



GIEWS Country Brief Namibia

Reference Date: 30-April-2021

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cereal production forecast at above-average level in 2021, but lower than last year due to localized abnormal dryness and localized locust infestations
- Livestock production anticipated average to above-average levels
- Cereal imports in 2021/22 forecast to decline for second consecutive year
- Prices of maize meal at high levels in early 2021 due to seasonally tight supplies and increased import costs
- High prevalence of food insecurity in early 2021

Cereal production forecast at above-average level in 2021

Harvesting of the 2021 main cereal crops, mainly maize and millet, is expected to start in May. Cereal crops are currently at grain filling stage and vegetation conditions are generally favourable. Production is anticipated at an above-average level of 165 000 tonnes, slightly below the previous year's level, reflecting expected production declines in the northwest.

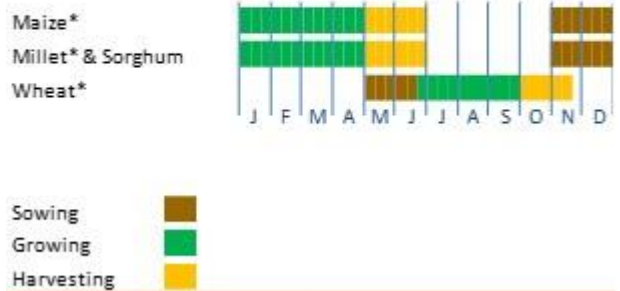
Following a poor start of the rainy season, with sparse precipitation in October and November, rains improved from December 2020 onwards and, as of April 2021, cumulative rainfall amounts were average to above average in most parts of the main cereal producing north and northeast regions. In spite of the reduced early seasonal rains, soil moisture levels were mostly adequate at planting time and the sown area to cereal crops is estimated at a near-average level in 2021, also supported by ample availabilities of seeds, machinery and labour. Based on remote sensing data, values of vegetation indices in the main cropped areas were at high levels in April, which points to an increased likelihood of above-average yields.

In the northwestern Kunene Region and in the key producing northern Omusati Region, seasonal rainfall has been less favourable, with below-average cumulative amounts. Crop lands exhibited stressed vegetation conditions and cereal production shortfalls are expected, which account for the overall reduced production prospects this year.

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Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

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Cereal Production

	2016-2020 average	2020	2021 forecast	change 2021/2020
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	56	64	65	1.4
Millet	53	95	85	-10.6
Wheat	10	12	12	0.0
Others	2	3	3	-11.8
Total	121	175	165	-5.5

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

Livestock production is anticipated to remain at an average to above-average level in 2021. Pasture conditions and water availabilities for livestock are generally satisfactory across most parts of the country, except in the northwest where reduced rains were observed. In northcentral and northeastern regions, there have been several outbreaks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease since the last quarter of 2020. In response, the Government implemented containment measures and vaccination campaigns that have successfully controlled the outbreaks.

Infestations of African Migratory Locust (AML), Red Locust and Brown Locust (mainly in the southern parts of the country), which were first detected in early 2020, remain a threat to crop and pasture production in 2021. Although weather conditions in northeast and north regions were conducive for crops, they have created a favourable environment for insect breeding and multiplication. Reports from the country indicate that the number of AML swarms have increased between January and April 2021. The Government is currently deploying response actions, with support from FAO, to combat the outbreaks, while conducting an evaluation of the affected areas to establish the level of infestation and assess the extent of the damage caused to crops and pastures.

Cereal imports in 2021/22 to decline for second consecutive year

The country is a net importer of cereals, with imports accounting for about two-thirds of the national cereal consumption requirement on average. In the 2020/21 marketing year (May/April), cereal imports (mainly maize and wheat) are estimated at 295 000 tonnes, about 20 percent less than the previous year reflecting the large cereal harvest obtained in 2020.

Imports of maize, mostly sourced from South Africa, are forecast at 160 000 tonnes, about 15 percent above the five-year average and 35 percent below the high level in the previous year. Imports of wheat are forecast at 110 000 tonnes, slightly above the average level.

Cereal import requirements in 2021/22 are forecast at 275 000, a decline for a second consecutive year, mainly reflecting adequate supplies from carryover stocks and the foreseen above-average cereal output in 2021.

Prices of maize meal at high levels in early 2021

Prices of maize meal generally increased in the first quarter of 2021, reflecting seasonally tight supplies ahead of the 2021 cereal harvest and costlier imports due to increased prices in South Africa, the country's main grain supplier. As of March 2021, prices of maize meal were on average 15 percent above their year-earlier values.

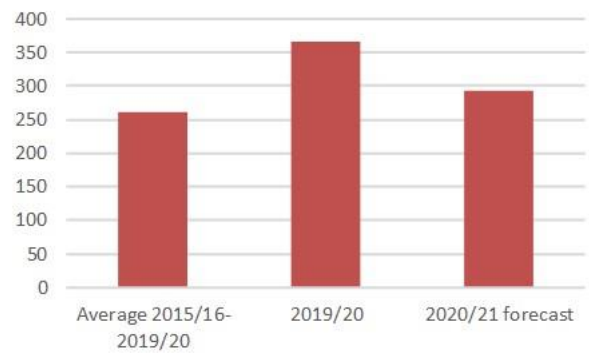
High prevalence of food insecurity in early 2021

About 440 000 people were assessed to be facing food insecurity (IPC Phase 3: "Crisis" and above), of which 14 000 people were facing IPC Phase 4: "Emergency" conditions, during the October 2020-March 2021 period, which corresponds to the lean season, when rural households are more reliant on market

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Cereals Imports

000 tonnes



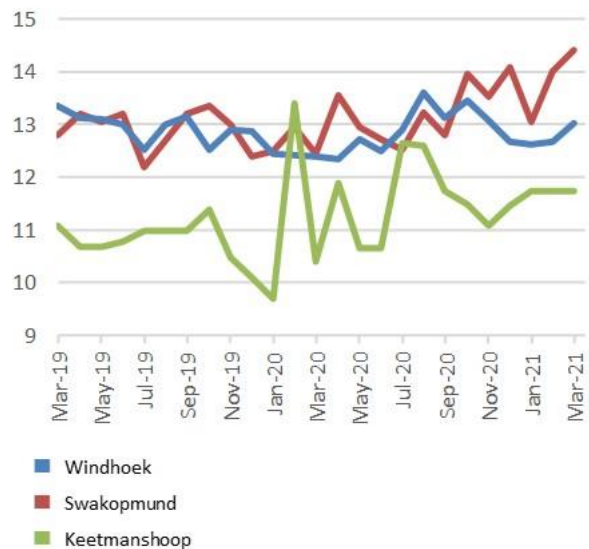
Note: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.

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Retail prices of maize meal

Namibia Dollar per kg



Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.

supplies and daily wage labour to meet their consumption needs. At this level, the number of people that faced critical levels of food insecurity is close to the number estimated in the corresponding period of 2019/20. The high prevalence of food insecurity, estimated at 20 percent of the analyzed population, reflects constraints on households' access to food, mainly due to high food prices and the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on income-generating activities.

The foreseen above-average cereal and livestock production in 2021 is likely to help improve food security conditions, especially from the start of the cereal harvest in May. However, as the country's economic recovery is expected to be modest in 2021, low-income households are likely to continue to experience significant constraints to access food.

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