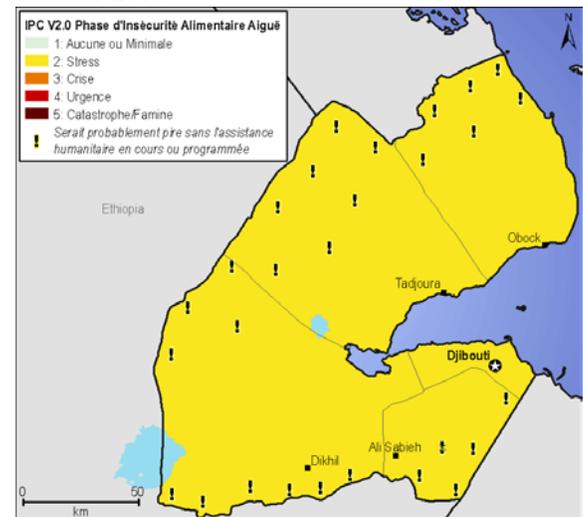


Water access and pasture availability increased after July to September rains

KEY MESSAGES

- The July to September *Karan/Karma* rains were near average to above average in terms of amount and somewhat well distributed. They helped regenerate water, pasture, and browse resources in almost all rural areas except in Southeast Pastoral-Border livelihood zone where the rains were poorer. Water access remains limited in that area.
- Most pastoral households are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to the recent increases in income from livestock products. Pastoral areas are likely to remain at this level from October through March. The rotation of livestock and other resource conservation strategies are expected to preserve forage in the Northwest through March, and the start of the coastal *Heys/Dadaa* rainy season in October will likely help replenish and regenerate pasture and water resources in coastal areas.
- In September, livelihood activities restarted that had been discontinued in the summer from June to August. Poor, urban households will regain many sources of income, but they are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to December. While there were seasonal declines in the availability of labor opportunities, a voucher program for poor, urban households this summer did help increase food access.

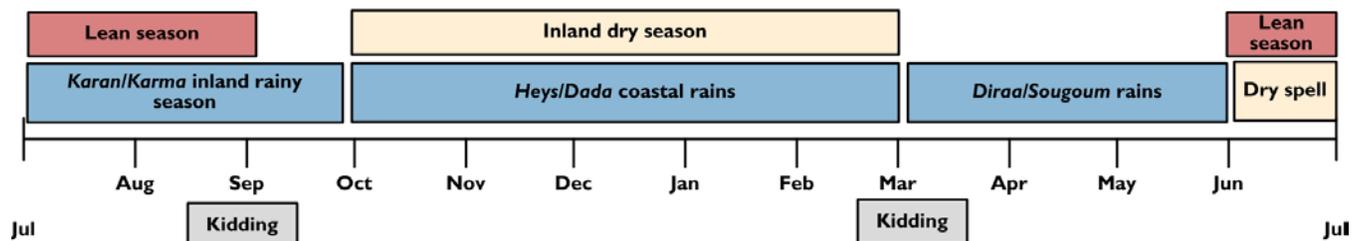
Figure 1. Current food security outcomes, October 2013



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making, and does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. For more information on this scale, please visit www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

The July to September *Karan/Karma* rainy season had near normal to above normal total rainfall in almost all regions (Figure 4). These rains led to increased access to water and improved forage conditions for livestock. Associated increases in livestock production and income from livestock sales and other livelihood strategies have increased access to food in almost all rural areas. In almost all places visited during the September 2013 multi-agency food security assessment, rural households reported they had indeed benefited from the rains with a positive impact on their food security.

The key benefit of the rains has been the regeneration of pasture and increased access to water. Livestock body conditions improved allowing pastoral households more advantageous prices for sales of their livestock. Overall, terms of trade between livestock and cereals have increased. Although both births and conceptions have been at close to typical levels during the June to September *Karan/Karma* season, typical household herd sizes remain low. Following many years of recurrent drought, households have sold more livestock than have been replaced. An index of livestock ownership calculated during the September assessment indicates that households in September had fewer livestock than they did even as recently as May 2013.

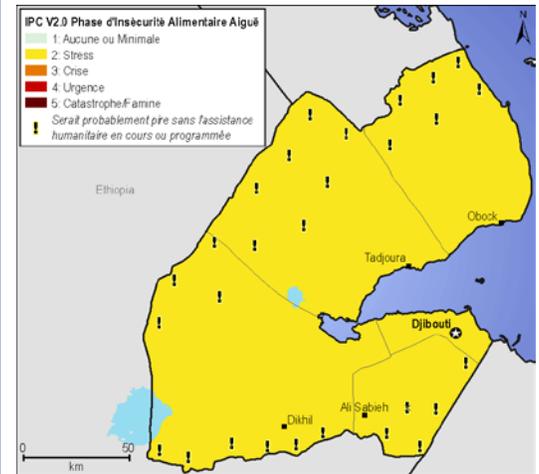
While the distribution of the rains was mostly normal, some areas received less rainfall. In these areas, rainfall was not sufficient to regenerate pasture due to its below average total amount or poor distribution. As a result, in certain areas of the Southeast, there was abnormal livestock migration. In Biidleh and Kabah Kabah, households with their livestock migrated to mostly typical areas of migration including Beya-Addeh, Guistir, and some herds and households even went beyond the border into northwestern Somalia. Both the timing and the direction of some migrations were unusual.

Using the [Food Consumption Score \(FCS\)](#) in September, the assessment found that 36 percent of households had “poor” or “borderline” food consumption. However, this is an improvement compared to the situation recorded in May 2013 when 42 percent of the population had “poor” or “borderline” food consumption. This records the surveyed households’ increased dietary diversity, which serves as a proxy measurement for total food consumed. Increased consumption was noted especially for vegetables, legumes, and milk among many households. However, meat consumption remains low.

In the September assessment, only a marginal proportion of the rural population cited their own production of livestock or agricultural products as a food source. The most important food sources reported were purchases which accounted for 60 percent of total food consumed, followed by food assistance from the World Food Program (WFP) provided 16 percent of food, on average, per household. In rural areas, 75 percent of households reported spending more than three quarters of their expenditures on food.

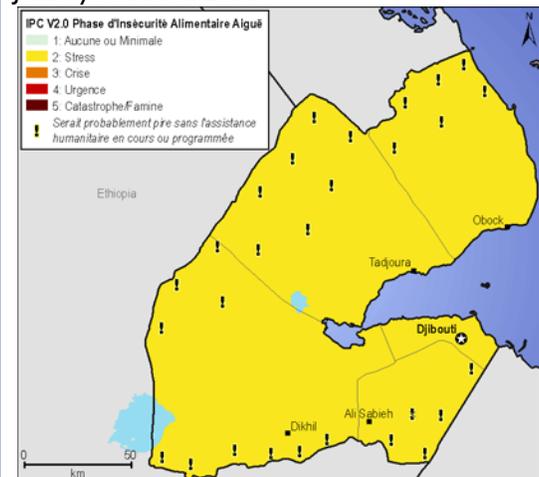
The [Coping Strategies Index \(CSI\)](#) uses a series of simple questions to capture potential changes in food consumption. In almost all regions, the September CSI had declined since May, indicating likely more food security than May. However, the index remains higher than it was in May 2012. While the use of coping strategies was still higher than a year ago, the improved consumption indicates that at least some coping strategies are effective in increasing access to food.

Figure 2. Projected food security outcomes, October to December 2013



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 3. Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2014



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents *acute* food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making, and does not necessarily reflect *chronic* food insecurity. For more information on this scale, please visit www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale.

Despite generally improving conditions in many parts of the country, households' income has not dramatically increased. Poor households' incomes generally remain insufficient to purchase a basic basket of food items.

Most rural areas of Djibouti are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2). In some areas, households are only Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) due to the presence of humanitarian aid. Monthly rations from WFP are supporting many households. The monthly WFP ration currently consists of 60 kilogram (kg) of cereals, 4.5 liters of vegetable oil, 9 kg of pulses, and 7.5 kg of corn-soya blend (CSB).

Assumptions

From October 2013 to March 214, the projected food security outcomes are based on the following key assumptions:

- The October to February coastal *Heys/Dadaa* rains are expected to be near normal to below normal in terms of both total rainfall and distribution.
- With near normal rainfall expected, the availability of pasture, browse, and water are expected to be maintained near their current levels.
- With the Hajj and Eid al-Adha in October, livestock prices are expected to seasonally peak in October due to increased export demand and then decline through January as demand slackens.
- The number of livestock sales is expected to remain above average from October to March, in part due to improved livestock body conditions caused by the availability of water and pasture and associated prices. Also, households will need to sell to meet essential food and non-food needs.
- Food assistance will continue from October to March with approximately 70 percent of the rural population receiving food aid.
- Remittances from Djibouti City and other urban areas to rural areas is likely to increase after January. Urban households are likely to have high spending through October, especially with school fees at the restart of the school year in September. As activities that had ceased during the summer resume, more labor opportunities would be available, leading to more income to remit to relatives in rural areas.

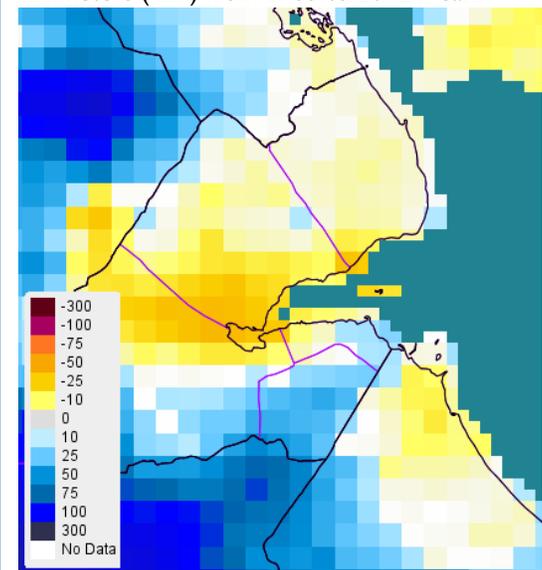
Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Despite the improved grazing, livestock body conditions, and water availability, herd sizes remain low. Many households continue to rely on non-sustainable sources of income or food such as food aid, the sale of charcoal, and assistance from relatives. With average to below average total October to March *Heys/Dadaa* rainfall forecast, conditions will likely remain similar to now, but further improvement is unlikely. However, in some areas, further deterioration of food security is expected, especially in the Southeast Pastoral-Border livelihood zone.

Households in the Southeast will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only due to the presence of humanitarian assistance from October to December as they will still be recovering from low rainfall during the July to September *Karan/Karma* rainy season. Also, if the October to February coastal *Heys/Dadaa* rains were to start late, this would especially affect the Southeast. From January to March, households in the Southeast will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only due to the presence of the humanitarian assistance.

In other pastoral areas, the near average to above average July to September *Karan/Karma* rainfall has improved the situation, but food access remains precarious. Households in Southeast Pastoral-Roadside, Central Pastoral, and Northwest Pastoral livelihood zones will likely remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March 2014. In urban areas, the official

Figure 4. July to September rainfall anomaly in millimeters (mm) from 1983 to 2012 mean



Source: [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)/Climate Prediction Center \(CPC\)](#)

unemployment rate is at 46 percent. Chronically poor households in Djibouti City are dependent on casual, day labor for income, and they will likely remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March 2014.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Southeast Pastoral-Border livelihood zone

Current Situation

The performance of the July to September *Karan/Karma* rains was highly uneven in Southeast Pastoral-Border livelihood zone. In some areas, the rains facilitated the regeneration of forage and replenishing of water sources. The rains, in general, recharged the groundwater, refilled some water storage systems such as *berkads* and shallow dams, and regenerated grazing. However, the rains were not as evenly distributed, and infrastructure for rainwater storage is not very common across the livelihood zone. Thus, despite some rainfall, approximately 70 percent of the population of the region of Ali Sabieh were a half hour or more walk from a water source by September.

Figure 5. Improved pasture and browse, September 2013



Source: [World Food Program \(WFP\)](#) and FEWS NET

The physical condition of livestock improved, and pastoral households can sell livestock at reasonable prices to access food. However, herd size has declined in recent years. In May 2013, the number of [Tropical Livestock Units \(TLU\)](#) in the area was about 1.8 per capita, which had increased to 2.2 per capita by September. The number of goats owned by the poor is only at half of the number held during the 2003-2004 baseline. Recurrent drought in recent years has decreased cattle holding despite some herd growth over the past year.

Food is largely purchased on markets, which are almost entirely supplied imports. The main food source is the purchase was providing an average of 55 percent of food in September followed by food aid which was providing an average of 22 percent of food. WFP is targeting food assistance to between 60 and 80 percent of the population. Almost all households benefit from food aid, but a high level of social obligation for redistribution within the community exists. This dilutes the impact of the food aid on any given household. On the other hand, the total amount of food provided by WFP have decreased 45 percent from last year from 1,100 metric tons (MT) per month to 600 MT for the past five months. About 9 percent of food is from loans or purchased on credit. Donations and community support was an average of 5 percent of households' September food sources.

Households in rural area were using about 75 percent of their expenditures on food. Income from livestock sales was reported in September to only provide around 15 percent of total household income. Households had no single, dominant income source, and instead they pieced together income from a variety of sources including charcoal sales (20 percent of income), small businesses and petty trading, and unskilled casual labor (14 percent), remittances (6 percent), and begging (7 percent).

With the presence of refugees in Ali Sabieh District and generally high levels of food aid, food aid availability has a major influence on food prices. In September, the [price of wheat flour in Ali Sabieh](#) is almost the same as last year and above the four-year average. With some food aid available and commercially imported foods on area markets, food availability has been mostly normal.

Unlike last May when the household food diet was not very diverse and consisted primarily of cereals, oil, and sugar, food consumption scores (FCS) calculated in September indicated that legumes and milk have reappeared in the diet one to two days a week. However, consumption of fruit and meat were almost nonexistent. In this area, the FCS indicated that just over 20 percent of the rural population in the area had "poor" food consumption and 16 percent had "borderline" consumption.

In September, many livestock gave birth, increasing milk availability. Also, some livestock were pregnant. Indeed, the consumption of milk is becoming more common. Households were on average consuming milk four days a week as

opposed to twice a week in May. Although the availability of milk has improved compared to last year, it is still below normal. Households are consuming around two liters per day when it is available. Three liters per household per day would be more typical and is the rate recording in the 2003-2004 household economy approach (HEA) baseline.

Despite improved dietary diversity and a likely increase in food consumption since May, households continue not to consume foods rich in iron or vitamin A, which could be one of the factors that explain the high prevalence of malnutrition. According to the May 2013 assessment by WFP and partners, the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) nutrition survey of 427 children under five years old found a global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of 13.5 percent and the severe acute malnutrition rate of 2.0 percent. These results were largely similar to rates recorded by the [Pan-Arab Project for Family Health \(PAPFAM\)](#) in 2012, indicating that malnutrition may be persistently high at these rates in much of Djibouti.

70 percent of the population of the area are estimated to be in extreme poverty, defined using a cost of caloric intake poverty line in national poverty statistics. CSI declined in this area from May to September, although it remained higher than May 2012. Dependence on food aid remains very high with between 60 and 80 percent of households currently receiving food assistance.

Despite increased consumption and access to water, at least 20 percent of the population is unable to meet their food needs without assistance. Poor households in the area are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only due to the presence of food assistance.

Assumptions

In addition to the national assumptions described above, the following assumptions have been made about the Southeast Pastoral-Border livelihood zone:

- The sale of charcoal is likely to increase from November until March during the cooler season, despite the government's ban on charcoal production.
- Animal diseases such as pneumonia are likely to develop, especially between January and March. Disease outbreaks in areas of livestock concentration may lead to above average livestock mortality.
- From the border areas, some households are likely to migrate to Southeast Pastoral-Roadside livelihood zone, placing additional stress on pasture, browse, and water resources in those areas.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Despite increasing production of charcoal, the incomes from the sale of charcoal will likely be below normal, as trees to produce charcoal are increasingly difficult to find. However, this income will increase slightly from its present level due to production conditions being easier during the cooler *Heys/Dadaa* season.

From October to March, the household income from livestock sales will likely increase to above normal due to livestock having good body conditions, high household needs, and somewhat favorable prices and production conditions. Income from milk sales will be below typical levels. The sale of milk in 2003/2004 was around one fifth of income, but herd composition since then has shifted away from cattle and toward goats. Thus, the amount of milk available for sale is limited. Other smaller income sources are expected to be near typical levels.

Livestock holdings are as little as half of the 2003/2004 HEA baseline levels. While some herd growth is expected, full recovery will not be possible by March. Food sources related to livestock production such as milk will be limited. Milk availability has improved recently, but it remains low. With most sources of income other than livestock sales being stable or declining, market access for some households will be limited due to limited income. Community support will be available, especially during Eid al-Adha in October. External food assistance will continue to be a major source of food for many households.

Households will continue to send family members to urban centers in search of work in order to generate some income.

Temporary urban migration, while not unheard of, is not a major, typical or seasonal source of income in this livelihood zone. Some households may limit the portion sizes for adults to provide larger portions to children. The sharing of food aid resources will likely continue, and this will be a major source of food.

From October to March, food consumption will likely be better than now with a more varied consumption pattern including some legumes and milk as September births having increased the number of lactating female livestock. The nutritional status of households in the area will improve with more frequent access to nutritious foods such as milk and vegetables. However, many households would be unable to meet their food needs without assistance. As such, they are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only due to the presence of humanitarian assistance.

Northwest Pastoral livelihood zone

In Northwest Pastoral livelihood zone, the July to September *Karma* rains led to substantial improvements in livestock productivity. The recovery of pasture, browse, and water resources increased livestock conceptions during the rains, improved livestock body conditions, and increased milk yields. Income from livestock sales, livestock product sales, and bush product sales increased over the course of the rainy season. However, competition for these resources from other pastoralists who have migrated into the area and the excessive use of some resources may lead to rapid degradation. Also, with more rain than recent year, stagnant water in places has likely increased mosquito breeding and thus the risk of malaria. Luckily some infrastructure exists in the region for storing water including reservoirs and shallow dams, so these are expected to provide some water through the end of March, allowing improved livestock body conditions and health to be maintained.

Pastoralists in the Northwest are currently receiving general food distributions (GFD) from WFP targeting approximately 60 percent of households. While environmental and livestock production conditions have improved markedly over the rainy season, food aid continues to be necessary for many households. Pastoralists are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) but only with the presence of humanitarian assistance.

Djibouti City

Urban households in Djibouti City are currently Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Households in and around Djibouti City rely heavily on daily casual labor. Despite the resumption of many labor opportunities and small business opportunities in September, poor households are still Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Households have had several months of high levels of expenditures related to Ramadan in July/August, school fees in September, and the Hajj and Eid al-Adha in October. Over the summer, a three-month food voucher program run by WFP and the State Secretariat for National Solidarity (SESN) helped maintain food consumption while casual labor opportunities were seasonally limited. Urban populations remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and are expected to remain that way through at least March.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table I: Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	Price increases of key staples foods	Price increases could reduce the purchasing power of poor households and limit their food access, possibly increasing food insecurity.
Northwest Pastoral livelihood zone	A significantly colder than normal October to March inland dry season	A situation of extreme cold might weaken cattle and cause increased incidence of livestock disease and mortality. This would further reduce herd sizes and the availability of livestock products for consumption and sale. The situation of household could deteriorate rapidly.
Southeast Pastoral-Border and Roadside livelihood zones	Well below average October to March coastal <i>Heys/Dadaa</i> rainfall	A below average season would likely reduce access both to food and income and lead to significantly worse food security outcomes.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes over a six-month period, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes those assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. Typically, FEWS NET reports the most likely scenario.