



# GIEWS Country Brief

## The Kingdom of Lesotho

Reference Date: 14-February-2025

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- After dry spells in December 2024, February-May weather forecasts point to improved conditions for 2025 crops
- Cereal import needs rise following drought-affected 2024 harvest
- Inflation rate eases, but staple food prices remain elevated
- Drought impact worsens acute food insecurity in 2025

### After dry spells in December, weather forecasts point to improved conditions for 2025 crops

Harvesting of the 2025 cereal crops is expected to begin in May. Cumulative rainfall amounts since the start of the cropping season in October 2024 through January 2025 were generally below average, with more substantial deficits recorded in minor cereal-producing areas of southwestern districts. This largely reflects some dry spells in December 2024, followed by average rainfall amounts earlier in the season. In northern districts, which are the main cereal-producing areas, rainfall deficits were more moderate, and vegetation conditions are near average, inferring average yield prospects for the 2025 cereal crops. Weather forecasts for the February-to-May period point to above-average rainfall amounts, which, if they materialize, could push up cereal yields in 2025 beyond current expectations.

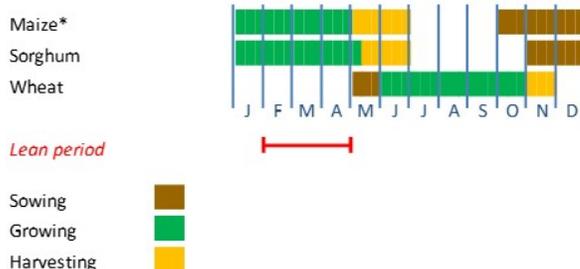
### Import needs rise following drought-affected 2024 cereal harvest

The El Niño-induced drought in early 2024 significantly affected the 2024 maize production which is estimated to about 60 percent below the average, driven largely by yield reductions. As a result, maize imports in the 2024/25 marketing year (May/April) are estimated at an above-average level. Reflecting the increased needs, the monthly rate of imports as of December for 2024/25 was about 30 percent above the rate in the previous marketing year. The country is a net importer of cereals, even in years of large harvests.

### Lesotho

Crop Calendar

(\*major foodcrop)



### Lesotho

#### Cereal Production

	2019-2023	2023	2024	change
	average		estimate	2024/2023
000 tonnes				
				percent
Maize	69	127	29	-77.2
Sorghum	5	9	1	-83.9
Wheat	4	5	8	60.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>-72.8</b>

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

## Inflation rate eases, but staple food prices remain elevated

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the annual inflation rate was estimated at 3.7 percent in December 2024, compared to 7.2 percent in December 2023. The food inflation rate was estimated at 5.6 percent, about half of the previous year's level. As the country is a net importer of key staple food commodities and energy, domestic prices are largely influenced by the international prices, particularly those of South Africa, its main trading partner.

Despite the slowdown in food price increases, prices of key cereal food staples remain elevated, with maize meal prices increasing by 9.3 percent year on year in December 2024. This is largely attributed to the record high wholesale prices of white maize grain prices in South Africa in 2024.

## Drought impact worsens acute food insecurity in 2025

Poor harvests following the drought in early 2024, elevated prices of food staples and diminished income opportunities are straining access to staple foods, especially among poorer households.

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis released in February 2025, about 335 000 people, about 22 percent of country's population, are currently facing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and above levels of acute food insecurity, and this situation is expected to persist until March 2025, prior to the main harvest period. This figure is moderately higher than the food-insecure population estimate in 2024.

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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/>.

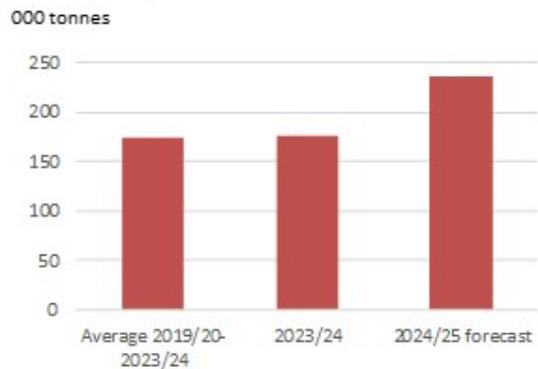
FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool <https://fpma.fao.org/>.

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

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

## Lesotho

### Cereals Imports



Notes: Includes rice in milled terms. Split years refer to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).