Crop Situation Update

Issue 10, February 2010

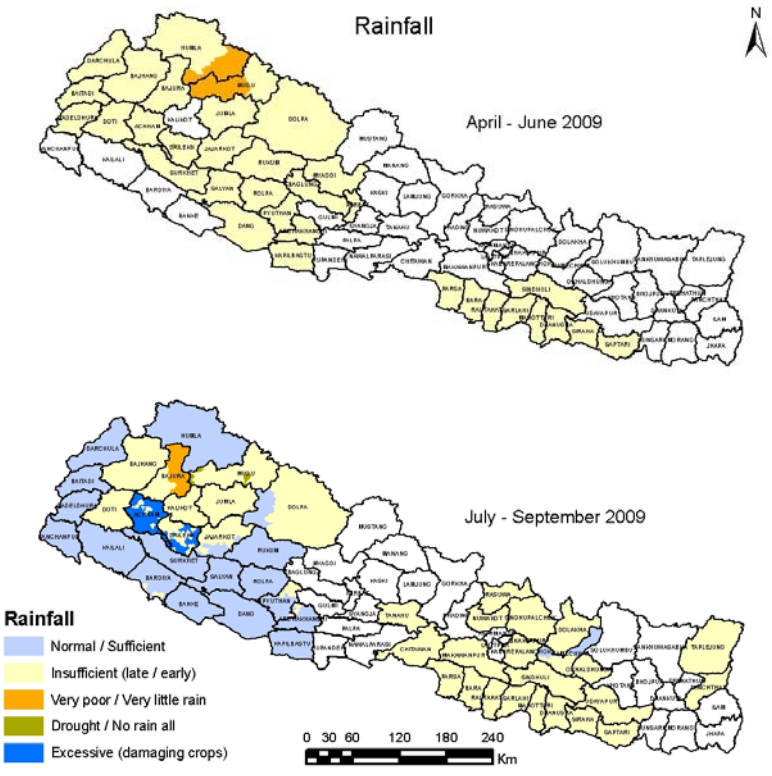
Jointly Produced by:
MOAC—Food Security Monitoring Unit
WFP—Food Security Monitoring and Analysis Unit

The crop situation update is prepared using a range of information and data from different sources: rainfall data from the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology; crop production data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and WFP field surveillance; and the findings from a joint MOAC/WFP crop verification mission which took place in December 2009.

SITUATION SUMMARY

- A late start to the monsoon and erratic distribution of rain caused a reduction in the 2009/2010 summer crop production across the country. Paddy production was reduced to 4.02 million MT and maize was reduced to 1.86 million MT; this represents a reduction of 11 percent and 4 percent respectively compared to last year.
- It is anticipated that the country will face a substantial food deficit during FY 2009/2010 despite the positive outlook for the current winter crop. In August 2009, MoAC estimated the edible cereal deficit to be 400,000 MT for FY 2009/2010 compared to the total requirement of 5.4 million MT. This deficit represented the cereal requirement of seven percent of the population. The deficit figure will be revised after the winter harvest.
- The global food market situation is currently not favourable for Nepal. Natural disasters caused substantial regional summer crop losses in countries such as India and the Philippines, which resulted in an increase in the international price of important summer crops such as rice. Domestic food prices are currently stable at a higher-level but they are anticipated to increase further during 2010. In February 2010, the year-on-year food price inflation was 18.1% (Source: Nepal Rastra Bank).
- The districts most affected by poor summer crop production are in the Mid- and Far-West Hill and Mountain regions; in these districts the summer crop was reduced by up to 30-50%. This resulted in a situation of high to severe food insecurity amongst the vulnerable population. Households in these districts are typically subsistent farmers reliant on rain fed fields and are typically food deficit even in a normal year. In these areas there are also typically very limited alternative livelihood opportunities due to their remoteness.

RAINFALL SITUATION

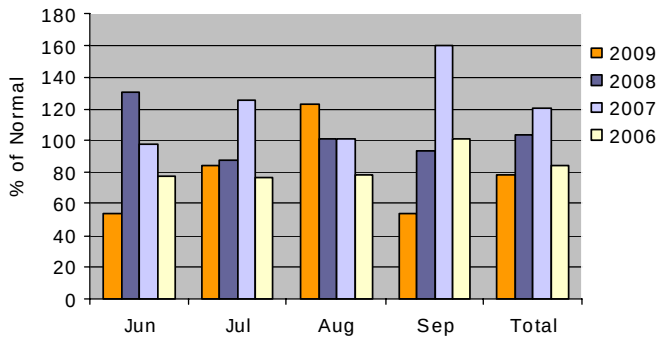


The 2009 monsoon was significantly delayed: it started on the 23rd of June but rainfall was significant only after the 25th of July. The monsoon then remained active until the 15th of October which extended the retreat period by more than 20 days. The normal monsoon period is from the 10th of June until the 23rd of September. June and July are the critical months for plantation of paddy in Nepal. The late start of the monsoon severely delayed paddy plantation and resulted in 5% of the land typically used for paddy plantation remaining barren. In addition, farmers had to transplant mature seedling, especially in the Hills and Mountains, which resulted in low paddy yield.

Overall the amount of rain was considerably lower than normal. The rainfall was even lower than in 2006 when the country experienced a record annual decrease in summer crop production.

In addition, much of Nepal experienced excessive rainfall between the 4th to 8th of October. This caused floods and landslides in the Mid- and Far-Western districts. The total amount of rainfall during the four days exceeded the total monthly rainfall in some areas and many districts in the Mid- and Far-Western Regions including: Banke, Bardiya, Kanchanpur, Kailali, Dadeldhura, Doti, Achham, Bajura, Darchula, Bajhang, Jumla, Dailekh, Dang, Jajarkot, Rukum, Rolpa and Pyuthan. This resulted in considerable damage to summer crop production.

Average Monsoon Rain



नेपाल खाद्य सुरक्षा अनुगमन प्रणाली
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Nepal Food Security Monitoring System

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SUMMER CROP PRODUCTION

The summer crops (paddy, maize and millet) comprise nearly 80 percent of the total national cereal production: paddy is the first main crop cultivated extensively in the Terai region where more than 70 percent of the national paddy production is grown. Maize is the second main crop mostly cultivated in Hill and Mountain districts. Millet is important in some of the Mountain districts. Paddy accounts for more than 50% of national cereal production.

Paddy production was reduced by half a million MT (equivalent to 11%) compared to last year. This significant reduction was mainly due to the late arrival of the monsoon. Almost 5% less land was planted and the per hectare yield decreased by 6.6%.

Maize production declined by almost 4% compared to last year. Millet production increased by 2.3%. This increase was however not large enough to compensate the losses in paddy and maize due to the very small share (about 4%) of millet in total national cereal production.

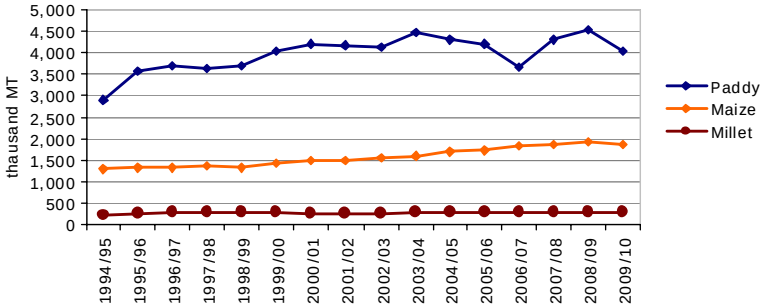
Maps on the next page illustrate the degree of crop loss by VDC and by crop (paddy and maize) in the districts covered by WFP field surveillance. Severe paddy crop losses were reported in pockets of Bajura, Jumla, Dailekh, Siraha, Taplejung and Sindhupalchok districts. In these areas the major causes of the crop loss included late monsoon rain, excessive and damaging rainfall, landslide, flood, hailstorm and strong wind.

Although production of minor local crops are not monitored nationally, evidence from local field monitors indicated that minor crop production followed a similar trend to major cereal crop production.

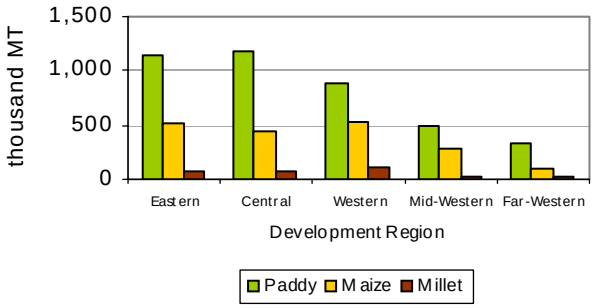
SUMMER CROP PRODUCTION

	FY 2009/2010 Production			% Change from Last Year		
	Area (,000ha)	Production (,000MT)	Yield (kg/ha)	Area	Prod	Yield
Paddy	1,481	4,024	2,716	- 4.8	**- 11.1**	- 6.6
Maize	876	1,855	2,119	0.0	**- 3.9**	- 3.9
Millet	268	300	1,116	1.0	**2.3**	1.4

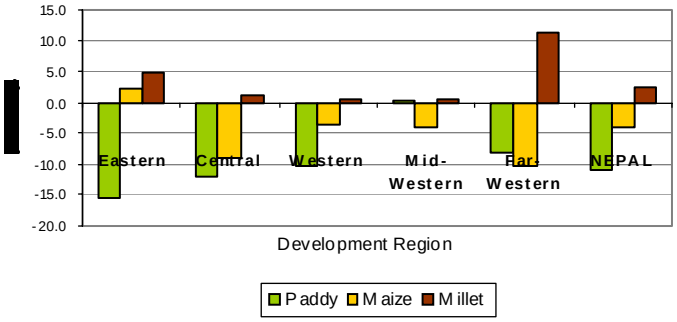
Summer Crop Production in the past 15yrs



Summer Crop Production by Dev. Region



Percentage Loss in Production Compared to Last Year



WINTER CROP OUTLOOK

The winter crop outlook for wheat and barley is reportedly above normal across the country. The area planted has increased compared to last year. Favourable rainfall to date is expected to have a positive impact on the overall production. Also the extended monsoon kept the soil moisture for good seed germination and initial growth of the winter crops.

Geographical areas of concern are noted in Humla, Mugu, Rolpa, eastern Bajura, Rautahat, Siraha and Saptari where the winter crop situation is moderate due to the insufficient rainfall. The winter crop may be reduced in these areas depending on the amount and the distribution of rainfall during the critical crop growing period in February – March 2010.

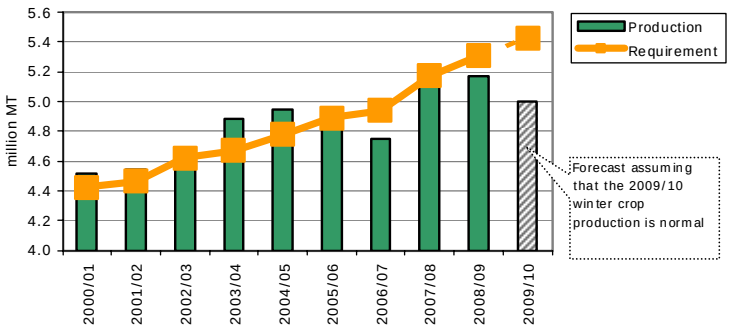
Wheat Field in Achham District

FOOD BALANCE IMPLICATIONS

The reduction in the summer crop output has a significant impact on the national food balance as the paddy, maize and millet crops account for approximately 80% of the annual production. In August 2009, MOAC estimated edible cereal deficit of 400,000 MT for the FY 2009/2010 against the total requirement of 5.4 million MT, which will be revised after the winter harvest.

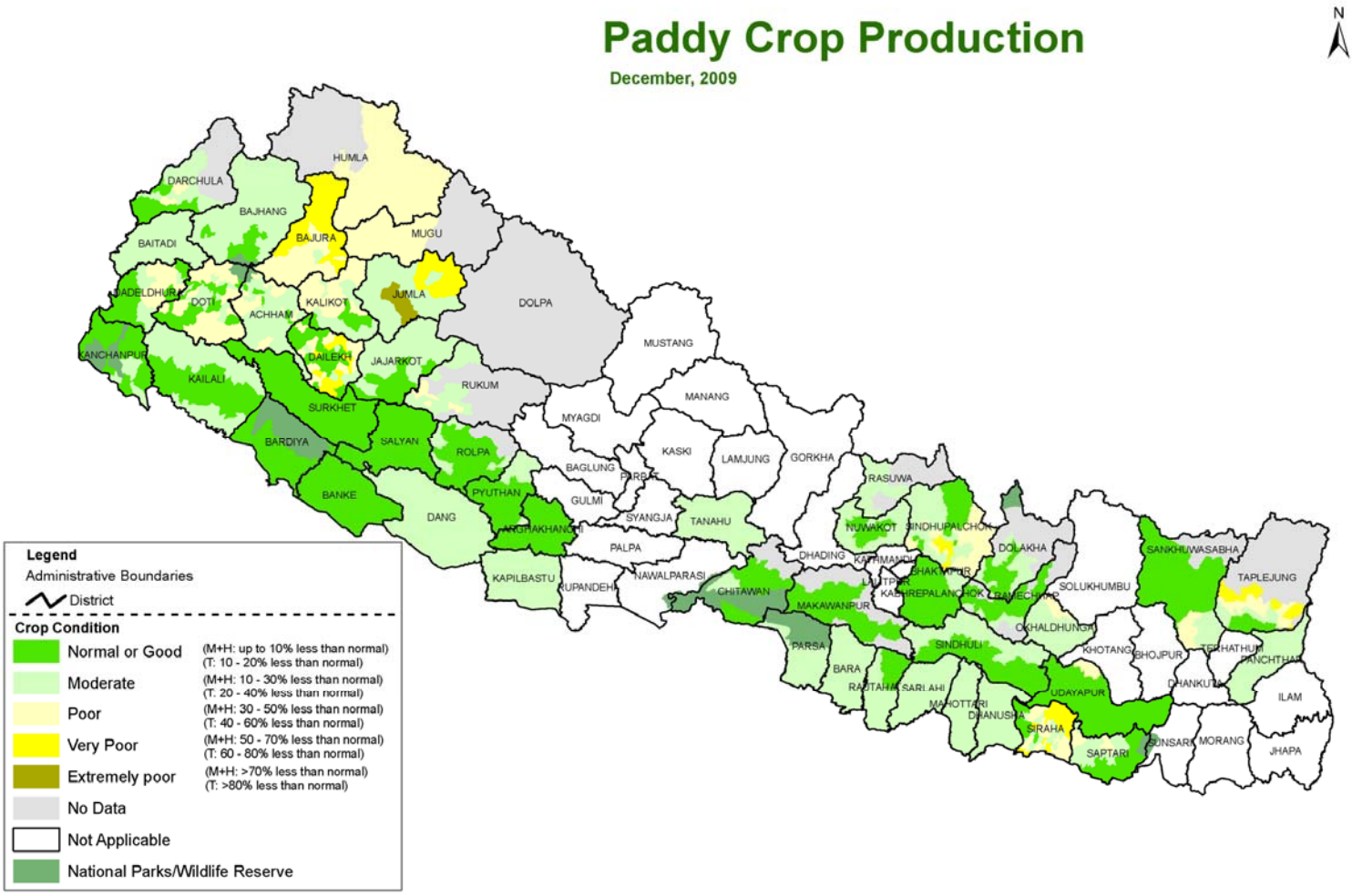
Over the past years, the level of production has not kept up with the increasing demand of the growing population. The country is anticipated to face a substantial food deficit even if the 2009/2010 winter crop production is above normal.

National Production Surplus / Deficit



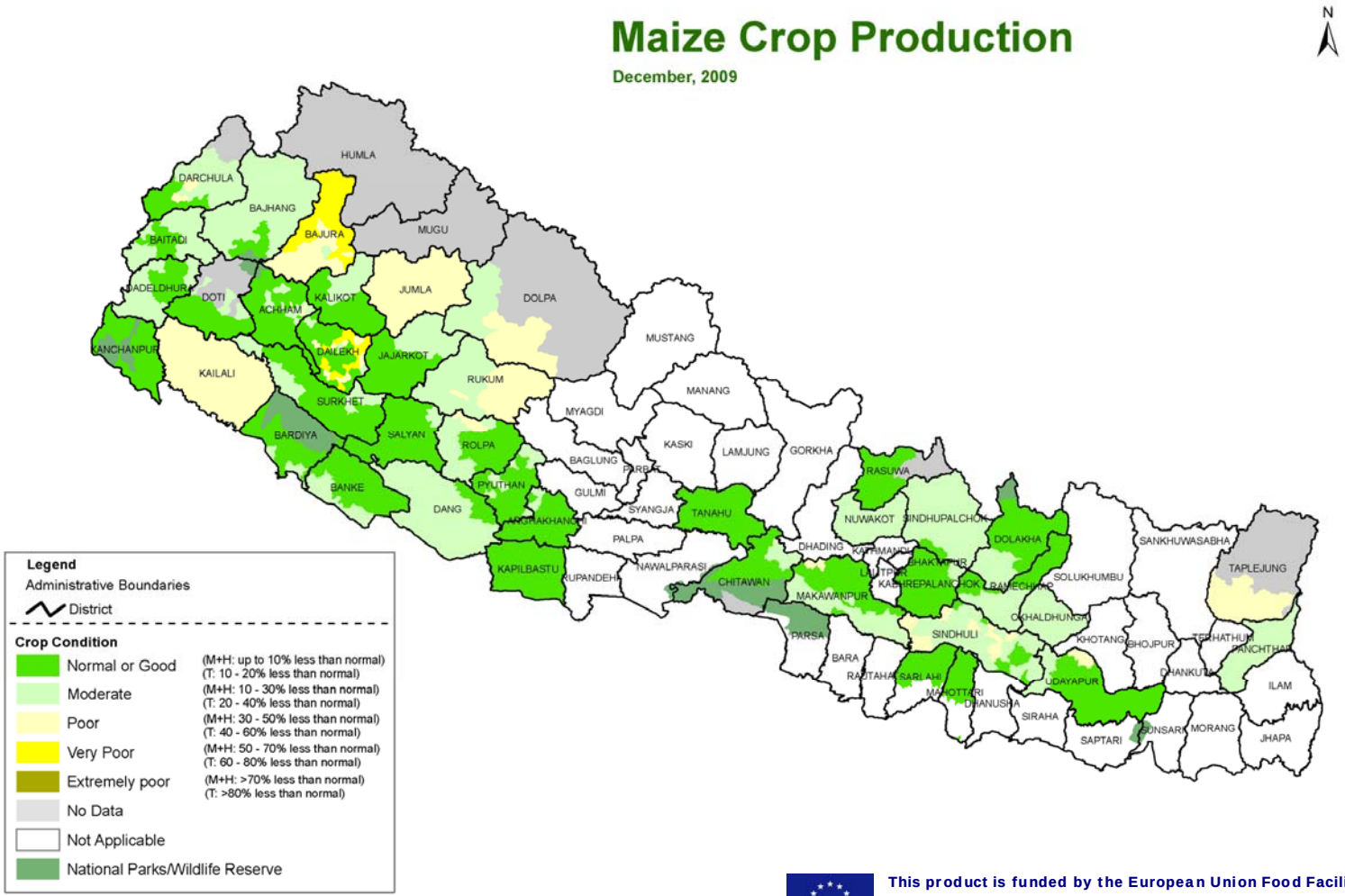
Paddy Crop Production

December, 2009



Maize Crop Production

December, 2009



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