

SPECIAL REPORT

FAO/WFP CROP AND FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT MISSION TO HAITI

21 September 2010

Mission Highlights

- Despite the late start of the 2010 spring rainy season, rainfall was generally favourable and a good foodcrop harvest is expected.
- Compared to the bumper 2009 spring season harvest, the Mission estimates a slight decline in the 2010 outturn of the maize, sorghum and plantain crops. Root crop production would remain similar.
- However, production of pulses has been seriously affected by the late onset of rainfall and the excessive humidity at the end of the growing cycle and production is expected to decrease by 17 percent compared to the spring of 2009.
- The aggregate 2010 crop production (including all seasons) is forecast at about 503 600 tonnes of cereals, 148 000 tonnes of pulses, 1 232 900 tonnes of root crops and 313 200 tonnes of plantain representing a reduction of 9 percent, 20 percent, 12 percent and 14 percent in cereals, pulses, root crops and plantain respectively.
- The total import requirement in the 2010/11 (July/June) marketing year is put at 711 000 tonnes (in cereal equivalent) of which 525 000 tonnes are expected to be imported commercially. This leaves an uncovered deficit of about 186 000 tonnes.
- An estimated 600 000 people fled the affected urban areas following the 12 January 2010 earthquake and sought shelter in the countryside; this, together with heavy damages to infrastructure, have led to sharp declines in income and food availability, along with price hikes.
- Some improvement in the food situation was observed between February and June 2010 through food assistance, the resumption of agricultural activities helped by the distribution of seeds and fertilizers, access to cash/food for work income-generating activities, and the recovery of agricultural and non-agricultural food trade.
- The food security situation in the North-West, the central highlands (plateau central) and the Western parts require close monitoring and detailed assessments in the coming months. Food insecurity is also prevalent in some other areas of the country and the EFSA II, as well as other studies, are expected to provide further Programme recommendations based on household level data.

1. OVERVIEW

A joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) visited Haiti from 16 June to 13 July 2010 to evaluate food crop production in the 2010 spring cropping season and to forecast forthcoming summer and autumn/winter season harvests and the cereal import requirements for the 2010/11 marketing year. The Mission received full support by the technical experts of the Ministry of Agriculture (more specifically the Research and Planning Unit, the Statistics Service and the National Food Security Coordination -CNSA-) from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR), both in the capital city, Port-au-Prince, and during the field work.

Prior to departing to the field, the Mission was briefed on the current crop production and food security situation following the 12 January 2010 earthquake by several public institutions and bilateral cooperation agents, in particular from the MARNDR, the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Commission, USAID, several NGOs as well as leading private sector cereals traders. A two-day training course on CFSAM methodology was also organized in Port-au-Prince for the representatives of the CNSA and the Departmental Agricultural Directorates (DDA).



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The Mission, divided into two teams, travelled extensively for 11 days and covered altogether the ten departments and four geographic sub-departments into which the country is divided (Annex 1). The first team visited the departments of the Centre, the Artibonite and the three departments of the Grand Nord, while the second team travelled to the departments in the West and the Grand Sud, as far as the Grand'Anse. The Mission also visited the markets in all the departments to assess food availability and price levels and went to the border with the Dominican Republic to estimate cross-border commodity flows and informal trade between the two countries.

The 2010 spring rainy season generally began with four to six weeks of delay at the end of April/beginning of May, after a particularly dry 2009/10 winter (except in the South). Following the onset of rainfall, precipitation was generally well above average, except in the North-West, in a few municipalities of the Artibonite and in the earthquake epicentre area. As a result of the delayed onset of the rainy season, there was a reduction in planted area during the spring cropping season, which is expected to be partially offset in the 2010 summer season on account of the overall good precipitation level recorded in June and early July.

The late and inadequate rainfall followed by excessive localized water favoured the emergence of the common mosaic virus which contributed to a reduction in bean production, particularly in the humid mountains of South-East, South, Centre and North-East departments. By contrast, maize crop, in which the anomaly in rain distribution promoted the resurgence of pests such as caterpillars (in the department of the Artibonite and in the department de l'Ouest) and attacks by invasive ants (Grand'Anse, North), reported only minor losses in the dry mountain areas.

For the 2010 spring cropping season, the Mission expects a reduction in beans production by 17 percent, with a small decline in maize, sorghum and plantain output of 8, 4 and 5 percent, respectively, compared to the same season of 2009. Root crop output should be similar to the previous year. In irrigated areas, where water supply and input availability (fertilizer, seed, and credit) have improved in comparison with 2009, the Mission expects a 15 percent increase in rice production for the 2010 summer season.

It is estimated that cereals, pulses and banana import requirements for the 2010/11 (July/June) marketing year will be approximately 711 000 tonnes in cereals equivalent, of which 525 000 tonnes are expected to be obtained through commercial imports. The uncovered deficit is estimated to be 186 000 tonnes.

Household surveys conducted in February and June 2010 in the areas directly affected by the earthquake, indicate that the percentage of households resorting to non-sustainable survival strategies, fell from 52 to 39 percent. The percentage of households with poor and limited food consumption also dropped from 31 to 27 percent, although it remains above the level prior to the earthquake in these areas. Humanitarian assistance together with the resumption of agricultural activities (thanks, *inter alia*, to the distribution of seed and fertilizer, access to cash/food-for-work income-generating activities) and the recovery of the agricultural and non-agricultural trade, have had a further positive impact on households' access to food.

The Mission identified three zones in the country requiring close monitoring of the food security situation over the coming months, namely, the North-West, the central highlands (plateau central) and the West, which are at risk due to poor harvests. However, food insecurity in some other areas of the country also remains prevalent.

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