

Price Monitoring and Analysis Country Brief

Lesotho

September 2011 - February 2012

Key Messages

- Maize meal prices spiked in September and October, but declined in December; wheat and rice prices remained almost stable throughout the year.
- As a result of the poor cereal harvest in 2011, the number of persons in need of food assistance is estimated to be 514,000 along the whole 2011/12 marketing year.
- Insufficient rains during the first half of the 2011/12 agricultural season followed by heavy rains and floods caused extensive losses to the agricultural sector.
- The Government together with international agencies supports production and assists the most vulnerable, through social safety nets.

Background

The total population was around 2 million with an annual growth rate equivalent to 1%. The undernourished population was estimated to be 14% while the prevalence of HIV among adults recorded 23.6%.

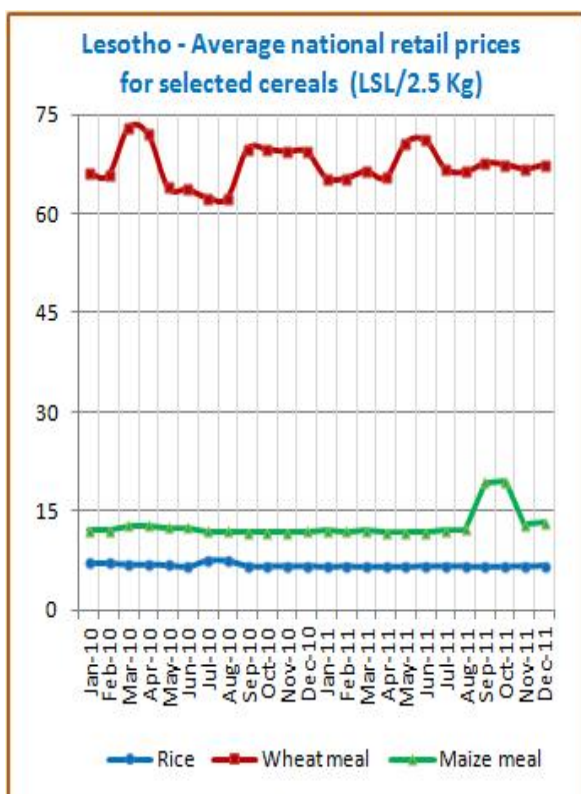
Economic Indicators	View Data
Total Population (millions) - 2010 (WB)	2.171
Population growth rate - 2010 (WB)	1%
GNI per capita, \$ PPP - 2010 (WB)	1840
Population below 1\$ PPP per day - 2003 (MDGI)	43%
Rural population - 2010 (WB)	73%
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP) - 2010 (WB)	7%

Food Consumption	
Undernourished Population - 2006/2008(FAO)	14%
Cereal share in total dietary energy consumption - 2007 (FAO)	78%
Meat share in total dietary energy consumption - 2007 (FAO)	4%

Health Indicators	
Pop. with sustainable access to improved sanitation - 2008 (WHO)	29%
Life expectancy at birth (years) both sexes - 2009 (WHO)	48
Pop. with access to improved drinking water sources - 2008 (WHO)	85%
Prevalence of HIV among adults aged >= 15 years - 2009 (WHO)	23.6%

Prices

Following relatively constant levels during most of 2011, the national average prices of maize meal, increased rapidly, by almost 60%, in September/October, mirroring high prices in South Africa. Prices, however, dropped by some 32% in December to LSL 5 per kg. Retail prices of rice were almost stable during most of 2011 and registered 13.38 LSL/Kg in December. The same stable trend was shown by wheat meal prices which were at 5.39 LSL/Kg in the same month. There are no latest price data available.



Source: GIEWS Country Briefs

Food Security Situation Assessment

The 2011 Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) report confirmed that 514,000 people were in need of humanitarian assistance during the 2011/2012 consumption year (July 2011 to June 2012) due to failed crop production prospects from the 2010/2011 agricultural season, with the majority of them located in the southern lowlands. GIEWS reports exceptional shortfall in aggregate food production/supplies; FAO Hunger map describes moderately low food insecurity while IFPRI GHI depicts the problem of hunger as serious.

CURRENT EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT

Exceptional shortfall in aggregate food production supplies	Widespread lack of access	Severe localized food insecurity	FAO/GIEWS CPFS 2011
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Lesotho is not covered by FEWSNET. FEWSNET coverage is limited 14 African countries 1 Caribbean (Haiti) and 1 Central Asia (Afghanistan). Food security status is given for different parts of the country in each case. [FEWSNET](#)

SCALE OF HUNGER (% of Undernourishment)

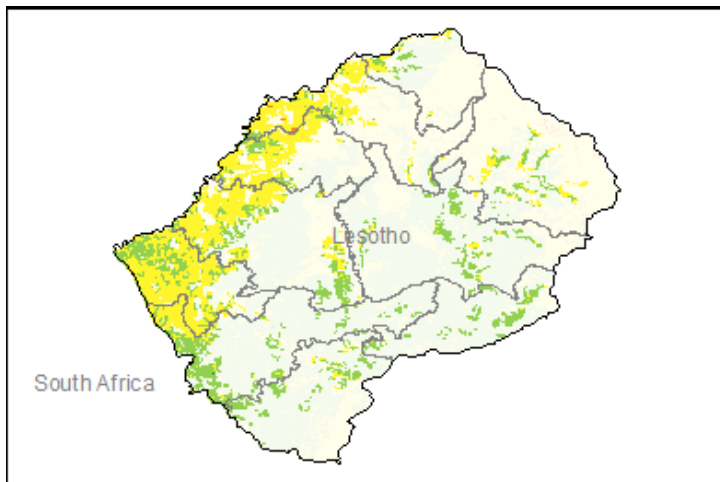
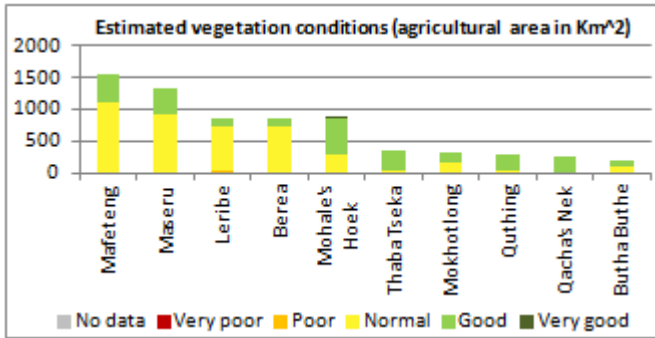
Very high (>= 35%)	High (25-34%)	Moderately high (15-24%)	Moderately low (5-14%)	Very low (< 5% under.)	FAO Hunger Map
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FAO Hunger Map classifies all countries of the world into five based on % of population undernourished.

Extremely alarming	Alarming	Serious	Moderate	Low	IFPRI/2011 GHI
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Vegetation Condition

Normal to good conditions are observed throughout the country. The general indicator of vegetation condition provided below is the absolute difference between the NDVI for February 2012 and the average of the last 10 years, calculated on the agricultural zones derived from the SADC (CSIR, South-Africa).



Source: JRC MARS – FoodSec

Crop phase in the reference period

- Sowing Maize - Sorghum
- Growing Maize - Sorghum
- Harvesting Wheat

Natural Disasters, Drought and Conflicts

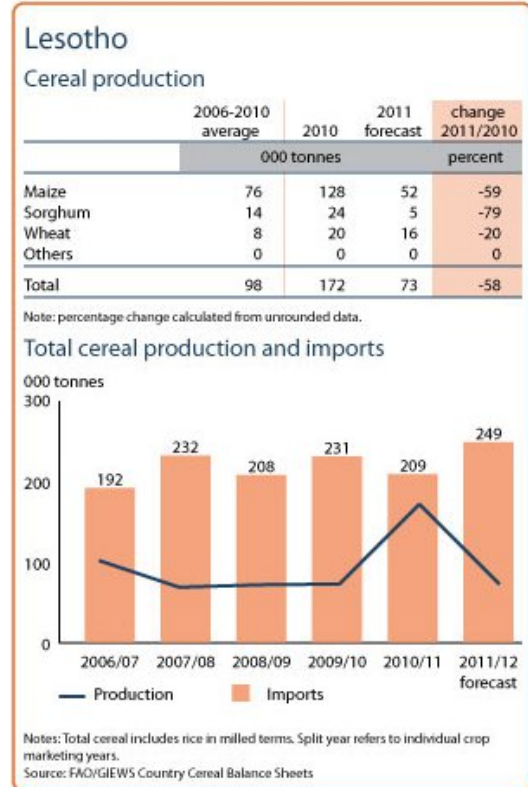
The weather has been characterized by extended drought followed by excessive rains. During the 2011 cropping season, prolonged drought extended from the beginning of the summer cropping season until December, when incessant and extensive rains began. The farming sector has suffered heavy losses, including crops and seasonal employment opportunities.

Refugees and IDPs	2008	2009	2010
Total in the country	0	0	0
Total outside the country	25	14	16

Source: UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Data extracted on 01/03/2012.

Food Balance Sheet

Maize output for 2011 is estimated at 52,000 T, 59% below the 2010's harvest, and some 32% below five-year average. Sorghum output, put at 5,000 T, is nearly 80% below 2010's output. The 2011 total cereal production is estimated at 73,000 T, including 16,000 T of wheat. Import requirements are put at 249,000 T, 19% below last year and 16% below the five year average.



Source: GIEWS Country Briefs

Government Policies

The Government, together with FAO, is supporting production with free input distribution. Social cash transfer programs are in place as part of broader social protection interventions. Measures are also taken to modernize the land tenure system and a third major dam is under construction.

Consumer and market oriented measures	n.a.
Producer oriented measures	Input support; Irrigation
Trade policy measures	n.a.
Safety net (increased or introduced)	Cash transfer; FAO input distribution

Different sources

Current events to watch (Click to see the full report)

- [Lesotho: Commission decision on the financing of human...](#)
- [Côte d'Ivoire: African Development Bank approves US\\$63...](#)
- [Botswana: Southern Africa Food Security Outlook Update...](#)
- [Lesotho: Nutritional Lifeline For Lesotho's Most Vulne...](#)
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For more information, contact: Information-for-action@fao.org
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