Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GIEWS Country Brief
Kenya

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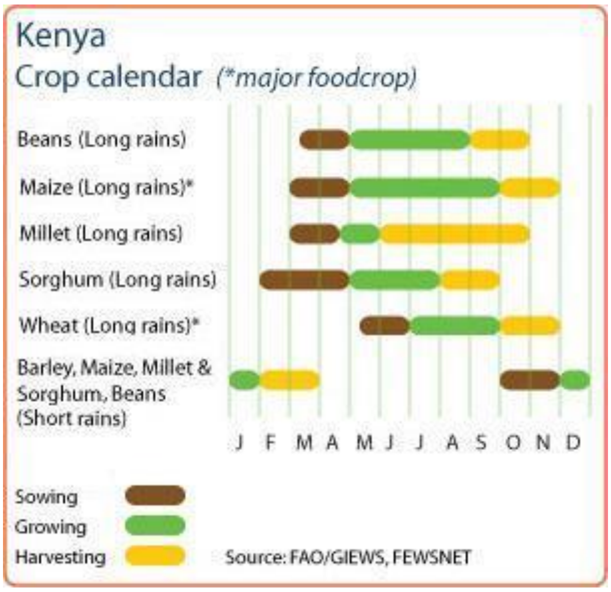
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Abundant rains in March and April benefited establishment and development of 2018 "long-rains" crops and improved pasture conditions**
- **Widespread floods resulting in displacement of about 244 000 individuals**
- **Reduced cereal output obtained in 2017 due to unfavourable weather conditions**
- **Prices of maize declining and generally at low levels, mostly due to sustained imports**
- **As of January 2018, 2.35 million people severely food insecure, 30 percent less than in October 2017**
- **Food security situation improving in 2018**

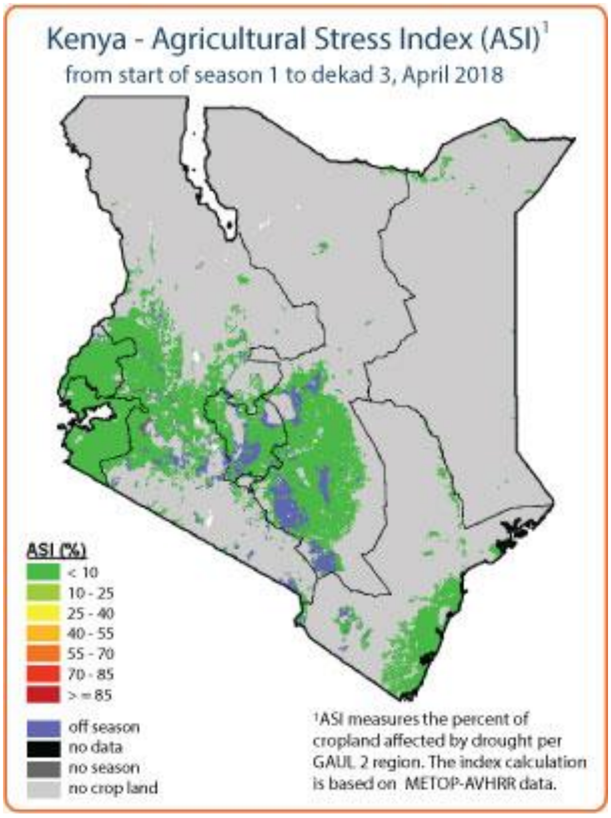


Abundant rains benefited establishment and development of 2018 "long-rains" crops

Planting of "long-rains" main season crops started in March with the timely onset of seasonal rains. So far, rains have been characterized by exceptionally high precipitation amounts across the country. In major southwestern growing areas of Central, Rift Valley and Western provinces (Bungoma, Kericho, Nakuru, Nandi, Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu counties), cumulative rainfall in March and April was between two and three times the long-term average. Heavy precipitations had a positive impact on crop establishment and development and vegetation conditions are currently good across all cropping areas (see ASI map). However, torrential rains triggered widespread floods, especially in Tana River, Wajir, Mandera and Garissa counties, which resulted in damage to houses and infrastructures, displacement of about 244 000 individuals, damage of 8 800 hectares of farmland and death of about 19 000 heads of livestock.

Although Fall Armyworm infestations are likely to constrain yields in some areas, it is expected that crop losses will be lower than in 2017 due to the improved capacity of pest management interventions, including pre-positioning of pesticides.

According to the latest Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF) weather forecast, the remainder of the March-May rainy season is likely to be characterized by average to above-average precipitations, except in northeastern areas, where rains are forecast at below-normal to normal levels.



Reduced 2017 cereal output due to unfavourable weather conditions

In bi-modal southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas, harvesting of the 2017/18 “short-rains” season crops, where it accounts up to 60 percent of the total annual output, was concluded in March. Maize production is estimated about 15-20 percent below the average of the previous five years due to unfavourable weather conditions during the October-December rainy season.

The 2017 main “long-rains” rainy season was characterized by a late onset and a prolonged dry spell in June, which caused moisture stress and wilting of crops during the critical development stages. Although improved rainfall between July and September partly offset the moisture deficits, some damage to the maize crop was irreversible. In addition, Fall Armyworm infestations affecting the maize crops resulted in the loss of about 100 000 tonnes and crop production was estimated at below-average levels.

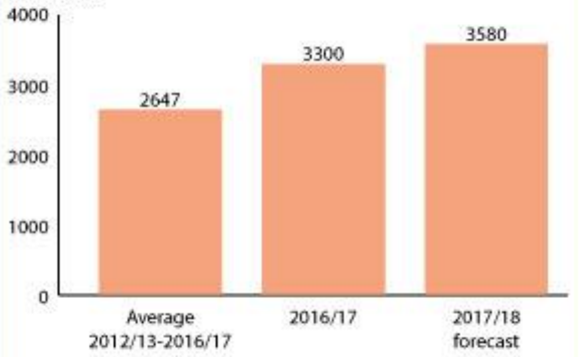
As a result, aggregate cereal production in 2017 is estimated by FAO at a low 3.6 million tonnes, 8 percent less than the previous year and 18 percent below the average of the previous five years. Accordingly, cereal import requirements for the 2017/18 marketing year (July/June) are set at 3.6 million tonnes, about 8 percent more than the previous year and 35 percent higher than the last five-year average.

Kenya
Cereal production

	2012-2016 average	2016	2017 estimate	change 2017/2016
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	3 604	3 339	3 000	-10
Wheat	316	222	225	1
Sorghum	164	117	125	7
Others	305	232	249	7
Total	4 389	3 910	3 599	-8

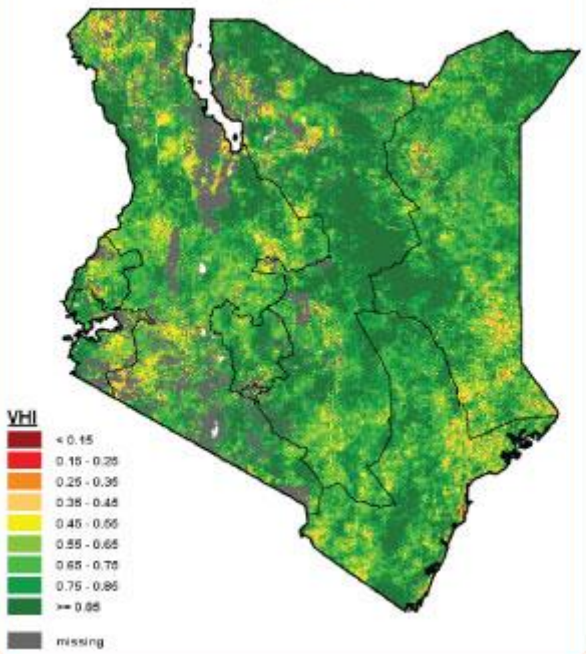
Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Kenya
Total cereal imports



Notes: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Kenya - Vegetation Health Index (VHI)
April 2018



Heavy precipitations improving livestock conditions and productivity in pastoral areas

In most pastoral and agro-pastoral areas, where drought conditions prevailed since late 2016, abundant rains in March and April offset accumulated moisture deficits and resulted in a substantial regeneration of rangeland resources. In northeastern pastoral areas of Marsabit, Mandera, Isiolo, Wajir and Garissa counties, which experienced the most severe rainfall deficits during the past three rainy seasons, estimated cumulative rainfall in March and April was between two and three times the long-term average. Heavy rains resulted in a significant improvement of vegetation conditions, which are currently well above average in most areas (see Vegetation Health Index map). Rainfall surpluses have also resulted in the complete recharge of most water sources (pans, shallow wells, boreholes) and livestock trekking distances to watering points from grazing fields have decreased to historically low levels. In Garissa, Isiolo and Tana River counties, they have declined by 40-80 percent between February and March, when they were up to 80 percent shorter than average. Livestock body conditions and milk production, which declined to very low levels due to the prolonged drought, substantially improved since the start of the rainy season and, although in March they were still slightly below-average, they are expected to further improve as abundant rains continued in April. The Livestock Early Warning System predicts the onset of dry conditions from July. Most of the forage cover will wither as they are mainly annuals that are sensitive to fluctuations in precipitation.

Maize prices declining to low levels

After having reached record highs in June 2017, prices of maize declined in main markets by 25-45 percent between June and December 2017 as the “long-rains” harvest and sustained imports increased supplies. The introduction of subsidies for maize grain imports and for the sale of maize flour products exerted a further downward pressure on prices. Subsequently, prices levelled off in January and February 2018, declining again by 10-15 percent between February and April as newly-harvested “short-rains” crops entered the markets. Prices of maize in April were 30-50 percent below their levels of one year before, when drought conditions seriously affected crop production. Prices of livestock reached historically low levels in mid-2017, after the failure of the 2016 “short-rains”, a harsh dry season and a delayed onset of the 2017 “long-rains”, as animal body conditions dramatically deteriorated and pastoralists were forced to reduce their herd sizes. Subsequently, prices increased in the second semester of 2017 and in early 2018 as animal body conditions improved and market supplies declined due to animal losses in previous months and herders were engaged in repopulating their herds and fattening their animals. In Marsabit, Garissa and Wajir counties, prices of goats in March were between 20 and 40 percent higher than a year earlier. As a result of increasing livestock prices and stable or declining cereal prices, the terms of trade for pastoralists improved over the last 12 months. For example, the equivalent in maize of a medium-sized goat in Garissa county increased by more than 30 percent on a yearly basis, from about 45 kg in March 2017 to about 60 kg in March 2018.

Improving food security situation in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas

According to the latest national food security assessment, the overall number of people in need of humanitarian assistance was estimated at 2.35 million in January 2018, 30 percent down from the estimate of 3.4 million in October 2017, but still 7 percent higher than the caseload of 2.2 million estimated 12 months earlier.

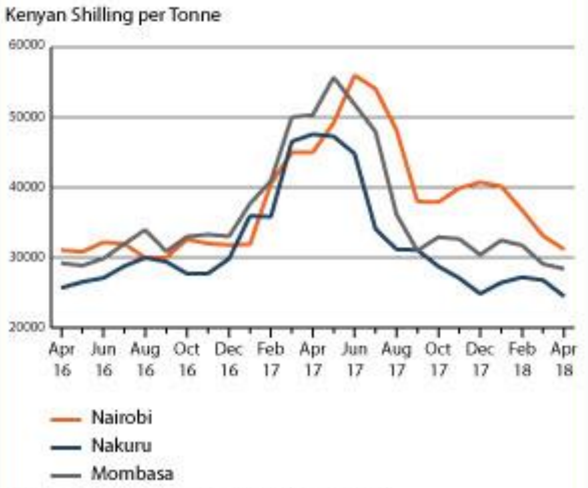
Despite the significant improvements recorded in most livelihood zones, in January 2018 the IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” food insecurity levels still persisted in several pastoral and agro-pastoral areas, including parts of Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Tana River, Kajado, Isiolo and Garissa counties. In these areas, the food security situation has been affected by the cumulative impact on food availability and access of three consecutive poor rainy seasons, which caused livestock emaciation and animal deaths, and severe shortages of livestock products (mainly milk).

The food security situation has recently improved with the abundant “long-rains” received in March and April, which resulted in forage regeneration, improvement of livestock body conditions and terms of trade, and increase of milk production. In agro-pastoral areas, the increased labour opportunities associated to agricultural operations related to the starting 2018 “long-rains” season are facilitating market food purchases.

However, in the areas most affected by the recent floods, the crop and livestock losses have resulted in the deterioration of the food security situation of the displaced population, and food shortages are reported.

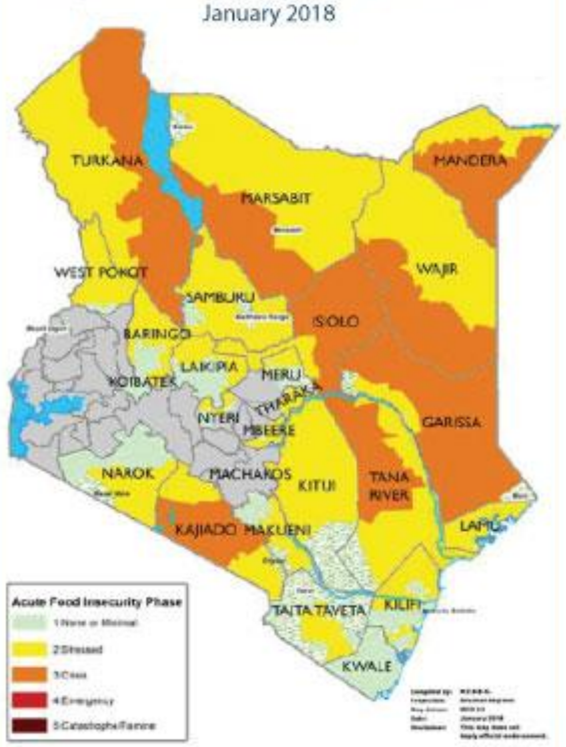
The country hosts a large number of refugees and asylum seekers, with about 273 000 refugees from Somalia as of late March 2018. About 50 percent of them reside in the Dadaab refugee camp in northeastern Garissa county, where access to the basic necessities including food, shelter, water and sanitation

Kenya
Wholesale prices of maize



Source: Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network

Kenya
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
January 2018



is often precarious due to the high concentration of people. The number of refugees from South Sudan is also significant, with about 113 000 individuals having crossed over to Kenya since mid-December 2013. Most of them are currently residing in the Kakuma refugee camp in northwestern Turkana county.