



GIEWS Country Brief Sierra Leone

Reference Date: 20-May-2019

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Planting season in 2019 started on time
- Above-average cereal crop production harvested in 2018
- Increasing economic growth and decreasing food price inflation projected in 2019
- Pockets of food insecurity remain in the country

Timely start of 2019 planting due to favourable moisture conditions

Following a timely onset of seasonal rains, planting of paddy rice, to be harvested from September, started in April 2019. Rainfed paddy is the major cereal grown in the country. Planting operations for maize, millet and sorghum are ongoing and the harvests are expected to start in August. The cumulative rainfall amounts since February/March is supporting favourable soil moisture conditions for crop growth and development. This is also contributing to the recovery of pasture conditions across the country. Weeding activities are underway in most cropping areas.

Above-average cereal output gathered in 2018

Despite the erratic rainfall at the beginning of the season and Fall Armyworm infestation, the 2018 national cereal production is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes, about 16 percent above the five-year average.

Imports account for about 20 percent of the country's total cereal requirements. Following the above-average harvest in 2018, the cereal import requirements for 2018/19 (November/October) are estimated at 330 000 tonnes, about 15 percent below the average.

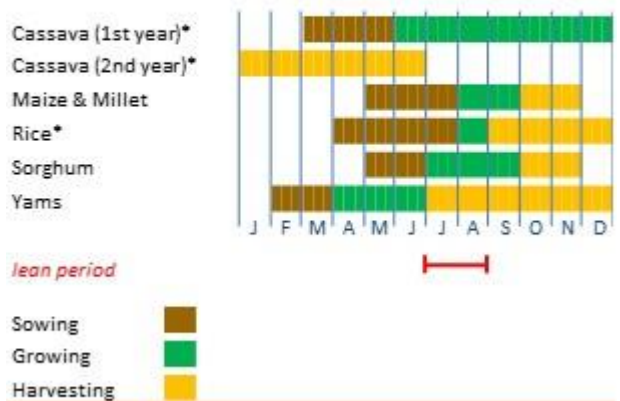
Increasing economic growth and decreasing food price inflation projected in 2019

According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), the economy is expected to grow by about 4.4 percent in 2019, up from an estimated 3 percent in 2018. This growth is supported mostly by strong private and public investments in mining, agriculture and service sectors. However, it is expected that the local currency will weaken from SLL 7 931 per USD in 2018 to about SLL 8 500 per USD in 2019 as a result of large trade deficits, which is maintaining a downward pressure on the exchange rate. Despite the depreciation of the local currency, the year-on-year food inflation is expected to fall from 16.9 percent in 2018 to

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Crop Calendar

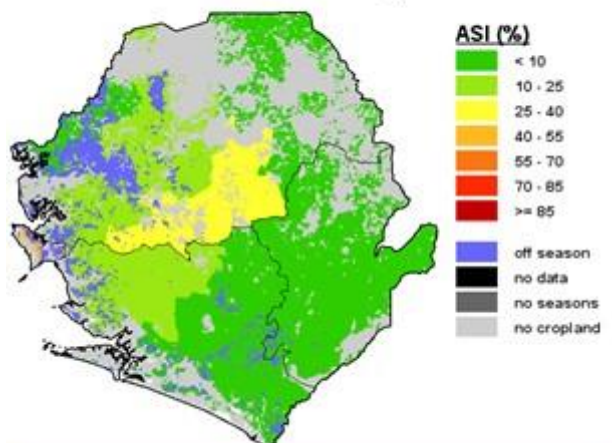
(*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

Sierra Leone - Agricultural Stress index (ASI)

from start of season 1 to Dekad 2, April 2019



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

15.2 percent in 2019 mainly as a result of the reduction in domestic fuel prices which was decided by the Government in response to the public unrest in January 2019.

Pockets of poverty remain in the country

Despite the overall favourable food security conditions, some vulnerable households still need external food assistance. According to the March 2019 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 67 000 people are estimated to be in need of food assistance from March to May 2019. This number is expected to increase to 124 000 during the June to August 2019 period, if no mitigation actions are taken.

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Cereal Production

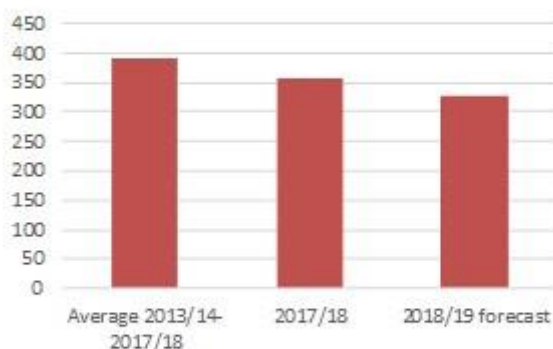
	2013-2017 average	2017	2018 estimate	change 2018/2017
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	1 194	1 401	1 410	0.6
Sorghum	46	57	49	-12.9
Millet	39	39	38	-2.6
Others	32	25	28	14.3
Total	1 311	1 521	1 525	0.2

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

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Cereals Imports

000 tonnes



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.