Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GIEWS Country Brief
Timor-Leste

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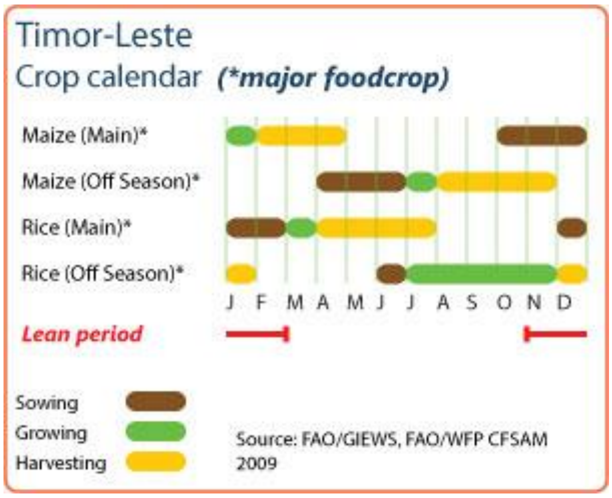
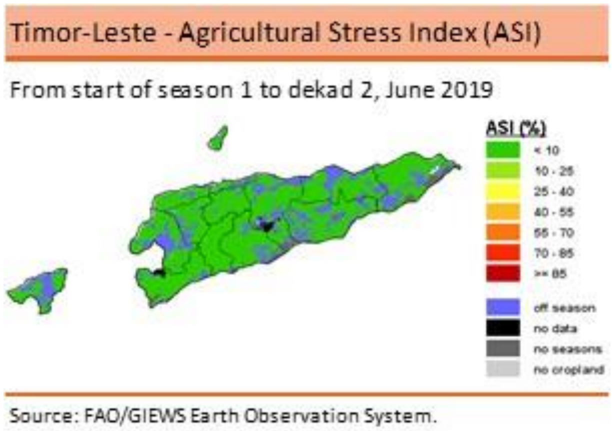
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- **Above-average rains benefitted 2019 main crops**
- **Cereal import requirements in 2019/20 estimated close to last year's average level**





Above-average rains benefit 2019 main crops

Harvesting of the 2019 main paddy crop is nearing completion and production prospects are favourable. Seasonal rains, which normally extend from December to April, have been characterized by above average amounts and good distribution in space and time in most key cropping areas, which supported plantings and had a positive impact on yields. The 2019 off-season crop, for harvest in December 2019 and January 2020, is growing under favourable weather conditions. According to remote sensing analysis and information (see ASI map), vegetation conditions of crops are good in most cropping areas. Overall, the 2019 aggregate paddy output is expected to be similar to the five-year average.

Harvesting of the 2019 main season maize crop was completed in April and the output is estimated close to average levels, mostly reflecting near-average yields, supported by favourable weather conditions. The off-season crop, for harvest between August and November, is growing under favourable weather conditions. Official forecasts set the 2019 aggregate maize production at 104 000 tonnes, close to the five-year average and 24 percent above the 2018 reduced output, which was affected by unfavourable weather conditions.

Some concerns remain for the ongoing off-season crops due to prevalent conditions of a one-weak El Niño event, which is normally associated with below-average rains in the country. The June's forecasts from the International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate Change and Society indicate a 50 percent probability of below-average rains from July to September throughout the country. This is a critical period for secondary season crops and, if confirmed, this may affect yields.

Cereal import requirements in 2019/20 estimated close to last year's average level

The country depends on imports, which amount to almost 50 percent of the country's total cereal consumption needs. Cereal import requirements in the 2019/20 marketing year (April/March) are estimated to remain close to the previous year's average level at 155 000 tonnes.