



# GIEWS Country Brief

## The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Reference Date: 16-June-2023

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Crop production in 2023 forecast below five-year average
- Cereal import requirements in 2023 estimated above five-year average
- Prices of cereals on decline, but remain at high levels in May
- Acute food insecurity level declines in 2023

### Crop production in 2023 forecast below five-year average

According to a recent joint [FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission \(CFSAM\)](#), 2023 aggregate paddy production is forecast at 3.8 million tonnes, 14 percent below the last five-year average. Yields of the 2022/23 main “Maha” crops, harvested in March, were mainly affected by the inadequate availability of fertilizers, particularly phosphorous and potassium, and their high prices. The output of maize, mostly used as feed, is projected at 272 100 tonnes, 13 percent below the average. By contrast, production of pulses is estimated to increase by 35 percent, forecast at 46 300 tonnes, reflecting strong domestic demand and remunerative prices that sustained the area planted. Production of root crops is expected at 9 percent below the average, mainly due to reduced outputs of potatoes and manioc, reflecting contraction of the sown areas associated with shortages of seeds.

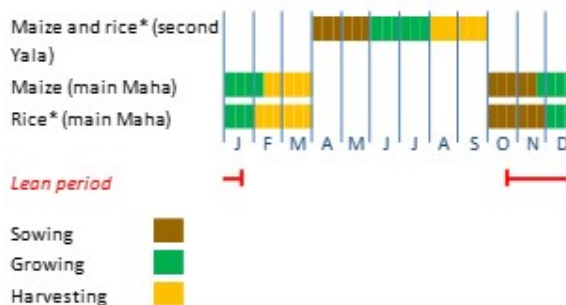
The livestock sector has been severely affected in 2023, particularly the production of chicken meat and eggs, important sources of protein in the local diet, due to high feed prices and hatchery closures.

### Cereal import requirements in 2023 estimated above five-year average

Total cereal import requirements in 2023 are forecast at an above-average level of 1.8 million tonnes, including 1.16 million tonnes of wheat, 130 000 tonnes of maize, 465 000 tonnes of rice and 200 000 tonnes of potatoes. The 2023 food deficit is expected to be fully covered by commercial imports as the financial capacity of the country to import has strengthened following the slight increase of foreign exchange reserves, the disbursement of donor funds and the modest currency appreciation, since last March.

### Sri Lanka

Crop Calendar (\*major foodcrop)



### Sri Lanka

#### Cereal Production

	2018-2022 average	2022	2023 forecast	change 2023/avg. percent
	000 tonnes			
Rice (paddy)	4 437	3 393	3 800	-14.3
Maize	312	259	272	-12.8
Millet	8	11	9	10.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 757</b>	<b>3 663</b>	<b>4 081</b>	<b>-14.2</b>

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

## Prices of cereals on decline, but remain at high level in May

Between September 2021 and July 2022, domestic prices of the commonly consumed white rice variety surged by 140 percent, underpinned by tight market availability caused by the sharp reduction in the 2022 “Maha” output. High production and transport costs as well as disruptions of marketing activities due to severe shortages of fuel also contributed to increase prices. Since August 2022, prices of rice started to decline, reflecting the arrival of imported rice and the commercialization of 2023 crops. Overall, prices of rice in May were 7 percent below the previous year’s elevated level, but 86 percent above the pre-crisis level (September 2021). Prices of wheat flour, entirely imported, increased more than threefold between September 2021 and August 2022. The surge was due to tight market availability following reduced imports in 2021 and early 2022 associated with the sharp depreciation of the national currency and increasing price trends in the international markets. Domestic wheat flour prices have declined since October 2022, reflecting increased imported quantities and low international wheat flour quotations. As of May 2023, prices were still close to the high levels a year earlier and more than 130 percent above the pre-crisis level.

Although food inflation has declined since October 2022, it remains at high levels and, in May 2023, it was estimated to be above 20 percent.

## Acute food insecurity level decline in 2023

The recently-released CFSAM report indicates that about 3.9 million people (17 percent of the population) are estimated to be moderately acute food insecure and 10 000 people to be severely acute food insecure.<sup>1</sup> This represents an improvement compared to May 2022, when 6.2 million were estimated to be moderately acute food insecure and 66 000 people were severely acute food insecure. It reflects some improvements in food consumption and the decrease in the share of expenditures on food, which is likely to be caused by improved agricultural production. This, in turn, has increased income-earning opportunities for farmers and related livelihood groups, while contributing to a softening of food prices.

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This brief was prepared using the following data/tools:

FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS) <https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/>.

FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool <https://fpma.fao.org/>.

FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring <https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/>.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>.

<sup>1</sup> Acute food insecurity has been estimated based on the World Food Programme’s (WFP’s) Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) Guidelines. According to the CARI standard methodology used to classify the household’s acute food insecurity, “moderately acute food insecurity” is an approximation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 (Crisis), while “severely acute food insecurity” is an approximation of the IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) or above.

## Sri Lanka

Retail prices of rice and wheat flour in Colombo

Sri Lanka rupee per kg

