



Nepal Food Security Bulletin

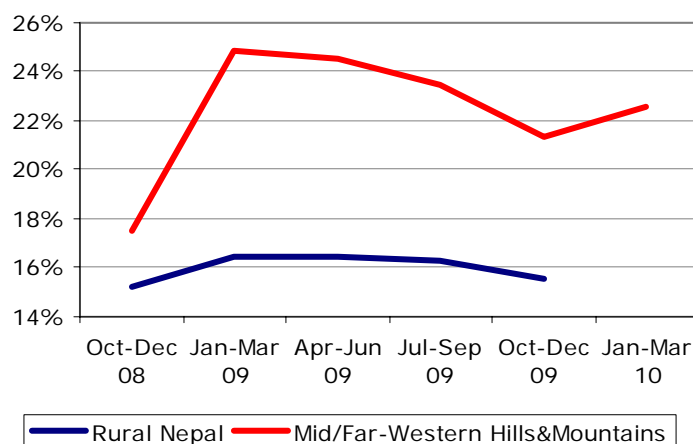
Issue 27, January - March 2010

The focus of this edition is on the Far and Mid-West Hill and Mountain region

Situation Summary

- As expected, between January and March the food security situation deteriorated in parts of the Mid- and Far-Western Hill and Mountain districts. This is primarily attributed to the poor summer crop production in November/December 2009. In highly and severely food insecure areas, households have depleted their food stocks and basic food prices have increased by 20 percent or more compared to the same time last year. Under- and unemployment is a huge problem in these areas with very little opportunities for income generating activities.
- Four VDCs in Bajura were classified as severely food insecure. In these VDCs the population adopted livelihood damaging coping strategies including sale of livestock and sale of household assets such as kitchen utensils. Out-migration has reportedly increased by 40 percent or more in these areas.
- Presence of external assistance including WFP Food/Cash for Asset building projects and development interventions by other agencies such as FINNIDA and GTZ in food insecure districts have prevented a further deterioration of the food security situation in the Far and Mid-West.
- The NeKSAP District Food Security Networks in the Mid- and the Far-Western Development Regions have identified altogether 179 VDCs in 11 districts that are highly or severely food insecure. The estimated number of food insecure people has increased by 1.2 percent to 23.6 percent of the population, or an estimated 0.6 million people. In Bajura and Humla 85 and 87 percent respectively of the district population are at a critical level of food insecurity. Other districts facing a high level of food insecurity include Mugu, Kalikot, Jumla, Dailekh, Achham, Doti, Bajhang, Darchula and Baitadi.
- In the central, western and eastern regions, the food security situation has remained stable. Although the summer crop production 2009/2010 across the country was reduced by 11 percent for paddy and 4 percent for maize, the population in these regions has alternative livelihood options available including the sale of cash crops and wage labour.
- Food price inflation remains of significant concern. The Nepal Rastra Bank's March 2010 data indicates that recent year-on-year food price inflation is over 18 percent. The price of food grains has remained relatively stable over the past quarter. However, prices are anticipated to increase until the next harvest.

Figure 1. Percentage of population food insecure



Hunger Overview

Food Security Cluster	Current Qtr.	Change over past	3 month outlook	6 month outlook
1. Karnali	●	→	↑	↓
2. Far-Western Hill and Mountain	●	→	↑	↓
3. Rapti-Bheri Hills	●	→	→	↓
4. Western Terai	●	→	→	→
5. Central & Eastern Terai	●	→	→	→
6. Western Hill and Mountain	●	→	→	→
7. Central Hill and Mountain	●	↑	→	↓
8. Eastern Hill and Mountain	●	↑	→	↓
Food insecure population (FMWHM)	0.6 mln	→	→	↓

Classification key See page 3 for more detailed classification explanation

- Food secure
- Highly food insecure
- Humanitarian emergency/ famine
- Moderately food insecure
- Severely food insecure

In highly and severely food insecure areas households have depleted food stocks from the 2009 summer harvest. In these areas unemployment and general lack of income generating activities have led to out-migration.

Assistance programmes including WFP Food/Cash for Work have mitigated a further deterioration in food security among vulnerable populations.

Winter crops are growing well across the country. Harvesting of the winter crops in April/May is expected to improve the food security situation in the short-term.



नेपाल खाद्य सुरक्षा अनुगमन प्रणाली
Nepal Khadya Suraksha Anugaman Pranali (NeKSAP)
Nepal Food Security Monitoring System

* A detailed description of methodology used by WFP to calculate food insecure is provided on the NeKSAP google group: http://neksap.googlegroups.com/web/Population_Tracking.pdf?hl=en&hl=en



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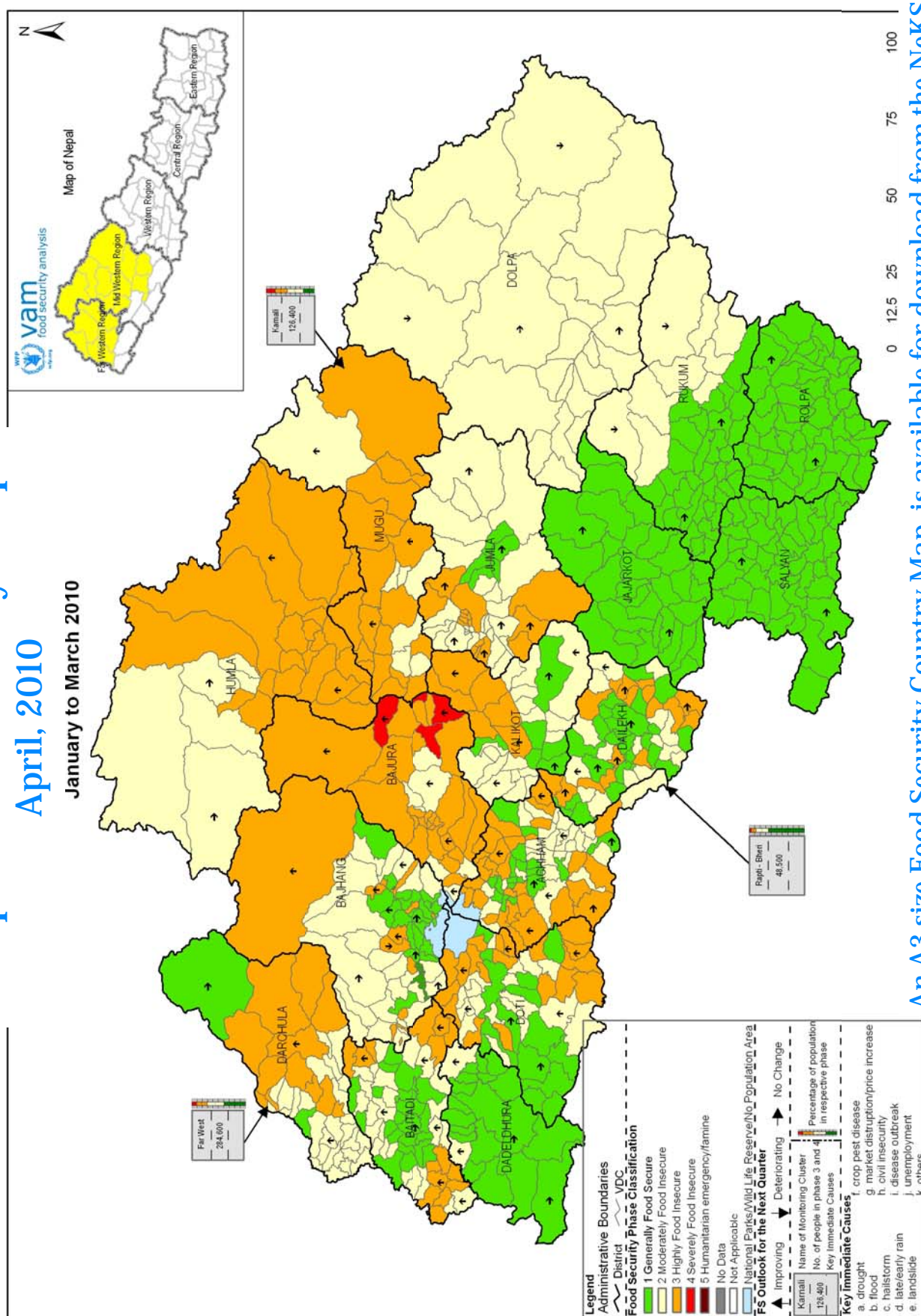
Food Security Phase Map (Mid and Far Western Hill and Mountain)

Map 1.

Nepal Food Security Map

April, 2010

January to March 2010



An A3 size Food Security Country Map is available for download from the NeKSAP
 Google group: <http://www.neksap.googlegroups.com/web/FSPMAP>



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Highly & Severely Food Insecure Populations

Highly and severely food insecure populations

In the Mid- and the Far-Western Hill and Mountain districts, the population of moderately, highly and severely food insecure is estimated by WFP to be 0.6 million. The number has slightly increased compared to the previous cycle as the 2009 summer crop production was poor or extremely poor in many parts of these regions.

The table below provides estimated figures of concentrated populations experiencing a critical level of food insecurity in the food insecure districts of the Mid- and the Far-Western Hill and Mountain regions (as reported by the District Food Security Network). At these levels of food insecurity households consume a poor and inadequate diet and are undertaking severe and often irreversible coping strategies such as reducing the size of the meals, skipping meals, heavy borrowing and selling of assets. The District Food Security Networks identified a total of 459,500 people residing in areas classified as phase 3 and 4. The 0.6 million food insecure estimated by WFP includes people living in areas classified as phase 1 or 2.

District/VDCs affected	Highly Food Insecure	Severely Food Insecure	% of total district population
	Phase 3	Phase 4	
Cluster 1. Karnali			
Jumla: Badki (1, 6-8), Narakot (5-9), GhodeMahadev, Malikathanta, Tamti, BumraMadichaur, Malikabota, and Shanigaun	21,700	0	20.7%
Humla: Barain, Saya, Gothi, Rodikot, Melchham, ShreeMashta, Darma, Mimi, Jaira, Shreenagar, Madana, Kalika, Maila, Sharkideu, Raya, Chhipra, Kharpunath, Thehe, Syada, and Dandaphaya	41,000	0	87.0%
Mugu: Dhainakot, Kotdanda, Bhie, Natharpu, Photu, Jima, Ruga, Hyanglu, Kimri, Pulu, Dolphu, Sukadhik, Khamale, Mangri, Rara, Kalai, and Rowa	35,300	0	63.2%
Kalikot: Dhoulagoha, Khina, Thirpu, Ramnakot, Nanikot, and Badalkot	28,400	0	23.2%
Cluster 2. Far-Western Hills and Mountains			
Bajhang: Bhatekhola (1), Luyanta (8), Kanda, Deulek (4, 7), Syandi (4,9), Sunkuda (5), Sunikot (1-9), Byansi (1-9), Kandel, Kotdewal (1-8), Maulali, and Majhigaun (3)	23,300	0	12.1%
Bajura: Sappata, Rugin, Jagannath, Wai (4), Bichhiya, Bandhu, Gotri, Wai (1-3, 5-9), Kuldevmandu, Budhiganga, Jukot, Manakot, Chhatara, Toli (4,5,8,9), Jayabageshwari, Kotila, Antichaur, Dahakot, Brahmatola, Gudukhati, Jugada (1-7), Kolti, Kailashmandu, Pandusain (2)	91,000	14,100	85.2%
Darchula: Rapla, Ghunsha, Khandeshwori, Sunsera, Sitola, Guljar, Dhaulakot, PipalChauri, Eyarikot, Dhuligada, RaniShikhar, and Khar	25,700	0	18.3%
Baitadi: Amchaur, Shivanath, Udayadev, Pancheshwor, Kulau, Bilashpur, Melauli, Maharudra, Kotpetara, Nwadeu, Bhatana, Shivaling, Thalakanda, Dhungad, and Sikash	29,300	0	11.1%
Doti: Chappali, Girichauka, Toleni, Warpata, Lanakedareshwor, Kanachaur, Dhanglagaun/ Ghangel, Simchour, Gaguda, Pokhari, Gairagaun, Kedarakhada, Wagalek, Daud, Tijali, Ganjari, Dhirkamandau, Kalena, and Ladagada	45,400	0	18.6%
Achham: Kalekanda, Chafamandu, Khaptad, Patakot, Devisthan, Kuskot, Thanti, Rishidaha, Dhungachalna, Payal, Seudi, Balata, Warala, Sutar, Bindhyabasini, Chandika, Marku, Ridikot, Babla, Bhairabsthan, Bhatakatiya, Lungra (3, 8, 9), Sodashadevi, Basti, Ghodasain, Hichma, Nandegada, Toli, and Saukat	55,800	0	21.4%
Cluster 3. Rapti-Bheri Hills			
Dailekh: Badalamji, Salleri, Baluwatar, ChhiudiPusakot (6-9), Rum, Piladi, Badabhairab, Singhasain, Lakandra, Pipalkot, Lalikanda, Jambukandh, Pagnath, Chauratha, Awalparajul, and Naumule	48,500	0	18.6%
TOTAL THIS QUARTER	445,400	14,100	N/A
TOTAL LAST QUARTER (Mid & Far-Western Hill & Mountain Region only)	364,000	30,600	N/A
DIFFERENCE	+22%	-54%	N/A

Food security classification:

- Phase 1. Food Secure – household has secure access to food.
- Phase 2. Moderately Food Insecure – household members have reduced their consumption, calorie and nutrient intake of household members is borderline sufficient. In addition, the household is undertaking coping mechanisms such as borrowing money and selling non productive assets.
- Phase 3. Highly Food Insecure – household members have significantly reduced their consumption, calorie and nutrient intake is highly deficient. In addition the household is undertaking irreversible coping mechanisms such as selling productive assets and taking children out of school.
- Phase 4. Severely Food Insecure – household members have significantly reduced their consumption, calorie and nutrient intake is highly deficient. The household has limited coping mechanisms left and is likely to be selling final assets/ land.
- Phase 5. Humanitarian Emergency - there is no opportunity for the household to gain access to food, leading to starvation if no intervention is made.

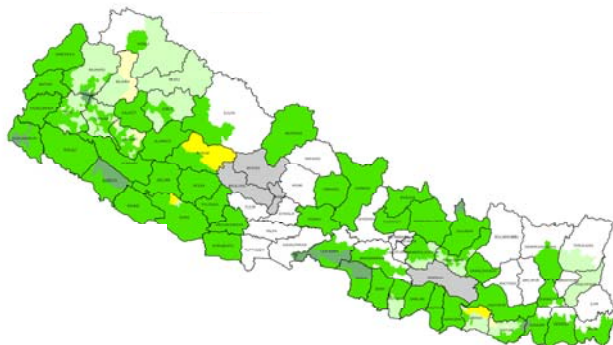


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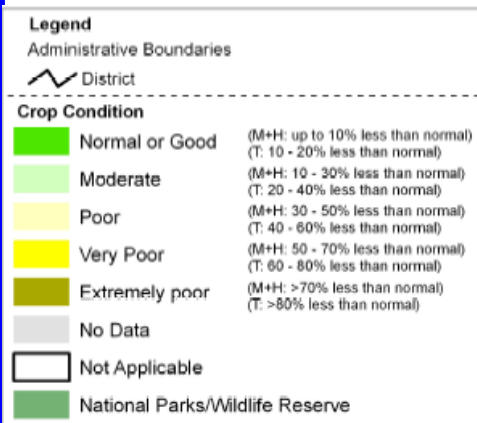
Key Food Security Factors

Crop production

Map 2. Wheat Production Outlook



Map 3. Barley Production Outlook



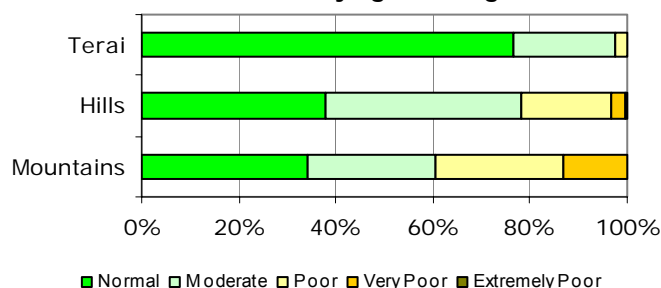
Domestic situation

- Wheat and barley are the major winter crops in Nepal. According to the District Agricultural Development Office (DADO), the outlook for the winter production is generally normal or in some areas moderately impaired.
- The exceptions are areas of Rukum, Dailekh, Bajura, Dang, Siraha and Saptari where localized natural disasters have caused a poor or very poor production outlook, this includes: heavy snowfall in northern Rukum; a hailstorm in the northern part of Dang; drought in the eastern part of Bajura and the northern part of Dailekh; and inadequate rainfall in the northern part of Siraha and Saptari.
- Household surveys (undertaken for this bulletin) confirm the information from the DADO that most households across the country report to expect normal or moderate levels of production, except in the above mentioned districts.
- The crop situation is much better than last year when the country was affected by a severe winter drought. Winter crop production estimates as well as the FY 2009/2010 food balance will be released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in June 2010.

Regional/International Situation

- India is expected to produce a bumper harvest of 117 million MT of food grains, predominantly wheat. The wheat crop, according to media reports, is expected to touch a record-high level of 82 million MT.
- In February 2010, the government of Nepal negotiated the procurement of 50,000 MT of wheat from India. India has imposed various restrictions on food grain exports since October 2007. The partial lifting of the ban on wheat exports to allow this inter-government transaction indicates the government of India's confidence about the upcoming wheat harvest. However, it is unlikely that the Gol will remove the general export ban anytime soon due to domestic food inflation concerns.

Figure 2. Household Perception of Winter Crop Production Outlook by agro-ecological belt



Migration trends

- Seasonal out-migration from the Mid- and the Far-Western Hill and Mountain districts was reportedly normal (but in some areas worse than usual). The relatively normal level of out-migration despite the poor summer crop production was attributed to the existence of WFP assisted Food/Cash for Work activities in many of these districts.
- A higher rate of out-migration was reported in the eastern part of Bajura and some parts of Dailekh in areas with high/severe levels of food insecurity and no or little development assistance provided.
- Across all rural districts surveyed, 43 percent of households sent one or more household members for out-migration. Of these households, 32 percent had to send an additional member compared to normal.



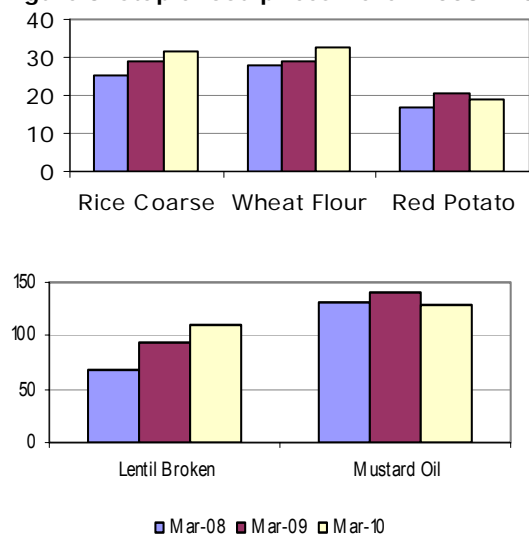


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Key Food Security Factors

Markets

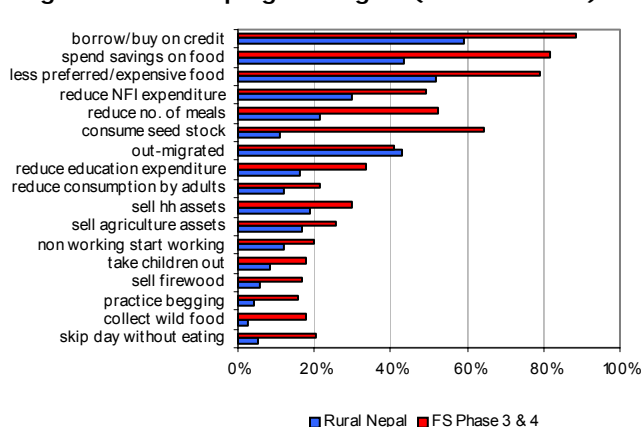
Figure 3. Staple food prices March 2008 - 2010



- Annual national food price inflation remains of significant concern. The Nepal Rastra Bank's March 2010 data indicates that recent year-on-year food price inflation is over 18 percent.
- The price of staple food grains has remained relatively stable over the past quarter because of the summer harvest. However, coarse rice prices are up by 8 percent as compared to the same time last year, national wheat prices have risen by 13 percent, and broken lentil is up by 18 percent.
- The poor summer crop production in 2009/2010 and winter snowfall negatively affected the food supply in markets especially in remote districts. Across the markets monitored by WFP, 45 percent of mountain markets and 10 percent of hill markets reported insufficient supply of key commodities.
- More than half of all WFP monitored markets have reported disruptions and temporary closures due to politically motivated bandhs (strikes/protests) conducted during the monitoring cycle. In March, transportation union led bandhs forced market closures in at least 18 districts.
- In March the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) lifted the price of fuel twice in response to increased international oil prices. In markets monitored by WFP, traders responded that their transportation costs had increased primarily due to the increase in fuel prices.

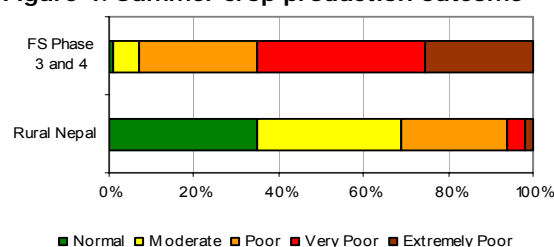
Household food security

Figure 5. Main coping strategies (Jan-Mar 2010)



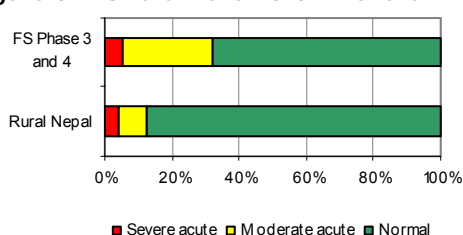
- The major cause of increased household food insecurity during the monitoring cycle was attributed to poor summer crop production. The majority of households under Food Security Phase III (Highly Food Insecure) and IV (Severely Food Insecure) reportedly experienced extremely poor/very poor summer crop production (Figure 4). Average household food stock is largely depleted amongst these households.
- Consequently, the affected households rely on market purchases. High food prices was cited as the major shock experienced by the interviewed households. Households cope with the situation through borrowing/buying food on credit, spending savings on food or eating less preferred food. Figure 5. presents the main coping strategies adopted by households. It is worth noting that households under the Food Security Phase III and IV adopted significantly more severe and irreversible coping strategies including consuming seed stock and selling household assets, compared to the overall rural population.

Figure 4. Summer crop production outcome



Health and nutrition

Figure 6. MUAC Children 6-59 months



- A higher proportion of children with MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference) below 125mm (severe acute/moderate acute malnutrition) was observed among the households in severely and highly food insecure VDCs (Figure. 6).
- The number of diarrhea cases at the district hospital increased worryingly in five VDCs in Jajarkot district. In 2009, a diarrhea outbreak claimed the lives of more than 300 people in the Mid- and the Far-Western regions. Poor hygiene practices, limited or no access to adequate sanitation, no/very limited access to safe drinking water, malnutrition and difficult access to basic health care are identified as among the key causes in the affected areas. The government of Nepal is working with development partners to address the above issues.



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Food Security Outlook & District Reports

Food security outlook

- **Bajura** continues to be the district of major concern. 105,100 people (equivalent to 85 percent of the total district population) are classified as highly or severely food insecure with four VDCs in a critical stage of food insecurity. Other districts of concern are: Humla, Mugu, Kalikot, Jumla, Dailekh, Achham, Doti, Bajhang, Darchula, and Baitadi. The food security situation in these districts will remain critical until the next harvest is ready.
- **The winter crop** will be harvested in April and May. The outlook for the winter crop production is good across the country. This is expected to improve the food security situation over the next quarter. The majority of households in highly or severely food insecure VDCs expect their winter crop outlook will be normal or moderately impaired.
- **Localized natural disasters** including hailstorm, heavy snowfall and drought damaged the winter crop in parts of Rukum, Dailekh, Bajura, Dang, Siraha and Saptari. These areas are anticipated to face winter crop losses of between 30–60 percent.
- **Sale of NTFP** (Non-Timber Forest Products) including *yarchagumba* will be at its peak during the next quarter (Yarchagumba is collected during the month of May). **Employment opportunities** are expected to improve with increased development activities as the government's FY end approaches. In-migration during this period and hand-carried **remittances** from India will improve households' access to food. **Improved access** along the Karnali highway as well as the opening of the Chinese border (expected in May) are other factors contributing to the positive outlook.
- **The market prices** of staple food commodities are anticipated to increase until the winter harvest becomes available. **Political instability** and **bandhs** will cause market disruption over the coming months as the 28th of May deadline for the pre-announced date of constitution promulgation approaches.
- Traditionally April to June is the period when cases of **water-born diseases** including dysentery, cholera, typhoid, giardia etc. are more prominent. Vulnerable, food insecure populations are more likely to be affected by such diseases. Last year, nineteen districts in the Mid- and the Far-western Hill and Mountain regions were affected, resulting in more than 300 diarrhea related death cases during the period of May to August 2009. The government of Nepal is working closely with development partners to improve water quality, educate communities on proper hygiene and sanitation and have medicinal stocks in place.

Detailed district food security information

The Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP) currently monitors 54 districts across Nepal. This information forms the basis for this bulletin. Detailed food security bulletins are available in English and Nepalese for all districts noted by an asterisk, these are available for download from the NeKSAP google group <http://groups.google.com/group/NeKSAP/web/food-security-bulletin-2?hl=en>. Reports for some of the most food insecure districts are provided as an appendix to this report.

Cluster 1. Karnali

Dolpa*
Humla*
Jumla*
Kalikot*
Mugu*

Cluster 2. Western Hill & Mountain

Achham*
Bajhang*
Bajura*
Baitadi*
Dadeldhura*
Darchula*
Doti*

Cluster 3. Rapti-Bheri Hills

Dailekh*
Jajarkot*
Pyuthan*
Rolpa*
Rukum*
Salyan*
Surkhet

Cluster 4. Western Terai

Banke
Bardiya
Dang
Kailali
Kanchanpur
Kapilbastu

Cluster 5. Eastern Terai

Bara
Chitwan
Dhanusa
Mahottari
Parsa
Rautahat
Saptari
Sarlahi
Siraha
Udayapur

6. Western Hill and Mountain

Gorkha
Lamjung
Tanahu
Arghakhanchi
Parbat
Baglung
Myagdi

7. Central Hill and Mountain

Sindhuli
Ramechhap
Dolakha*
Sindhupalchok
Kabrepalanchok
Nuwakot
Rasuwa
Makawanpur

8. Eastern Hill and Mountain

Taplejung
Panchthar
Sankhuwasabha
Okhaldunga

This Food Security Bulletin is based on (i) data collected from 1,073 households (Hill: 361 households, Mountain: 379 households, Terai: 333 households) during January-March 2010 as a part of the Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP), (ii) NeKSAP District Food Security Network Meetings across 17 districts of Mid and Far Western Regions, and (iii) other information sources as referenced.



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World Food Programme