



MOZAMBIQUE FOOD SECURITY UPDATE DECEMBER 2005

ALERT STATUS:
NO ALERT
WATCH
WARNING
EMERGENCY

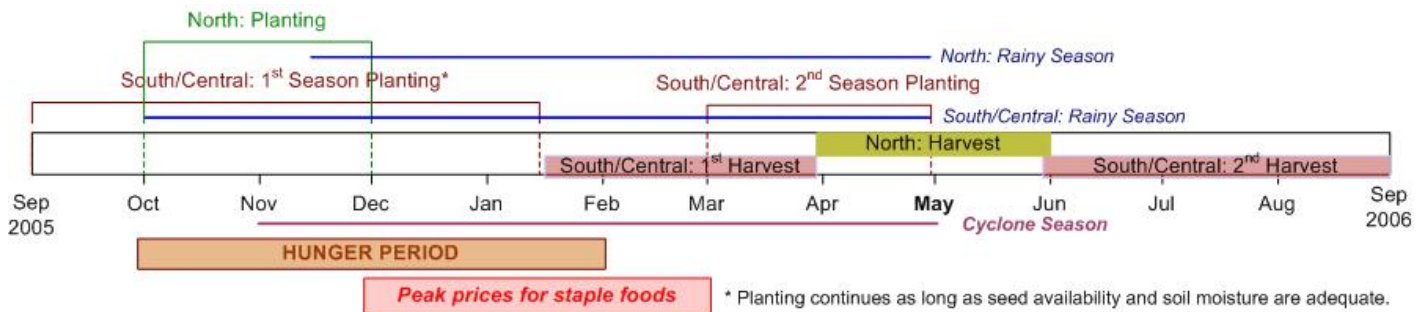
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SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Household food security conditions in drought affected areas are expected to improve as water, food aid and seasonal fruits and vegetables become available. With recent contributions for emergency food assistance, the World Food Programme (WFP) is now able to meet the food needs of approximately 90 percent of the food insecure people in southern and central Mozambique. Rains have thus far been near to above normal in most districts, providing favorable conditions for land preparation and planting, which have been underway since November. With the rains, the availability of water for agriculture, livestock and human consumption has improved. In the north, seasonal rains are expected to start soon. Although the overall outlook appears positive, continued monitoring is necessary in the south, center, and localized areas in the north.

SEASONAL TIMELINE



CURRENT HAZARD SUMMARY

- Rainfall thus far is near to above normal in southern and northern Tete. In Sofala and Zambézia provinces, as of December 10th, rains were below normal. Rains have yet to start in the north.
- Maize prices are consistently high in several markets in the country as supplies continue to dwindle.
- The food aid pipeline improved significantly, but 10 percent of the emergency needs are still unmet.
- Flash flooding is possible along the Zambezi River in central Mozambique.

FOOD SECURITY SUMMARY

In most drought affected areas of central and southern Mozambique, food security conditions are expected to stabilize or improve in the coming months as water, food aid and seasonal fruits and vegetables become available. Localized food insecurity may persist. In October, the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) indicated that 801,000 people were in need of immediate food assistance through March 2006. To date, less than half of the required food aid has been delivered, but with recent contributions, WFP is now able to cover 90 percent of the population in need, and will feed 718,000 people in the south (Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane provinces) and center (Manica, Sofala, Tete and Zambézia provinces) through March 2006.

Food aid interventions have not been planned for the northern region, despite growing concern about the coastal and northern areas of Nampula Province (Erati, Nacarua, Monapo, Memba, Nacala-Porto, Nacala-Velha, Mossuril and Ilha de Moçambique). The provincial SETSAN has indicated that household food security at a critical level in these areas. Cassava has been affected by the brown streak disease. Household food stocks are non-existent, and maize prices are higher than usual. Households face water shortages and are forced to walk longer distances for water. Coping capabilities have been eroded, and some households are disposing of their assets.

SEASONAL UPDATE

Substantial rains in the south

Moderate to substantial rainfall was observed in much of the country in late November and early December. In the south, the rains were brought by a frontal system and stationary low pressure system. For the rest of December, models predicting rainfall forecast significant rains in the north and moderate rainfall in the center and south.

In much of **northern Mozambique**, cumulative rainfall totals from October to mid December were below to well below normal. In the interior of Niassa and coastal areas of Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces, rainfall varied between 12 and 29 percent of normal. By the end of December, the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), the main cause of rains in the north, is normally well established over the region, and rains become consistent. A clearer picture of the start of the growing season in the north will then be available.

In **central Mozambique**, comprising Tete, Manica and Sofala provinces, cumulative rainfall has been near normal in much of the region, except Zambézia Province, where thus far the rains are below normal. Latest news from Beira, the capital city of Sofala, indicates heavy rains on December 25, with negative consequences for the populated areas around Beira city. (These rains, having occurred after December 20, are not taken into account in the adjoining image.)

Heavy rains will likely cause flash flooding along the rivers in the central region. Soils are saturated following excessive rainfall in the second half of December, and additional rainfall could pose problems throughout the region.

In **southern Mozambique**, Gaza and Inhambane provinces have experienced above normal rains, while Maputo had near to below normal rains. The rains have been a deserved blessing for households who have suffered from recurring drought.

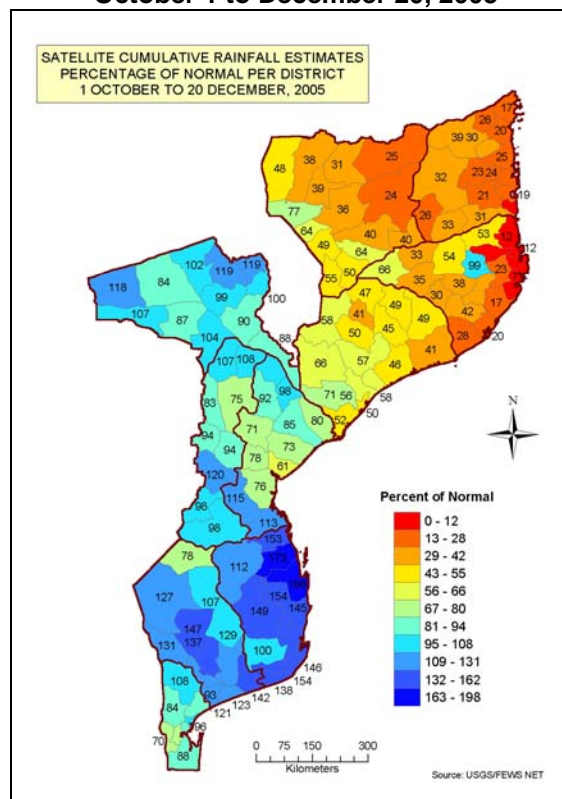
The current forecasts update indicates a greater likelihood of normal to above normal rainfall for most of Mozambique from December to February. However, in the northeastern province of Cabo Delgado, the forecast indicates normal to below normal rainfall, contrary to what predicted in September by the climate outlook statement. Given the expectation of poor rains in some areas in coming months, contingency plans for a possible drought are necessary.

November marked the onset of the cyclone season, which lasts until April and peaks in January and February. The heavy rains associated with the cyclones cause localized flooding.

Cropping season underway

Since mid November, rainfall has been evenly distributed and of good intensity in the southern and central provinces, indicative of a successful start to the season. According to recent information from the field, planting is widespread and crops are developing well. However, seeds have been in short supply, particularly in drought affected districts, and commercial input supplies are expensive. Where seeds are in short supply this season, the areas planted tend to be smaller than they were last year. Planting in the north will begin as soon as the rains set in. The short-term rainfall forecast indicates the possibility of rainfall in the north towards the end of December, which, if the rains continue, would mark the start of season.

Figure 1. Cumulative Rainfall estimates from October 1 to December 20, 2005



MAIZE PRICES

Maize prices continue to rise as the supply of maize from the last harvest is drawn down. Rising fuel and transportation costs are also contributing to the price increases. Among markets monitored by SIMA, Maputo market has the highest maize prices. According to SIMA, a comparison of food availability on markets monitored by SIMA indicates that by the second week of November, available quantities were 20 to 40 percent of the quantities available at the same period last year. In the productive areas of the center, where rains have not been satisfactory so far (e.g. Gorongosa district), farmers are holding on to their small stocks for family consumption, limiting the movement of commodities from surplus to deficit areas and fueling price increases.

Cross border monitoring systems established by FEWS NET and WFP indicate that exports from Mozambique into Malawi have declined earlier than expected. Last season's drought, which affected production in northern Mozambique as well as the south and center, has increased effective demand from within Mozambique. Overall, informal exports from Mozambique have declined by 47 percent, from nearly 5,000 MT in September to 2,700 MT in October 2005. Compared with last year at the same time, informal exports from Mozambique have dropped by 56 percent.