



## GIEWS Country Brief Uganda

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### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Overall favourable prospects for 2020 first season cereal harvest in bi-modal rainfall areas
- Abundant early season rains benefiting crops and pasture in Karamoja Region
- Torrential rains in April and May triggered floods in several areas, affecting about 177 000 people
- Prices of maize increased to high levels in April and May amidst panic-buying and trade disruptions
- Food security situation affected by measures to contain spread of COVID-19 pandemic

### Overall favourable prospects for 2020 first season cereal harvest in bi-modal rainfall areas

In bi-modal rainfall areas covering most of the country, except the agro-pastoral uni-modal rainfall Karamoja Region in the northeast, harvesting of 2020 first season crops is about to start. The March-May rainy season had a timely onset and was characterized by well-above precipitations during most of the cropping period. Although a dry spell in the first dekad of April affected crop germination and establishment in some areas, the resumption of rains led to a substantial recovery of water-stressed crops. Current vegetation conditions are good over most cropping areas (see ASI map) and an above-average crop production is expected.

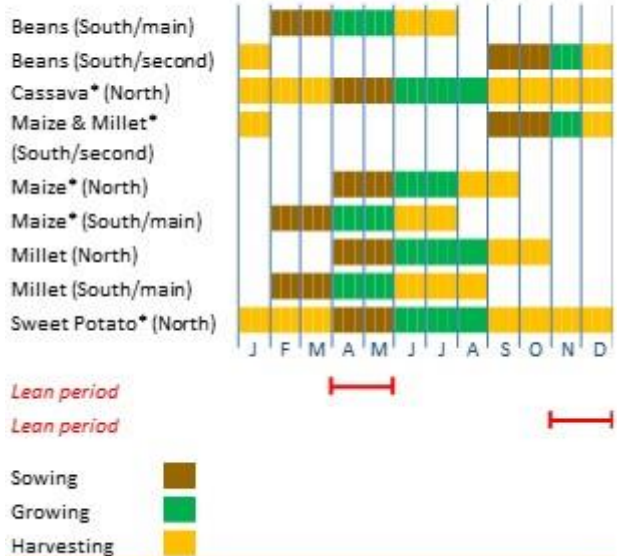
Torrential rains in April and May triggered flooding and landslides in several areas, including Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko, Kabale, Rukungiri, Kanungu, Isingiro, Rwampara, Ibanda, Wakiso, Mayuge, Kyegegwa and Nakasongola districts. The floods and landslides affected about 177 000 people, of which about 24 000 were displaced and caused losses of lives, livestock deaths, damage to infrastructure and localized crop losses. Above-average rainfall has also increased water levels in rivers and lakes, especially Lake Kyoga and Lake Victoria. Notably, the water levels of Lake Victoria are reported to be the highest on record in 60 years. The inundation of the areas along lakeshores has resulted in infrastructure damage and livelihood losses.

Since February 2020, a desert locust outbreak is affecting northeastern Teso and Karamoja subregions and northern Acholi and Lango subregions. In April, locust-induced damage to pastures and crops was reported to be localized, as swarms were

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Crop Calendar

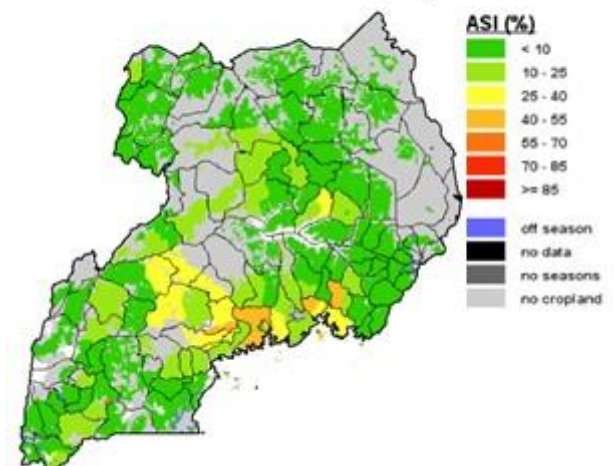
(\*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

### Uganda - Agricultural Stress index (ASI)

from start of season 1 to Dekad 2, May 2020



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

of relatively small size and the Government, with the support of FAO, carried out effective control operations. However, locust infestations are widespread in central and northern areas of neighbouring Kenya, and the heavy March-May rains across the subregion have created a conducive environment for further insect reproduction. As a result, there is a concrete risk of additional locust invasions of northeastern and northern areas of the country, characterized by an already fragile food security situation.

### Abundant early season rains benefiting crops and pasture in Karamoja Region

In the uni-modal rainfall agro-pastoral Karamoja Region, the April-September rainy season had an early onset in March and cumulative precipitations between March and mid-May are estimated at about twice the long-term average. The abundant rains benefited germination and establishment of crops and improved rangeland conditions, but triggered floods in the Nakapiripirit District, resulting in localized crop losses.

According to the latest Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF) weather forecast, above-average precipitation amounts are expected between June and September, with a favourable impact on pasture conditions and on yields of sorghum, the main cereal grown in the area, for harvest from September.

### Prices of maize increased to high levels in March and April

Prices of maize declined by 10-25 percent between December 2019 and February 2020 in all monitored markets, including the capital, Kampala, as the commercialization of the 2019 second season harvest increased market availabilities. Subsequently, prices surged by up to 40 percent between February and April, with seasonal patterns compounded by panic-buying, speculative trading and supply chain disruptions following the implementation of lockdown measures to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Institutional purchases by the Government to implement a food aid distribution programme in urban areas provided further support to prices (see Box below). Prices of maize in April were at high levels, up to 45 percent higher than a year earlier, also due to a tight domestic supply situation following a below-average 2019 cereal production, coupled with sustained export demand from Kenya and South Sudan. Prices of beans followed similar patterns, sharply increasing in March and April, when they were well above their year-earlier levels.

### Food security situation affected by measures adopted to contain spread of COVID-19

In recent months, the restrictive measures introduced to contain the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak (see Box below), have resulted in reduced agricultural labour demand, caused by declining purchasing power and disposable income for farmers that employ hired labour. In most bi-modal rainfall areas, where food insecurity is normally at minimal levels, the recent decline of incomes for agricultural workers caused by the reduced labour demand did not have a significant impact on the food security situation. By contrast, in the areas affected by the floods and landslides during the last two rainy seasons, the poor households are currently facing IPC Phase 2: "Stressed" food security

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### Cereal Production

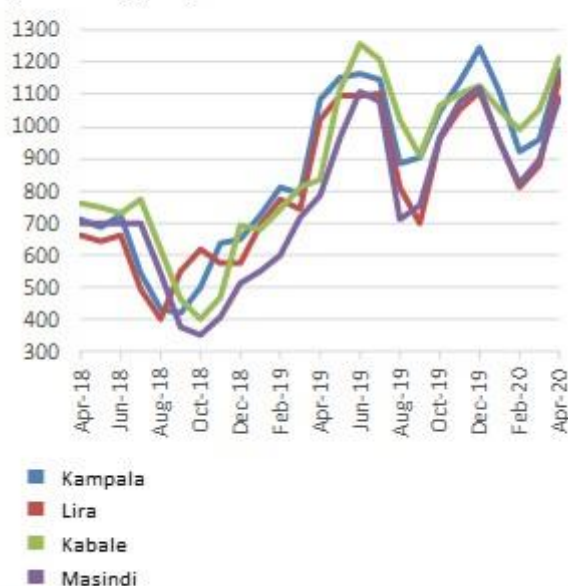
	2014-2018 average	2018	2019 estimate	change 2019/2018
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2 662	2 600	2 575	-1.0
Sorghum	379	411	400	-2.7
Rice (paddy)	243	261	220	-15.6
Others	248	276	260	-5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 532</b>	<b>3 548</b>	<b>3 455</b>	<b>-2.6</b>

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.  
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

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### Wholesale prices of maize

Uganda Shilling per kg



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

conditions. This is due to the cumulative impact of reduced incomes caused by the restrictive measures and by the disruption of agricultural activities caused by flooding and of flood-induced losses of crops, livestock and productive assets.

In the agro-pastoral Karamoja Region, where IPC Phase 2: “Stressed” levels of food insecurity prevailed before the COVID-19 pandemic, the restrictive measures are resulting in below-average incomes from labour and sales of firewood and charcoal. As a result, the food security situation deteriorated to IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” levels, also due to the suspension of school feeding programmes and high food prices. The food security situation is expected to improve to IPC Phase 2: “Stressed” levels from July/August, when the harvests from within the region and neighbouring bi-modal rainfall areas will improve food availability.

The food security situation in the urban areas is the most affected by the restrictive measures, as the poor households mainly rely on the daily wages obtained through casual labour, petty trading, food vending, construction activities and domestic work. Due to a sharp decline in incomes, coupled with increasing food prices, IPC Phase 2: “Stressed” levels of food insecurity are prevailing among poor urban households. The most vulnerable of them are facing IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” levels of food insecurity, characterized by food consumption gaps. Despite the recent phasing out of some restrictive measures, the food security situation of the urban poor is not expected to improve in the short term, as the restoration of economic activity is likely to be slow.

As of end-April 2020, the country hosted about 1.42 million refugees, including about 880 000 people from South Sudan and about 415 000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The reliance of refugees on humanitarian assistance increased in recent months as movement restrictions constrained the already limited income-earning opportunities.

## COVID-19 and measures adopted by the Government

The Government of Uganda introduced in March and April 2020 several precautionary measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- A nationwide curfew, from 19:00 to 06.30 hours.
- The suspension of all public passenger transport, including trains, buses and taxis.
- The obligation for all citizens to stay indoors unless travel is essential.
- The prohibition of public gatherings by more than five people.
- The suspension of all international flights, except for cargo aircrafts, humanitarian flights and emergency landings.
- The closure of all land borders on entry and exit, including for Ugandan citizens and residents, except for cargo trucks.
- The introduction, in cooperation with Kenya, Rwanda and South Sudan, of a digital surveillance and tracking system to monitor cargo truck drivers engaged in cross-border transport activities.
- The closure of all shops selling non-essential items, with only stores selling food, agricultural and veterinary products, detergents and pharmaceuticals allowed to remain open.
- The prohibition to sell non-food items in markets, with traders of food items required to find accommodation in the proximity of their food stall.
- The prohibition to sell cooked food on the streets.
- The closures of factories and construction sites unless crucial employees may be accommodated around their workplace.
- The closure of all schools and universities.

To mitigate the economic impact of these measures, especially on vulnerable households, the Government introduced:

- The distribution of food aid to 1.4 million beneficiaries in the capital Kampala and in the town of Wakiso.
- A suspension of house rent payments and bank loan repayments.
- A reduction of internet traffic rates to facilitate e-commerce and teleworking activities.

Beginning from May 2020, some restrictive measures have been phased out. For example, hardware shops, workshops, garages and insurance providers have been allowed to resume their activities, abiding to social distancing guidelines. Restaurants have been authorized to re-open, but only take-away is allowed.

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