Rwanda
Food Security update

Highlights

- October retail prices for key staples increased on average by 37 and 29 percent compared normal and last year; respectively.

- Despite delays in planting, and below average rainfall experienced in October, rainfall in the first 20 days of November was slightly higher than average, except in some localized pockets.

- While lean season peaks, households especially in the East atypically face reduced food access. This derives from two consecutive below normal harvests, combined with shrinking purchasing power, mostly arising from soaring staple prices.
**Key staples were generally more expensive than usual:** According to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), main staple prices in October 2016 were generally higher than five-year-average, with an increase of about 37 percent. The top three most expensive commodities compared to normal were Sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and Cooking banana. Beans as the most predominant source of proteins were also more expensive than usual; moreover, comparisons with last month indicate higher price increase, especially regarding dry maize and sweet potatoes, in rural than urban settings (Figure 3).

Furthermore, the food and non-alcoholic consumer price index gradually increased from May till October (Figure 2); which exerts significant pressure on households’ resources and ability to meet basic needs. Unless markets are 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. This is expected to last until the next harvests in late December, when households will seasonably reduce their reliance to markets, following food availability from own production.

Source: FEWS NET
The first 20 days of November were slightly wetter than normal: Though delays in planting and below normal rainfall in October might adversely impact on overall seasonal performance, marginal increase of moisture levels were experienced in November, except a few localized areas (Figure 4). Nonetheless, without optimal rainfall performance in the remainder of the season, the agricultural production will most likely range between normal and below normal.

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

![Graph showing the evolution of food and non-alcoholic beverages consumer price index from January to October 2016 for All Rwanda, Rural, and Urban areas.](http://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/consumer-price-index-cpi-october-2016)

Source: Based on NISR CPI data

Figure 3: October 2016 prices and anomalies

Source: Calculations based on NISR price data

**Lean season peaks, Eastern region in particular faces more food access challenges:** Following recent dry-spell and consequent poor seasonal output, households faced lean season earlier than normal, especially in the Eastern areas. However, Seasonal Agriculture Survey 2013\(^1\) which is considered as a baseline indicates that the region leads in production of main staples. Consequently, this has a negative impact on the overall food security situation, as negative food consumption coping and asset depletion are widely resorted to. This will last till the next harvest in December, when seasonal production will be available.

Figure 4: Rainfall anomalies. These depict the deviation of current rainfall from the average. In other words, current rainfall compared to the average might result in positive (above average) or negative (below average) percentages.