases have been reported in Arta, Ali-sabieh and Dikhil.

Food and income

Most households in this zone obtain their food through purchase, relying on income generated mainly from milk and charcoal/firewood sales, depending on sub-zone. A significant reduction in milk production and sales together with a decrease in charcoal prices due to oversupply, reduced the income of both poor and middle households by more than half, thereby reducing access to purchased food. As a result, poor households will experience a 40% food deficit between June and at least August, when the performance of *Karan/Karma* rains will be known.

Prospects (March-August 2005)

Recent rains are expected to improve temporarily the pasture, browse and water situation. Camel milk production will increase due to recent births, but the sales are not expected to increase due to reduced demand because of the upcoming summer vacations.

SEASONAL ASSESSMENT: NORTHWEST PASTORAL ZONE

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Delay in the onset, above seasonal average,	Rainfall are not expected until July
Milk production	Far below seasonal norm	Little improvement is expected
Butter production and sales	Far below seasonal norm	Little sales this season
Livestock sales and prices	Decreased prices	Reduced sales and decreased prices
Onga collection and prices	Decreased prices	Increased collection, decreased prices
Cereal salt exchange	Stable	Decreased prices
Staple food prices	Increasing	Increasing

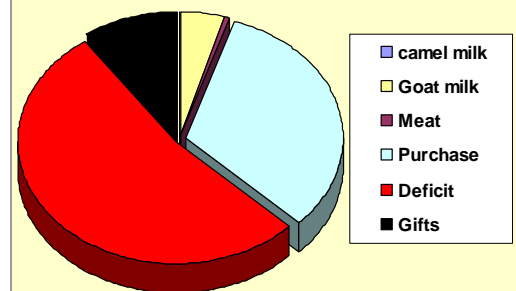
Animal Production

Abnormal migration of livestock to the coastal areas during the *Heys/Dada* season was observed. High livestock mortality rates were recorded recently due to prolonged drought. Milk and milk by-products declined significantly. The remaining animals are very weak. Recent above normal rains (Fig 2) replenished the traditional water catchments. Pasture and browse are expected to improve soon. Full recovery of animal productivity will take sometime. Animals will follow their usual migration pattern

Food and Income

The population in this zone is chronically food insecure and depends entirely on livestock to obtain food and income. Recent prolonged droughts undermined milk production and limited income from livestock sales. Butter sales were far below the seasonal norms and the price of livestock has been lower than normal due to poor livestock conditions. The combination of low income and low milk production, together with high staple food prices in neighboring markets in Ethiopia will contribute to a seasonal food deficit of more than 50%.

Fig: 4- Food deficit for pour households at current prices



Prospects (March – August 2005)

Animal production factors (pasture, water, etc.) are expected to improve due to recent rains, but food security situation will remain precarious for the next couple of months.

SEASONAL ASSESSMENT: CENTRAL PASTORAL ZONE

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Normal to above normal	No rains until July
Milk production	Far below seasonal norm	Little Improvement is expected
Livestock sales & prices	Far below seasonal norm	Improvement in sales
Firewood sales & prices	Stable	Decreasing prices
Payment of Government salaries and pensions	Regular	Regular
Staple food prices	Gradually Decreasing	Gradually Decreasing

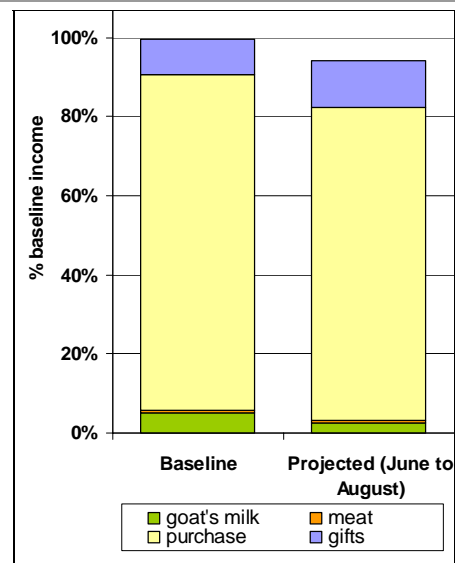
Animal production

Animal body conditions are currently very poor. Milk production is very limited. Recent normal to above rains in the upper escarpment of the central lowlands and above normal rains in the central high land pastoral zone are expected to stabilize the animal production conditions by improving water and pasture conditions. Livestock are following their normal migration pattern and will concentrate soon on the highlands as well as the plains in the Northwest Pastoral Zone (Andaba, Makarasou etc) to escape the summer heat.

Food and Income

The main source of food for the population in this zone is purchase. Cash income is obtained mainly from remittances and to certain extent livestock products. Livestock sales and milk production are expected to decline, leaving a food deficit of around 5% for the poor households in this zone from June to August.

Fig 5 : Sources of food for poor Households



Prospects (March-August 2005)

The situation may slightly improve during the coming months, but the 5% food deficit, which is mainly linked to the reduction in milk, will have a negative nutritional impact on children.

SEASONAL ASSESSMENT: MARKET GARDENING

Key Indicators at a Glance

Indicator	Current Situation	Expected Trend
Rainfall	Mixed picture	Mixed picture in different zones
Milk production and sale	Far below seasonal norm	Little Improvement is expected
Butter production and sales	Far Below seasonal norm	Little improvement is expected
Livestock sales and prices	Decreased prices	Increased sales and decreased prices
Vegetable sales and prices	Decreased production	Decreased sales
Fruit sales and prices	Normal	Stable sales
Wood sales and prices	Stable price	Increased sales, reduced prices
Payment of government salaries and pensions	Regular	Regular
Staple food prices	Gradual decrease	Gradual decrease

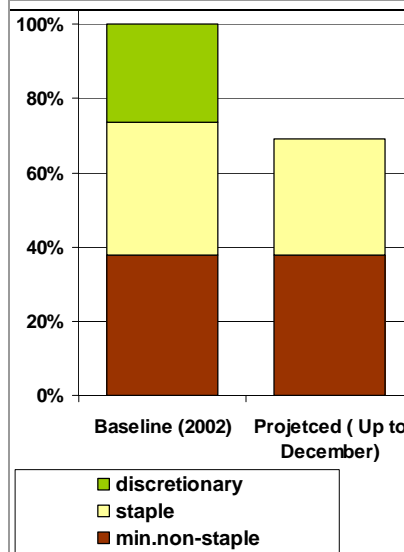
Production Factors

Successive droughts followed by sporadic intense rainfall decreased agricultural production in this zone. Vegetable planting was delayed due to lack of certified seeds at the beginning of the season; in addition plant pests and diseases further reduced yields by around half this year. The harvest of summer vegetables (melon & watermelon) and fruits started at the end of April with low yields. Animal body conditions are not yet satisfactory. Milk production is limited with no butter production.

Food and Income

Most food is purchased through income from pensions/salaries and to a certain extent crop and animal production sales. With yield reductions of up to 50% this year, the income of the population in this zone has been significantly reduced. In order to cope with the loss of the income, poor households will likely switch expenditure from non-essential items to food, as illustrated in Figure 6. Nevertheless, a food deficit of 17% will remain for the poor households in this zone until December.

Fig: 6 Expenditure for poor households



Prospects (May'05-Dec'05)

The yield of summer vegetables is limited and next main vegetable harvest is expected no earlier than January next year.