

## Highlights

### SPECIAL MONTHLY BRIEF

This monthly brief departs from the usual sectoral analysis and regional highlights format following intensive, month long FSAU fieldwork to update baselines (September and October). This issue focuses on emerging issues and implications for response.

#### CIVIL INSECURITY CONTINUES TO THREATEN FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS IN SOUTHERN SOMALIA

Unresolved tensions within the TFG continue to be worrisome. Recent reports of significantly increased weapon imports underscore the militant and potentially violent nature of these tensions. An outbreak of armed conflict would have direct and widespread negative implications on food and livelihood security. As such contingency planning is an urgent priority.

Peaceful and democratic elections in Somaliland will have direct benefits towards promoting food security, including a functioning civil society, market stability and access, as well as encouraging economic investment into the region.

During the last two months, localized insecurity and tensions intensified in a number of areas in Southern Somalia. In Bay and Bakool regions, especially in Qansadheere, Dinsoor and Baidoa districts, localized conflict increased as a result of growing political tensions, as well as increased resource based conflicts over access to water and land. If unresolved, increased civil insecurity and tensions could disrupt Deyr'05 agricultural activities prior to and during October and November. A poor Deyr'05 crop production will only further threaten food security in the Sorghum Belt, given the almost complete failure of the Gu '05 crops (31% PWA in Bay and 36% of PWA in Bakool).

Humanitarian response in Kismayo and surrounding areas is jeopardized following the killing of a UN staff member in Kismayo on 3rd of October 2005. This tragedy has led to the immediate halt of the planned re-engagement of UN activities in the region and will potentially limit humanitarian access to the worst affected Juba riverine communities.

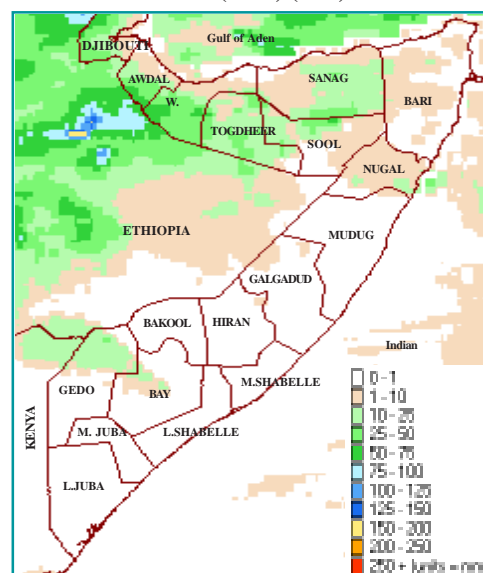
**Implications for Response: Contingency planning for the possibilities of widespread humanitarian relief needs in Southern Somalia is an urgent priority. Civil insecurity and unrest continues to be one the main factors contributing to food and livelihood insecurity throughout the region. Unless these underlying causes are addressed, humanitarian response and development assistance will at best be sporadic and or ineffective, and achievement of food and livelihood security transient.**

### THE ONSET OF 2005 DEYR RAINS

Although full commencement of the *Deyr* season rains is not expected until mid-October, early September rains were received in large pockets in the northeast and northwest, including much of Awdal, W. Galbeed, and Toghedheer Regions and parts of Sool and Sanag Regions (see Figure 1 and Climate Data Update, October 12 2005). Pockets in northern Gedo also received rains in the month of September.

It is still early to predict the outcome of the *Deyr* season rains. FSAU and FEWS NET will continue to monitor the progression of the 2005 Deyr rains. FEWSNET will produce a dekadal rainwatch.

Figure 1: September '05: Cummulative Rainfall (RFE) (mm)



### FIRST HARVEST OF RECESSIONAL CROPS IN JUBA LEADS TO DRAMATICALLY DECREASED MAIZE PRICES

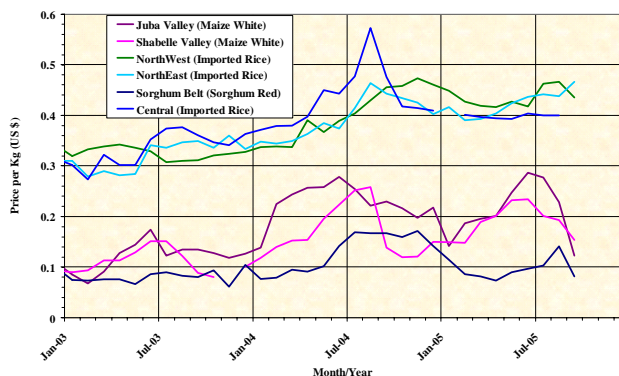
In Juba Region, devastating floods in June '05 destroyed crops and other important assets, but filled all the flood plains (*dhesheks*) and offered opportunities for recessional farming and fresh water fishing. The first harvest of the off-season recessional crops (maize, cowpea and sesame) planted in early July has started to reach the main markets in the region and will peak in late October.

As a result prices have fallen both in real and nominal terms. A 50-kg bag of maize in Buaale dropped from 150,000 SoSh in July to 80,000 SoSh in late September/early October. In real terms, maize prices are currently 0.12 US\$/kg, which is 57% lower than in July and is the lowest price since February 2003 (Figure 2). Cowpea and sesame prices show similar declining price trends, following recessional harvests. For instance, the price of a kilo of cowpea dropped from 8,000 SoSh in July to 3,000 SoSh in late October.

The prospect of the off-season harvest in Juba Valley is good and is expected to last up to mid-December. However the risk of *Deyr* floods (November) is high since most of the riverbank destroyed by the *Gu* floods remains open.

**Implications for Response:** There is a need for immediate canal and river bank rehabilitation to prevent flood damage of remaining recessional crops, this would also facilitate more efficient water off-take and use during the *Deyr* production season. General food distribution is not advised during the harvest period as it would suppress farm-gate prices and provide dis-incentive for agricultural investment.

Figure 2: Regional Trend in Cereal Prices (USD)



### DISPLACED POPULATIONS IN BAY AND BAKOOL

The influx of displaced populations in Qansahdere and Dinsor districts following continuing and increased water and land based conflicts in surrounding Habibayall, Radhole, Misra (Dinsor District) and Oflow and Idale (Qansahdere) is of increasing concern. FSAU field reports though unconfirmed, indicate that possibly one third of the IDPs have begun to return to their farms to participate in farming activities in anticipation of the approaching *Deyr* rains, while another two thirds are unable to return. Cereals are available in the market (especially sorghum) and prices have declined since August (Figure 2). However, displaced populations have limited purchasing power due to the scarcity of income earning opportunities. The food security situation in Wajid is also of concern due to increased influx of population from surrounding areas due to civil insecurity. FSAU currently is mobilizing a rapid assessment team to assess the evolving situation in these areas.

### IMPROVED NUTRITIONAL STATUS AMONG HARGEISA RETURNEES AND IDP'S

Hargeisa 'Returnees and IDPs' nutrition survey in September 2005 indicated a substantial improvement in the nutrition situation. Global acute malnutrition (weight for height <-2 Z scores or oedema) was 7.6% (CI: 6% - 9.5%) which is below the previous levels seen in similar populations.

**Implications for Response:** The results demonstrate that given a secure environment, a thriving economy, assistance in access to social services and better housing, human wellbeing will benefit and rapid recovery can occur.

### PASTORAL RECOVERY UNDERWAY IN SOOL PLATEAU, THE HAWD AND NUGAL VALLEY

Recent in-depth fieldwork by FSAU (Sept./Oct. '05) in the Hawd, Sool Plateau, and Nugal Valley further confirms that pastoral recovery is underway in these regions following two consecutive above normal rainy seasons (*Deyr* '04/'05 and *Gu* '05).

Pastoral livelihoods are beginning to recover due to increasing herd sizes and improved livestock body conditions, (especially shoats) following a year of adequate access and availability to water and pasture. It is anticipated that camel calving will dramatically increase in the next two months, as most of them conceived just after the last *Deyr* season. Currently pasture is widely available and abnormal herd migration or 'distress' coping was not reported or observed in the areas covered by fieldwork.



Exceptionally high camel calving is expected in November and December following concentrated and high conception rates in Deyr 04/05. FSAU Livelihoods Baseline Fieldwork, September 2005

Poorer households are benefiting from livestock restocking through kinship support mechanisms, such as receiving loans of ‘milking’ animals from their relatives or better-off households. Transportation of water for the poor households who lost their pack camels continues to be a major problem; however, there is evidence of pack camel/donkey ‘water transport’ shared with better-off households.

Debt levels remain high among all wealth groups, but interviews indicate that the middle and better off have begun to repay these debts. Many households expect to repay their debts over the next year if the coming *Deyr* and the next *Gu* seasons are good. Charcoal production is continuing and increasing in many areas, despite ongoing pastoral recovery. Field studies indicate that pastoralists are not the prime charcoal producers. Pastoralists are not directly involved or benefiting, and in most cases opposed to such activities. Some pastoralist communities have been effective in halting charcoal production in their areas through vigilance and force, e.g. Sool of Bari, while others remain ineffective due to the strength of the protected interests. Charcoal production and trade is a lucrative commercial enterprise linked to urban and export market demand.

A year on from the peak of the Humanitarian Emergency (*Gu* '04), many ‘destitute’ households have either dropped out of ‘pastoralism’ altogether and moved into larger urban areas or have been reintegrated into pastoral communities. This population remains vulnerable, but are difficult to identify or target as a group. However, they will benefit from a response focused on general livelihood support to the region. Due to recent field information FSAU is changing the phase classification of this population from Humanitarian Emergency to Food and Livelihood Crisis (See Map 1).

**Implications for Response:** The immediate response implications of the observed pastoral recovery is to shift from a humanitarian response focused on immediate food needs, to a response focused on supporting the continued recovery of livelihoods in the form of debt relief, restocking, especially pack camels, creation of alternative livelihoods for charcoal burners, and a general focus on basic development needs that address the high levels of overall poverty in the region, i.e. absence of schools and health facilities, poor communication and infrastructure.

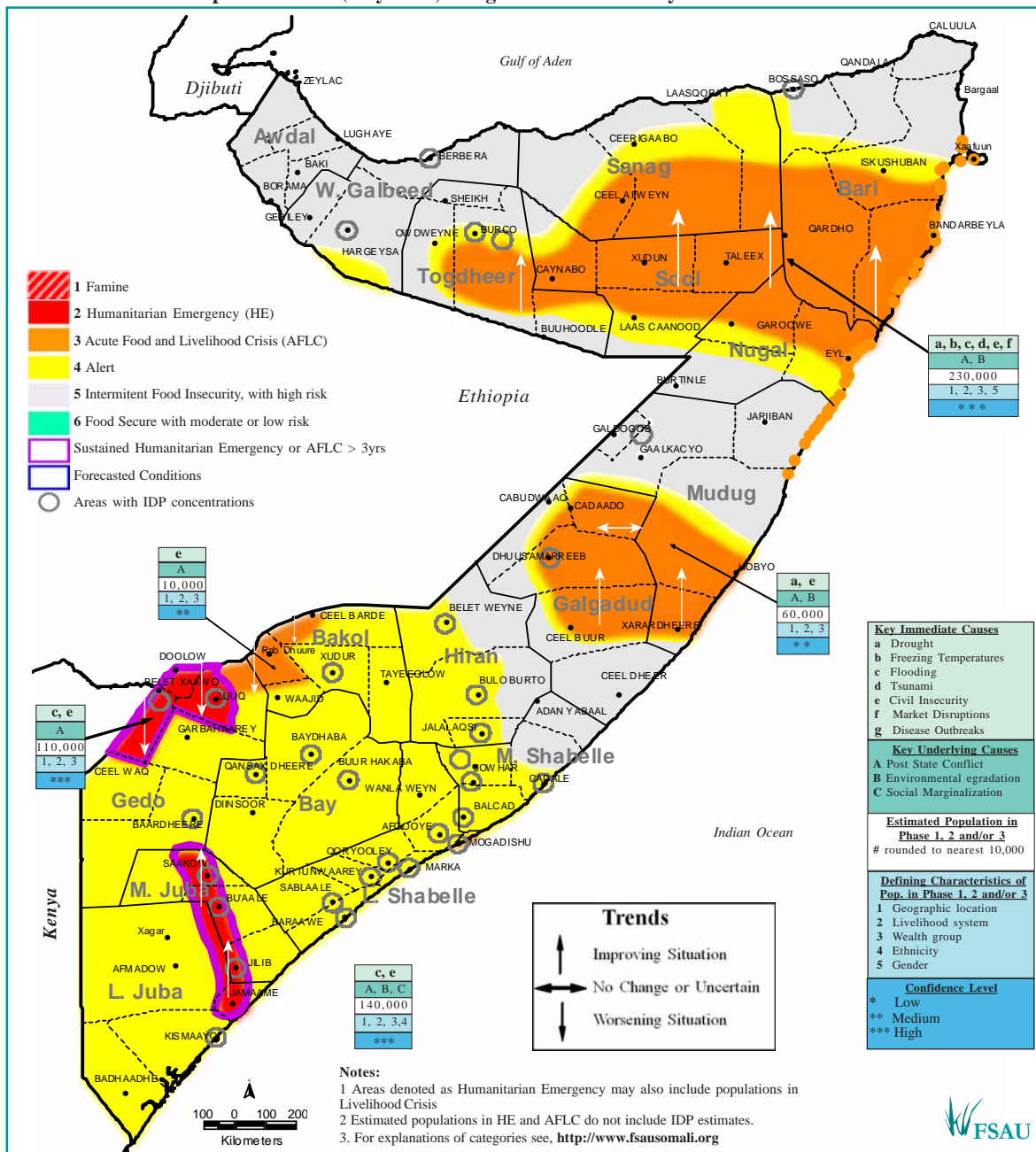


Empty destitute camps outside Qardho. FSAU Livelihoods Baseline Fieldwork, September 2005

pastoral recovery in the north



Map 1: Post Gu (July 2005) Integrated Food Security Phase Classification



phase classification

FSAU conducted baseline fieldwork and analysis throughout parts of the Northwest, Northeast and Central regions between September 9 and October 6, 2005. The work involved 24 FSAU field and NBI staff and focused on updating baseline data for three pastoral livelihood zones (Sool Plateau, Nugal Valley and the Hawd) and a rezoning review for Golis and Guban pasotralists (NE and NW) and agro-pastoralists in NW. Reports are currently being prepared and will be available in November.

FSAU/ FEWSNET Market Data Update, October 12 2005  
 FSAU/FEWSNET Climate Data Update, October 12 2005  
 FSAU Nutrition Update, September 29, 2005  
 FSAU 2005 Post Gu Analysis, Technical Series Report No IV. 7, 13 September 2005.

“Conflict and Drought Induced Displacement – Qansah-Dhere and Dinsor Towns and Misra Village in Bay Region”, Joint Assessment Field Report, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, 22-27 August 2005.