Crop Situation Update

United Nations World Food Programme
Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System

Update, October 2006, Issue 3

Field update on the status of the summer crops

As reported in the previous Crop Situation Updates, the drought has had a profound impact on the production levels of the main summer crops. To verify some of the earlier findings with regard to crop losses (especially paddy) and the consequent food security impacts, the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives (MoAC) requested WFP and FAO for a joint crop assessment which started on 29 October. The results of this assessment will be released at the end of November (and in the next Crop Situation Update). The most recent information collected from the field in 34 districts covered by the WFP Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System is reported in this issue of the Crop Situation Update. The information provided here has been used to identify the areas to be visited by the joint crop assessment mission.

RAINFALL

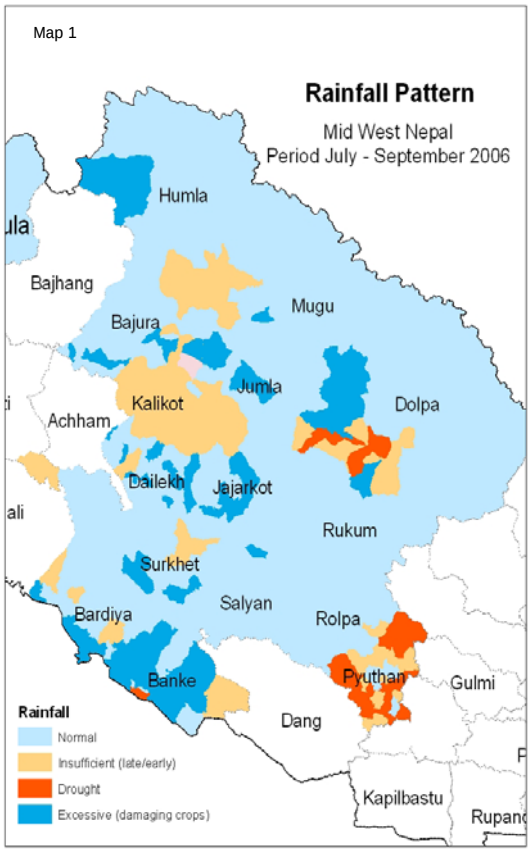
The monsoon rainfall patterns in Mid-West and Eastern Nepal are presented in Map 1 and 2 on the right. It identifies areas affected by drought, insufficient or late rainfall, or those that experienced excessive rainfall during the period July –September 2006. Rainfall is an important determinant of agricultural yield given that on average about 67% of agricultural production is rain fed.

In Mid-West Nepal, the main areas affected by drought or insufficient rainfall can broadly be identified as the northeastern parts of Bajura and southern parts of Humla, Kalikot and northern areas of Dailekh, Puythan, and southwest Dopla. Areas receiving excessive rainfall causing floods and landslides were Banke and Bardiya; western parts of Dolpa and Humla, and selected areas in the districts of Bajura, Mugu, Jumla, Dailekh, Jajarkot and Surkhet.

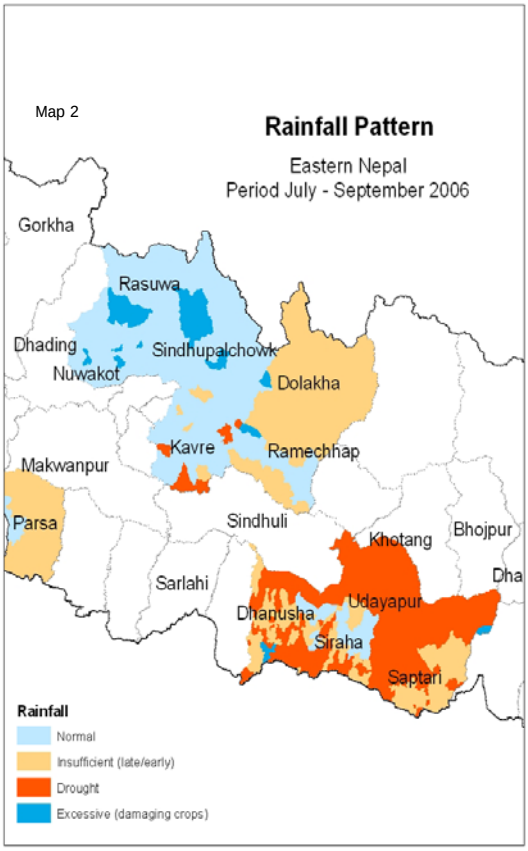
In Eastern Nepal, the key area of concern is the Saptari, Siraha, Dhanusha and Udayapur cluster where drought has severely affected the summer paddy crop production. WFP field monitors from Dolakha, Ramechhap and Parsa reported insufficient or late rainfall in all or parts of the districts.

Harvesting the meager yields, Saptari, 31 October 2006

Map 1



Map 2



CROP SITUATION OVERVIEW

Depending on the area, the main summer crop is paddy, maize or millet. The following symbols are used to depict the primary crop in each district that is covered by the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis system:

Rice Maize Millet

At this writing, the maize crop has mostly been harvested, while paddy and millet are in the growing or harvesting stage.

PADDY PRODUCTION

Map 3 and 4 depict the current paddy crop condition as reported by WFP field monitors (good, normal, poor, and failure) at the sub-district level for Western and Eastern Nepal.

The key area of concern is in the eastern Terai (Dhanusa, Siraha, Spatari and Udayapur) where the paddy crop production has been severely affected by the drought. This area alone contributes approximately 13.5% to the national paddy production in a normal year. In 59 VDCs in Saptari the paddy production has failed. For Siraha, Dhanusa and Udayapur the paddy production failed in 38, 17 and 14 VDCs respectively. Paddy land in these VDCs depend entirely on rainfall. Other areas where the crop is much less affected is either fully or partly irrigated.

In the western Terai, the paddy crop was severely affected in several VDCs in Banke and Bardiya due to flooding at the end of August.

The following provides a summary of the key areas where paddy production decreased substantially as a consequence of the drought.

DISTRICTS UPDATES - RICE

Eastern Nepal

Saptari – 59 VDCs in the western part of Saptari have been severely affected with crop losses of more than 80%. Most of the eastern and southern parts are fully are partly irrigated. Crop losses in this area range from 10-25%.

Siraha – 38 southern and western VDCs were severely affected with most paddy land remaining fallow. 39 VDCs were moderately affected and the remaining was lightly affected.

Dhanusha – In 17 VDCs paddy was planted in only 35% of the area and production is estimated to have decreased by more than 80% in these areas. 31 VDCs are moderately affected and the remaining is lightly affected.

Udayapur – 14 VDCs are severely affected with some 30-40% of the paddy field remaining fallow. In moderately affected areas, about 10-30% of the paddy land remained fallow.

Dolakha – Paddy is the second largest summer crop in Dolakha, following maize. No paddy is produced in the mountain areas. Production is estimated to decrease by 40% in 5 VDCs (Lapilang, Lamidanda, Sundrawati, Sunkhani and Suspachhemawati) due to insufficient rainfall and pests. The drought has affected paddy production in 20 VDCs in central Dolakha, where production is said to have decreased by 10-25%.

Western Nepal

Banke and Bardiya – Drought followed by flooding has severely affected paddy production in the central part of south Banke and in the southeast of Bardiya.

Rupandehi – Paddy production in 39 VDCs in the south and east was affected due to no rainfall for about one month after planting. Irrigation facilities are not sufficient in these areas and subsequent crop loss is estimated at almost 40% in these VDCs.

Pyuthan – Rice production is severely affected (about 70% loss) in 6 VDCs in the north due to drought and pest infestation (neck blast).

Rukum – Compared to last year, the paddy crop production should increase as rainfall was timely. However, pest infestation and storms affected the crop in 5 VDCs in the northwest.

Jajarkot – Paddy is the second main crop in Jajarkot following maize. Flooding affected paddy production in 5 VDCs in central Jajarkot; however, paddy is not widely cultivated in these areas.

Dailekh – The drought has affected the paddy production in most parts of Dailekh. The northeastern part however received excessive rain and was affected by neck blast infestation.

Kalikot – Northern parts were affected by drought. The worst affected VDCs are Khin, Nanikot, and Dhoulagoh.

Bajura – The worst affected areas are in the north and east of the district. Paddy production is expected to decrease by 30-50% in these areas due to drought conditions.

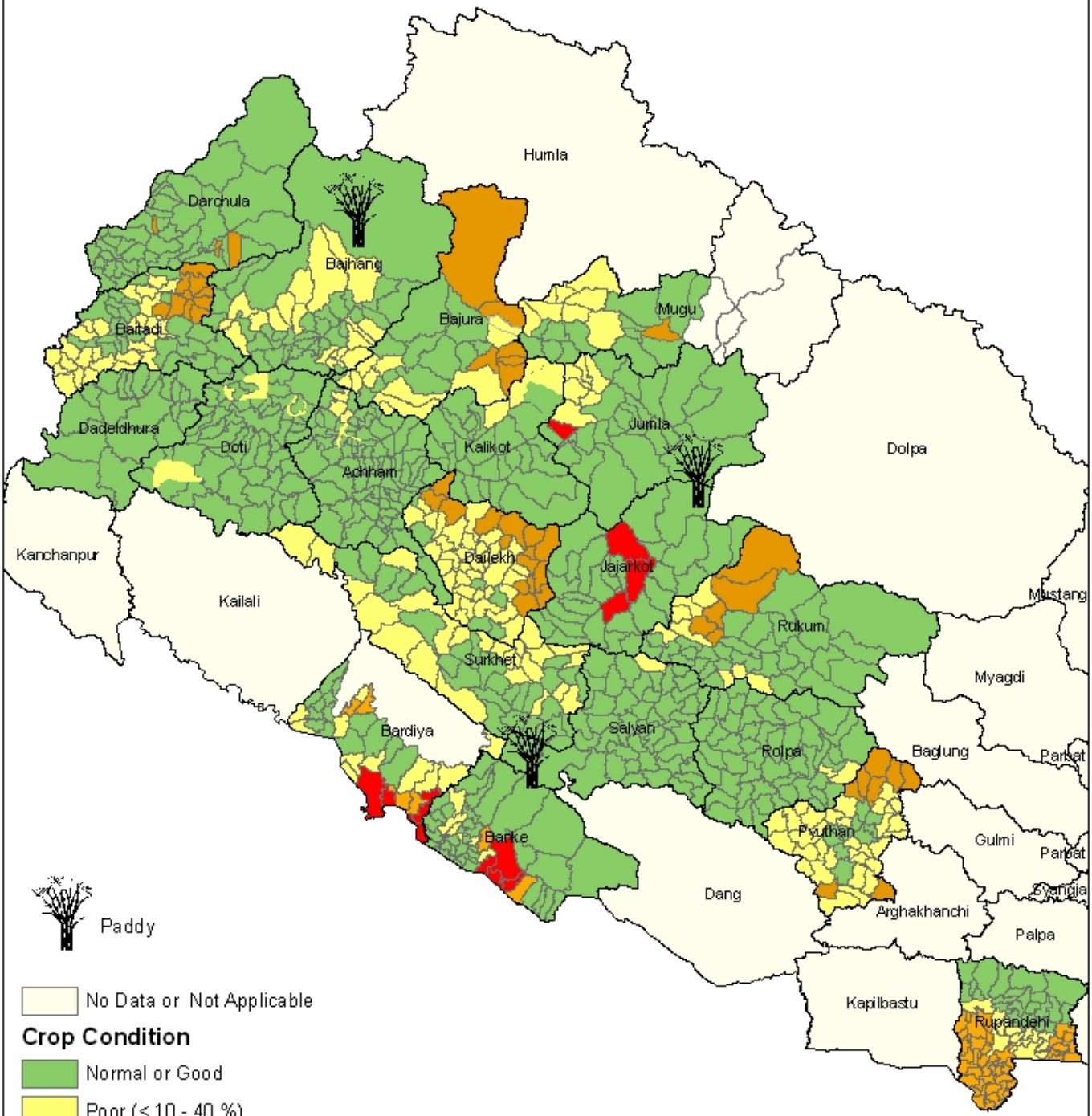
Baitadi – Paddy production is expected to decrease by 15-20%. The worst affected area is in the northeast where a 40-45% decrease is expected.

Paddy land left fallow due to drought, Saptari, 31 October 2006

Map 3

Paddy Crop Condition

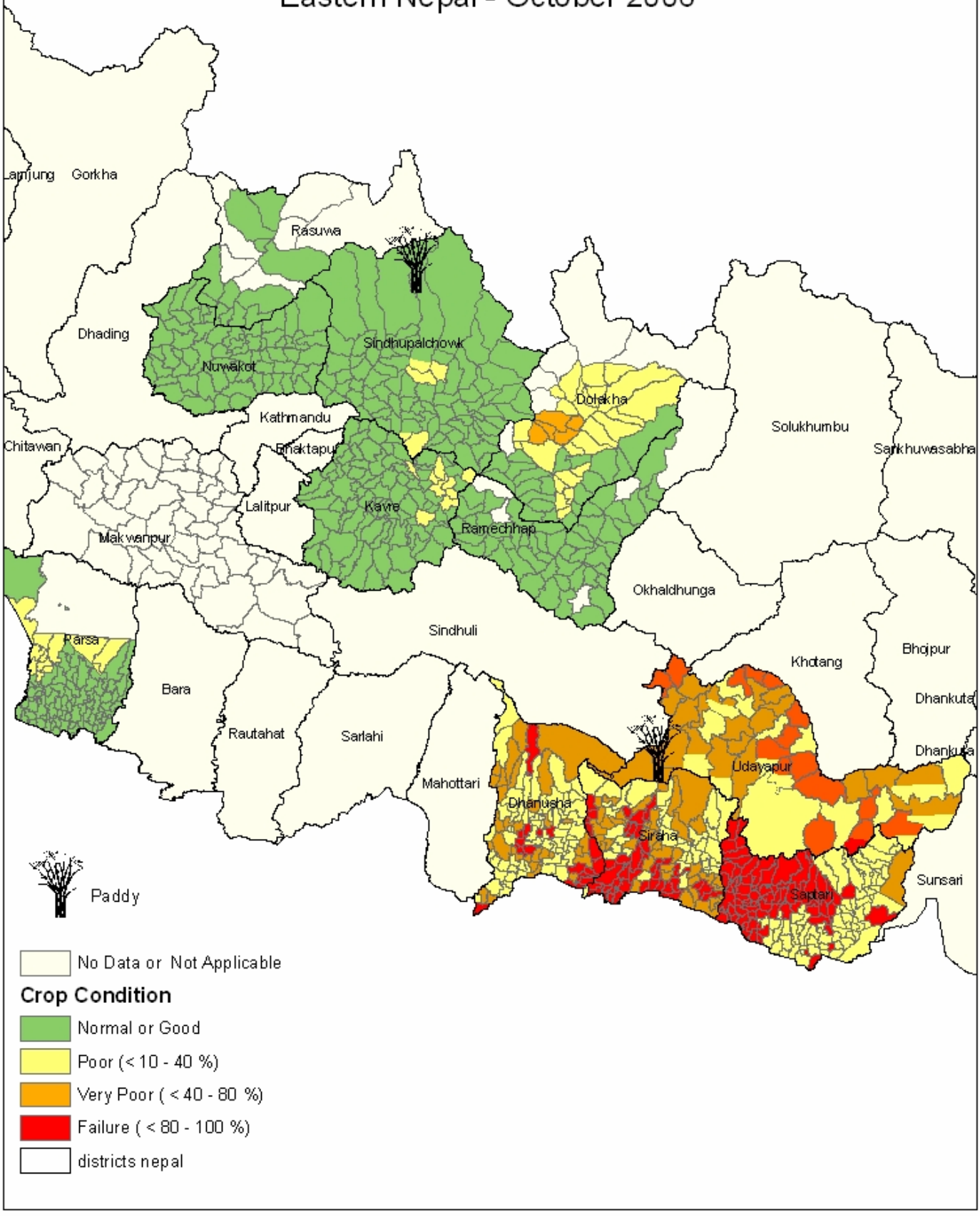
Western Nepal - October 2006



Map 4

Paddy Crop Condition

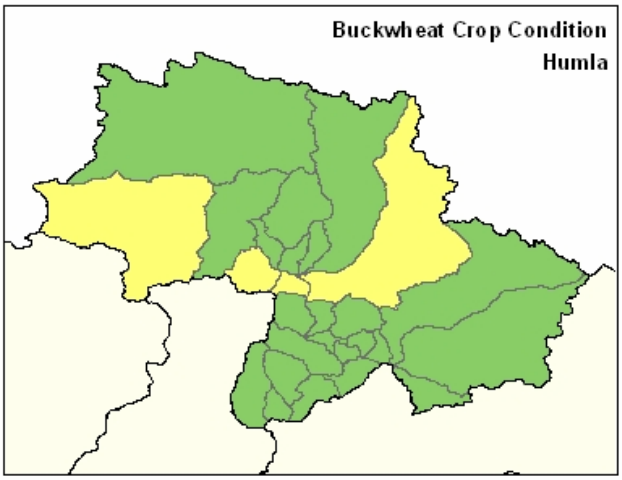
Eastern Nepal - October 2006



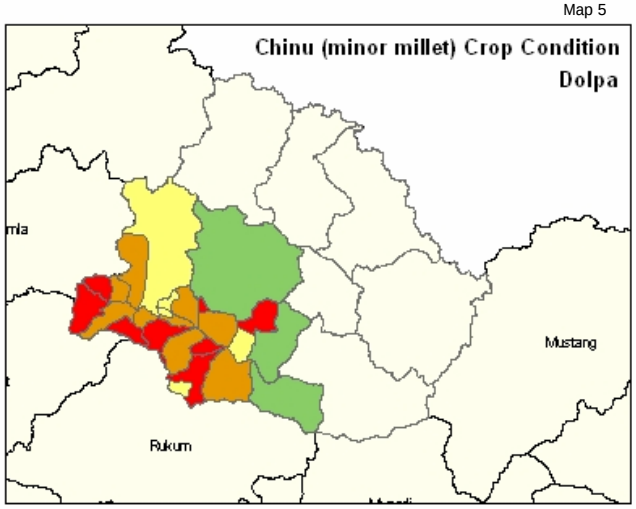
HUMLA AND DOLPA

Paddy is not cultivated in the mountain districts of Humla and Dolpa, nor in the northern parts of Mugu. Instead, millet and maize is grown (see next section) as well as buckwheat in the case of Humla and *chinu* (minor millet) in the case of Dolpa. The current conditions of these crops are shown in Map 5 and 6. Production levels of *chinu* are severely affected in the southern parts of Dolpa where production has decreased by 40-80%. In some VDCs complete crop failure has been reported.

Humla / Dolpa



Map 5



Map 6

Crop Condition
- Not Applicable
- Good or normal
- Poor (< 10-40 %)
- Very Poor (< 40-80 %)
- Failure (< 80 - 100 %)

In general, the same areas affected by the drought for paddy have impacted maize and millet crops. Several key areas of concern in Western Nepal are the southern parts of Dolpa, Humla and Pyuthan, western parts of Rukum, and northern parts of Dailekh. In Eastern Nepal, the focus is on Udayapur (millet) and Dolakha (maize)

The following provides a summary regarding the main areas of concern.

DISTRICTS UPDATES – MAIZE AND MILLET

Eastern Nepal

Udayapur – The drought has severely affected the millet crop in Udayapur. Particularly affected are the areas in the hills in the northern part of Udayapur, where production is expected to decline by 75%.

Dolakha – Maize production increased by 20-25% in southern parts of Dolakha compared to last year. In other parts, maize production decreased by 10-15%. Overall the maize production for the district can be considered normal.

Western Nepal

Dolpa – The maize crop in southern parts of Dolpa are severely affected by drought. Crop loss estimates range from 50-80%.

Humla – The millet crop in 6 VDCs in the south were affected by rust blast infestation which decreased the expected production by about 50%.

Kalikot – Drought affected the millet production in the same areas as paddy (Nanikot, Dhoulagh and Khin VDCs).

Dailekh – The maize crop in the northeast and west are expected to decrease by some 50% due to excessive rainfall, hailstorms and pests. In other parts, the maize crop is slightly affected due to drought conditions and is expected to decrease by 10%.

CONCLUSION

This Crop Situation Update identifies several areas of concern regarding the summer crop situation. Due to crop failure in these areas, the food security situation of the local population has been compromised as shown in the food security phase classification map in issue 15 of the Food Security Bulletin. The joint crop assessment mission currently undertaken by the MoAC, WFP and FAO has sent teams to each of the areas where a substantial decrease in crop production is expected. The assessment mission will verify the current crop production estimates and investigate household vulnerability as a consequence of crop failure. Teams are currently in the field and outcomes of this assessment are expected mid November.

MAIZE AND MILLET PRODUCTION

In many parts of the hills and mountains, particularly in Western Nepal, maize or millet are the main summer crops. The expected production levels - categorized into four classes: normal or good, poor, very poor, and failure - for maize and millet are presented in Maps 7 and 8.

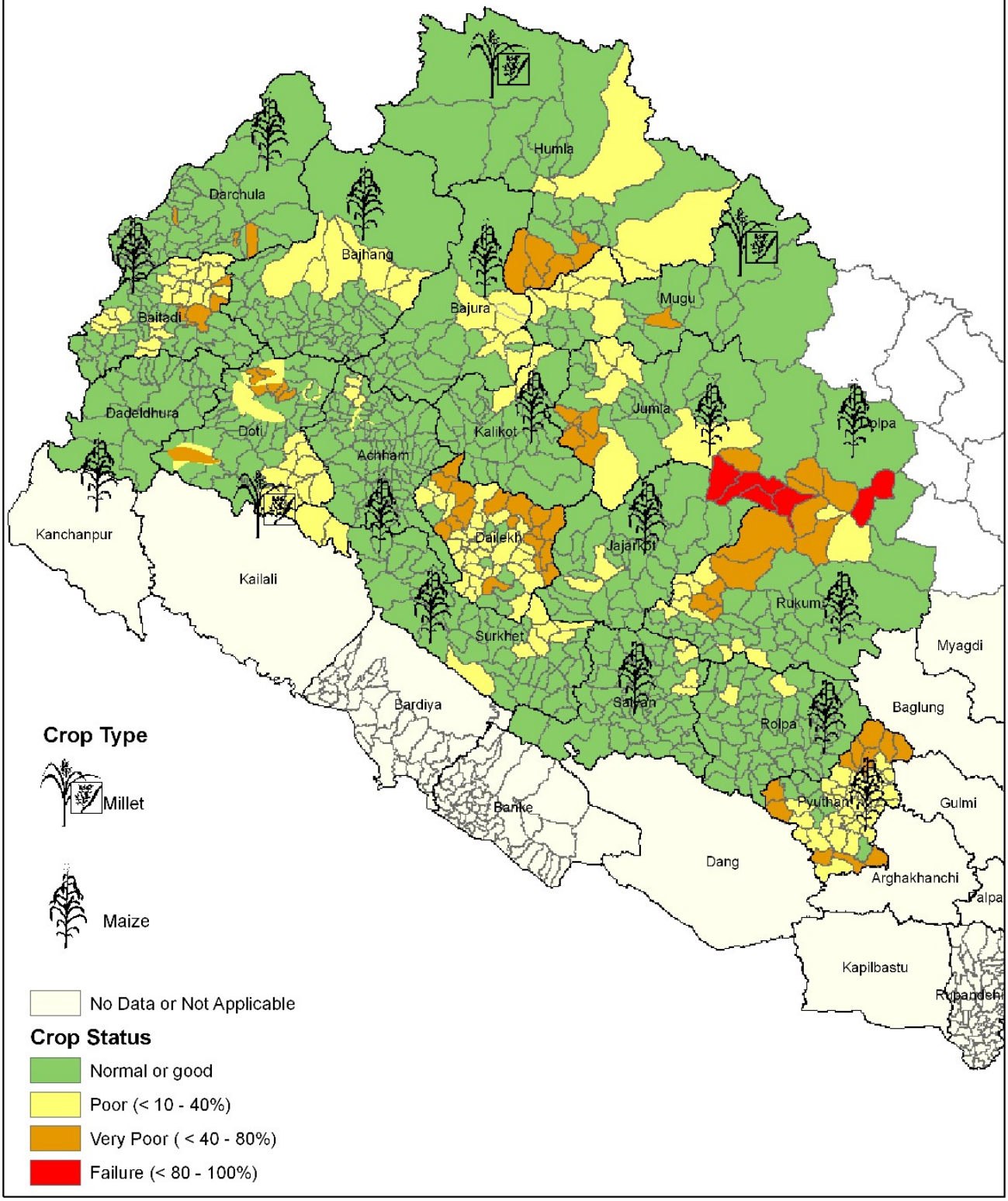
Crop Situation Updates are produced by WFP Nepal as part of the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System, supported by DFID and OFDA.

For more information please contact the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis Unit
United Nations World Food Programme
Patan Dhoka Road, Lalitpur
PO Box 107
Tel 5542607 ext 2420-5

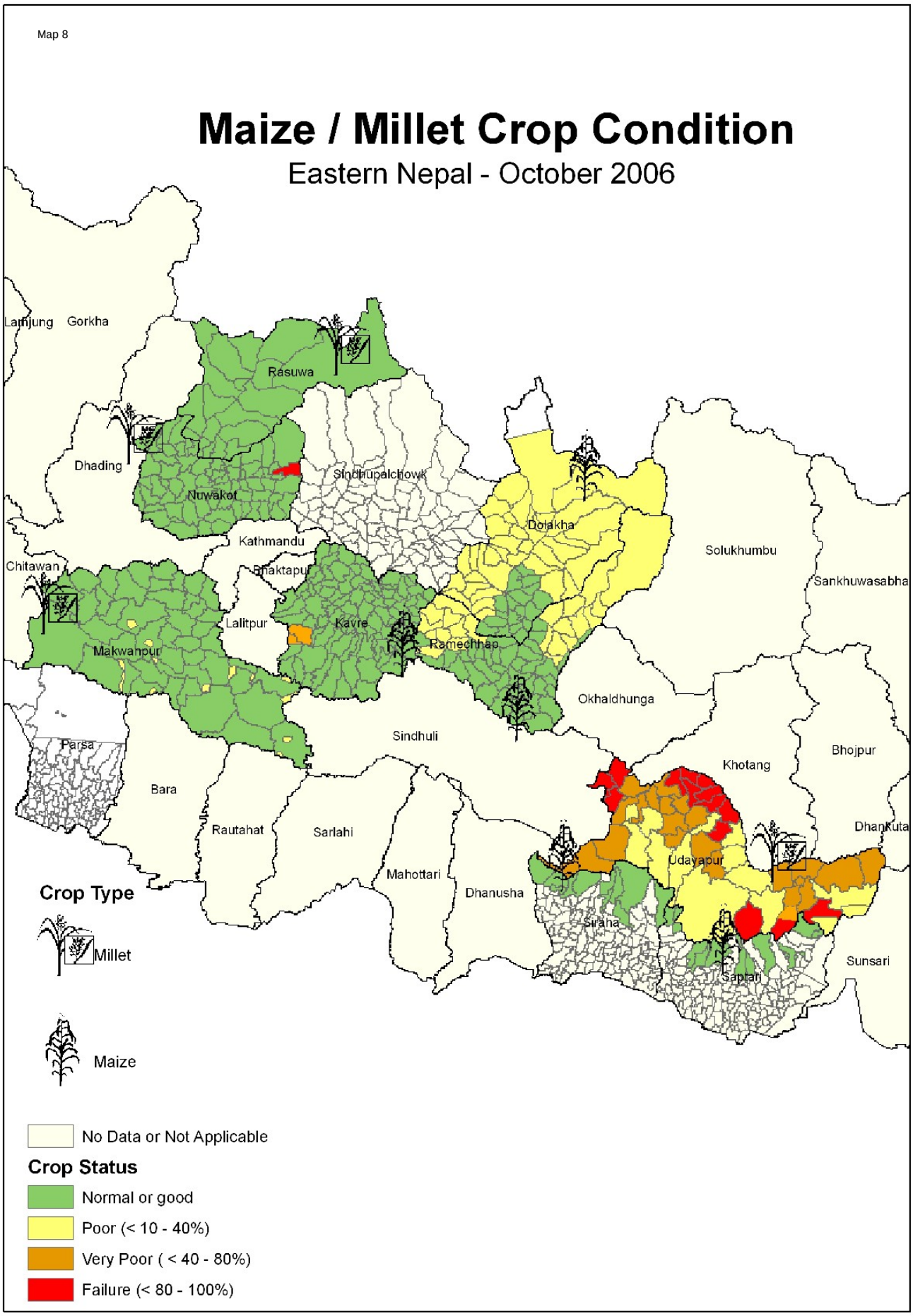
Map 7

Maize / Millet Crop Condition

Western Nepal - October 2006



Map 8

Maize / Millet Crop Condition

Eastern Nepal - October 2006