

Price Monitoring and Analysis Country Brief

Lesotho

February 2010

Key Messages

- Cereal prices have stabilized, however they remain above average levels.
- Crop production would probably be affected by prolonged dry spells.
- It has been estimated that 450,000 people are in need of food assistance. GIEWS claims that the food situation in the country is affected by shortfalls in food production.
- The government and FAO are implementing different programmes to support producers.

Background

The total population was around 2 million with an annual growth rate equivalent to 0%. The undernourished population was estimated to be 15% while the prevalence of HIV among adults recorded 22%, with life expectancy at birth being 42 years for both sexes.

| Economic Indicators | View Data |
|---|---------------------------|
| Total Population - 2008 (WB) | 2016823 |
| Population growth rate - 2008 (WB) | 0% |
| GNI per capita, \$ PPP - 2008 (WB) | 2000 |
| Population below 1\$ PPP per day - 2003 (MDGI) | 43% |
| Rural population - 2007 (WB) | 75% |
| Agriculture, value added (% of GDP) - 2008 (WB) | 7% |

| Food Consumption | |
|---|-----|
| Undernourished Population - 2005 (FAO) | 15% |
| Cereal share in total dietary energy consumption - 2005 (FAO) | 79% |
| Meat share in total dietary energy consumption - 2005 (FAO) | 3% |

| Health Indicators | |
|--|-----|
| Pop. with sustainable access to improved sanitation - 2006 (WHO) | 36% |
| Life expectancy at birth (years) both sexes - 2006 (WHO) | 42 |
| Pop. with access to improved drinking water sources - 2006 (WHO) | 78% |
| Prevalence of HIV among adults aged >= 15 years - 2005 (WHO) | 22% |

Prices

There is no recent price data, but cereal prices are reported to have stabilized in 2009 in line with those in the South African market which supplies the bulk of maize and wheat imported by Lesotho. Towards the end of 2009, prices of maize meal were almost equivalent to the 2008 prices.

Natural Disasters, Drought and Conflicts

The El Niño phenomenon is expected to affect Lesotho by causing prolonged dry spells from early 2010. Consequently, households will suffer from low crop production and will require food assistance support.

| Refugees and IDPs | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|
| Total in the country | n.a. | n.a. | 0 |
| Total outside the country | 14 | 20 | 25 |

Source: [UNHCR](#) Statistical Online Population Database, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Data extracted on 22/10/2009.

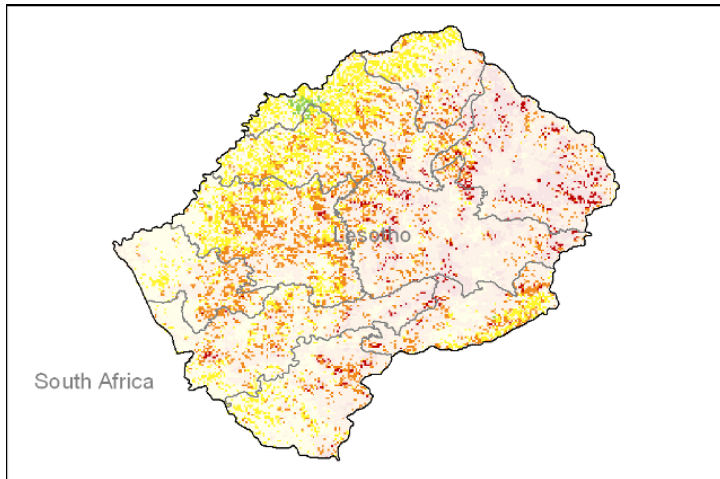
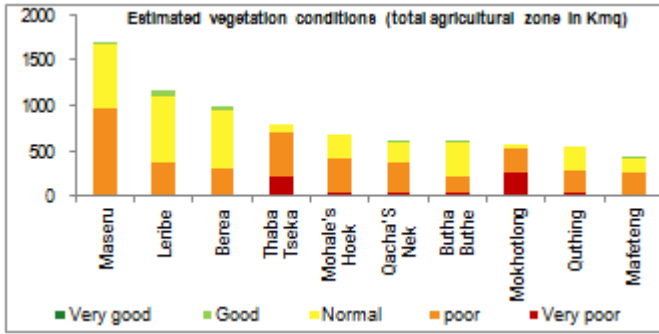
| Disaster Type (last year) | Date | Location | Alert |
|---------------------------|------|----------|-------|
| No Floods | - | - | - |
| No Earthquakes | - | - | - |

Source: [Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System](#) - 3 = 1000 or more people killed or 800000 or more people displaced. 2 = 100 or more people killed or 80000 or more displaced.

Information required to draw this chart is not available.

Vegetation Condition

The middle of the rainy season presents poor to normal vegetation conditions throughout the country with real concerns for Thaba Tseka and Mokhotlong provinces. The indicator of vegetation condition is the relative difference between the NDVI for Jan. 2010 and the average of the last 10 years on the agricultural zones derived from the GLOBCOVER database.



Source: JRC MARS – FoodSec

Food Security Situation

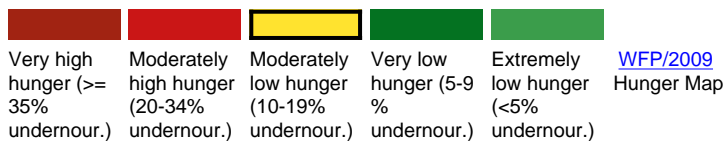
The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) has estimate that about 450,000 people require food assistance for the 2009/10 marketing year (Apr/Mar). GIEWS claims that the country is facing exceptional shortfalls in food production. In the long term WFP reports moderately low hunger while IFPRI warns a serious hanger problem.

CURRENT EMERGENCY ASSESMENT



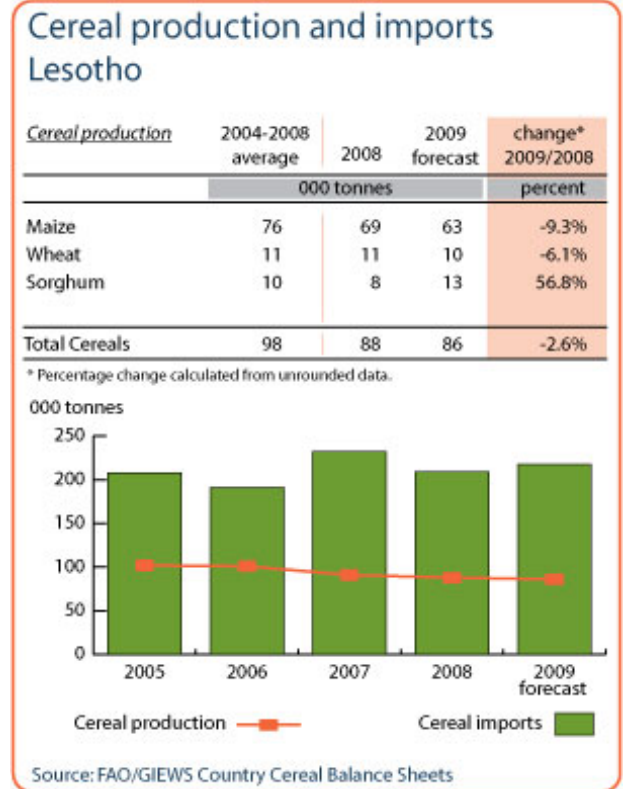
Lesotho n.a. FEWSNET

SCALE OF HUNGER



Food Balance Sheet

The total 2009 cereal production, including the wheat crop harvested in November, is estimated at 86,099 tonnes, slightly lower than the below average 2008 cereal output. The maize crop fell by about 10%, to 62,528 tonnes. By contrast, sorghum production increased to 13,241 tonnes, 57% above the year earlier. Total cereal import requirements in the 2009/10 marketing year are estimated to increase by some 9% to 222,000 tonnes.



Source: GIEWS Country Briefs

Government Policies

The Government has instituted a 30-50% subsidy on seed and fertiliser, while FAO availed a range of inputs for 22,551 vulnerable farming households.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Consumer and market oriented measures | n.a. |
| Producer oriented measures | Support to input for crop production. |
| Trade policy measures | n.a. |
| Safety net (increased or introduced) | n.a. |

Different sources

Current events to watch (Click to see the full report)

- LESOTHO: Mamalshoae Nkhahle, "They look at me and see that I am..."
- LESOTHO: Mountain clinics bring HIV services to remote villages
- LESOTHO: Mokete Tshelo, "I don't take [antiretroviral] drugs bec..."
- LESOTHO: A mountain of challenges
- LESOTHO: Time to talk about sex and HIV

For more information, contact: Information-for-action@fao.org
Website: www.foodsec.org

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