

Food Security and Nutrition in Liberia

Comprehensive Food Security & Nutrition Survey (CFSNS) 2018

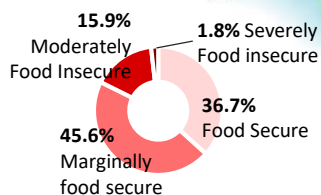
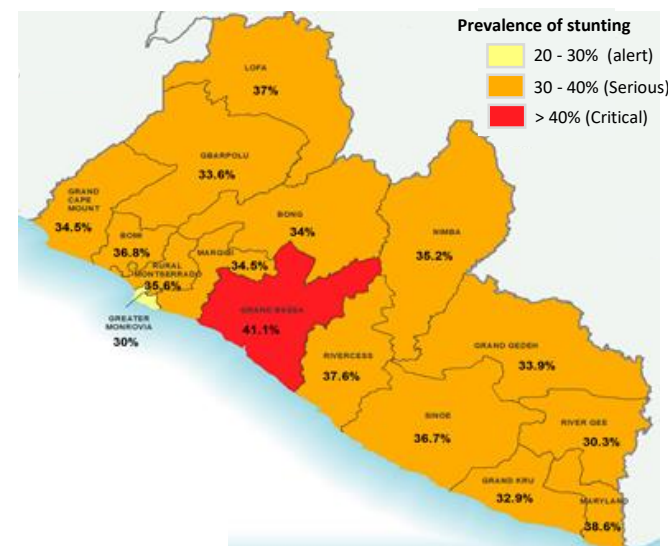
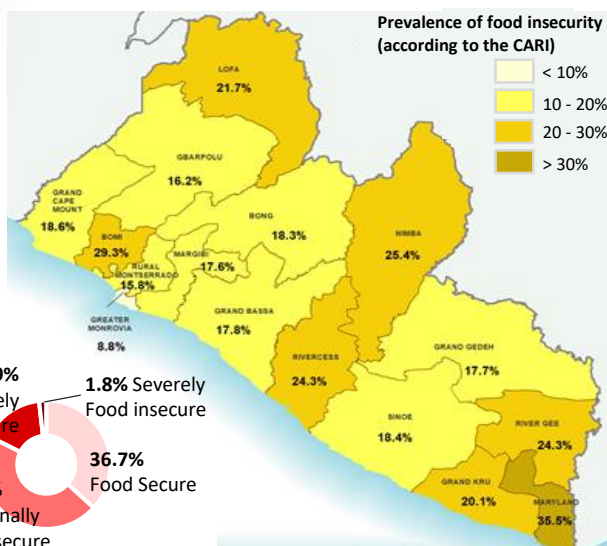


In Liberia, approximately **1 in 5** households in Liberia is **food insecure** (16% moderately food insecure and 2% severely food insecure), while **2 in 5** are **marginally food secure** (42%), and therefore quite vulnerable to falling in to food insecurity as a result of a shock or hazard. Food insecurity disproportionately affects rural areas (23% of rural households are food insecure, compared to 11% of urban households).

Malnutrition in children less than 5 years of age remains a concern with a national GAM rate of 4.8%, and 35.5% stunted, 15% underweight and 3.7% overweight. The prevalence of stunting has been above the WHO threshold of acceptable (<20%) since 2006.

- **Food insecurity** is highest in Maryland (35%) followed by Bomi (29%), Nimba (25%), River Cess (24%) and River Gee (24%).

- **Stunting** is highest in Grand Bassa (41.1%), followed by Maryland (38%), River Cess (37%), Bomi (36.8%), Sinoe (36.7%), Rural Montserrado and Nimba (35% each).



Availability

Of sufficient quantities of nutritious food



Farming remains mostly small-scale and subsistence-oriented with low utilization of inputs and improved resources, and little engagement in livestock rearing or fishing.

- 1 in 3 households lack access to farmland (34%)
- 19% reported fishing
- 30% of households maintain vegetable gardens
- Low utilization of improved seeds (3%), fertilizer (3%), pesticides (2%), and post-harvest agricultural assets (6% with access to storage facilities, 13% to a drying floor)

Overall, agricultural productivity is low leading to a deficit in domestic supply of staple goods and a heavy import dependency (65% of all rice is imported).



Stability

Of the three dimensions over time

1 in 3 households (34%) reported experiencing shocks over the last 12 months, and 1 in 3 households (34%) reporting using livelihood coping strategies (adjustments in or disposal of livelihoods or productive assets).

34%

Access

To adequate income and resources to obtain food

Reliance on markets for food is widespread

- 81% of food for the household is sourced from markets, with just 11% from own production



Prices are rising as the country struggles with inflation

- On average, domestic prices have risen by 11% from April 2017 to April 2018
- The Liberian dollar fell by 57.1% between July 2017 and July 2018

As a result, household purchasing power is reduced and a larger portion of household expenditures is allocated for food (60%). Two in five households spend more than 65% of their budget on food.

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Utilization

Of nutrients appropriately to maintain healthy nutrition



1 in 5 households have inadequate food consumption

- Dairy and pulses are infrequently consumed across Liberia
- Households with poor and borderline consumption eat little meat compared to households with adequate intake

Universal access to, and practice of, safe and sanitary WASH is still a challenge



- 13% of households rely on surface water for their drinking supply
- 38% of households do not have adequate or appropriate sanitary facilities
- 7% of households report open defecation

Health & Nutrition

Of children less than 5 years of age

Malnutrition of children <5 years is a persistent problem

- 35.5% stunted, 4.8% thin for their weight (GAM), 15% underweight, and 3.7% overweight.

Children's access to vaccines / supplements in last 6 months is variable

- High for measles (93%), deworming (~80%), and vitamin A (71.3%)
- Low for micronutrient coverage (16%)

Recommendations

- Encourage agricultural investments across the country, such as establishment of public-private partnerships to provide smallholder farmers with agricultural inputs (seeds, tools and fertilizer)
- Closely monitor price increases of basic commodities
- Construct and upgrade schools especially in rural areas; these can serve as an incentive for children to attend school and, if combined with school feeding mechanisms, can improve food intake
- Nutrition-implementing partners should emphasize the importance of dietary diversity and promote "kitchen gardens," which can be used as both an income-generating activity and as a source of nutrients for the individual and household.

