

Price Monitoring and Analysis Country Brief

Lesotho

May 2010

Key Messages

- Cereal prices still remain high despite some slight decreases since January 2010.
- Food security is particularly affected by widespread poverty and high prevalence of HIV among the population.
- The situation in Lesotho is described as serious hunger or moderately low hunger in the long term.
- The government provided input subsidies 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

The WFP report indicated that on average, urban maize prices were nearly at 48.00 Maloti per a bag of 12Kg in January 2010, increasing by 8% from December 2009 (44.00), while rural prices increased by only 0.2% and were 45.00/12kg. WFP monitoring reports also estimated that prices of maize meal declined by 1% in rural areas and 3% in urban areas between January and March 2010. The South African Crop Forecast Committee projects a bumper harvest in South Africa and this may result in lower maize prices which will benefit Lesotho since the bulk of its maize and wheat import comes from South Africa.

Natural Disasters, Drought and Conflicts

The political atmosphere has been relatively calm; however food security is hampered by structural poverty. The economic downturn has particularly hit the country by drastically reducing employment opportunities and income, and limiting their access to markets where food prices are still very high. Moreover, the country has very worrying rates of HIV infection, affecting 22% of the population.

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.

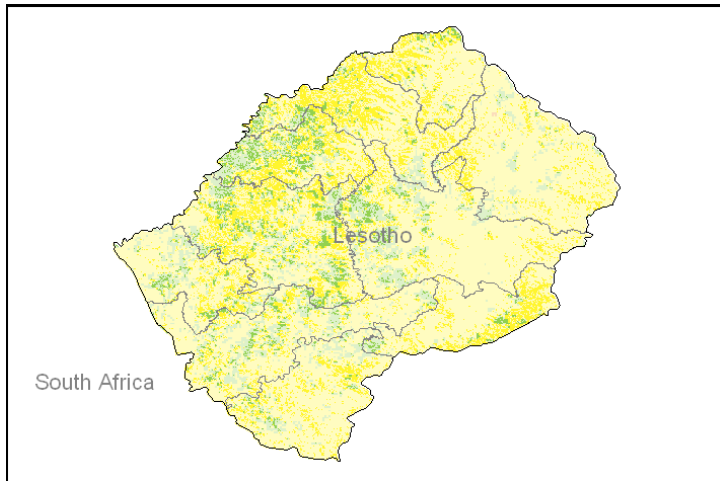
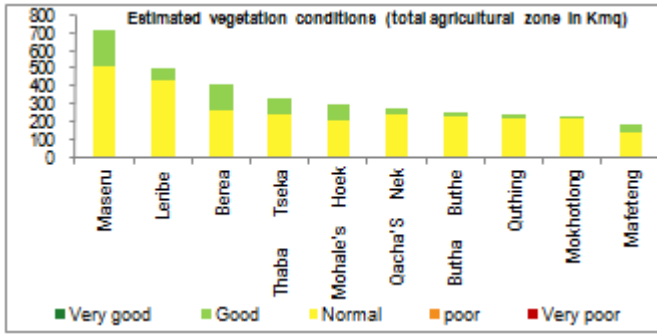
Disaster Type (last year)	Date	Location	Alert
No Floods	-	-	-
No Earthquakes	-	-	-

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

At the middle of the rainy season, normal to good vegetation conditions are observed throughout the country. The indicator of vegetation condition is the relative difference between the NDVI for April 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 Analysis Committee (LVAC) is undertaking its annual post-harvest livelihoods assessment. WFP/Lesotho is under resourced and a shortfall of 3595 MT of food was reported between February and July 2010. In the long term, WFP expects moderately low hunger, while IFPRI evaluates a serious hunger problem issue.

CURRENT EMERGENCY ASSESMENT

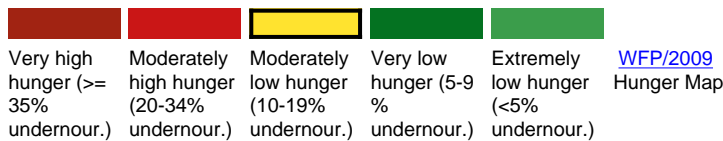
Lesotho is not part of the countries in crisis requiring external assistance

[FAO/GIEWS CPFS 2010](#)

Lesotho is not covered by FEWSNET. FEWSNET coverage is limited 14 African countries 1 Caribbean (Haiti) and 1 Central Asia (Afghanistan). Food security status is given for different parts of the country in each case.

[FEWSNET](#)

SCALE OF HUNGER



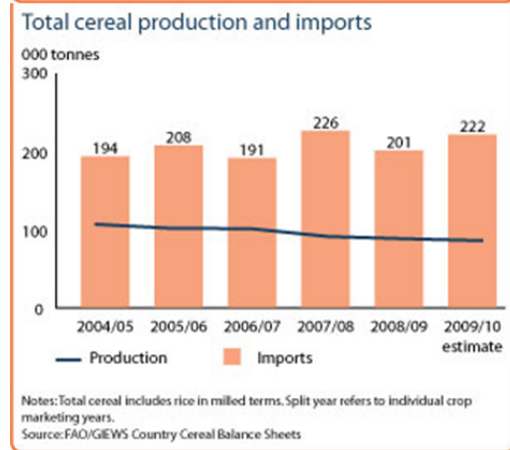
Food Balance Sheet

First preliminary forecast indicated an about normal size cereal crop this year, 16% up from the below average level harvested in 2009 (86,099 tonnes). The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) has forecasted 2010 production for the three main crops: 25,937.80mt of wheat, 72,397.54mt of maize and 24,982.6mt of sorghum. A crop assessment is currently underway and more complete data is expected shortly.

Lesotho Cereal production

	2004-2008 average	2008	2009 estimate	change 2009/2008
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	76	69	62	-10
Wheat	11	11	10	-9
Sorghum	10	8	13	62
Total	98	88	86	-2

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets



Source: [GIEWS Country Briefs](#)

Government Policies

The Govt raised input subsidy from 30% to 50%. Inputs were procured in time and were brought close to the farmers for easy access. The Govt's budget has been negatively impacted by the reduction in the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) revenue which in 2009/10 represented only 35% of the budget, compared to 65% in earlier years.

Consumer and market oriented measures	n.a.
Producer oriented measures	Import subsidy.
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 Tsehlo, "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
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