Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Food Programme

S P E C I A L R E P O R T

Summary

FAO/WFP CROP AND FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT MISSION TO MADAGASCAR

27 October 2015

This report has been prepared by Benjamin Badjeck (FAO) and Maherisoa Takotonirainy (WFP) under the responsibility of the FAO and WFP Secretariats with information from official and other sources. Furthermore, the designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the organizations of the United Nations concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Since conditions may change rapidly, please contact the undersigned for further information if required.

Shukri Ahmed
Senior Economist, EST-GIEWS
Trade and Markets Division, FAO
E-mail: giews1@fao.org

Chris Nikoi
Regional Director
OMJ/WFP
E-mail: chris.nikoi@wfp.org

Please note that this Special Report is also available on the Internet as part of the FAO World Wide Web www.fao.org at the following URL address: http://www.fao.org/giews/ and http://www.wfp.org/food-security/reports/CFSAM

The Special Alerts/Reports can also be received automatically by E-mail as soon as they are published, by subscribing to the GIEWS/Alerts report ListServ. To do so, please send an E-mail to the FAO-Mail-Server at the following address: mailserv@mailserv.fao.org , leaving the subject blank, with the following message:

subscribe GIEWSAlertsWorld-L

To be deleted from the list, send the message:

unsubscribe GIEWSAlertsWorld-L

Please note that it is now possible to subscribe to regional lists to only receive Special Reports/Alerts by region: Africa, Asia, Europe or Latin America (GIEWSAlertsAfrica-L, GIEWSAlertsAsia-L, GIEWSAlertsEurope-L and GIEWSAlertsLA-L). These lists can be subscribed to in the same way as the worldwide list.

S P E C I A L R E P O R T

Summary

FAO/WFP CROP AND FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT MISSION TO MADAGASCAR

27 October 2015

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME
Rome, 2015

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

© FAO, 2015

FAO encourages the use, reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Except where otherwise indicated, material may be copied, downloaded and printed for private study, research and teaching purposes, or for use in non-commercial products or services, provided that appropriate acknowledgement of FAO as the source and copyright holder is given and that FAO's endorsement of users' views, products or services is not implied in any way.

All requests for translation and adaptation rights, and for resale and other commercial use rights should be made via www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request or addressed to copyright@fao.org.

FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased through publications-sales@fao.org.

Cover page photographs by: G. Fisher, Yasuuoshi Chiba, P. Pittet.

HIGHLIGHTS

- National rice production in 2015 is estimated at about 3.7 million tonnes (in paddy terms), representing a decline of 6 percent compared to the previous year. Estimates for maize and cassava outputs are approximately 330 000 tonnes and 2.7 million tonnes, respectively, down about 10 percent for both crops compared to the 2014 harvests.
- The production declines mainly reflect the impact of two cyclones, which struck the country in January and February 2015, causing significant damage to crops and irrigation infrastructure, and resulting in the silting of arable land.
- In most regions, the cyclones were preceded and followed by rainfall deficits that negatively impacted on crop development and also resulted in limited cultivation of off-season crops.
- The locust damage to crops and pastures in 2015 was negligible at the national level, with the outbreak largely contained as a result of the three-year programme in response to the locust plague; the third and final campaign of the programme must be fully completed to ensure a return to a locust recession situation in 2016.
- The country's cereal import requirement for the 2015/16 marketing year (April/March) is estimated at 551 000 tonnes, compared to 437 000 tonnes for 2014/15, including 331 000 tonnes of rice (in milled terms), 75 000 tonnes of maize and 145 000 tonnes of wheat.
- The lean season in 2015/16 began earlier than normal, especially in the southern regions, where the production of staple crops, maize and cassava, decreased sharply by 60 to 80 percent.
- Poor households, whose weak purchasing power has been exacerbated further by higher food prices, are employing multiple coping strategies, including reducing quantities of rice consumed, to mitigate the impact of tighter cereal supplies this year.
- The Mission estimated the number of food insecure people in 2015 at nearly 1.9 million, of whom some 1.4 million were in a state of moderate food insecurity, while almost 450 000 were categorized as severely food insecure.
- In the southern regions of Anosy and Androy, the rate of food insecurity was estimated at 90 and 76 percent of the households surveyed. Levels of related severe malnutrition were, 49 and 32 percent, respectively, in these regions, with an estimated 50 000 people requiring emergency assistance in terms of food security and nutrition, as well as livelihood support.

OVERVIEW

The 2014/15 main cropping season (October-June) was acutely affected by tropical cyclones Chedza and Fundi, which struck the country in January and February 2015. These cyclones were preceded and followed by rainfall deficits during the cropping season, with extended drought conditions in the southern regions. Given the uncertain production outcomes in 2015 on account of the adverse weather, the Government of Madagascar requested a joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), which benefited from technical and logistical support from the Direction de la Statistique Agricole, de la Planification et du Suivi-Evaluation (DSAPSE) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MinAgri). The Mission's remit was to identify and evaluate factors impacting on agricultural production in 2014/15, estimate national cereal production and assess the overall food security situation in the country.

Surveys were conducted by 15 teams in 22 regions from 2 July to August 2015, using questionnaires designed to examine factors that may have affected agricultural production and food security in 2014/15. The questionnaires covered seven thematic areas: *climate conditions; plant diseases and pests; availability of agricultural inputs; the state of livestock production and fisheries; market and prices; food stocks; and household nutrition security*. A total of 2 448 households were surveyed, covering 50 districts, 150 municipalities and 204 *fokontany* (villages). The Mission also met with key persons from the agricultural sector (farmers, fisher folk and agricultural technicians) and held meetings with officials from the regional Offices of Nutrition (ORN). To gain a more detailed understanding of the chronically food insecure areas of the south, the Mission also focused its field assessments in seven southern regions (Androy, Anosy, Atsimo Andrefana, Atsimo Atsinana, Ihorombe, Menabe, and Vatovavy Fito Vinany).

The Mission held meetings with officials from a number of ministries and national institutions, including: MinAgri, the Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT), the Ministry of Commerce, the Director of Customs, the Observatoire du Riz (OdR), the Central Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Union (EU), USAID, the World Bank and UNDP, as well as with NGOs, to collect data

on national agricultural developments and policies, as well to review the prevailing economic conditions. The OdR ceased producing its monthly publications since January 2015, on account of a lack of funds, and therefore the Mission was not able to benefit from the institution's price and market data, as in previous years.

In 2015, Madagascar experienced a sluggish economic performance, partly as a result of the impact of a decline in foreign direct investment since 2012 and delays in the implementation of the National Development Plan adopted in 2014 as well as in certain development partner programmes. The two cyclones that struck the country in early 2015 also contributed to the weak economic growth, adversely affecting the performance of the rural economy. The unfavourable weather conditions extended over most of the country, with some municipalities receiving twice the average rainfall over a two-month period. The regions of Atsimo Andrefana, Atsimo Atsinanana, Alaotra Mongoro, Analamanga, Diana, Menabe and Vatovavy Fitovinany were among the worst affected by the heavy rains and flooding. By contrast, the southern regions of Androy and Anosy suffered more from prolonged drought conditions than from the excessive rains at the start of the year.

In regard to pests and diseases, the locust outbreak has been largely contained on account of the successful implementation of the joint Government-FAO three-year programme (2013-2016) in response to the locust plague, with critical support from donors. Evidence of the presence and damage caused by grouped locust populations showed a marked decline in 2015. An infested area of approximately 0.64 million hectares was treated in 2014/15 and 1.2 million hectares in 2013/14. Furthermore, the size of the swarms fell sharply from an average area covering 400-500 hectares in 2013 to an area of 80-100 hectares in 2015, while their density also contracted from highly dense to scattered. Notably, in the southern regions, fewer than 5 percent of households interviewed by the Mission indicated that locusts had damaged their crops in 2015, compared with 10 percent of households in 2014. However, other pests and diseases continued to inflict significant damage on crops, particularly in the traditional farming sector. Agricultural extension services report the presence of rice pests in many areas, as well as rice blast disease (particularly in the eastern coast), fusarium wilt in Alaotra Mongoro region, and potato blight in the uplands. Cash crops, notably vanilla, cocoa, coffee and cloves, were attacked by fusarium wilt, brown rot, anthracnose and borer.

Regarding to agricultural inputs, the Mission found that a principal concern of farmers was the lack of access to good quality seeds and complementary inputs (fertilizers and pesticides) at reasonable prices, given farmers' weak purchasing power. For rice in particular, farmers frequently stated a preference for short-cycle varieties, including the X265 rice variety, currently being promoted by some agricultural programmes. There is also a requirement to renovate irrigation infrastructure that would improve water management and, when used in combination with short-cycle crops, enable farmers to harvest multiple crops per year. All these factors would help to strengthen farmers' resilience.

Weather-related factors were the main determinant of the 2015 cereal production, with the area planted estimated to have remained virtually unchanged compared to the previous year. Flooding and silting of agricultural land, following the passing of the two cyclones in early 2015, resulted in a reduction of harvested area relative to 2014. In combination with rainfall deficits at the start and end of the cropping season that retarded crop development, the adverse weather resulted in an overall decline in cereal production. Paddy production in 2015 is estimated at 3.72 million tonnes, down 6 and 12 percent compared with the 2014 output and the five-year average, respectively. Maize and cassava production in 2015 are estimated at about 330 000 tonnes and 2.68 million tonnes, representing declines of 10 percent and 9 percent, respectively, compared to 2014. It should be noted, however, that crops grown in the *tanety* (high ground), including rainfed rice, generally benefited from the abundant rainfall. In some municipalities, the damage caused by flooding of the irrigated land was more than offset by increased production in the *tanety*. The rainfall deficits experienced at the end of the season also hampered the transplanting of rice seedlings and off-season crop cultivation.

The southern regions of Androy and Anosy, which were affected by both excessive rains in January and a subsequent severe-prolonged dry period, registered the sharpest production declines for rice in 2015 (in relative terms). Production decreases for maize and cassava in these regions were similar to those of rice, between 60 and 80 percent, with even more serious implications, given that these food crops form the basis of the majority of the population's diet.

Given the production levels in 2015, the total cereal import requirement for the 2015/16 marketing year (April/March) is estimated at 551 000 tonnes, compared to 437 000 tonnes estimated for 2014/15, including 331 000 tonnes of milled rice, 75 000 tonnes of maize and 145 000 tonnes of wheat.

Insecurity in rural areas reached a critical stage in 2015, threatening cattle rearing and agricultural activities in general. In efforts to increase productivity in the livestock sector, particularly for dairy production, plans were initiated to cross-breed domestic animals with imported species and to also introduce pasture improvement programmes. The Government had also planned to promote short-cycle livestock production – small ruminants, pigs and poultry – among several strategies aimed at strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households.

As a result of a tighter cereal supply situation, overall food security conditions deteriorated, particularly in southern regions reflecting three consecutive years of reduced crop production. Poor households, whose weak purchasing power has been further eroded by high inflation rates, are consequently employing multiple coping strategies, including consuming reduced quantities of rice.

The Mission estimated the number of people suffering from food insecurity in 2015 to be nearly 1.9 million, of whom approximately 1.4 million were in a state of moderate food insecurity and almost 450 000 people were categorized as severely food insecure. They spend more than 75 percent of their household budget on food.

The regions of Anosy and Androy have the highest rates of food insecurity, estimated at 90 and 76 percent, respectively. The rate of severe malnutrition in these regions was estimated at 49 and 32 percent, affecting, amongst others, 50 000 people who are also characterized by a low level of educational attainment and limited capacity to diversify their income. These people are mainly concentrated in the districts of Amboasary Atsimo, Beloha, Ambovombe and Tsihombe, and require emergency assistance in terms of food and nutrition security as well as livelihood support.