FSNWG Update

Food Security & Nutrition Working Group

Central & Eastern Africa | June 2010

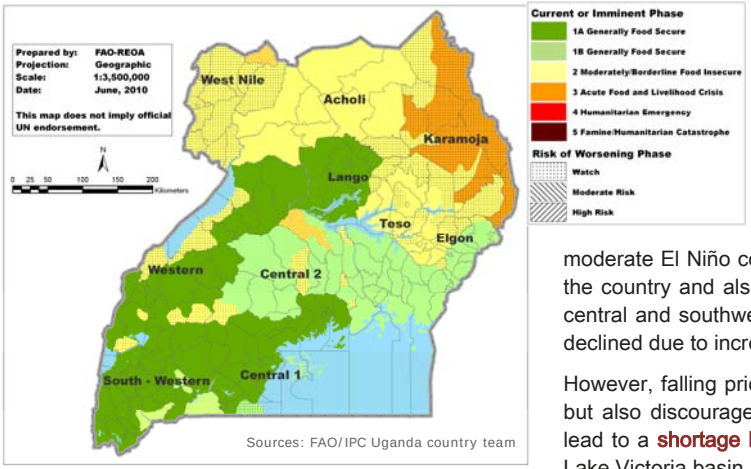
Aflatoxin Alert in Eastern Province, Kenya

According to the results of a recent survey carried out by the Government of Kenya Ministry of Agriculture approximately **78% of the current stocks of maize held by farmers in Eastern Province** (3 million bags of maize of 90kg each) **are suspected to be contaminated with aflatoxin**. The remaining 22% is considered to be of good quality and safe for human consumption. In upper Eastern, 15% of the stocks are of good quality (<10ppb), while 85% are considered contaminated. In lower Eastern, 40% of the stocks are of good quality, while 60% are considered contaminated. About 2 340 000 bags of maize need to be purchased from farmers by the government.

What is Aflatoxin?

Aflatoxins are poisonous chemical compounds produced by mycotoxigenic fungi. High risk commodities include maize, rice, nuts and pulses which can lead to contamination of animal feed and consequently of the entire food chain. Fungal development takes place before and after harvest and particularly when harvesting takes place under high humidity and warm weather conditions.

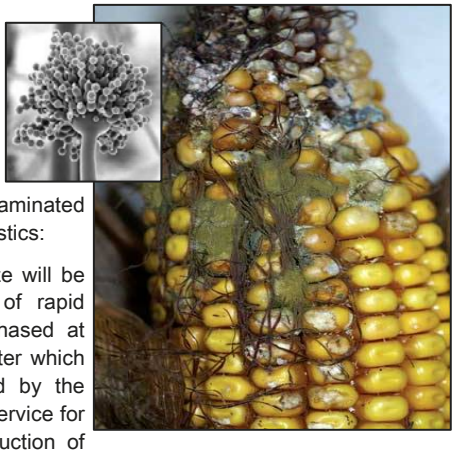
The main causes of contamination are: dropping of maize on contaminated ground after de-husking; drying of maize on contaminated ground; shelling of maize using "beating" method, which opens up the testa and pre-disposes the crop to infestation by the fungus that produces aflatoxin; storing of maize in houses with inadequate ventilation and with high humidity, and storing of maize in propylene bags instead of recommended sisal bags. **The effects of aflatoxins** are a suppression of the immune system causing acute symptoms of severe illnesses appearing very quickly. Longer term chronic or cumulative effects on health include induction of cancers and Immune Deficiency.



Sources: FAO/IPC Uganda country team

Further Information:

- *Kenya Ministry of Agriculture:* www.kilimo.go.ke
- *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC):* www.ipcinfo.org
- *Regional Food Security Map - June 2010:* www.reliefweb.int
- *FSNAU/FAO Somalia Study:* www.fsnau.org
- *FSNWG Update May 2010:* www.reliefweb.int



Response Strategy

At present the Government intends to spend Khs 3 billion to purchase both contaminated and non-contaminated maize using the following logistics:

(i) The contaminated maize will be identified through the use of rapid testing kit and will be purchased at KES 1 000 per 90kg bag. After which it will be ferried and stored by the Military and National Youth Service for future use in industrial production of starch and industrial alcohol.

(ii) Clean maize will be determined through use of the same kit and will be purchased at KES 1,500 per 90kg bag and used as part of strategic grain reserves by NCPB.

As a strategy to prevent future contamination of the bumper harvest expected in July 2010 under similar climatic conditions, the Division proposes **acquisition and installation of four stationery driers** (1 in Sagana, 2 in Ukambani, and 1 in Meru). The stationery driers should be complemented with 32 mobile driers to serve smallholder farmers.

Recommendations for Action:

- Encourage warehouse receipting system where farmers will be able to store their produce in well ventilated National Cereals and Produce Stores;
- Support sensitization through media broadcasting in local languages;
- Purchase and distribution of Grain Moisture Meters and rapid testing kits;
- Capacity building through training and provision of support materials.

Newly Released Uganda IPC Map

The current **overall food security situation has improved in Uganda when compared to the last season** (IPC September 2009 - January 2010). This is attributed to an enhanced second season 2009 performance influenced by moderate El Niño conditions. Abundant rainfall increased crop production levels in many parts of the country and also favored pasture and water availability for livestock in the cattle corridor, in central and southwestern Uganda. Prices of food items and livestock products in bimodal areas declined due to increased food availability.

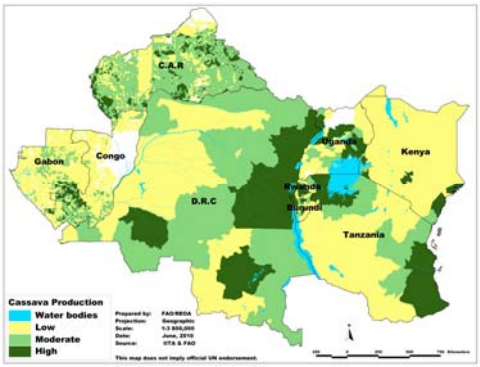
However, falling prices of grains, notably maize, have not only induced traders to reduce stocks but also discouraged farmers from growing the crop this season. This situation will most likely lead to a **shortage by end of 2010**. Also in some areas of eastern and western Uganda and in Lake Victoria basin, rains have caused crops, vital public infrastructures and properties damages.

Landslides and flooding in **Teso region** and in the districts surrounding Mount Elgon have led to population displacement, which, combined with increased rainfall amounts and disease occurrence, is expected to worsen the food security situation.

About **45 360 people in localized hotspots in Elgon region** are estimated to be in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis **(IPC Phase 3)**. Rapid interventions are required to prevent a further deterioration of the situation.

The food security situation in the **Karamoja region** has not been favorable **(772 213 people estimated in Phase 3)** seeing that last year's only cropping season significantly underperformed. By now, farmers have planted in previously non-agricultural land, and crops are at weeding stage. Projections are however mixed as the usual dry spell that occurs from June or July could affect the cereals at the critical stage of flowering. Nonetheless, near normal rainfall conditions are expected.

Cohesive Regional Cassava interventions



Map of main cassava production areas in ECA

A regional cassava workshop was held in Kigali, Rwanda from 03 to 04 June 2010. The event was sponsored by the European Union, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations with the support from Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). **The overall objective of the workshop was to reinforce cohesive approaches to cassava-related interventions in central and eastern Africa**

The Ugandan variant of the cassava mosaic (EACMD-Ug) and the cassava brown streak disease (CBSD) are two major viral diseases that are significantly affecting food security of rural poor in central and eastern Africa. EACMD-Ug epicenter is currently in the Kivu Regions and Burundi while a new strain of CBSD has now been detected in all the countries of the Great Lakes Region with some variation in severity and incidence (High in Uganda, Western Kenya and Lake Zone of Tanzania).

Interventions in the region are following a **Disaster Risk Management framework** where all regional stakeholders are exerting their comparative advantage, update of which is provided below.

Regional Disaster Risk Management framework

Preparedness and mitigation:

- ⇒ *Smart surveillance:* Led by IITA under the Great Lakes Cassava Initiative (GLCI) – Next round of survey starting in July 2010.
- ⇒ *CBSD diagnostic tool:* Led by FERA under GLCI – More reliable through a real-time PCR method – Next step includes equipping local labs.
- ⇒ *Pest Risk Analysis:* Led by CRS under GLCI – First draft for cassava developed
- ⇒ *Breeding for tolerance:* Led by IITA under GLCI – 8 to 14 varieties under review with dual disease tolerance
- ⇒ *Coordination:* Led by FAO under EU project – A national coordination platform is set in each country (formal or informal)
- ⇒ *Information management:* Led by FAO under EU project – Core information to collect has been harmonized – Next step will be to upscale the existing central data warehouse.
- ⇒ *Awareness campaign:* Led by ASARECA under USAID funding – Mass campaign simultaneously launched in 8 countries in October 2010.

Response:

- ⇒ *Mass-multiplication:* Led by CRS under GLCI and FAO under EU – At least 1.6 million people reached by 2012.

Transition:

- ⇒ *Behavior change: Led by CRS under GLCI*
- ⇒ *Farming practices: Led by FAO under EU project – Use of Farmer Field School approach to review/change farming practices.*

The Regional Cassava Initiative led by FAO has been particularly successful in terms of establishing **national coordination systems through the creation of national commissions** that take the lead on guidelines for beneficiary selection, disease monitoring & information management, quality standards regulation & implementation, elaboration of disease mitigation strategies, stakeholders management, programme development and fundraising. National commissions are functional in Burundi, CAR and DRC, and are currently being established in Rwanda, Uganda, Gabon and Tanzania. Other successes are the **harmonization of information management tools** towards one central data warehouse and the implementation of **mass awareness campaigns** which will start in 7 countries in eastern and central Africa in October 2010.

Half of Somali Women and Young Children Suffer from Anaemia

Taking blood samples in Central Somalia, July 2009

A recent national study lead by the FSNAU/FAO has shown that Somali women and children are suffering from shocking levels of anaemia and Vitamin A deficiencies. **50% of all women, 30% of all school aged children and 60% of children under five were classified as anaemic from the study.** The results also show that **one third of all children and half of adult women have Vitamin A deficiency**.

Unexpectedly, the report also shows that levels of iodine deficiency were not of concern; in fact high levels were reported across both school aged and adult women populations.

The study was conducted in Somalia between March and August 2009 using funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency in collaboration with the University College London's – Centre for International Child Health, and with support from UNICEF, WFP and WHO.

This was the first study of its kind to be conducted in Somalia and its implementation was an important step in understanding the scope of nutritional deficiencies and providing an evidence base for planning future interventions. An interagency task force has been established to take forward the recommendations developed based on the findings.

Recommendations for Action:

All the recommendations discussed should be linked with the overall nutrition strategy being developed for Somalia.

- Establish a Micronutrient Task force for Somalia;
- Partnerships with global micronutrient initiatives and other global institutions to be encouraged to facilitate experiences exchange and mobilization of resources for Somalia.

Coming Events...

Date	Event	Location
23-24/06	Symposium on policy implementation (Regional Pastoral Livelihoods advocacy Project - REGLAP)	Kenya School of Monetary Studies, Nairobi
July TBC	IPC analysis workshop	Bangui, CAR
13-23/07	IPC internal technical development retreat	Ispra, Italy
25-30/07	LEGS Training of Trainers (Horn/East Africa)	Nairobi

Several International NGOs and UN Agencies have underlined their interest in developing a regional food security and nutrition coordination mechanism, technically supported by FAO. As a result of this request, a thematic working group - the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group - was established in 2005 with the participation of CRS, IFRC, Save the Children, OCHA, World Vision, WFP, FAO/FSAU, FAO, Concern Universal , FEWS NET, OXFAM, UNHCR and UNICEF. The FSNWG now covers12 countries: Burundi, CAR, Djibouti, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. For more information, please contact FAO Regional Emergency Office for Africa (REOA): fsn-gha-workinggroup@fao.org