

ETHIOPIA Food Security Alert

June 23, 2008

Food aid pipeline faces serious shortfalls

According to the 2008 Revised Humanitarian Appeal for Ethiopia, about 4.6 million people require a total of nearly 510,000 MT of emergency food assistance from June to November 2008. Of this amount, only about 118,000 MT is available or has been pledged, representing a shortage of over 390,000 MT. While these figures will be revised upwards at the end of July based on findings of the *belg/gu* season assessments, current estimates represent a 77 percent shortfall in food aid needs.

The pipeline shortfall will most impact those populations seriously affected by the poor February to May rains and the resulting failure of the *belg* crops.

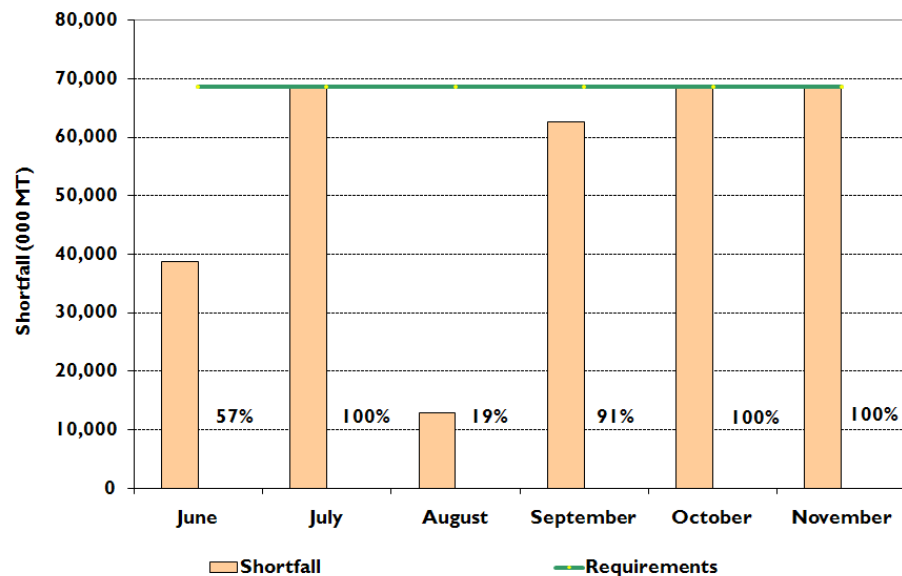
This includes populations in the southern zones of Somali, lowlands of Oromiya, and most of SNNP regions, as well as the northeastern highlands. Some of these areas are already reporting high levels of acute malnutrition. Nutritional surveys in Damot Pulassa woreda of Wolayita zone in April, for example, revealed a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 16.7 percent and a Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate of 2.9 percent, and 19.5 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively, in Boricha woreda of Sidama zone.

Based on the current estimated needs for this period, including 411,366 MT of cereals, 12,342 MT of oil, 41,136 MT of pulses, and 45,078 MT of food for supplementary feeding activities, the food aid pipeline faces a total shortfall of 77 percent. Total shortfalls are 53 percent in June and 99 percent in July, with cereal shortfalls of 57 and 100 percent for each month, respectively. (Figure 1) While the pipeline should improve in August with the expected arrival of 71,377 MT of food, total shortfalls of 85 to 100 percent will resume in September. These shortfalls come at the same time as the country's peak hunger season, June to September, and when cereal prices are at their highest. While borrowing from the country's Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) has been the usual means to respond quickly in such a crisis, reserve levels are very low (only 75,000 MT) and therefore insufficient to meet projected needs. Even April contributions from USAID that were expedited cannot arrive before mid-July and the World Food Program (WFP) cannot use the contribution as a guarantee for an immediate loan from EFSR because there is not enough grain in the reserve. Ethiopia's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) and Food Security Coordination Bureau (FSCB) are working together to formulate a strategic plan for using what is in the reserve to meet the immediate needs in the most severely affected woredas first, while waiting for projected replenishments for August and September.

Given the continued deterioration of food security and nutritional conditions in much of the country, there is an immediate need for contributions to the food aid pipeline. As the hunger season begins, pipeline replenishment will help to ensure the timely distribution of food aid to prevent a further worsening of conditions for an estimated 4.6 million people.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) issues alerts to prompt decision-maker action to prevent or mitigate potential or actual food insecurity. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Figure 1. Cereal requirement and expected gaps by month in Ethiopia, June to November 2008



Source: Revised Humanitarian Requirement for 2008, Government Partners Joint Document, June 12, 2008