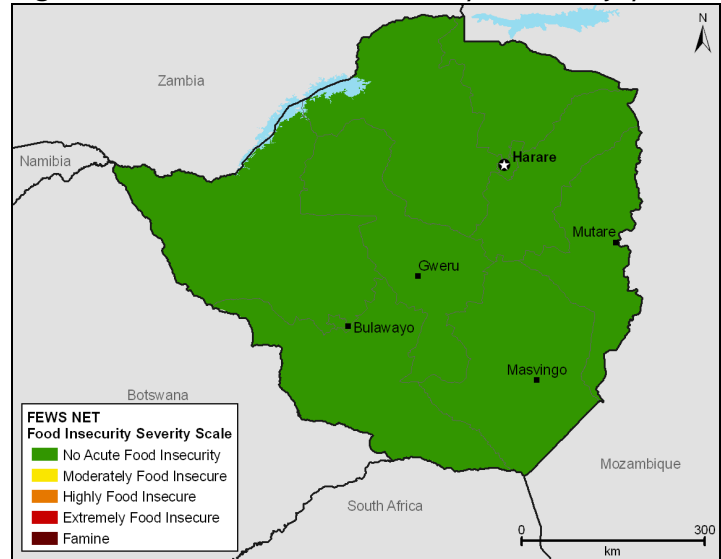


## ZIMBABWE Food Security Outlook

July to December 2010

- Generally, the food security situation is stable throughout the country, following improved harvests and the extension of the duty-free regulations to end of the year. This situation is likely to prevail throughout the July to September 2010 outlook period with the majority of poor rural and urban households meeting their minimum basic cereal requirements. However changes are expected in the beginning of the October to December 2010 outlook period as cereal production stocks will diminish for a majority of the poor households throughout the country.
- The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) rural livelihoods assessment in May 2010 projected that about 1.3 million rural people will not be able to meet their cereal requirements at the peak of the 2010/11 consumption year. Though a majority of the households are currently food secure, the worst affected livelihood zones in specific provinces are the Poor Resource Kariba Valley (Matabeleland North and Masvingo provinces), Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal (Matabeleland South province), Save River and Ndowoyo Communal (Southern area of Manicaland province), and the Northern Zambezi Valley (Mashonaland Central province) which are likely to be moderately food insecure in the October to December 2010 period.
- Though, there is likely to be an improved supply of basic commodities on the market following the extension of the duty-free regulations, poor and very poor households in urban areas are likely to remain vulnerable with limited income to buy food.

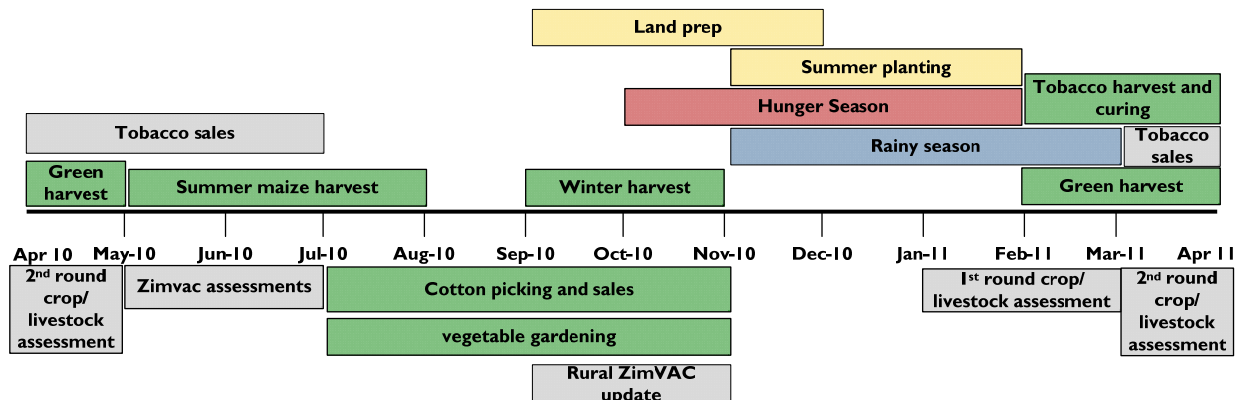
**Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, July 2010**



Source: FEWS NET and ZimVAC

For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

### Seasonal calendar and critical events



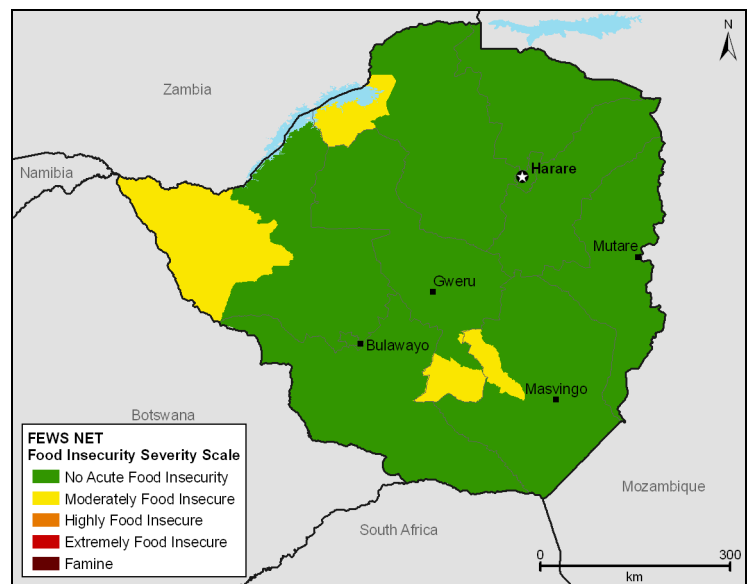
Source: FEWS NET

**Most likely food security scenario (July – December 2010)**

Cereal availability is generally good in Zimbabwe following the recently completed 2009/2010 harvests, with cereal production marginally better than last year. Maize production increased by three percent and is more than 50 percent above the five-year average. With the improved cereal production, the national cereal deficit is estimated at about 385,174 MT (Table 1) taking into consideration the cereal production estimates, open stocks from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), food aid, and formal imports. The Government of Zimbabwe’s (GoZ) and humanitarian agencies’ plans of addressing national food insecurity are at advanced levels with the GoZ planning to intervene and assist vulnerable households by September 2010. Besides vulnerable feeding interventions, humanitarian agencies are also considering food-for-asset programs to create and ensure that people have a strong asset base. The May 2010 ZimVAC rural livelihoods assessment projected that at the peak, 1.3 million people will be food insecure during the 2010/11 consumption year. The highest prevalence of food insecurity was estimated to be in Matabeleland North and South provinces, Masvingo province, and northern parts of the country which experienced dry spells in the second half of the 2009/10 cropping season. The worst affected livelihood zones in these provinces are the Poor Resource Kariba Valley (Matabeleland North and Masvingo province), Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal, Save River and Ndowoyo Communal (Southern area of Manicaland province) and the Northern Zambezi Valley (Mashonaland Central province). These zones are located in the drier parts of the country and are traditionally grain deficit areas, however, small grains in most instances do better than maize crops.

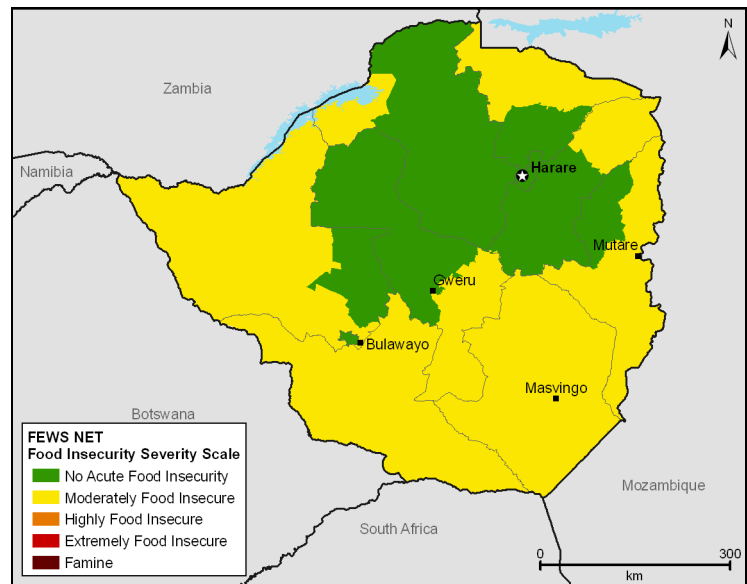
**The Poor Resource Kariba Valley livelihoods zone** is in the north-west part of the country covering Binga, Kariba and Hwange districts. Though agriculture is generally unreliable most households in this zone are currently food secure given that cereal production this season was relatively better than last season. **The Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal livelihood zone** covers southern parts of Beitbridge, Chiredzi, southern and central parts of Gwanda, southern Matobo, northwestern and southern parts of Mangwe, and southern parts of Mwenezi districts. Currently the zone is food secure, with only a few pockets of moderately food insecure poor households in southern parts of Gwanda district. According to the Agriculture and Food Security Monitoring System (AFSMS, July 2010), sites in the southern part of Gwanda have a significant proportion of households relying on the market for cereals. About 97 percent of households in Garanyemba ward and 93 percent in Datata ward south of Gwanda reported that the market is their main source of cereals. Generally, maize grain prices are currently stable in the livelihood zone. **The Save River and Ndowoyo Communal livelihood zone** covers the southern and central parts of Chipinge district. According to the AFSMS, cereal availability is not a major challenge in this zone with most households, including the poor,

**Figure 3. Most-likely food security scenario, July- September 2010**



Source: FEWS NET Zimbabwe and ZimVAC

**Figure 3. Most-likely food security scenario, October – December 2010**



Source: FEWS NET Zimbabwe and ZimVAC

consuming cereals from own production and with cereals also available on the market. Maize grain prices have been relatively stable in the past three months at around US\$0.30/kg and this is likely to prevail in the July to September 2010 period. Currently, most households are generally food secure. **The Northern Zambezi Valley livelihood zone** covers the northern parts of Mashonaland Central province, cutting across Guruve, Centenary and Mt. Darwin districts. This zone is currently food secure with farmer-to-farmer transactions being common.

All four livelihood zones (Poor Resource Kariba Valley, Northern Zambezi Valley, Ndowoyo Communal, and Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal) experienced low cereal production. Although located in the drier and marginal areas, the dry spells that affected the country greatly affected yields in these livelihood zones. Though small grains did better than maize, the production levels remained below the production averages. The situation was even worse in the Northern Zambezi Valley and Poor Resource Kariba livelihood zones where more than 50 percent of crops were destroyed by elephants and other wild animals. Already there are some very poor households who failed to harvest anything and are currently employing negative coping strategies such as consuming wild fruits, skipping meals, and begging. By early September, most of the poor households in these areas will have exhausted the cereals from own production and will rely on the market for food.

The direct effects of low cereal production are that most of the households with disposable income will rely on the market and adjacent grain surplus districts or zones for food. In the southern zones, Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld and Ndowoyo Communal livelihoods zones, households will also rely on cereals from neighboring countries, South Africa and Botswana. Poor Resource Kariba is likely to face great challenges because of its remote location; prices are likely to be unaffordable for the majority of poor households in this livelihood zone. The Northern Zambezi Valley livelihood zone is close to grain surplus areas in the central parts of the country, though the road networks are poor having been damaged by rains.

In these grain deficit livelihood zones it is anticipated that terms of trade are likely to be unfavorable for those holding livestock. Currently, from AFSMS monthly monitoring it has been established that terms of trade in the Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal livelihood zone (particularly in Gwanda district wards) are unfavorable, with a beast being exchanged for about 500kg maize grain, whereas in normal periods a beast can be exchanged for 800-1000kg of maize grain. As the peak lean season comes, it is anticipated that the terms of trade might even worsen.

Livestock production is dominant in all the four livelihood zones with the highest livestock holdings in Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal and the Northern Zambezi Valley livelihood zones. Most of the poor households own small livestock which include chickens and goats. For cattle, the poor households own at least one or two beasts. According to the AFSMS, livestock conditions are generally good and grazing is fair across the country. Though there is some improvement in the management of external parasites on livestock, tick control remains a challenge across the country with the livelihood zones mentioned above being the worst affected. Measures have to be put in place to strengthen the prevailing practices of dipping livestock to ensure that good livestock conditions are maintained. The May 2010 ZimVAC rural assessment noted that despite the higher proportions of households owning bigger cattle and goat herds, Matabeleland South (25 percent) and Matabeleland North (27 percent) provinces had the lowest percentages of households accessing veterinary services.

Though grazing is fair across the country, there are concerns of veld fires as the dry period approaches with greater impacts expected in the livelihood zones of concern (Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal, Poor Resource Kariba, and Northern Zambezi Valley, specifically). Currently there have been provincial awareness campaigns by the Environmental Management Agency. Livestock rearing areas covering Hwange and Gwanda districts recorded the highest figures of fire damages last year, destroying 62,508 ha and 72,273 ha, respectively.

**Table 1. Cereal (Maize, Sorghum, and Millet) Balance Sheet, June 2010.**

DESCRIPTION		MOA
A	Human requirements	1,640,000
B	Livestock and other uses	350,000
C	Seed	40,000
<b>Total Annual Requirements (A+B+C)</b>		<b>2,030,000</b>
E	Production	1,521,460
F	Strategic Grain Reserves	45,000
G	Commercial imports (SAGIS)	33,645
H	Food aid imports	17,461
I	Opening stocks	72,260
<b>Total Available Cereals (E+G+H+I)</b>		<b>1,644,826</b>
K	Deficit(J-D)	-385,174

Source: Source: Ministry of Agriculture Mechanization and Irrigation Development, SAGIS, WFP, and C-SAFE

A direct effect of tick borne diseases is that livestock conditions will deteriorate and in some cases can result in increased animal deaths. From the May 2010 ZimVAC Livelihoods Assessment it was reported that about 71 percent of households interviewed indicated that the main causes of death or livestock losses were due to diseases and other causes. Though this was a national observation, it is anticipated that the greater impact will be felt in areas with large livestock holdings which include the Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal, Poor Resource Kariba, and Northern Zambezi Valley. Poor households will be greatly affected as they are the ones with small livestock holdings as cases of tick borne diseases are likely to cause these households to lose most or all their livestock. If there is livestock reduction this also implies that household asset bases are disturbed and potential income and other benefits like milk and manure from livestock are disrupted and ultimately household food security is affected as a result.

If veld fires are experienced again this season, the availability of pasture and browse will be poorer than normal and will be unavailable until the rains come in October 2010, assuming a normal start of season. This means that livestock conditions are likely to deteriorate and if conditions become critical, the situation might result in animal starvation. Given the limited incomes of poor households, these households might not be in a position to buy stock feeds to supplement the feeds. This will further compromise livestock health and conditions and if this continues, it might result in livestock deaths and thus a reduction in livestock holdings. If livestock numbers decrease this means potential income from livestock is also reduced exposing poor households to vulnerable conditions. As such, food security conditions are likely to be moderately food insecure.

Most of poor households in the Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal, Poor Resource Kariba, and Northern Zambezi Valley are expected to remain food secure, at least through the July to September period and their situation is likely to worsen beginning of October when their food base diminishes. If humanitarian agencies and government support comes in late, food conditions could deteriorate to highly food insecure. However food security conditions for poor households is likely to be moderately food insecure during the October to December 2010 outlook period. After poor households exhaust their own cereals and their coping alternatives, which include consumption of wild foods, reliance on small remittances, and limiting portion size and the number of meals consumed per day. Poor households with limited incomes are likely to rely more on the market for food, where prices, especially for cereals, are expected to have doubled from the July to September 2010 period. Poor and very poor households without any income are likely to rely on external support for food through food-for-work or food-for-assets programs. With the humanitarian and government plans at advanced stages, it is expected that food pipelines will be well resourced, as has happened in the past, and will finally close the national cereal gap.

**In urban areas**, the supply of basic commodities on the market has remained stable; this is likely to prevail throughout the outlook period from July to December 2010, following the extension of duty-free regulations. Recently, the Minister of Finance in the mid-term fiscal policy review extended the duty-free importation regulations to the end of the year. This policy has been in place since January 2009 with the aim of addressing shortages that have occurred due to depressed local output and to stabilize prices following a decade of economic decline. However, there were some basic items which include margarine, washing powder, bathing soap, and various cosmetics which have been taken off of the list of duty-free commodities to make way for locally produced products. It is hoped that the local industries will sustainably supply these eliminated products to avoid having the market run into shortages. If market liberalization is reversed, the importation of food and non-food by the private sector is likely to drop and this will have a negative impact on the supply of commodities on the market, resulting in shortages and price increases which will hinder food access. Inflation levels, as monitored by the Central Statistical Office (CSO), are relatively low with monthly inflation recorded as 0.3 percent in May 2010 and with year-on-year inflation at 6.1 percent.

The cost of living for low income urban earners, as monitored by the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, reports that the monthly budget for a family of six recorded a slight decrease from USD 481.11 in May 2010 to USD 481.01 in June 2010. However the cost of non-food items, which is inclusive of rental and utility bills, has remained high. Though a majority of the middle and poor urban households are consuming cereals from own production and complementing with small proportion of purchases, by early September they will be solely relying on the market for food. Currently most of the urban poor and very poor households access food items in very small quantities (e.g. 500g of maize flour) to cover meager meal provisions without the storage of any foods, and this approach will continue in the October to December 2010 period. The

petty street vending done in order to gain income to access the small amounts of food mentioned above is likely to increase during the July to December outlook period.

As is normal, prices of cereals are likely to peak starting in July as better-off households hold onto their stocks. Poor urban households with limited incomes will face access challenges. The cost of living is likely to continue rising hindering food access for most of the poor and very poor urban households and no attention will be given to other non-food basic requirements. Throughout the outlook period a majority of poor and very poor households will be moderately food insecure relying on food aid or other external assistance. It is anticipated that as the agricultural season starts in September 2010, on-farm casual labor opportunities will increase, with the poor clearing and hand tilling land for the better-off households and getting paid in cash or in kind. The planned ZimVAC urban assessment towards the end of the year is likely to provide further details and define the severity of the food security conditions in the urban areas. Though there is an effort by the city councils in urban areas to collect refuse, the system has not fully stabilized. If this fails, water borne diseases are likely to erupt come the start of the rainy season. If this is the case, cholera outbreaks, which hit the country from August 2008 to July 2009, might recur with great impact in urban areas further exacerbating poor and very poor household vulnerability.

**Table I:** Less likely events over the next six months that could change the above scenarios.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Poor Resource Kariba Valley, Northern Zambezi Valley, Ndowoyo Communal, and Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government restoring restrictions on private sector trade of staple cereals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staple cereals availability will drastically go down in the affected areas resulting in increased prices and a drastic reduction of household access to food in the southern, northwestern, and extreme northern parts of the country.</li> </ul>
Poor Resource Kariba Valley, Northern Zambezi Valley, Ndowoyo Communal, and Beitbridge and South Western Lowveld Communal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Livestock disease outbreak affecting cattle, goats and chicken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible livestock disease could drastically reduce livestock holding for over 70 percent of households in these areas who consider cattle, goats, and poultry sales as a major source of income. Furthermore, the terms of trade between livestock and staple cereals could turn in favor of staple cereals for these cereal deficit households.</li> </ul>
The whole country, especially in urban areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reversal of the importation regulations by the Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is likely to disrupt the currently stable supply of basic commodities on the market and prices are likely to increase given the limited supply. This situation will seriously compromise cereal deficit household access to adequate food.</li> </ul>