



Wet Season Agricultural Performance Survey in Borno State.

Key highlights

- The current agricultural season is progressing well and is characterized by fair distribution of precipitation which provides optimal conditions for the growth and development of crops. The assessment of on-field crop conditions and a survey of farmers indicate that the key staple food crops (maize, millet, sorghum and cowpea) will record normal yields and enable farming households to meet their own food needs for 2 to 4 months.
- A total of 20 farmers were interviewed in four communities and while farmers expect a good harvest of various crops from the current growing season, insecurity and restricted access to land, pest and insect infestation of field crops, lack of fertilizers and farming equipment as well as lack of extension service workers remain the key impediments to agricultural production.
- In most of the communities visited, less than 5% of arable land has been cultivated as land access is limited to about 3km radius from the community, with many farmers confined to the cultivation of marginal agricultural lands.

Introduction

A 3-day agricultural performance survey was carried out in four communities in Konduga and Jere LGAs under the leadership of the National Agriculture Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) in partnership with Borno State Agricultural Development Program, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the UN World Food Programme from the 3rd to 5th of September 2018. The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- To obtain agricultural production forecast based on various indices for 2018;
- To identify constraints based on agricultural practices on the field; and
- To provide data which gives a true reflection of agricultural production.

Consultation meetings were held with various stakeholders at the state level and the locations to be visited were chosen based on available resources, logistical arrangements as well as the prevailing security situation. In addition, questionnaires were provided to the Permanent Secretary at the State Ministry of Agriculture for secondary data collection from each LGA in the Borno State in order to ascertain the true picture of cropping practices. WFP provided two hired vehicles to facilitate travel by the survey team to the four locations. The survey team agreed to conduct interviews with five farmers at their farms in each location for a total survey of twenty (20) farmers in four locations while focus group discussions were also held at the end of the three days exercise.

The four sites visited were as follows:

- Dala Ngadabul (Jere LGA)
- Fariya (Jere LGA)
- Jimtilo (Konduga LGA)
- Zabarmari (Konduga LGA)

Jimtilo (Konduga LGA)

Farming in Jimtilo is confined to a few kilometres from the community and farmland is shared among several households, resulting in the cultivation of small size plots as compared to pre-crisis period. The crops cultivated in the community are mainly millet, cowpea and groundnut. As a result of poor soil fertility of farmland in close proximity to the community, field crops were observed to be less dense and this tend to reduce the quantity of the crops harvested. Jimtilo farmers generally anticipate normal crop yields this year as compared to the previous year due to the timely onset of the rainy season and optimal precipitation conditions. Grains harvested during pre-crisis usually lasted for 6-8 months, but in recent times harvested grains lasts for just 3 months. The problems faced by farmers in the community are availability of farming inputs, insecurity and reduced access to farmland as well as lack of extension service workers.



Dala Ngadabul (Maisandari ward), Jere LGA

Maize and cowpea are the most common crops cultivated in Dala Ngadabul. Farmers in this community observed a relative improvement in the security situation, enabling them to extend the cultivated area from 1 KM radius during the previous year to 3 KM radius from the community during the current growing

season. Farmers also spoke of satisfactory yields of maize and cowpea from the ongoing season, but noted further that farming households will not attain pre-crisis stocks as a result of reduced access to farmland. Farmers estimated that less than 10% of the pre-crisis farmland is currently accessible for cultivation by community members.

Given the ongoing favorable moisture conditions, farmers expect the seasonal harvest of crops to begin in two month and should provide them with food stocks that are would last up to four months. Before the onset of the current crisis, stocks from cultivated fields provided households with food for up to 7 months. Seeds and fertilizer were distributed to most farmers in the community by some Non-Governmental Organizations last year, but no assistance was provided during the current growing season.



Fariya community, Jere LGA

Majority of farming households in Fariya planted millet and sesame while others cultivate beans, maize, sorghum and cowpea on their farmland. Well distributed rains during the current season has created favorable conditions for the growth and development of crops as a result of which normal yields are expected for millet, maize and sorghum which are the main staple crops. Despite the favorable agro-meteorological conditions, access to land is limited to about 4 KM radius from the community and farmers currently cultivate about 3 percent of the pre-crisis arable land. Farmers estimate that harvested grains from the crops under cultivation during the current season would likely last up to four months, compared to 10-12 months for pre-crisis harvest.

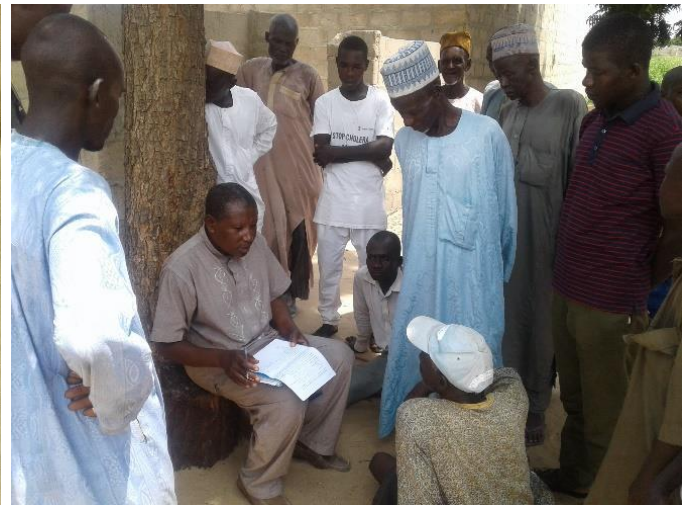
Some of the challenges facing the farmers are post-harvest loss of agricultural produce resulting from theft due to late arrival of threshing machines during the period of harvest as well as insect pest infestation and lack of extension workers.



Zabarmari, Konduga LGA

The crops cultivated include millet, cowpea, sesame and groundnut. Field crops from the current season are expected to produce satisfactory yields thanks to well-distributed rains. Access to land in the community has increased from 3km during the previous growing season to 5km during the current season, hence more land is being cultivated, but this falls far below pre-crisis cultivation level. Harvested grains would likely last for 2-3 months.

The community raised concern about the need for good quality seeds (for millet, groundnut and cowpeas), as well as improved access to pesticides, insecticides, fertilizers, farming equipment and extension workers.



Concluding remarks

The assessment of on-field conditions of crops and a survey of farmers in four communities indicates that the key staples currently under cultivation in those locations will record normal yields and would enhance farming households' capacity to meet their own food needs for 2 to 4 months. This notwithstanding,

farmers are saddled with a number of challenges which include reduced access to land to due continuing insecurity, pest and insect infestation of field crops, lack of fertilizers due to government restrictions and lack of extension workers.

Survey team members

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