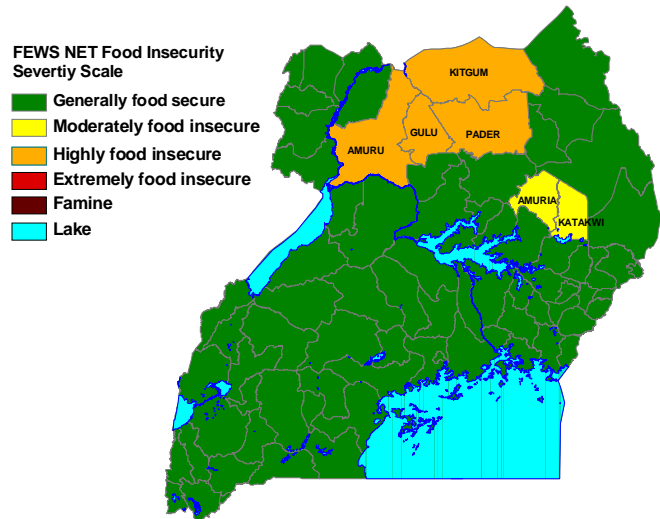


UGANDA Food Security Update

December 2007/January 2008

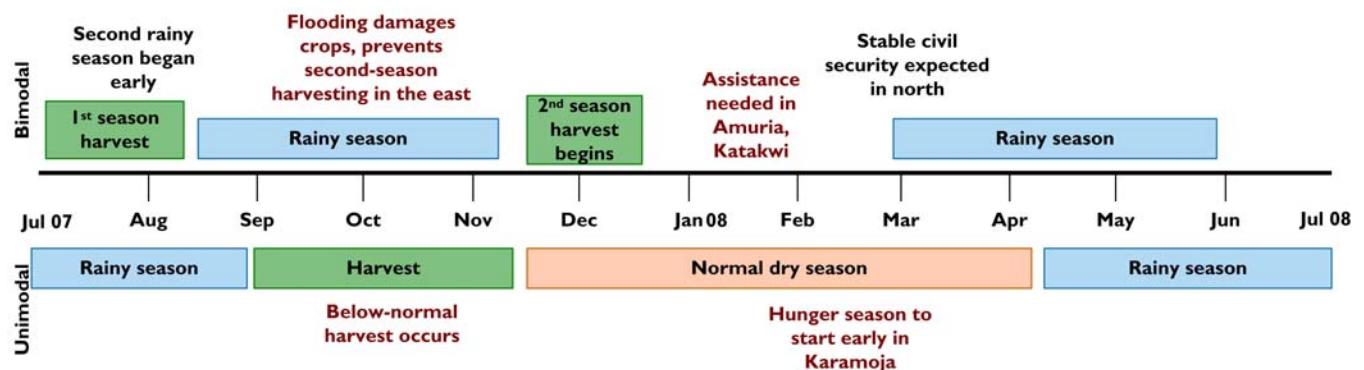
- Households are moderately food insecure in parts of Amuria, Katakwi, and Lira districts, where flooding in 2007 damaged first-season crops and prevented a second-season harvest. About 30,000 households (200,000 people) will require food assistance between January and June/July 2008.
- Household food stocks and food security in northern Uganda are progressively improving as stable civil security enabled the beginning of harvests in December, which may indicate a long-term improvement in household and regional food security. Normal second-season harvests ensure normal food security in most other bimodal parts of the country.
- Normal food security is currently reported in Karamoja. However, food stocks are lower than usual at this time of the year following below-average harvests in the region's 2007 single season. Moderate food insecurity is expected to set in by February or March.

Figure 1: Current estimated severity of food insecurity, January 2008



Data: WFP, UN FAO, GoU; Graphics: FEWS NET

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Food security summary

Household food stocks, access to food, and food security in northern Uganda's Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts are progressively improving following the beginning of harvests of the long-term sorghum crop, pigeon peas, and other pulses in December. Sustained civil security during 2007, coupled with good growing conditions, has helped many households to access land and cultivate crops. This harvest is the start for many households to regain their own productive capacities, and

could signal long-term enhanced household and regional food security. However, this improvement depends on normal rainfall and growing conditions as well as maintained civil security to allow access to and increase land cultivation in the next two seasons of 2008. Many households interviewed in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts (during an October/November 2007 inter-agency assessment of the impact of floods on local food security in the region, which was determined to be minimal), including people still in camps accessing local land, people in camps accessing their land at home, and some returnees, stated that if civil security continues, they will be able to grow adequate food and feed themselves by the end of 2008. Although the exact impact on the number of households needing assistance will depend on the quality of the harvests, an increased number of households may require limited or no food assistance.

Following floods that devastated crops in Amuria and Katakwi districts (in Teso Region in eastern Uganda), many households have no food stocks after dismal or failed second-season crop harvests in November and December, and now face moderate food insecurity. A January 2008 visit to parts of Amuria, Katakwi, and Lira (in mid-northern Uganda) by USAID, FEWS NET, and World Vision to assess harvest and food conditions, confirmed that households had low food stocks and were food insecure. The assessment team also concluded that food assistance will be required in the districts to cater for poorer households that have limited livelihood options and off-farm income/food access opportunities in the districts until June/July 2008, when the next harvest is due. An estimated 30,000 households (200,000 people) will need food for the period.

Overall, food access and security remain normal in Karamoja in northeastern Uganda, as households benefit from the harvests from September to November. However, food stocks are reportedly lower than usual at this time of the year following below-average harvests in the region's 2007 single season. Most households in the region rely on their own production as their primary source of food access. Food security conditions in the region are being closely monitored as the hunger period approaches, which is likely to begin one to two months earlier than usual in April. By late February or early March, many households in the region are expected to be food insecure. Net-producer households will have limited stocks, reducing their food access, and there will be less locally produced food on markets as a result of the below-normal production. Additionally, commodity inflows from neighboring districts are likely to be limited due to the poor road conditions and ongoing insecurity, which is likely to contribute to the reduced access for market-dependent households.

The dry season in Karamoja – Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit districts – normally begins in October and runs through April of the following year when the rains begin. During this period, pastoralists normally migrate to dry-period grazing areas, initially within the region and later to neighboring districts (Amuria, Katakwi, Lira, Kumi, and Soroti) in search of pastures and water as the season intensifies. This year, however, district agriculture officials and non-governmental organizations report that sporadic unseasonable rains since October have benefited pastures and water sources in the pastoral areas, sustaining vegetation and water sources to enable adequate livestock access to pastures and water in the region. This continues to have a positive effect on the population, especially the elderly and children, having more access to milk and other animal proteins than usual. However, *Pest des Petits Ruminants* (PPR), a fatal viral disease that affects sheep and goats, remains widespread and with no known control measures. Additionally, as a result of the below-normal cereal availability on markets due to the poor regional harvest, livestock/cereal terms of trade have reportedly remained stable but low during December/January, limiting the ability of pastoral households to exchange livestock for other food products.

Household stocks and food security remain normal in bimodal areas, benefiting from the second-season harvest of late planted cereals and alternative crops.

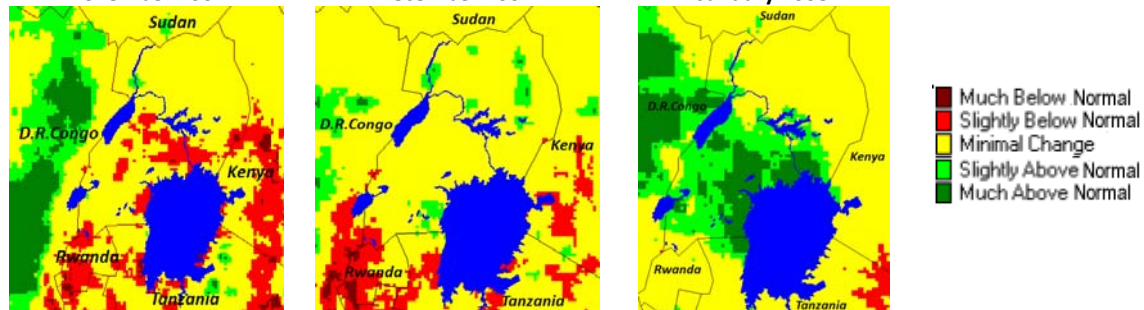
Seasonal progress

Across the country, second-season rains have ended and the main harvests are over, and only a few late-planted annual crops remain in the field. After a relatively wetter-than-normal December/early January period in several bimodal areas in the southern half of the country (see Figure 2 below), dry conditions returned by mid-January, helping to dry the harvested crops. This reduced the risk of crop molding and quality deterioration, which was widespread at the start of the harvests in November. Overall crop production is generally normal except in the flood-affected eastern districts (Amuria and Katakwi) where households did not get a second-season harvest. Based on qualitative assessments, a normal second-season maize

harvest of between 200,000 and 250,000 MT is expected, including about 40,000 MT from the main production areas in Kapchorwa District. About 120,000 to 150,000 MT of dry maize grain is expected to be available for the market. Also, production of root crops and tubers, key food security crops, remains normal in most areas. Dry beans from the second season are already available in the market.

Unseasonable rains during December and early January also provided moisture to support perennial crops, such as bananas, coffee and tea, key income-generating crops in Uganda.

Figure 2. Estimated rainfall in November to second dekad of January, compared to average



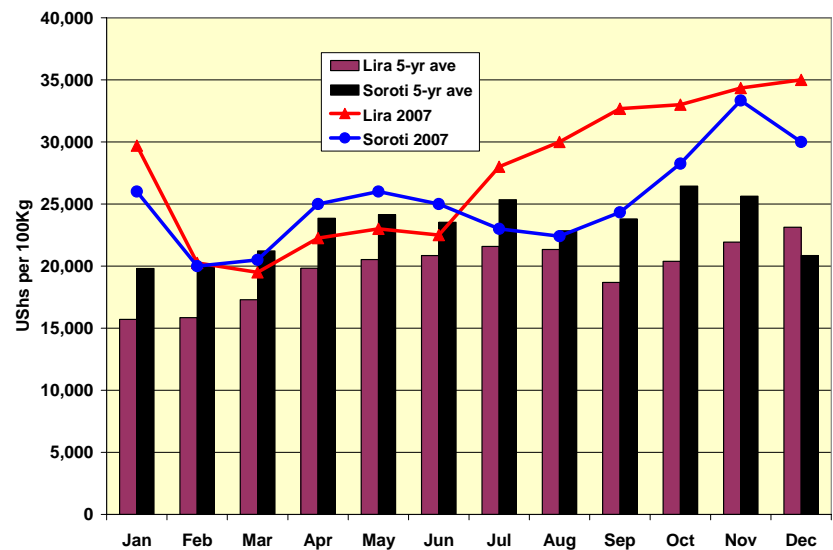
FEWS NET/Uganda, January 2008; Source: FEWS NET/USGS

Markets, trade and food access

The second-season harvests and dry conditions since mid-January have increased market supplies of crops, such as dry maize, millet and sorghum. Supplies of root crops and tubers are also normal in most major district markets.

Sorghum is a staple crop in eastern, northern and northeastern Uganda. Continued analysis of sorghum prices in Lira and Soroti, major regional supply markets in the north and east respectively that were affected by flooding in 2007, shows that prices remain higher-than-normal even as the harvests continue (Figure 3). This reflects the low sorghum harvests in these areas and greater-than-normal market demand as household stocks are less than average. Nonetheless, a 10 percent price fall between November and December in Soroti and a relative stabilization of prices in Lira indicate relatively improved supplies than before the harvests.

Figure 3. Comparative wholesale sorghum prices for Lira and Soroti: 2007 vs. 2002-06 average



Source: Market Information Service; Graphics: FEWS NET/Uganda, Jan. 2008

While still higher-than-normal food prices constrain households' access to market-dependent households, these recent changes in food prices are nonetheless significant and provide a limited improvement in households' access to food in markets. These effects could also have a multiplier effect in neighboring areas, such as Amuria and Katakwi districts (where the second-season harvest failed) that depend on Lira and Soroti districts as supply points, helping mitigate households' access to markets there.