Highlights

- Household level stock depletion continues, and lean season is expected to last through December. Season A 2016 planting activities are ongoing and most sowing is expected to be completed by October, as normal. (Figure 1).

- Staple prices generally stabilized in August compared to last month and last year; however, beans and sweet potatoes, among others, remained more than 10 percent higher than five years ago, in about 40 and 50 percent of markets.

- The first 10 days of September were marked by normal rainfall, succeedingly drier than normal in August. In addition, the following 10 days of September were drier than normal (Figure 2). However, the October-December period is expected to be wetter than normal, as a result of El Niño, which is supposed to peak in the last quarter of 2015 and last until early 2016.¹

Seasonal household level stock depletion continues through December: As normally happens this time of the year, most households experience reduced food stocks from their own production (Figure 2). This is also linked to increasing market reliance regarding food sources; with more exposure to high prices. This trend is expected to be reversed in December when fresh harvests from season A will be available.

Source: Rwanda CFSVA 2012
Staple prices are generally higher than the long-term average: Referring to calculations made based on e-soko/MINAGRI data, August staple prices in general exhibited a stable trend compared to last month and last year; however, price remained higher than five years ago. Prices are expected to follow an upward trend in the coming months, as households seasonably rely more on markets. According to NISR, food consumption mainly comprises roots, tubers and products for energy supply; staples like sweet potatoes and cassava accounted for about 52 percent. These naturally have limited storability; which results in price seasonality.

The October-December period is anticipated to be wetter than normal: According to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR), there is increased likelihood of above-normal rainfall linked to El Niño. Most parts of the country are expected to experience above-normal rainfall and adverse effects on agricultural production might compromise normal food availability, which in turn leads to reduced food security among less resilient households.

The El Niño Preparedness Plan has been put in place to support the timely, efficient, consistent and coordinated response to potential impacts, thus effectively reducing the impacts on human population, livelihoods, infrastructure and the environment. This will in turn help reduce the need of humanitarian response to the affected population.  

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September rainfall was normal in the first 10 days, slightly drier than normal conditions evolved in the following 10 days, with a deficit ranging between 10 and 25 mm countrywide. The previous month of August was also characterized by lower moisture to some extent compared to normal, affecting mostly pasture availability for livestock. Forecasts report above-normal rainfall, which will likely peak in the last quarter of the year and last until early 2016, as a result of El Niño.\(^4\)

Figure 2: 2015 Rainfall anomalies. This depicts the deviation of current rainfall from the long term mean. In other words, current rainfall minus long term average might result in positive (above average) or negative (below average) figures.

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<tr>
<th>First 10 days of September 2015</th>
<th>Second 10 days of September 2015</th>
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Source: USGS/Early Warning Explorer