GIEWS Country Brief
Mali

Reference Date: 02-November-2021

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Production of coarse grains in 2021 forecast above average, while production of rice anticipated at reduced level
- Cereal imports in 2020/21 estimated slightly above average
- Prices of cereals in October 2021 were well above year-earlier levels
- Severe prevalence of food insecurity in 2021 due to upsurge of violence

Production of coarse grains in 2021 forecast above average, while production of rice anticipated at reduced level

Harvesting of the 2021 main season coarse grains crops is underway and it is due to conclude in December. Rainfall amounts between June and August were conducive for crop development in the major growing regions in southern and western parts. Reflecting beneficial rains, remote sensing data indicated favourable crop conditions as of early October. Crop yields of coarse grains are expected to be at above-average levels due to favourable weather conditions and enhanced access to subsidized agricultural inputs. The planted area to maize crops increased significantly on a yearly basis, driven by government programmes that distributed large amounts of subsidized maize seeds. Production of maize in 2021 is officially forecast at 4.7 million tonnes, about 35 percent above the five-year average. Plantings of millet and sorghum contracted year on year as farmers switched to more profitable crops, mainly cotton, the country’s main agricultural export earner. However, production of millet and sorghum is expected to be at 1.9 and 1.6 million tonnes, about 8 and 5 percent above the five-year average, respectively.

Harvesting of main season rice crops is underway and it is expected to conclude in January 2022. The area planted to rice crops contracted significantly in 2021 compared to the previous year, due to adverse weather, reduced access to inputs and a deterioration of the security situation in parts of important rice producing regions, notably Mopti and Segou, and also in Gao and Tombouctou. Increased violent events perpetrated by non-State armed groups (NSGAs) limited farmers’ access to fields and constrained availability of inputs and labour. In addition, several rural households have been displaced and were forced to abandon their crops. Erratic rainfall in parts of central and northern regions also hampered planting operations,
contributing to the contraction of the sown area. As a result, production of paddy rice is anticipated at 2.55 million tonnes, 14 percent below the previous five-year average.

Livestock body conditions and milk production are estimated at average levels across southern, western and central parts. Constrained access to pastures and limited fodder availability in northern areas caused by insecurity and localized dry spells, disrupted pastorialist activities and curbed local production prospects.

Cereal imports in 2020/21 estimated slightly above average
Cereal imports, mostly wheat and rice, are estimated at 575 000 tonnes in the 2020 marketing year (November/October), near the previous year’s level and 5 percent above the average, reflecting population growth.

Prices of cereals in October were well above year-earlier levels
Following an increasing trend since early 2021, prices of locally produced coarse grains levelled off or decreased in October, with the arrival to the markets of recently harvested grains. Prices of rice, by contrast, continued to increase, reflecting lingering below-average market supplies, amid unfavourable production prospects of the 2021 paddy crops. As of October, prices of coarse grains and rice were generally well above their year-earlier values, supported by conflict-related market disruptions throughout 2021, which added significant pressure to cereal prices and exacerbated seasonal upward trends.

Severe prevalence of food insecurity in 2021 due to upsurge of violence
The food security situation has deteriorated in 2021, particularly in conflict-affected central and northern areas. In addition to increased violent events by NSAGs, banditry and inter-communal clashes, which affected northern and central parts in past years, has spread to southern areas, causing new displacements. According to the United Nations Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as of September 2021, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) was estimated at about 400 000 people, well above the estimated 290 000 a year earlier. The upsurge of violence has disrupted agricultural livelihoods and limited labour migration, constraining availability of and access to food especially for IDPs and poor households in most affected regions of Mopti, Gao and Tombouctou and in northern parts of the Segou region. Moreover, the COVID-19 containment measures curbed income-generating activities and reduced remittances, further constraining households’ purchasing power and increasing their dependence on food assistance. According to the latest “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 1.3 million people were estimated to face acute food insecurity (CH Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) during the June and August 2021 period, well above the 870 000 people assessed to be food insecure in the March to May 2021 period. Of particular concern, the number of people in CH Phase 4 (Emergency) was estimated at about 60 000, up from a previous estimate of 30 000 people.

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.