Key staples were generally more expensive than usual: According to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), main staple prices in November 2016 were generally higher than five-year-average, with an increase of about 42 percent. The top three most expensive commodities, compared to normal, were the important starchy types like Sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and Cooking banana. Additionally, Beans as the most predominant source of proteins were also more expensive than usual (Figure 1).

Moreover, the food and non-alcoholic consumer price index gradually increased since the beginning of 2016 till November (Figure 2); which exerts significant pressure on households’ resources and ability to meet basic needs. With current harvests, staple prices will most likely slow down over the next few months.

October-November period was marked by near normal rainfall despite localized deficits: Crop growth experienced close to average rainfall, with a few exceptions of drier than normal and above average moisture conditions. The first 10 days of December experienced reduced moisture levels, but there was an improvement over the following 10 days (Figure 4).

 Nonetheless, delays in planting and erratic rainfall in specific locations will adversely affect overall seasonal performance to a certain extent; and production prospects most likely range between average and below average.
Season 2016B production was lower than in reference period of 2013: In spite of reduced seasonal output for most staple commodity groups as reported in the seasonal agriculture survey 2016 (Figure 3), households are currently recovering from lean season as their access to food seasonally increases due to ongoing harvests of 2017A. This marks a particular relief for households in the East, to whom the just elapsed lean season was atypically harsh. The improved food security conditions are expected to last till the end of February next year, before significant stock depletion materializes.

The figure 4 depicts the deviation of current rainfall from the average. In other words, current rainfall compared to the Long Term Averages (LTA) back, might result in positive (above average) or negative (below average) percentages.

The figure 5 is a seasonal calendar.