



Fact Sheet

February 2013



Somalia

Agriculture

Agriculture and Somalia's crisis

Agriculture is an important economic activity in Somalia not only in terms of meeting the food needs of the population (roughly 50% of populations cereal requirements are met through domestic production), but also in terms of generating income through crop sales and agricultural labor opportunities.

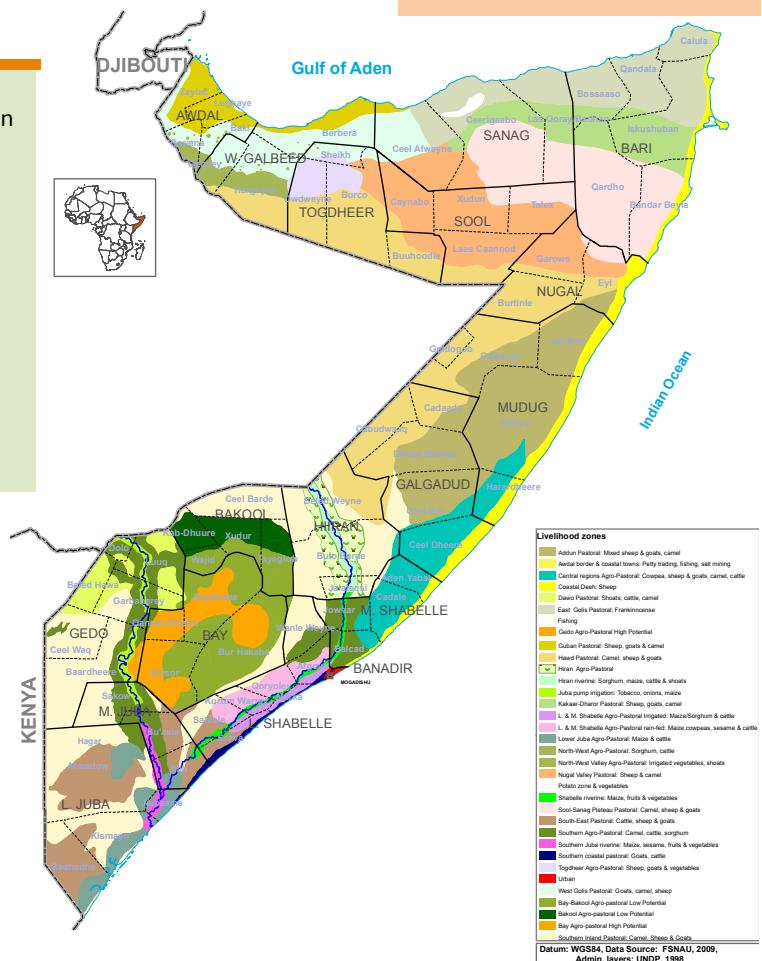
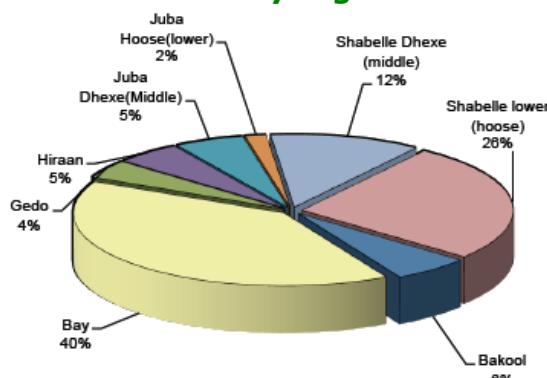
However, two decades of conflict have created a situation of protracted and complex emergency, which has eroded livelihoods and led to increased vulnerability to food insecurity. In the midst of one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, hunger and malnutrition are some of the major causes of suffering for significant sections of the population. Due to intermittent conflict, floods, drought, disease outbreaks and very limited access to basic services and humanitarian space, a section of Somali families increasingly face challenges to maintain a food secure and well-nourished household. This also curtails agricultural production leading to poor harvests and significant cereal shortfalls. Limited access to quality health care, education services and poor childcare

Somalia Livelihoods Zones

Two areas are considered high potential for crop production with rainfall ranging from 400mm to 600mm: a small area in the Northwest (west of Hargeisa) and a much larger inter-riverine area between the Shabelle and Juba river valleys. There are four primary agricultural zones in Somalia:

- Northwest in parts of Awdal and W. Galbeed - rainfed maize and sorghum with some livestock herdings
 - Coastal Cowpea Belt Zone in Central and Southern Somalia
 - Shabelle and Juba Riverine Valleys - rain fed and irrigated maize, with sesame cash crops
 - Sorghum Belt in Bay and Bakool Region - rainfed sorghum with livestock production.

Cereal Production by region



FAO's Strategy for Somalia's Agriculture



Through its Strategy, FAO will seek to stabilize and increase the incomes of rural families who grow crops. The focus is on increasing crop production and productivity and improving returns to farmers' investment of labor and inputs. This will be achieved through easier physical access to markets with adequate facilities, and greater transparency through the dissemination of information. Producing and selling are closely intertwined and co-dependent and therefore access to fair and open markets tends to increase incomes which, inter alia, encourage farmers to invest more for production increases and efficiencies.

Increasing on-farm use of inputs, technology and sound water management coupled with farmer training, access to credit and technology development and transfer are the main tenets of the FAO agriculture programme. The main instruments of the agricultural programme include the expanded use of the Farmer Field School concept, Public/Private Partnerships as well as the strengthening of local and public institutions and groups. Each of these areas of action will build on the progress that the Somali people have made with previous and continuing FAO support in seed production, farmer and technician training, irrigation infrastructure improvements and water management capacities.

The seed system, in particular the training on use and production of seeds, is crucial. This is together with the expansion of the genetic portfolio of the seeds; with rain-fed and irrigation, long and short cycle varieties. In remote areas or where ecosystems are strongly characterized (soil, water, wind, cropping techniques), seed production from local landraces will be encouraged and supported. The expected increased yield will lead to support improved seed storing methodologies and facilities.

Areas of priority

- Ease access to inputs and agricultural services.
- Improve farmer production and business skills.
- Improve farming practices; use of inputs, mechanization, soil and water management.
- Improve and update production technologies.
- Upgrade on-farm water management and infrastructure.
- Reduce on-farm post-harvest losses.
- Improve access to markets and information. Add value to farm commodities.

As farmers increase the use of improved seeds and other inputs, their financial investment also increases. This implies greater risk in the event of a crop failure caused by various threats; floods, drought and pests. A crop insurance scheme would mitigate some of this risk and encourage farmers to invest for productivity increases.

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