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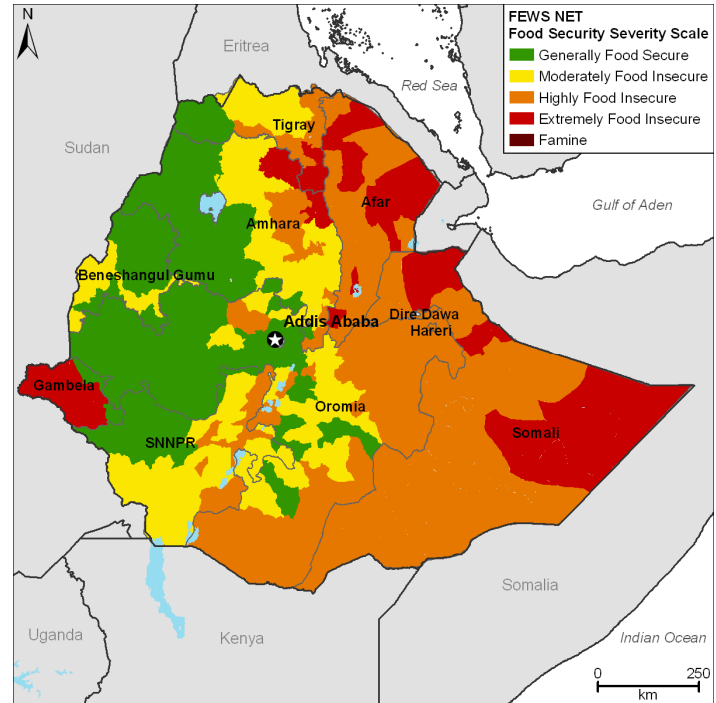
FEWS NET
FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook

January to June 2010

- An estimated 5.23 million people will require emergency food assistance up to December 2010 with the net food requirement including TSF needs being 290,271 MT estimated to cost around USD 231.3 million according to the Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' Humanitarian Requirement Document released on 2 February 2010
- Performance of the *kiremt* rains (June to September) was below normal, particularly in Gambella, the eastern half of the country and southern lowlands of SNNPR. As a result, main season *meher* crop harvests are poor in these areas.
- Poor main season *karma/karan* rainfall in the pastoral region of Afar and northern zones of Somali region have led to poorer than usual pasture and water availability. Further deterioration is expected until the rains begin in March.
- Availability of pasture and water in the southern zones of Somali region, neighboring lowlands of Oromia and South Omo Zone of SNNP Region has marginally improved following the *deyr* (October-December) rains. However, the respite will likely be short-lived and households will continue to depend heavily on external assistance.
- Several woredas in the eastern parts of Amhara, Tigray, Afar, Oromia and Somali regions are facing water shortages at the start of the dry season following the poor *kiremt* rains.

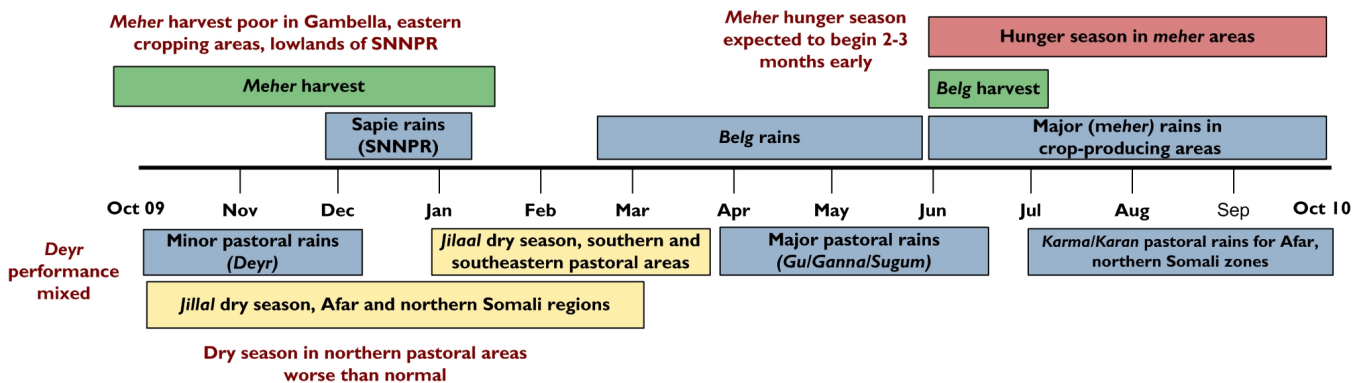
Figure I. Current estimated food security conditions, January 2010



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

Source: FEWS NET and WFP

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

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Current food security conditions

Following the late onset, erratic distribution, and early cessation of the 2009 *kiremt* rains, especially in the eastern half of the country, and poor performance of the 2008 and 2009 *belg/gu* rains, a multi agency, multi sector mid season *meher* assessment was conducted in September/October 2009 to prepare a contingency plan for the January to June 2010 period. Based on the assessment findings, a joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' National Contingency Plan was released by the Government in December 2009. The plan estimated that 4.76 million required emergency food assistance between January and June 2010. The document provided preliminary planning figures for decision makers for food needs and other non food needs that were estimated at USD270 million.

The Government and the Humanitarian Partners then conducted a *meher* needs assessment in November/December 2009 aimed at revising the needs established in the National Contingency Planning Document. The *meher* assessments resulted in the preparation of the Humanitarian Requirements Document released by the Government on 2 February 2010. The document estimated emergency food requirements for the period January to June 2009 at 5.23 million people requiring 503,013 Mt of cereals, 52,882 Mt of blended food, 66,404 Mt of pulses and 20,684 Mt of vegetable oil. The document also estimated the non food needs that include water and sanitation, health and nutrition, agriculture and livestock and education at USD63.4 million.

Performance of the *kiremt* rains (June to September), the main rainy season for most of the country, was below average this year in the eastern and southern parts of the country. This has resulted in below average *meher* production in these areas, though the *meher* harvest (October to January) has improved availability of food compared to the peak 2009 hunger period (June and October). Cereal prices are still high compared to the five-year average, but are either stable or slightly decreasing, following the seasonal pattern. The physical condition of livestock, especially cattle, is poor in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe, Bale, Arsi, parts of Eastern and Southern Tigray, and Wag Himra zones due to shortage of pasture and water. In some of these areas there is an unusually early livestock movement in search of water and pasture. Pockets of the lowlands of eastern and northern Amhara (Kobo, Kewet, Gubalafto, Habru, Sahala, Ziquala, Abergele, East Belesa, Janamora and Tselemt), eastern and southern Tigray (Saesi Tsaeda Emba, Ganta Afeshom, Erob, Atsbi Womberta, Kilte Awlaleo, Enderta, Raya Azebo, and Alamata woredas); East and West Hararghe (Fedis, Midaga Tolla, Golo Oda, Meyumuluke, Hawi Gudina, Burka Dimtu and Miesso) and lowlands of Bale and Arsi zones are facing water shortages. In some parts of the eastern *meher* producing areas such as Wag Hamra zone of Amhara region and lowlands of East and West Hararghe zone of Oromia Region, outmigration of people due to shortages of food and an increase in levels of acute malnutrition are also being reported.

There has been an improvement in food security and the nutrition situation in the northern parts of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People' Region (SNNPR) with the improved availability of food from the *meher* harvest, increased incomes from sales of coffee and ginger, labor opportunities in coffee harvesting and processing, generally stable market supplies, and stable cereal prices. The exceptions are the lowlands, where performance of the rains was poor, resulting in poor *meher* production. Most of the region received unseasonable rains in December that improved availability of pasture and water with a subsequent recovery of livestock and improved access to milk. The rains were also beneficial for the growth of roots and tubers and land preparation for the *belg* season. Following a shortage of sweet potato cuttings in the region due to poor production in previous seasons, increased planting of taro has been reported this year. The increased planting of taro could make up for the reduced planting of sweet potato in some areas. Normally, sweet potato is widely consumed during the hunger period between February and May, thus serving as an important transitional crop until the *belg* harvest begins in June.

In the southern parts of SNNPR which are most dependent on the *belg* rains, including the southern special woredas of Konso, Derashe, Burji and Amaro and the dominantly pastoral zone of South Omo, performance of the 2009 *belg* rains was poor and performance of the October to December short rains has been below average also leading to poor *meher* harvest. Food security in these parts of the region, especially those of the special woredas, is fragile and a large proportion of the population is dependent on food assistance.

Ongoing food distributions have improved availability of food in Gambella region where the *meher* harvest has been a near total failure as a result of poor *kiremt* season rains. Food security in the region will continue to heavily rely on food aid until the next harvest begins in August. Currently, availability of pasture and water is good and physical condition of livestock is

normal although there are serious concerns that these resources may not last through the entire dry season in some parts of the region. Continued inter-clan and tribal conflicts and livestock raids by tribesmen from Sudan pose a serious threat to food security. In some parts of the western woredas, pastoralists are forced to restrict their livestock movements and grazing grounds to reduce the risk of attacks by these outside forces. Hence, lack of free access to some of the major dry season grazing grounds is likely to negatively impact livestock conditions and productivity.

The pastoral region of Afar and the northern two zones of Somali Region, Shinile and Jijiga, have received consecutive seasons of below average rainfall including the *karma/karran* (July to September) rains of 2009. The rains were inadequate for pasture regeneration and recharging of water sources in most areas. This has led to poor pasture and water availability. The water problem is particularly critical in Harshin and Kebribeyah woredas of Jijiga zone, Ayisha, Erer and Shinile woredas of Shinile zone and Elidaar, Bidu, Erebt and Kore wordas of Afar Region. Livestock body conditions are deteriorating, leading to significant reduction in livestock productivity. In parts of Shinile zone recent deaths of cattle have been attributed to drought and related causes. Livestock:cereal terms of trade are poor because of low animal prices and relatively high cereal prices in both pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Though areas along the Awash River and neighboring areas of Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions are normally dry season grazing areas, there has been increased and unusually early livestock migrations to these areas that could lead early pasture depletion and likely clan conflict if not averted..

Milk availability is very low due to low livestock births and poor livestock body conditions. Crop performance in the agro pastoral parts of Afar and the northern zones of Somali region has been poor. Performance of the irrigated farming along the Awash river has also been poor because of poor rains in the highlands. Overall, food security in these parts of the country is precarious and continues to heavily depend on food assistance.

The southern zones of Somali Region and the lowlands of Bale and Borena in Oromia Region have also faced repeated below-normal seasonal rains. The 2009 *deyr/hagaya* (October-December) rains were generally below normal, especially in most parts of Degahabur, Fik, Warder, Korahe and Afder; lowlands of Bale and South Omo of SNNPR. Serious water shortages are reported in several areas of Warder, Afder and Korahe zones and most lowlands of Bale zone in Oromia Region as the October- December rains could not adequately replenish major water sources. Consequently, many of these areas require urgent emergency water assistance. The situation is likely to get more critical as the current dry season advances. Milk availability is poor due to poor conception and births. Livestock movements and early migration is increasing to areas where water and pasture availability is relatively better. However, cereal prices continue to be stable due to improved distribution of food aid. Food aid is an important source of food for most people in these areas.

Unseasonable rains were received in large areas of the country in December. The rains were beneficial for slight pasture and water regeneration and supported the development of transitional crops in SNNPR. Land preparation for *belg* crop planting is also ongoing following the rains. However, the rains negatively affected *meher* crops that were ready for harvest or were being harvested.

Most-likely food security scenario (January to June 2010)

The most likely scenario is based on the following assumptions:

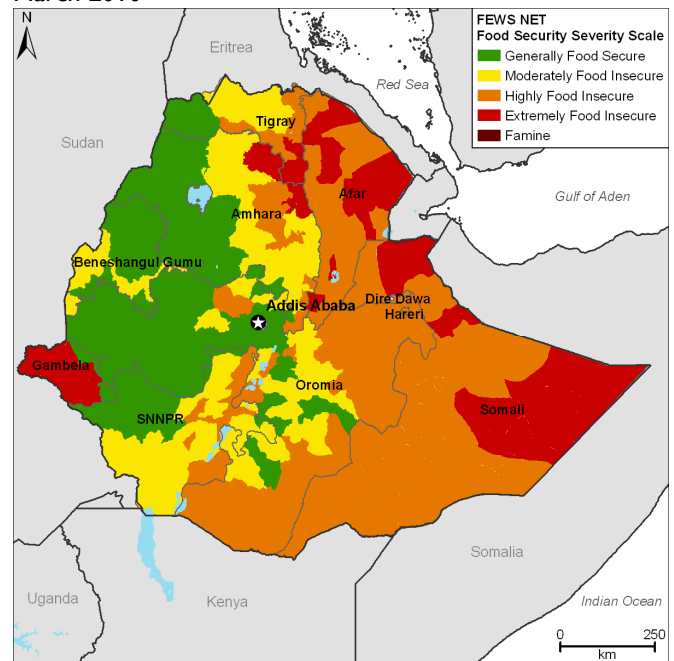
- Staple prices are expected to remain stable despite a poor harvest in the eastern parts of the country following ongoing food aid imports and distributions and cereal imports by the government aimed at price stabilization.
- Although forecasts have not yet been provided by metrological agencies, February to May rains are expected to be normal.
- PSNP food and cash distributions are expected to be undertaken normally during the January to June period.
- Sweet potato production in SNNPR is expected to decline compared to average following shortage of cuttings for planting. Increased planting of taro this year is expected make up for some of this deficit in some areas.
- Prevailing conflict in Gambella region is expected to continue during the period January to June.

In the **eastern *meher* producing parts of the country**, January to June is typically the time of the year when food security improves because of availability of fresh stocks from the *meher* (October to January) harvest. The hunger season typically begins in June as these stocks deplete. This year however, because of the below-normal production, the hunger period (especially among the poor and very poor households) is expected to start two to three months earlier than normal. Income from livestock and livestock products is expected to be low this year due to the poor livestock physical condition. These areas are chronically food insecure with limited coping capacity due to their chronic poverty and repeated poor performance of seasonal crops. Unless sufficient and timely assistance is provided to households in these areas, negative coping strategies such as unusual migration and selling of productive assets will occur. There will also be increased levels of acute malnutrition earlier than the normal hunger period (June to September for these areas) as the poor stocks from the *meher* harvest are depleted.

Although the period from February to May is the normal hunger period for most of **SNNPR**, the food security outlook in the highlands and midland parts of northern SNNPR is likely to be good following normal performance of *meher* crops. In the lowlands however, in addition to the poor performance of the *meher* season crops, there was shortage of sweet potato cuttings which will result in a reduced harvest of sweet potato. In these parts of the country, below average sweet potato production can lead to fast deteriorations in food security and a rapid increase in levels of acute malnutrition. The increased planting of taro this year is expected to alleviate the problem slightly. There is a need to closely monitor the food security situation in these areas as the hunger season progresses from February to May. Food security will deteriorate further in the extreme southern parts of SNNPR, including the special woredas of Konso, Derashe, Burji and Amaro until their next harvest begins in June. Continued provision of food and non-food assistance is needed to prevent deterioration in food security.

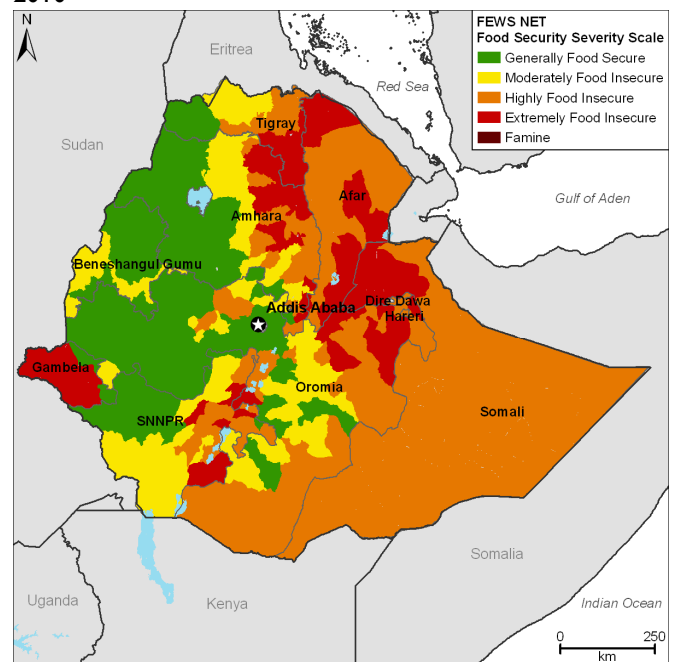
In the northeastern pastoral areas of **Afar region** and the two northern zones of Somali region, food security is expected to continue deteriorating until the next rains begin in March. The upcoming *sugum/gu* rains are expected to improve water availability beginning March including in areas such as Elidar, Bidu, Kori, Ayisha and Harshin where currently water is very scarce and water trucking is required. Pasture availability is also expected to improve with the start of the rains. Milk availability is expected to continue to be poor due to poor conception in previous seasons, though improvement in body conditions will improve livestock prices. But, cereal prices are also seasonably high during these months and therefore terms of trade may not improve substantially. The long dry period before the rains begin will be particularly difficult as these areas have faced consecutive poor seasonal rains, leading to significantly smaller herds compared to the baseline year and making them more vulnerable to food insecurity in the future. There will be further loss of livestock during the dry period between January and March. Shortages of drinking water, which are already prevalent, will be widespread. Early migration of livestock, emaciated physical condition, and deteriorating terms of trade will lead to

Figure 2. Most-likely food security scenario, January to March 2010



Source: FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP

Figure 3. Most-likely food security scenario, April to June 2010



Source: FEWS NET Ethiopia and WFP

high levels of food insecurity with increased levels of malnutrition unless appropriate food and non food interventions are carried out. Extreme dependence on food aid will continue. Food security of pastoralists in Afar region and Shinile zone of Somali region is expected to improve with the *belg/sugum* rains which begin in March. Food security of agropastoralists however, is expected to remain deteriorate between now and late June/early July when the *belg* harvest begins.

In the southern zones of **Somali Region**, ongoing food aid distributions have contributed significantly to improvements in food security compared to the past couple of years. It has improved availability of food at household level and has also helped to stabilize cereal prices. Despite the relatively improved food security situation though, levels of food insecurity remain high. In areas where the *deyr* rains performed poorly, availability of water and pasture is already scarce. High livestock mortality during the past drought periods, unfavorable livestock:cereal terms of trade, low animal birth rates that led to low availability of milk, and conflict have contributed to the high level of food insecurity. Livestock production and productivity takes some time to recover, and therefore the loss of livestock will continue to affect pastoral food security for some time. The continued shortage of milk will cause widespread acute malnutrition, especially among under five children, and pregnant and lactating women, unless required food and non-food assistance is provided, including provision of supplementary food. The critical water shortage already reported from various areas in the region will persist until the *Gu/Genna* rains begin in April. An increase in livestock mortality will occur due to increased movements in search of pasture and water and likely disease outbreaks in areas where livestock are concentrated. The upcoming *Gu/Genna* rains will improve pasture and water availability although recovery will be slow for livestock body conditions and productivity. Similarly, food security will continue to be poor in the neighboring zones of Bale and Borena of Oromia region as well as South Omo zone of SNNP Region. Continued food and non-food assistance is important to prevent further deterioration.

Table I: Events which could affect the food security outlook

Geographic Focus Area	Possible events in the next 6 months that would change the most likely scenario in this area	Impacts on food security conditions	Likelihood of occurrence*	Key variables to monitor
A. Eastern and central parts of SNNPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweet potato butterfly occurrence Poor performance of belg rains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security will deteriorate further with rapid increases in the levels of acute malnutrition among the vulnerable. Prices of cereals will increase further in anticipation of poor <i>belg</i> harvest in June/July. Availability of waged labor opportunity will decline. 	<p>Unlikely</p> <p>Possible but not expected in the most likely scenario</p>	<p>Performance of sweet potato</p> <p><i>Belg</i> rains</p>
B. The eastern <i>meher</i> crop producing parts of the country including the northeastern highlands of Amhara and Tigray, areas in the rift valley and East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor performance of the belg rains Improved availability of food aid (general ration and supplementary food) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed or reduced planting of long cycle <i>meher</i> crops Improvement in the availability and access to food at the household level 	<p>Possible but not expected in the most likely scenario</p> <p>Unlikely</p>	<p><i>Belg</i> rains</p> <p>Food aid distributions</p>
C. Pastoral region of Afar and the two northern zones of Somali region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of unseasonable rains Decline in staple food prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial improvement in availability of water and pasture Improved livestock:cereal ToT, improved conception Access to food improved 	<p>Unlikely</p>	<p>Unseasonable rains</p> <p>Prices of staples</p>
D. Southern seven zones of Somali region and neighboring lowlands of Oromia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor Gu rains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further deterioration in water and pasture availability and deterioration of food security. 	<p>Unlikely</p>	<p>Deyr rains</p>
E. Gambella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further intensification of conflict along the border with Sudan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further displacement of people and deterioration of food security 	<p>Possible but not expected in the most likely scenario</p>	<p><i>Kiremt</i> rains</p>

* Probability levels	Description
Unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed moderately
Very unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed significantly



Maize is the most widely consumed cereal by the rural poor. Sorghum is generally one of the cheapest cereals. Teff is also very important throughout the country. The most important markets for teff are the large cities including Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Mekele, and Dire Dawa. Addis Ababa is the capital city and Dire Dawa, Mekele, and Jijiga are major towns in the eastern, mainly food insecure, parts of the country. Bahir Dar is a major town in a surplus producing area. Jimma represents a generally food secure surplus area. Shashemene is an assembly, wholesale, and retail market and the main transshipment point for cereals from the south and southwest to the center and east. Sodo is an urban center located in the Wolayita zone, and is one of the most chronically food insecure parts of the region.

Monthly prices are supplied by FEWS NET enumerators, local government agencies, market information systems, UN agencies, NGOs, and other network and private sector partners.

