Rwanda
Food Security update

Highlights

- Countrywide, rainfall has set in over the second ten days of September, initiating season 2017A planting.

- There is an increased likelihood of below normal rainfall in Rwanda over October to December period; which might exert more pressure in drought prone areas in Rwanda, already undergoing reduced food stocks as a result of two consecutive below normal harvests.

- Staple food prices stabilized in August compared to the previous month, but were well above their respective previous-year and five-year averages, especially for roots and tubers.
The second 10 days of September market rainfall onset: Though the first 10 days of September were drier than normal, Rwanda received near normal rainfall in the second 10 days; which instigated season 2017A planting. Nonetheless, forecast indicate that rainfall during October to December period will likely be lower than average, with probabilities of above normal, near normal and below average levels respectively being 25, 35 and 40 percent.¹

The forecast customized to specific areas of the country further points out areas which will likely have near normal to below normal rainfall, namely the Eastern Province (Ngoma, Gatsibo, Bugesera, Kirehe, Rwamagana, Kayonza and Nyagatare), Kigali City (Nyarugenge, Kicukiro and Gasabo) and Southern Province (Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyanza, Huye, Gisagara) and those such as the Western Province (Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rutsi, Rubavu, Nyabihi and Ngororero), southern province (Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru) and Northern Province (Rulindo, Musanze, Bulera, Gicumbi and Gakenke) expected to have normal rainfall (Figure 4&5).²

Drought prone areas are most likely to face atypically reduced moisture levels, exposing households whose primary livelihood activity is agriculture production to increased vulnerability, considering already two successive poor seasons.

² Ministry of Natural Resources (MINIRENA)/Rwanda Meteorology Agency, Seasonal forecast for September to December (SOND) 2016, No44
Key staples were generally more expensive in August16 than usual: According to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), main staple prices in August 2016 were generally higher than five-year-average. Prices were also higher compared to last year, but stable compared to last month in both rural and urban markets.

Comparisons of the current prices with last year and five-year averages indicate that the top three most expensive commodities in both urban and rural markets were the starchy types, especially Irish potato, cassava flour and sweet potato (Figure 3).

Moreover, the food and non-alcoholic consumer price index gradually increased from May till August (Figure 2).

In the event markets are not supplied with cheaper imports, staple prices will most likely continue to increase, due to atypically low supply from dry-spell affected locations which normally produce marketable surplus.

Figure 2: Evolution of food and non-alcoholic beverages consumer price index

Source: Based on NISR CPI data

Reduced household level stocks persist in East: Following recent dry-spell and consequent poor seasonal output, households faced lean season earlier than normal, especially in the Eastern areas. This constrains their overall food security situation as negative food consumption and livelihood coping are widely resorted to; and will last till the next harvest in December, when seasonal production will be available.
Figure 4: Greater Horn of Africa Consensus rainfall Outlook for the October to December 2016 rainfall season

Zone I: Increased likelihood of above normal rainfall

Zone II: Usually dry

Zone III: Increased likelihood of above normal rainfall

Zone IV: Increased likelihood of below normal rainfall

Zone V: Increased likelihood of below normal rainfall


Figure 5: Rwanda Rainfall Outlook September-December 2016

Source: MINIRENA/Rwanda Meteorological Agency