

Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP)

Monthly Early Warning Report – Feb 2023 issue

Data referenced in this report was collected across 45 JEOP operation woredas in the month of Jan 2022. CRS analyzed using quantitative and semi-quantitative methods. Visit the JEOP EWS dashboard for further data disaggregation (<http://jeop-ews.crs.org/Users/Index>, username: JEOP EWS. Password: Jeop@user_2019). JEOP received narrative reports from Tigray, references included in this report.

Highlights

- JEOP's food security analysis indicated presence of critical food insecurity situation in 8 woredas (out of 45 woredas sent weekly report in Jan 2023): Abergele, and Dehana (Amhara); Chiro Zuria, Deder, Dodota, Kurfa Chele, Midega Tola and Shalla (Oromia). Furthermore, 27 woredas fell in distressed category.
- Food insecurity situation is alarmingly severe in southern drought affected areas. Preliminary results of JEOP food security survey in Borana, Bale, and East Bale (Oromia); and South Omo (SNNP) indicated presence of severe food insecurity outcomes, including severe hunger experienced by some households.
- The year-to-year wholesale price of staple food cereals increased by 46%. Maize and sorghum increased highly by 58% and 43% respectively, while moderately high increase was observed on wheat (28%) and teff (21%) in the same period.
- The year-to-year price of shoat and labor wage increased by 54% and 33% respectively. However, terms of trade with cereals remained low. With a sale of medium sized shoat, households could buy 15% lower amount of cereal as compared to 5 years average. In similar comparison, with 15 days average income from labor wage, households could buy 29% less cereals.
- Forecasted neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and El Niño southern Oscillations (ENSO) conditions may result normal to below normal rainfall in the southern drought affected regions. This may further exacerbate the already worst drought situation in the region.

Weather

Dry moisture condition prevailed in much of the country during the recently concluded Bega season (Oct 2022 -Jan 2023). This created favorable condition for meher 2022 harvest and post-harvest activities in meher growing areas, while marking fifth consecutive season of poor performance in the southern drought affected areas. In the meantime, extremely low temperature was experienced in few places, including Haromay woreda (JEOP woreda), which could have slightly impacted fruits and vegetables grown under irrigation as well as animals and their products.

In January 2023, much of the country experienced below normal and much below normal rainfall, except pocket areas in Western and Southern Ethiopia which received normal rainfall. While JEOP woredas share the same situation, the rainfall was concerningly extremely poor in Angot (Amhara), as this woreda relies on belg production.

National Met agency forecasts slightly late onset of belg rain in north eastern, southern and southeastern regions with possible dry spells. Anticipated neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and El Niño southern Oscillations (ENSO) may increase chances of normal to above normal belg rainfall for northern half while increasing chances for normal to below normal rain for southern and south eastern. This may materialize sixth consecutive seasons of poor rain performance in the south and south-eastern region and may exacerbate the already severe drought condition in this region.

Recommendations

- Apply water conservation and moisture conservation activities in Southern and south-eastern Ethiopia.
- Monitor proper onset of rainfall before planting, and exercise moisture conservation to manage dry spells.

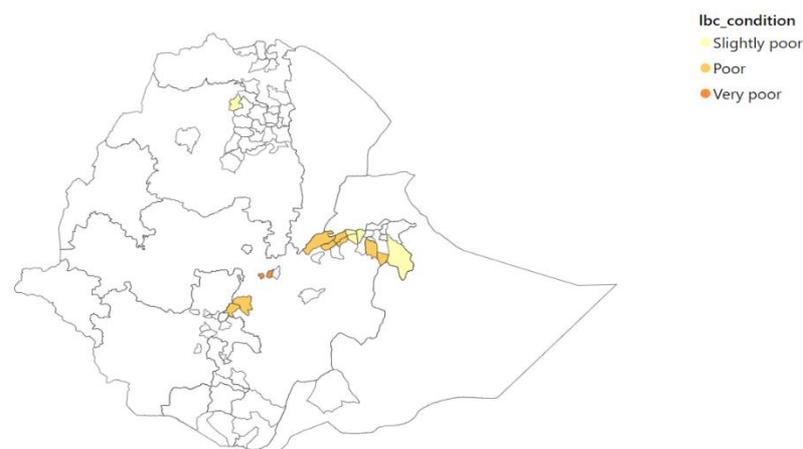
Livestock and Pasture

Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) shows persistent dryness following extended dry season in the southern and southeastern region. As a result, livestock condition continued to be extremely deteriorating including lowlands of Bale and east Bale, Borana (Oromia); and South Omo (SNNP). Livestock shape is also poor in Angot (Amhara); Dodota, Shalla, Arsi Negele, Girawa, Haromaya, Kurfa Chele, Gemechis, Chiro Zuria, Mieso, Doba, Tulo, Midega Tola (Oromia); and Dire Dawa, as the JEOP weekly early warning report shows. The report also indicated below normal availability of pasture in Girawa, Dodota and Shalla (Oromia). An outbreak of new castle disease was reported in Haromaya (Oromia). Livestock death continues to be slightly higher

in Abergele (Amhara); Deder, Goro Gutu, Melka Belo, Haromaya and Meta (Oromia) as compared to usual. Livestock death rate was very high in southern areas, including Borana, lowlands of Bale and East Bale (Oromia); and South Omo (SNNP). Limited access to veterinary services, decreased availability of livestock feed and water aggravated the prevalence of livestock diseases (including Anthrax, Black leg, FMD, BOVINE and Ovine pasterolisis) in JEOP woredas in Tigray. In Ahferom woreda, which is among the most affected in Tigray, a total of 480 cattle died while 31 donkeys died in Keyahat kebele during the reporting month.

Recommendations

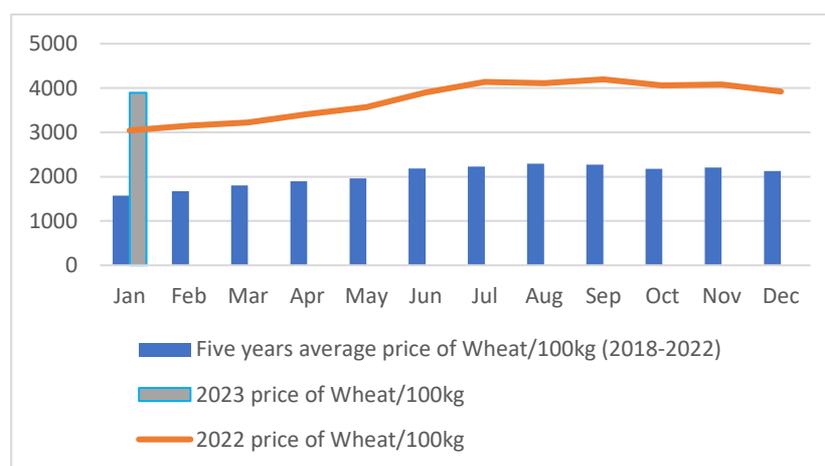
- Improve livestock feed management (protect grazing land, growing pasture in protected areas, rotational grazing).
- Increase range land, animal feed management, and water conservation to mitigate the impact of erratic rain.
- Increase livestock vaccination.
- Rehabilitate and strengthen veterinary services in war affected areas.



Markets

The year-to-year wholesale price of staple food cereals increased by 46%. Maize increased by 58% since January 2022 while sorghum increased by 43% in similar period. A moderately high year to year price increase was observed on prices of wheat (28%) and teff (21%). The drastic price increase on maize (least preferred cereal) indicates customers shifting to maize from more expensive commodities such as teff, wheat or sorghum. Key informants indicated numerous factors contributed to price increase including inflation (which ticked up to 33.9% in January 2023), low supply from local production due to drier than usual conditions, and localized hazards, and conflict.

Nominal wholesale price trend of wheat (Birr/qrtl) across JEOP woredas



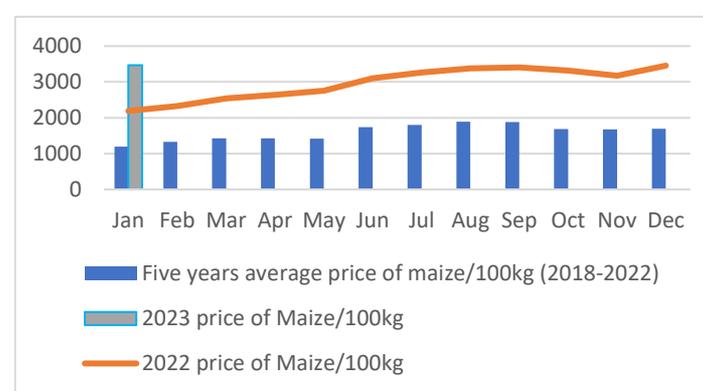
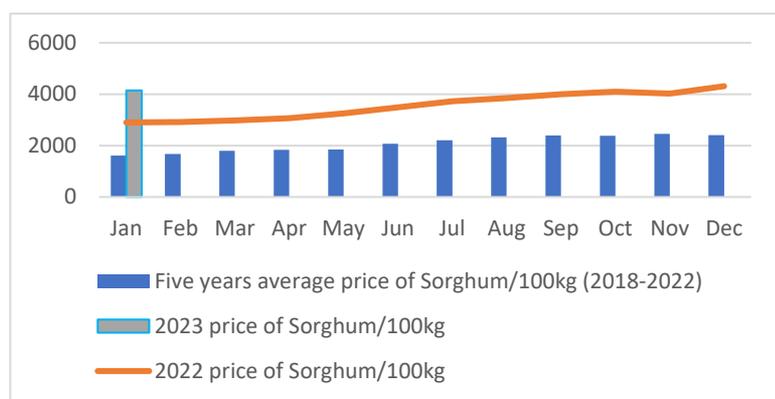
However, monthly price comparison showed an unexpectedly low (2%) price decrease in January as compared to December 2022. JEOP's historical price data shows an average of 15% decrease from December to January every year due to increased supply of crops to market following meher harvest. Low price decrease in January 2023 as compared to December 2022 price may indicate decreased availability of crops to markets as compared to average and possible early price increase in 2023.

Similar or substitute commodities to the standard food basket saw drastic increase in retail markets that JEOP monitored, often visited by poor households. In these markets, the year-to-year retail price of sorghum increased by 42%, while wheat and maize increased by 27%. Field pea and haricot bean increased by 29% and 20%. Vegetable oil saw a 68% year-to-year increase. JEOP conducted 1020 interviews with vendors of wheat, field pea and vegetable oil in January 2023 and learned 11% had run out of at least one type of commodity over the previous 2-week period. Reasons mentioned by suppliers include price was too high from source (39%) and inaccessible source (56).

Following peace deal, price of food commodities in Tigray (Mekelle town) showed a significant decrease for wheat and sorghum. However, the price of teff was significantly high by 57% in Tigray as compared to prices in out of Tigray region. Much has to be done to improved prices across all woredas in the region by resuming relevant services and trade routes.

Recommendations

- Continued, timely in-kind assistance to stabilize prices.
- Timely inclusion of revised caseloads (following seasonal assessment) to food assistance programs.
- Restore or resume lists of relevant services such as trade routes across war affected areas.



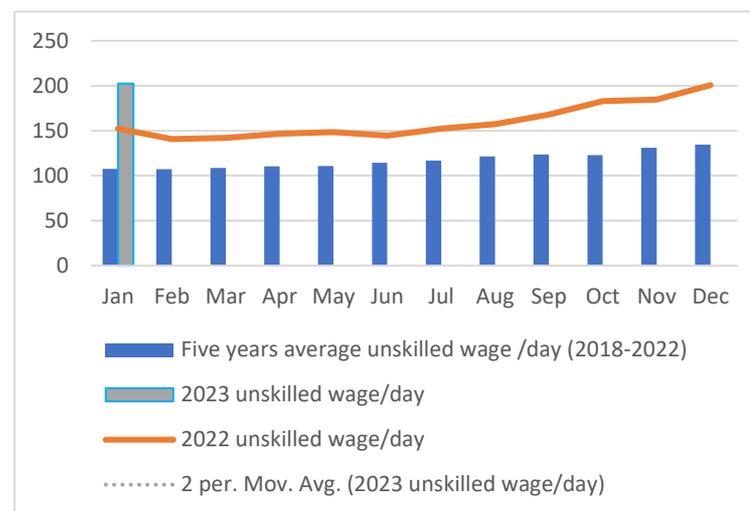
Labor

Casual daily wage rates continued to increase slightly since September 2022. In January 2023, almost 1% increase was observed as compared to December 2022. A 33% year-to-year wage rate increase was seen. This month's year to year comparison showed a 10% decrease when compared to the Dec 2022 year to year wage rate. But it still leaves a noticeable challenge for poor households to access enough food. With 15 days engagement in the wage labor in January, households could buy 29% less cereals as compared to five recent years average for the month. Labor wage sector was highly affected in Tigray region as key informants have also indicated decreased access to labor wage and lower rate paid as compared to out of Tigray regions.

Recommendations

- Timely provision of cash and food assistance for households relying on daily labor.
- Stimulate economic activities in war affected areas.

Average labor wage change for all JEOP woredas



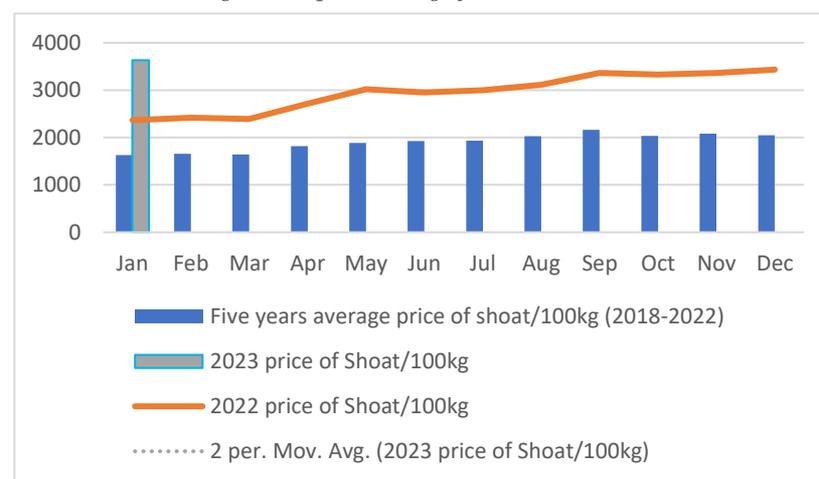
Shoat

The price of a medium sized Shoat has shown a 6% increase in January as compared to December 2022. Furthermore, a remarkably high (54%) increase was seen in comparison with last year's Shoat price of the same month. However, the terms of trade between shoat and staple cereals remained disproportionate despite high year to year price increase of shoat. With the current value of medium sized shoat, households could exchange 15% less cereal than the amount they used to buy in the five years average for the month.

Recommendations

- Improve connection between local and main markets in woredas with lower terms of trade.
- Increase household asset protection (credit facilities, timely food/cash assistance).

Average shoat price change for all JEOP woredas



Malnutrition

Drought and other natural and manmade disasters put JEOP woredas at high risk of malnutrition, despite ongoing humanitarian food assistance. In January, a total of 7253 cases of under five children admitted to Therapeutic Feeding Program (6771 Outpatient Therapeutic Programs (OTP) and 482 stabilization center (SC)) in 41 Woredas JEOP collected report in the month. A 0.1% - 3% case increase was noticed in 15 woredas as compared to Dec 2023. A total of 24 woredas reported admitting more than 100 severely acute malnourished cases in OTP. Among these, three woredas also reported admitting more than 25 Severely Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases including Sekota and Dehana (Amhara); and Midega Tola (Oromia). Poor quality of screening service, worsening of the food security situation, shortage and interruption of Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP) supplies are among the major contributors for high number of malnutrition cases. Woredas in Borena zone are reported as priority one in the recent three hotspot classifications. In Borena zone, SAM cases are significantly increasing. SAM case in December in Borana was 44% higher than Dec 2021, affecting also elderlies, pregnant and lactating women. Constraints on Therapeutic Feeding Program (TFP), and shortage of water were among the major challenges in relation to the nutrition situation in Borana zone. Borana malnutrition situation could also be a reflection of other JEOP operation woredas in southern drought affected areas such as Bale and East Bale (Oromia); and south Omo (SNNP)

The malnutrition situation in Tigray is alarming. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in Adwa, Hawzen and Hintalo were 23%, 33% and 40% respectively, surpassing the emergency threshold (15%). In same places, 73%, 82% and 72% of PLW were moderately acute malnourished. In addition, complicated SAM cases of under five children are on rise in Adwa, Nek Sege and Bora woredas.

Recommendations

- Improve the regularity of screening service to facilitate timely identification and referral of acute malnutrition cases.
- Avail TSFP commodities timely and adequately to prevent deterioration of MAM cases.
- Avail TFP supplies timely to minimize morbidity and mortality associated with SAM.
- Keep conducting VBT to ensure prioritization of HHs with the most vulnerable groups in the food assistance.
- Prioritize food distribution in woredas reporting high number of malnutrition cases and facilitate timely distribution of food ration.

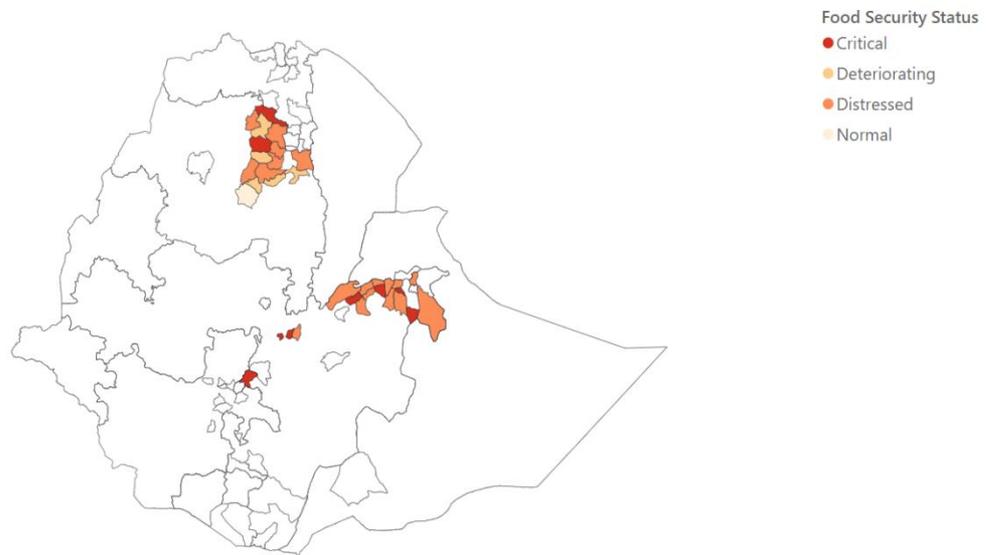
Food security

JEOP collected weekly reports from 45 woredas and applied semi-quantitative analysis method to understand severity of food insecurity. With the analysis, 8 fell in the critical category: Abergele, and Dehana (Amhara); and Chiro Zuria, Deder, Dodota, Kurfa Chele, Midega Tola and Shalla (Oromia). In these woredas at least 70% of outcome and stress level indicators (staple cereal price, labor wage, shoa price, livestock shape, livestock mortality, school absenteeism, coping strategy, recent season harvest) surpassed the worst level thresholds. Furthermore, 27 woredas fell in the distressed category in which at least 70% of outcome and stress indicators were at concerning level of severity, slightly lower than worst thresholds. Many were in Waghimra, East and West Hararge and North Wollo, few from other zones as well. ([see map 2 and visit JEOP dashboard for details](#))

Key informants in Tigray describe the food security situation as dire due to poor harvest in the recent season. The regional DRMC indicated that only 54% (of the total farm land of 1.3M hectares) was covered with crops during Meher 2022 agricultural season. Significant loss is also expected from meher harvest due to various factors including low rate of input utilization. Key informants agree that ongoing food assistance is supportive in saving lives and stabilising markets.

Facing worsening food insecurity, poor households employing negative coping strategies in 53% of woredas. These include sale/slaughter of productive livestock, migration of bread winners, increased sale of firewood/charcoal, sale of productive assets, and reduced expenditure on productive inputs. Various factors contributed to food insecurity, including below average consecutive seasonal harvest, inflation, impact of COVID-19, conflict, very high food price increas, and delayed food assistance.

Meher 2022 (September -December) season harvest was anticipated to improve food availability. However, the improvement could be short-lived, as the pre-harvest assessment conducted in JEOP woredas suggested below normal (<by +25%) meher harvest in 91% of woredas (out of 35 woredas reported harvest amount between Sep – Dec 2022). Among these, meher season production was less by more than 75% in Abergele, Angot, and Sahla (Amhara); Dodota, Kurfa Chele, Midega Tola, Shalla, and Siraro (Oromia); and Misrak Badewacho (SNNP). The prospective food security condition needs close monitoring in these woredas.



Map 2. Food security in JEOP woredas in December 2022

JEOP is responding to the drought in southern Ethiopia. Poor rainfall for consecutive five seasons contributed to a livelihood crisis. Recent Season's (Oct – Dec) low level of rain further aggravated drought conditions. The drought in Borana had impacted in wider spectrum: 46% of livestock died (85% cattle), high proxy GAM (>15.2), no crop yield expected in the current season (Oct – Dec 2022 planting), and high school absenteeism (up to 50%). Forecasted below normal March to May season rainfall may further exacerbate situation in Borana and other drought affected southern areas including lowlands of Bale and East Bale (Oromia) and South Omo (SNNP). Preliminary results of JEOP's food security survey indicated presence of sever food insecurity outcomes including severe hungers by some households.

Recommendations

- Emphasize vulnerability-based targeting with transparent ranking of incomes. Timely and continued assistance to conflict affected Northern Regions of Ethiopia. Prioritize food distribution to woredas identified as 'critical' and drought affected.

