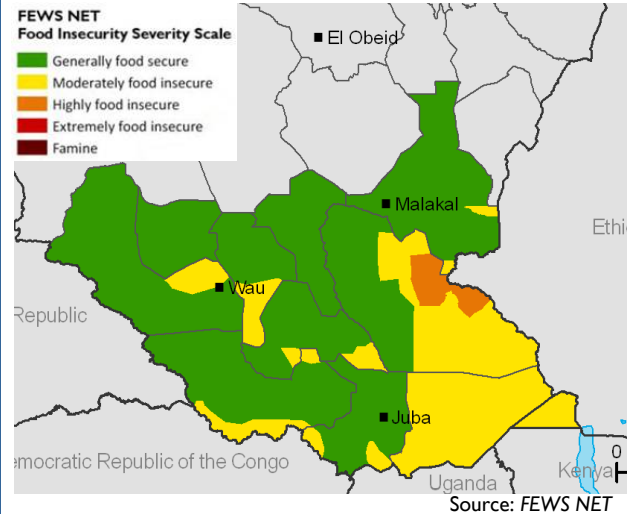


SOUTH SUDAN Food Security Update

November 2009

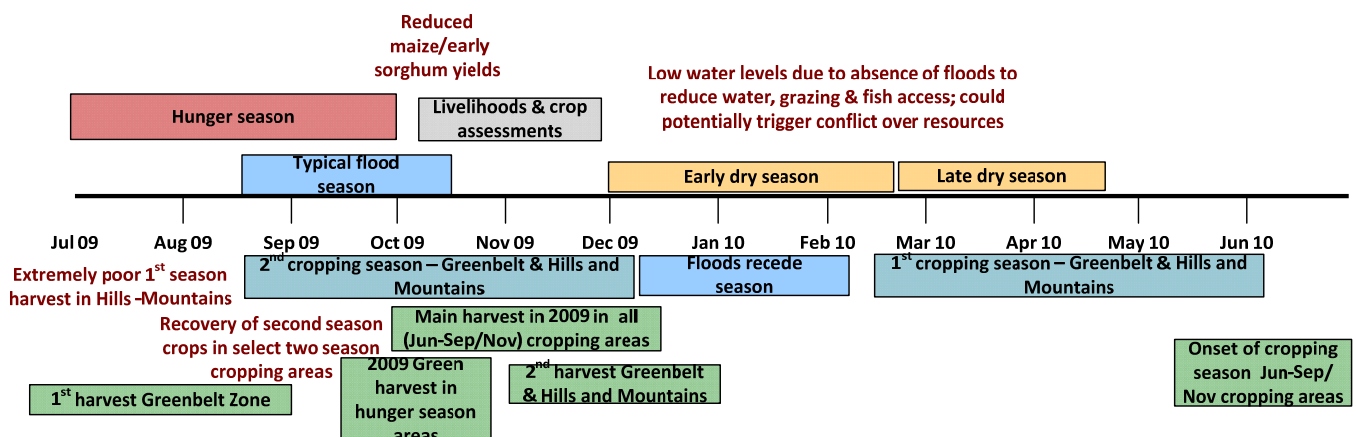
- Food insecurity has improved in parts of Southern Sudan, particularly in Northern Bahr El Gazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, northern parts of Warrap, and in the second season growing areas of Eastern Equatoria. This is because of short-cycle sorghum and groundnuts harvests in October and improved performance of the second season in some select areas.
- Preliminary findings from this year's Crop Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) indicate that this year's harvest is below average and less than the 2008 harvest in all 10 states except for Central and Western Equatoria. Current food security improvements could therefore be temporary and last only until January, especially in the Eastern Flood Plains (Jonglei and Upper Nile states), Western Flood Plains (Northern Bahr El Gazal and Warrap states), and parts of the Nile-Sobat Zone (Unity State).
- Reduced crop production this year is due to a prolonged dry spell during May-July that resulted in less land occupied by crops. The decline in production is also due to the fact that many people were displaced by unusually high levels of conflict this year. The current size of the displaced population is estimated at 350,000 people.
- The persistence and increasing incidences of conflict remain of great concern. Past conflicts were typically over grazing and water resources during the dry season, but are now a mix of inter-ethnic/tribal tensions, historical hostilities, revenge attacks, and cattle raiding practices. There is concern that below-normal rains have resulted in below-normal water levels, which are likely to cause water and pasture shortages and increased potential for resource-based conflicts. Reduced water levels will also reduce fish availability and access, especially in the Western and Eastern Flood Plains.

Figure 1. Estimated current food security conditions November, 2009



For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

Food security overview

Initial findings of the CFSAM, which concluded on November 13, 2009, indicate reduced crop performance in most parts this year compared to last year. Despite this reduction, food security conditions have significantly improved, especially in western and northeastern parts of Southern Sudan, with the exception of displaced households scattered in areas of Mvolo, Wullu, Awerial, Tonj, and Lords’s Resistance Army (LRA)-affected areas in Western Equatoria.

As projected in the FEWS NET October Outlook and most likely scenario during October – December 2009, the October harvests have improved food security in Northern Bahr El Gazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, northern parts of Warrap and in a few second season growing areas of the Eastern Equatoria counties of Kajokeji and Magwi (Figures 2a and 2b). Also as projected, these improvements have not been sufficient to mitigate food insecurity in the southeastern part of the Eastern Flood Plains (Jonglei State- Akobo, Nyirol, Pochalla,) the Pastoral Zone (Pibor and Greater Kapoeta Counties), the single season growing areas of Budi and Torit located in the Hills and Mountains Zone, and pockets of displaced households in Mvolo, Wullu, Awerial, Tonj, and Western Equatoria (Figure 2b). The areas that are still food insecure have been affected by one or a combination of the following: conflict this year preventing displaced people from cultivating; unfavorable crop harvests; and unfavorable pasture and water conditions.

Current and anticipated widespread harvest levels might only see a very temporary reduction in sorghum prices, possibly until January-February when they are likely to increase again. Prices are unlikely to drop significantly unless there is sufficient grain injected from other sources other than traders, such as government subsidized program, and mechanized farming programs.

Figure 2a. Food security conditions as of September, 2009

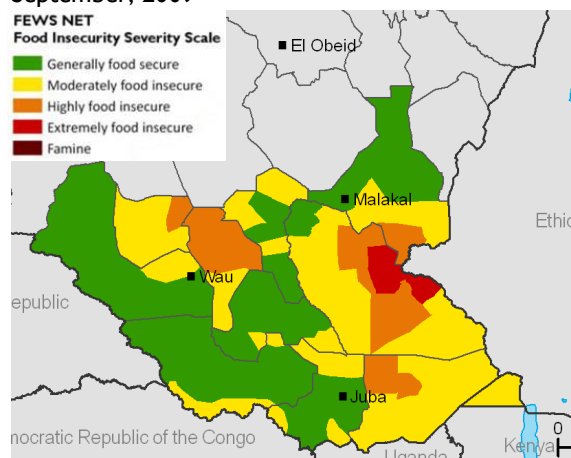


Figure 2b. Most likely conditions, November – December 2009

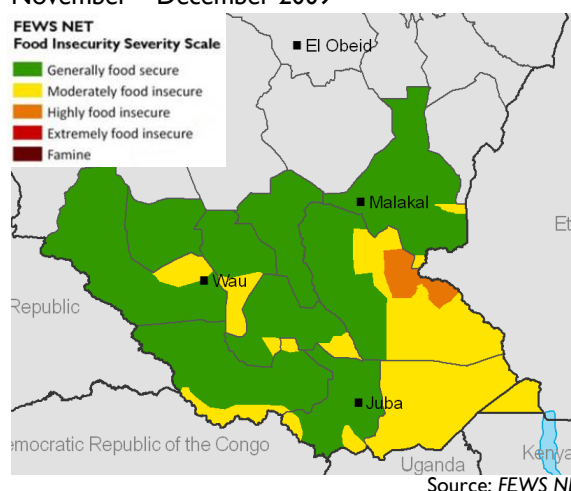


Table 1. Review of October Outlook Assumptions

Assumptions	Progress of these assumptions to date
Delayed harvest of early maturing sorghum and maize crops will take place between mid October and mid to end of November	The harvest was expected to improve conditions starting November. Harvest of short term cycle sorghum and groundnuts occurred in October, slightly earlier than anticipated.
Conflict will persist in the eastern half of Southern Sudan, especially between Murle Pastoralists (Pibor) and Nuer of Akobo, Wuror, Diror and Waat Counties)	Insecurity especially that involving cattle raiding has continued to date.
Anticipated crop harvests might not necessarily mitigate food insecurity in the conflict areas in the Eastern Flood Plains	The harvests are in reduced quantities and have not fully mitigated food insecurity given the high food shortages in the area, and also given that all displaced households in this zone did not cultivate.
Crop harvests in the June-September crop growing areas might last for 3-4 months instead of the typical 6 months	Generally, most CFSAM teams found that current harvests are likely to last until December-January especially for the 2009 poor producers
A poor second season in select Hills and Mountain areas and potentially limited food imports from Uganda due to reportedly reduced production in parts of Uganda this year	The second season has improved due to better rains since August. This has improved second season crops especially in Kajokeji and Magwi. Overall, the second season has done better than projected.

Seasonal Progress

Western Flood Plains

In the northern parts (all Aweil counties, Gogrial and Twic), slightly delayed rains that started at the end of June were soon followed by dryness throughout July, which negatively affected growth of the main crops, short-cycle sorghum and groundnuts. Rains improved in August, facilitating recovery of crops, but harvests were delayed until October instead of September. Most notable is the great variation in crop performance between lowlands and highlands. Good sorghum yields have occurred in the lowlands while poor production has occurred in the highlands. Yields in the lowlands are sufficient to last lowland farmers until the next harvest, but yields in the highlands will last until January at most. An estimated 60-70 percent of the population farm in highland areas. However, there are select pockets in highlands with a fair groundnut harvest, especially in the northern parts of Aweil East, West, and North. An estimated 600 large-scale farmers are reported to have cultivated over 400 acres of land each and in total, have potentially produced over 1500-2000 MT of sorghum, groundnuts and simsim, which they hope to release to the market.

An equal number of small scale farmers have also cultivated up to one acre of rice each, but the expected harvest is not likely to be significant to food security in the state because the quantities are small. The Crop and Food Supply Mission in this zone received reports of share cropping practices between big farmers and returnees, where the farmers provides seeds, tools and a food ration to the returnee, who then cultivates and the harvest is shared equally between the two. This was reported in the Omdurman area of Aweil East. This practice brings to attention the need to further investigate the role of hired agricultural labor to food security in Southern Sudan, which up to now remains undefined.

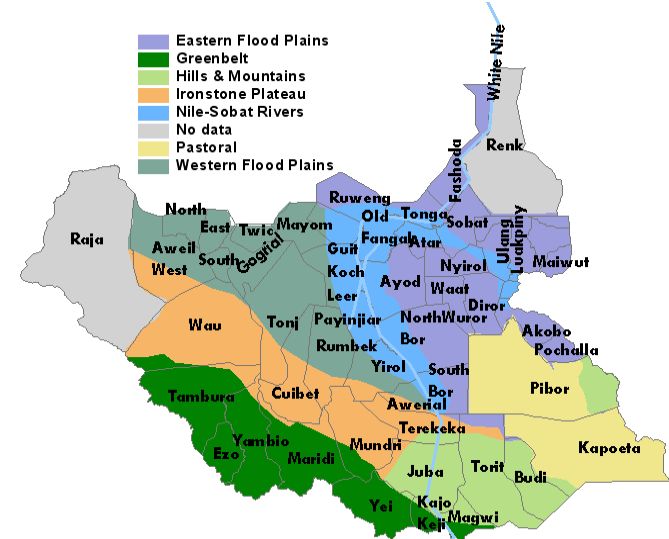
Information provided by traders indicated that the price of sorghum (per 90 KG bag) has reduced by 35, 42, and 50 percent in Aweil Town, Gogrial, and Twic counties, respectively, between July and October, following conclusion of the local short cycle sorghum harvest from local farmers. It is important to note that trader reports in Aweil suggest higher price reductions than WFP records for the Aweil Town market for this same period. However, the records are comparable to other price reductions in the major towns of Malakal, Juba, and Wau for this same period. The Crop Mission team observed significant amounts of food aid from Darfur being sold in Aweil Town Market. Generally, prices in this zone are likely to increase starting in February when poor households in highland areas that have been affected by a poor harvest completely exhaust their sorghum and groundnut stocks.

The southern parts of Lakes (Rumbek, Yirol and Cuibet) and Warrap (Tonj) States predominantly grow long-cycle sorghum as the main crop. The sorghum is now at flowering stage. Here, rains were timely around April-May, but remained below normal through June-July. Rains resumed in August and necessitated replanting. This reduced area occupied by crops as seed stocks became exhaust. The harvest is due in December and largely depends on rains during the remaining part of November. Of most concern in continuing insecurity in southern parts of Tonj and Wullu areas where people have been displaced since June this year and failed to cultivate. Displaced households without productive assets such as livestock will remain most affected and food insecure in the next 12 months.

Prices in Rumbek have dropped by half since July due to harvest of early crops while those in Tonj have remained the same possibly due to ongoing insecurity, which often constrains market access and trade.

Livestock conditions are currently good, but significant losses caused by trypanosomiasis, especially in Aweil East and Aweil West, are reported. The NGO VSF Suisse estimated that there were losses of up to 20-25 percent. The losses might have

Figure 3. South Sudan livelihood zones and counties



Source: FEWS NET

been exacerbated by excessive flood conditions last year. *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) disease among goats increasingly observed but mortality rates remain stable.

Ironstone Plateau

As in the Western Flood Plains, the May-July dry spell negatively affected growth of long-term sorghum, which started recovering in August when normal rains resumed. Extended or additional planting was also done. This is especially so in Raga and Wau counties. Despite resumption of normal rains, groundnuts did not recover significantly, causing farmers to increase simsim planting, particularly in Raga County.

In Raga, households rated 2009 crop performance as better than 2008, mainly because the rains were better distributed. Too much rain near harvest time damaged crops last year. Households in Wau reported the contrary, rating 2009 to be worse than 2008 and expecting a 50-70 percent reduction. The crop assessment team noted that 60 percent of sorghum planted had reached a stage where it would yield successfully, and 40 percent was at risk of poor performance or failing if there were no rains during the remaining part of November.

In terms of food security, conditions in Raga and Wau County are likely to be stable in the coming year, mainly due to reliance on root crops and wild foods such as cassava, wild yams, shea butter, dome palm and honey which are critical in supplementing grain shortages. It is important to note that cassava is the main crop especially in Raga and Wau Counties, while sorghum is the main crop in Jur, Aroyo and Aweil Center counties. Sorghum production in the latter three counties is rated fair. Crop production further south in Terekeka is reported poor with an expected reduction of 60 percent. Though not assessed, slightly better conditions are likely in northern parts of Mundri (with the exception of Mvolo) which had two seasons. In Raga, sorghum prices were reported high this year due to the shortage of cassava in areas where it has been destroyed during insecurity in the last one or two years.

Meanwhile, of concern is food insecurity induced by continued conflict in Mvolo and Wullu counties, where people remain displaced, largely due to inter-tribal/livelihood conflicts, and failed to cultivate this season. Of additional concern is a recent attack in Raga County by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has already destabilized a large part of the Greenbelt Zone. The population in Raga County is typically food secure, and more attacks could make them vulnerable to food insecurity, as the LRA tends to loot food and burn assets.

Eastern Flood Plains Livelihood Zone

There has been poor crop performance in Maiwut, Maban, Longuchok, Ulang, Nasir, and Balliet areas caused by dry spells in June – July, which delayed planting by one month. In these areas, current harvest stocks can last only until the end of this year. Similar to the Western Flood plains, lowland areas are likely to have performed better than highland areas. Most affected is Maban County, which has experienced unusual flooding for a second consecutive year.

Very poor production caused by the June-July dry spell has also occurred further south in Pochalla. Though the crop mission did not assess crop conditions in Akobo, Wuror and Nyirol Counties, poor production is anticipated because of a combination of erratic rainfall, displacement and failure or reduced area under cultivation due to escalated insecurity this year. Persistent inter-clan and inter-tribal cattle raiding conflicts since last year and last year's crop shortfalls - caused by 2008 June-August dryness followed by floods - have been the main causes of food insecurity. Given similar events this year, the same households will become increasingly food insecure during the next 12 months. This particularly applies to those that are still displaced from their homes and have lost their productive assets like livestock. It also includes chronically food insecure households that have also been displaced. These make up not less than 35 – 45 percent of the population in the affected counties.

Over 850,000 acres of land have been put to mechanized farming with sorghum, simsim and groundnuts in areas of Renk, Manyo, Mabaan, and Melut, and there is the potential for significant surpluses that could be sold in the zone. Unfortunately, surpluses produced in the mechanized areas do not get far because of poor road infrastructure. Areas that could greatly benefit from these surpluses are Akobo, Wuror, Nyirol, Maiwut, Longuchok, Ulang, Nasir and Balliet but remain cut off due to poor roads. Insecurity this year has further constrained access to food markets. Sorghum prices are highest in this zone, having doubled in Boma, and increased by 50 percent in Pochalla compared to October last year.

Greenbelt Livelihood Zone

The April-July cropping season was timely with planting of sorghum, maize, sesame, and groundnuts starting in as early as the end of March and continuing through April. Maize and groundnuts were harvested in July-August. However, over 82,000 displaced people in this area failed to cultivate during the first season due to attacks by the LRA. The attacks started in mid-December 2008. Additional LRA attacks have occurred since the first season harvest in August implying that more people have been displaced or have potentially lost the first season harvest. LRA attacks include looting of food stocks. Despite the lack of cultivation by the displaced households, first season crop performance was generally rated average.

The second season started in August with maize, groundnuts, millet, and sorghum planted. Harvests are expected around December. Again, displaced households (13 – 17,000 households or 80-100,000 people) have failed to cultivate for the second season. As during the first season, normal yields are expected of the second season crop, but area put to cultivation has significantly reduced due to insecurity. Due to this, up to a 50 percent reduction in cereal yields could occur.

Kajokeji County experienced a poor first season due to prolonged dryness during May-July/August. Also, a significant proportion of people returned from Uganda early this year, and did not cultivate sufficient land. However, rains improved since August, increasing prospects of an improved second season harvest during December. The December harvest could last until May for some households.

Nile-Sobat River Zone

Good crop performance is reported in Shilluk area despite ongoing insecurity during most of this year. Here, production is reported better than last year, and will be sufficient to sustain most households until the next harvest in September. However, pockets affected by insecurity this year might not be food secure.

Farther southeast in the Guit, Rubkona, Leer, Koch, Mayendit, Payinjiar, and Mayom counties, crop performance is mixed. Fair crop harvests are reported in Guit and Rubkona, while poor harvests are reported in the other areas including Bor County. Ten thousand acres have been put under mechanized farming with maize (Mayom, Rubkona and Guit) and sorghum (Ruweng) this year. Given that fair crop harvests are reported in Guit and Rubkona, chances are that the mechanized farms would have done well in these two areas and could potentially inject some surpluses into the market. Households in this zone significantly rely on markets and obtain up to 20 percent of their food from markets.

Hills & Mountains

Similar to the Greenbelt Zone, the April-July cropping season began on time around mid April. However, conditions deteriorated between May and July, particularly when the typical June spell lasted longer than normal. This severely stressed crops, causing failure and replanting in many areas, particularly in many parts of Torit and Budi, and select parts of Magwi County. Replanted crops also faced poor growing conditions and were not harvested in July – August. Total failure occurred in some parts of Magwi and Torit, as well as Kapoeta County. The only areas that were successful were the Imotong range areas that straddle across Magwi, Ikotos and Torit counties.

Rains improved during the second season but unfortunately, the second season only occurs in Magwi and a few select areas of Torit. During the second season, area occupied by crops is reported to have increased in Magwi and few parts of Torit. While an improved second season will mitigate food insecurity in the second season pockets, single season areas remain of most concern especially due to cumulative negative impact of two consecutive failed seasons (2008 and 2009), namely large parts of Torit and Budi. Generally, many single season areas are estimated to have received only 30 percent of a typical year's harvest while areas with a second season are showing increased prospects for improvement as the second season harvest nears. CFSAM indicates that government stocks of subsidized sorghum are still available in Torit though in less amounts compared to what was available in August. Initial projections were that the sorghum would run out by end of September.

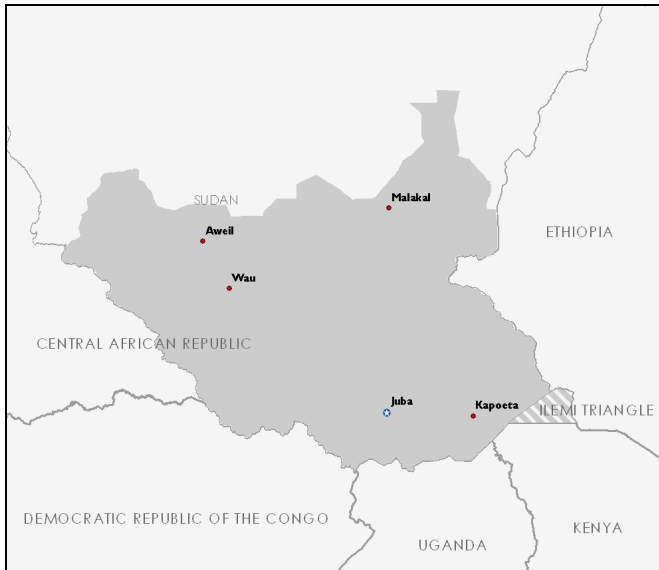
Near average harvests are expected in Juba County, which is also located in this zone.

Pastoral Zone

Sorghum planted in April-May this year in Kapoeta failed due to lack of rain between April and August. This also constrained the return of livestock to homesteads because pasture and water were insufficient. Livestock dominate this livelihood zone

and are reported to have stayed away from grazing areas near homesteads and instead migrated to non-traditional grazing areas due to lack of pasture and water. Typically, livestock are near homes between May and September. As of August-September, most of the livestock was grazing far into Ethiopia and Budi County. Monitoring of livestock movements and access to grazing and water are critical in this zone, as crop failure has a much less negative impact on food security compared to livestock.

Farther north in Pibor County (Boma), mixed conditions are reported. Good crop harvests are reported in farms located in between highlands. The harvests would last both pastoralists and agriculturalists until the next harvest. For other parts not visited that are far from the mountains, conditions are not likely to be as good as in Boma. This is especially so farther north in Lekongole, where a significant number of households displaced during escalated cattle raiding practices starting in April this year are not likely to have cultivated. These same households lost their livestock — their dominant food source — and have been food insecure. Of concern are increasingly armed and above-normal cattle raiding incidences between Pibor pastoralists and their Nuer and Dinka neighbors. If these escalated levels are sustained, they have the potential to destabilize half of the Eastern Flood Plains Zone.



Monthly prices are supplied by the WFP VAM.

Southern Sudan: Sorghum and maize flour are important to all households in southern Sudan, while wheat flour and groundnuts are mostly purchased by urban households. Wau and Aweil are the main markets in and around chronically food insecure areas. Malakal is the main market of Renk, a key sorghum surplus producing area. Juba is the capital city market and is also a transshipment point between borderline food insecure and surplus areas. Kapoeta is located in a predominantly pastoral region representing the food security conditions in this area as well as the cross border trade between Sudan and Kenya.

NOTE: The units prices are now being collected in has changed from large bags (45 – 90 kg) to small bags (3.5 kg), meaning data is not exactly comparable between April and May 2009 when the change took effect. FEWS NET has converted all prices in per kilogram units for use in graphing.

