



GIEWS Country Brief Liberia

Reference Date: 04-May-2021

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Timely start of 2021 planting season
- Average rice production harvested in 2020
- Increasing prices of staple food due to inflation
- Continued assistance needed for most food insecure households

Timely start of 2021 planting season

Following a timely onset of seasonal rains in late March, planting operations for paddy rice, the only cereal grown in the country, are ongoing and the harvest is expected to start in September. The cumulative rainfall amounts have been average to above average, supporting the development of early-planted crops. While planting activities will continue until end-July, the crops already in place are at sprouting, seedling and tillering stages and weeding activities are regularly taking place.

According to the latest Forum on the Agro-Hydro-Climatic Seasonal Forecast in the Gulf of Guinea countries (PRESAGG), above-average rainfall amounts are expected during the April/June period, with likely positive effects on crop production and availability of pasture and water for livestock.

Forage availability is currently satisfactory in the main grazing areas of the country, allowing animals to maintain good body conditions and enhance their market value. The animal health situation is generally good and stable, with just some localized outbreaks of seasonal diseases, including Trypanosomiasis and Contagious Bovine Peri-pneumonia.

Average rice production harvested in 2020

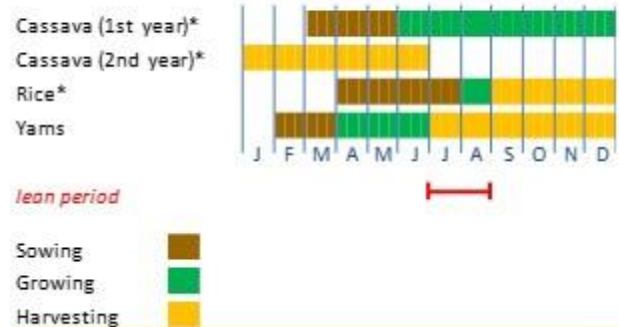
Despite localized flooding in some areas of the South-Western Region, the 2020 national rice production is estimated at 270 000 tonnes, similar to the five-year average and slightly below the previous year.

Imports account for more than half of country's total cereal requirements. Rice for human consumption accounts for over 80 percent of imports, while wheat and maize account for about 13 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Import requirements for the 2020/21 marketing year (November/October) are forecast at an above-average level of 540 000 tonnes as local traders are aiming to replenish their stocks.

Liberia

Crop Calendar

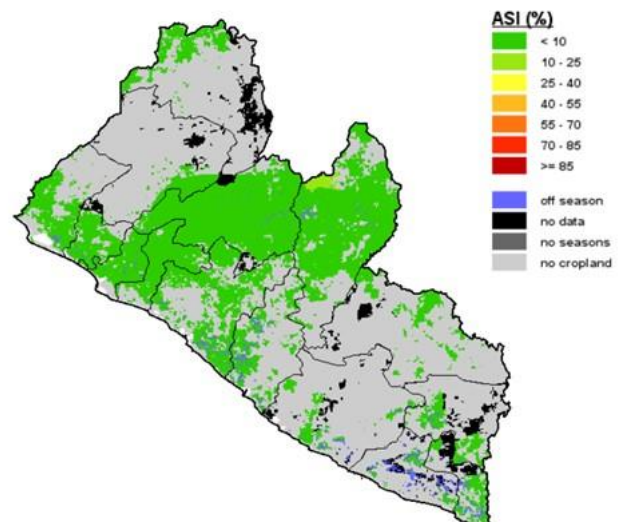
(*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

Liberia - Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)

from start of season 1 to dekad 2, April 2021



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

Increasing staple food prices due to inflation

Although the implementation of the COVID-19 restriction measures has disrupted operations in some markets, the overall supply of both local and imported commodities were satisfactory in April 2021. Prices of staple food have been on the rise in most domestic markets since early 2021. Prices of rice reported the major increases, between 5 and 40 percent in early 2021 above the level recorded during the same period in 2020. Rural markets in Maryland and River Gee counties continue to report the highest food prices than other counties due to poor internal trade flows. The increased prices in the country are attributed to the poor conditions of roads, high food inflation and the weakening of the local currency.

Continued assistance needed for most food insecure households

According to the March 2021 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 773 000 people were estimated to need food assistance from March to May 2021. This number is expected to increase to 939 000 people during the lean period from June to August 2021, if no mitigation actions are taken. The main drivers of the food insecurity are the effects on crop production of floods and high infestations of pests, including Fall Armyworm in some localized areas, coupled with high inflation rates, weakening local currency and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the value chain.

According to the UNHCR, the number of registered refugees in the country was about 8 200 as of October 2020 (last available data).

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Cereal Production

	2015-2019 average	2019	2020 estimate	change 2020/2019
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	269	276	270	-2.4
Total	269	276	270	-2.4

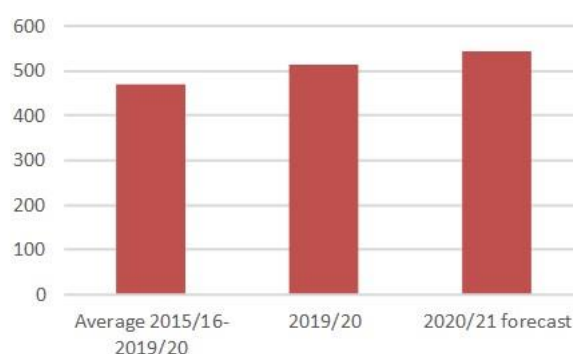
Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

Liberia

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.