**GIEWS Country Brief**
**Benin**

Reference Date: 15-January-2021

**FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT**
- Above-average cereal production gathered in 2020
- Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2020/21
- Prices are overall stable, but remain higher on yearly basis
- Effects of COVID-19 pandemic drive up food insecurity

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**Above-average cereal production gathered in 2020**

Harvesting activities of millet, sorghum, rainfed rice and main season maize crops have almost finalized, while harvesting of irrigated rice and second season maize crops is still ongoing and will be completed by end-January. Despite some localized losses of crops due to flooding and attacks of Fall Armyworm (FAW) on maize as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on population movement, the 2020 aggregate cereal output is estimated at a near-record level of 2.1 million tonnes as favourable rains benefitted yields in most parts of the country.

Natural pasture is the main source of livestock feed in the country. The current forage availability is overall satisfactory in the main grazing areas of the country due to abundant rainfall amounts. The animal health situation is generally good and stable, with just some localized outbreaks of seasonal diseases, including Trypanosomiasis, Contagious Bovine Peripneumonia, Peste des Petits Ruminants, African Swine Fever, Foot-and-Mouth disease, bronchitis and rabies.

**Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2020/21**

Cereal import requirements for the 2020/21 (November/October) marketing year, mostly rice and wheat for human consumption, are estimated at 520,000 tonnes, 30 percent above the average and more than double compared to the previous year. The significant increase in import follows the re-opening of the border with Nigeria in late December 2020 as traders aim to replenish their stocks that are at their lowest level over the past two years.

**Prices of maize overall stable, but remain higher on yearly basis**

The ongoing harvest improves stocks at household and market levels. Prices of maize grains in October 2020 (last available

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**Crop Calendar**

- Cassava
- Irrigated Rice
- Maize (Main)*
- Maize (Second)*
- Millet & Sorghum
- Rice
- Yams

**Cereal Production**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>1,581</td>
<td>1,587</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice (paddy)</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,017</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,186</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,153</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data. Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.
data) showed a relative stability over the past two months, but remained above the level of a year earlier due to strong domestic and institutional demand from neighbouring Sahelian countries. The high level of maize prices is also due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures implemented to contain it that hampered market functioning and increased transportation costs. Prices of imported rice were also relatively stable in October 2020 but below their levels in October 2019 due to the regular supply from the international markets.

**Effects of COVID-19 pandemic drive up food insecurity**

According to the November 2020 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 385 000 people were estimated to need food assistance from October to December 2020, well above the level of 25 000 food insecure in October to December 2019. However, this number is projected to decline to nearly 282 000 people between June and August 2021 as a result of the harvests of maize crops and yams, which will improve food availability and access in southern and central regions. The increase in the prevalence and severity of food insecurity in 2020 has been predominantly driven by the effects of the lockdown measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions on the movement of people and the closure of non-essential industries resulted in the loss of jobs and incomes, reducing people’s capacity to access adequate diets. In addition, the closure of the border with Nigeria imposed by the Government of Nigeria since August 2019 has resulted in widespread disruption of cross-border marketing activities, diminishing livelihood opportunities of households and their food security.

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**Cereals Imports**

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<th>000 tonnes</th>
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<td>Average 2015/16-2019/20</td>
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<td>320</td>
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Note: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown). Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.

**Benin**

**Retail prices of cereals in Cotonou**

CFA Franc BCEAO per kg

![Graph showing retail prices of cereals in Cotonou](source)

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