



MAIN HIGHLIGHTS



10.2 million people are food insecure – if the *belg* rains fail, this number is expected to increase exponentially by March.



2.2 million farmers and herders need immediate humanitarian agricultural production support.



Crop production has dropped by 50–90% in some areas and failed completely in others. Seed reserves are critically low and the number of households requiring seed support has nearly doubled.



Hundreds of thousands of drought-related livestock deaths reported in Afar and Somali Regions.



FAO needs USD 50 million to assist 1.8 million people through coordinated support to agriculture and livestock production, and resilience-building interventions. Of this, **USD 10 million is urgently needed by March** to help farmers meet the *mehar* season.

CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

OVERVIEW AND KEY MESSAGES

Humanitarian needs in Ethiopia have tripled since the beginning of 2015 as one of the strongest El Niño events on record has caused severe drought, leading to successive crop failures and widespread livestock deaths. The drought started in early 2015 with unfavourable *belg* rains (March–May) and continued with late and erratic *kiremt* rains (July–September), which produce 85 percent of Ethiopia’s food. Crop harvests were well below average and failed in several areas.

Food insecurity and malnutrition rates are alarming. Insufficient access to and availability of food has driven humanitarian needs to near-unprecedented levels. The current situation requires simultaneous and immediate scaling up of multisectoral lifesaving and livelihood support along with investment in resilience building efforts in the most affected and at-risk areas.

The El Niño-induced drought is not just a food crisis — above all, it is a livelihood crisis. Over 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their food and income – significant production losses have severely diminished households’ food security and purchasing power, forcing many to sell their remaining agricultural assets and abandon their livelihoods.

Meeting immediate needs is integral to longer-term recovery. To safeguard and build the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods, urgent support is required to enable families to resume production and improve their ability to withstand future droughts and climate-related disasters.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Some 10.2 million people are food insecure according to the Government and humanitarian agencies – more people will need food assistance in 2016 than at any other time in the past decade. The Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) has targeted this population with life- and livelihood-saving support in 2016.

Malnutrition rates have soared. One-quarter of Ethiopia’s *woredas* are officially classified as facing a nutrition crisis. According to the HRD, 435 000 children are in need of treatment for severe acute malnutrition– a 65 percent increase from the same time last year. More than 1.7 million children, pregnant women and lactating women are in need of supplementary feeding and many more are considered at risk, especially if the next rains fail.

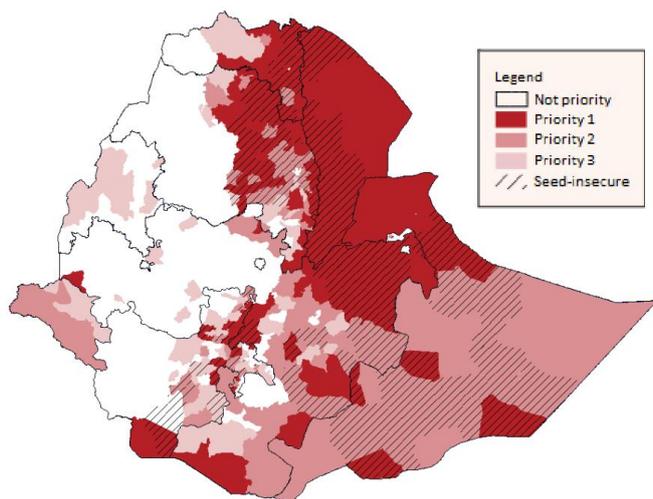
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HOTSPOT AND SEED-INSECURE AREAS

(Source: Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners, January 2016)



Hotspot *woreda* classification has been derived using six multisector indicators, including agriculture and nutrition, agreed at zonal, regional, federal levels. A hotspot matrix is often used as a proxy for the Integrated Phase Food Security Classification (IPC).

Seed insecurity was determined at *woreda* level by the Government and presented to the multisector Disaster Risk Management Agriculture Task Force.

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

2.2 million farmers and herders need immediate humanitarian agricultural production support in 2016.

The most recent harvest is expected to be well below average. This is likely to further increase humanitarian requirements beyond the current scale until June 2016, when the short-cycle crop harvest is expected.

Seed reserves are severely depleted – 838 000 households require seed support in the upcoming *belg* season following unsuccessful re-planting in the 2015 *belg* and *meher* seasons. This figure represents a near doubling of identified seed requirements from December. With extremely limited means of production for the upcoming planting season, farming communities will remain vulnerable and increasingly unable to access food.

High livestock mortality rates and worsening animal body conditions due to poor grazing resources, feed shortages and limited water availability in Afar and Somali Regions have led to sharp declines in milk and meat production. Hundreds of thousands of livestock have died as a result of the drought. Current estimates indicate 869 000 households require animal feed support, and access to pasture and water will continue to deteriorate until the start of the next rainy season in March.

OUTLOOK

The number of severely food insecure is expected to surge if the *belg* rains fail. Malnutrition rates will deteriorate in areas worst-hit by the drought – those in the Priority 2 category are likely to slip into Priority 1.

Needs are likely to be particularly high during the peak of the lean season. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network has warned of escalating food insecurity with an expected early and severe lean season. Without urgent humanitarian assistance, the El Niño-related drought could further decimate the food security and livelihoods of millions.

FAO ETHIOPIA EL NIÑO RESPONSE PLAN 2016

In 2016, FAO Ethiopia seeks USD 50 million to assist 1.8 million pastoralists, agropastoralists and smallholder farmers affected by El Niño. FAO will assist vulnerable families to restore agricultural production, regain their livelihoods and better withstand future crises.

- Reduce the food gap and enhance nutrition**
- Safeguard livestock-based livelihoods**
- Enhance resilience of households**
- Coordination**

- Emergency seed distribution to affected areas for the *meher* season
- Quality drought-resilient seed production at community level
- Reduce risk of malnutrition through backyard vegetable production initiatives
- Rapid response for irrigated food production at household level
- Provision of cash to destock already weak animals through slaughter
- Protection of core breeding animals through survival feed provision
- Voucher-based livestock supplementary feed support
- Increase fodder production at community level
- Support to animal health interventions and vector control
- Restore livelihoods through restocking with small ruminants
- Adoption of the *caisses de résilience* approach for better mitigation of future crises
- Cash-for-work initiatives to improve critical infrastructure for water access
- Technical support, coordination and joint monitoring of overall agriculture sector response
- Specific food security and agriculture sector assessments, evaluations and analyses
- Dialogue with Government and private sector for efficient response to the crisis