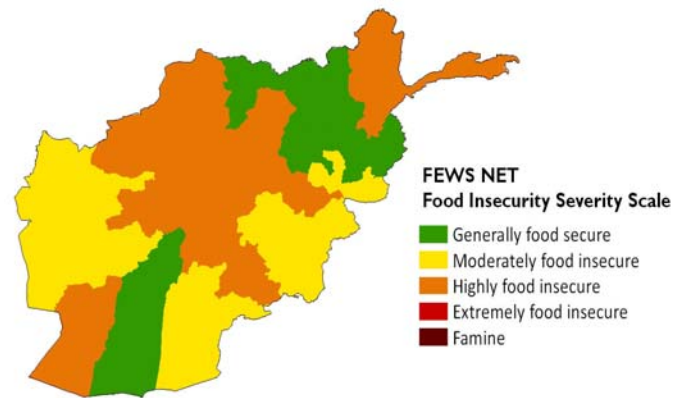


AFGHANISTAN Food Security Update

August 2008

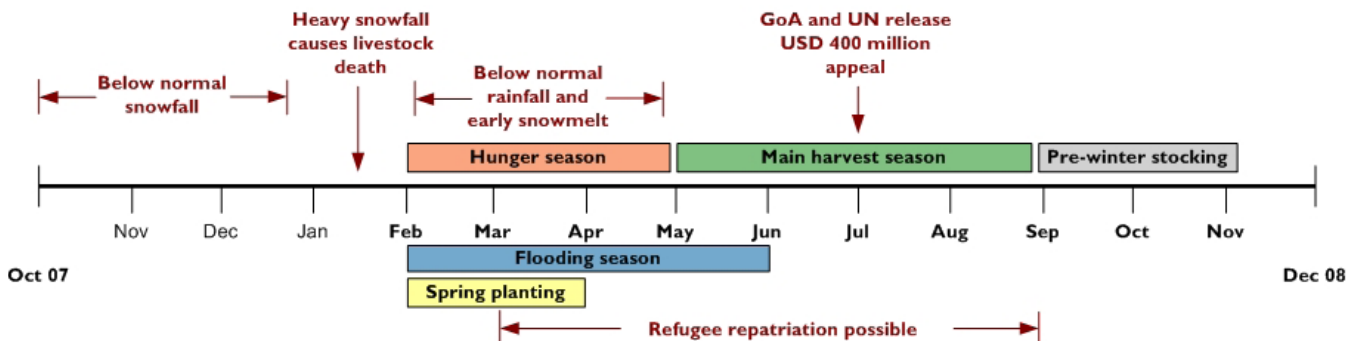
- According to NRVA data, more than 35 percent of the Afghan population (8.4 million people) is suffering from chronic and transitory food insecurity.
- Climate change, low precipitation and depletion of underground water resources are still major concerns both in urban and rural Afghanistan. As the planting season approaches, farmers are apprehensive about the availability of irrigation water for autumn cultivation that normally takes place during September and October.
- In many parts of the country people have started purchasing wheat for their winter food stocks. While prices significant price increases have not yet occurred, it is anticipated that they will begin to rise before the winter starts.

Figure 1. Current estimated food security conditions, third quarter 2008 (July to September)



Source: FEWS NET

Seasonal Calendar



Food security overview

Climate change, lack of water storage infrastructure to capture rainfall and run-off, poor irrigation systems, and crop diseases have resulted in an uncertain food security situation in Afghanistan. Anecdotal reports indicate that most of the underground water resources, including *Karezes*, springs, and shallow wells, have significantly degraded during last three months particularly in southern and southwestern Afghanistan. More broadly, a shift towards cash crops, rapid urbanization, and low prices of agricultural commodities due to free trade and increased imports have seriously damaged local production capacity, damage which cannot be fully addressed without significant investment in the agriculture sector.

According to NRVA data, more than 35 percent of the Afghan population (8.4 million people) is suffering from chronic and transitory food insecurity. The highest prevalence of food insecurity is in the northwest and central regions of Afghanistan where livelihoods are predominately rainfed agriculture and very small-scale irrigated agriculture.

As a result of ongoing drought and high food prices, the government and the UN released a joint appeal, requesting \$400 million, in July. A portion of these funds are meant to address food insecurity. However, even if additional food aid is donated, the issue of road insecurity will need to be addressed as food aid shipments are often attacked.

Figure I. Wheat prices on selected Afghan markets, compared to the five-year average

