



GIEWS Country Brief

The State of Libya

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Planting of 2024 winter cereal crops nearing completion
- Close-to-average cereal production harvested in 2023
- Collapse of two dams in northeast caused losses of lives and material damages
- Although oil production recovered slightly, political instability continues to affect economy
- People in need of assistance estimated at 0.3 million

Planting of 2024 cereal crops nearing completion

Sowing of the 2024 winter grain crops, for harvest from April 2024, started in mid-October and is nearing conclusion. Although below-average aggregate rainfall amounts were received in September and October 2023 in the main producing areas along the coast, rainfall distribution was reckoned to be favourable, providing adequate soil moisture in time for sowing.

Despite general improvements in security facilitated access to fields, farmers reported that power cuts and high prices of inputs, including seeds, water, fuel and machinery, continue to constrain their ability to cultivate land.

Agricultural production is principally constrained by the landscape, only about 12 percent of the total area of 15.4 million hectares is arable. Although 470 000 hectares are suitable for irrigation, only about 240 000 hectares are currently irrigated due to concerns over the depletion of underground water. Cereals are cultivated in coastal regions, where rainfed production or cropping with supplementary irrigation is possible, and in some arid areas in the south, under full irrigation.

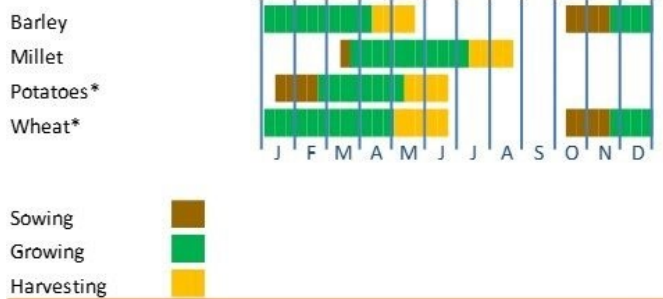
Collapse of two dams caused losses of lives and material damages

Rainfall in early September was extremely abundant along the northeastern coast, where more than 10 centimetres of rain overnight from a cyclone in the Mediterranean Sea inundated settlements. The city of Derna, with a population of about 90 000 people, was one of the worst hit as floods triggered the collapse of two dams, resulting in a loss of lives of over 20 000 people and widespread material damages.

Libya

Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



Libya

Cereal Production

	2018-2022 average	2022	2023 estimate	change 2023/2022
	000 tonnes			percent
Wheat	134	130	130	0.0
Barley	70	70	70	0.0
Millet	6	6	6	0.0
Others	3	3	3	0.0
Total	213	209	209	0.0

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Losses and infrastructure damages have been detrimental to income-earning opportunities. Although the exact extent to which the dams actually served for irrigation purposes remains unknown considering the dams were reported to be in need of repairs, remote sensing images indicate that some fields in the area were irrigated, with irrigation more prevalent for high value crops. However, aggregate 2024 cereal production is unlikely to decline significantly due to the dams' collapse, while the impact on regional availability of fruits and vegetables is likely to be more pronounced.

Close-to-average cereal production in 2023, stable import requirement

Overall rainfall amounts in the main producing areas along the coast were satisfactory and cereal crop production in 2023 is estimated at a near-average level of 209 000 tonnes, unchanged from the previous year.

The country relies heavily on imports (up to 90 percent) to cover its cereal consumption requirements (mostly wheat for human consumption and barley for feed) and changes in domestic cereal production have a limited impact on the magnitude of the import requirement. In the 2023/24 marketing year (July/June), the import requirement is projected at 3.1 million tonnes, about the same as in the previous year and close to average.

Between 2016 and 2020, the country sourced over 30 percent of its wheat imports from Ukraine and 20 percent from the Russian Federation. Following the start of the war in Ukraine, wheat origins shifted towards the Russian Federation, mostly due to price considerations. Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 marketing years, wheat imports from the Russian Federation have more than doubled.

Political instability persists, high crude oil prices trigger production increases

After a year-on-year contraction of almost 30 percent in 2020 in real terms, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that the Libyan economy grew by about 28 percent in 2021, driven by strengthening global oil prices and improved political stability, before contracting by 10 percent in 2022. Despite the elevated international crude oil prices benefiting the economy that is reliant on exports of hydrocarbons, uncertainty regarding disruptions to oil production and security tensions following the delay of the national elections in December 2021, tentatively scheduled for December 2023, affect the country's economic environment.

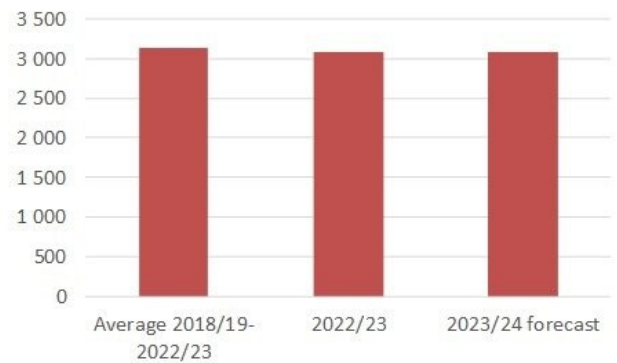
Higher crude oil prices and slight improvements in the security situation supported a recovery in oil production. In 2022, oil output per day has been particularly volatile, bottoming out at less than 200 000 barrels owing to protests in fields and ports, amidst the political crisis. In November 2023, daily output reached 1.24 million barrels/day.

In November 2023, the official exchange rate was maintained at LYD 4.8/USD 1, while rates on the parallel market exceeded LYD 6/USD 1. The unification of central banks is likely to narrow the gap between the official and parallel market rates. The annual food inflation rate remains lowest in the subregion owing to a widespread use of consumer subsidies, registering 3.36 percent in July 2023.

Libya

Cereals Imports

000 tonnes



Notes: Includes rice in milled terms. Split years refer to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

According to the 2023 Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview, about 300 000 people (less than 4 percent of the population) are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023, down from 800 000 people (10 percent of the population) in 2022. The dam destruction in the eastern part of the country in September 2023 further increased the needs, particularly in the shelter and sanitation sectors.

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This brief was prepared using the following data/tools:

FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS)

<https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/>.

FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool

<https://fpma.fao.org/>.

FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring

<https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/>.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>.