



Editorial

This monitoring cycle marks the harvesting season of wheat, barely and potato. As anticipated in Bulletin 12, there has been a decrease in wheat and barley production this year, particularly in areas without irrigation facilities. Inadequate rain and snowfall during the planting and growth stages, in addition to localized hailstorms in some areas, have contributed to 20-100% crop losses.

Production was most severely affected in the Mid-west and Far-western Development Regions, though all monitored districts were affected to some extent.

In many market areas, moderate increases in the price of food items have been reported, compared to last year. These increases are thought to be a result of low production and higher prices at source markets. During the CPN(M) *Bandh* from March 14-20 and a SPA general strike from April 6-24, temporary but more dramatic increases in market prices were observed, due to the transportation constraints and diminishing stocks.

This cycle is traditionally a period of in-migration. As expected, many people were observed returning home, though perhaps to the low winter production and reduced household food stocks, a number of people were also reported to be leaving for employment opportunities.

These data and trends suggest an increase in household vulnerability to food insecurity, especially in the hill and mountain districts of the Mid-west and Far-west regions. The period of increased food insecurity is expected to continue until the next harvest in August.

Field Access Hindered

Due to the CPN (M) *Bandh* and SPA general strike, all 30 field monitors experienced difficulty accessing the districts and sites where they conduct Food Security Monitoring. Movement constraints, from March 14-20 and April 6-24, prevented regular data collection during these times.

WFP Finalizing Short-term Assistance for Drought-affected Communities

WFP is in the process of finalizing an Emergency Operation to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of food insecure, drought-affected communities in Bajura, Dolpa, Dailekh, Humla, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Rukum and Rolpa. Using primary and secondary data gathered through the FSMS and a rapid EFSA, VDCs in these 10 districts have been identified as severely affected by this winter's drought and in need of food assistance. These chronically food insecure districts experienced a reduced summer crop production in late 2005 due to late and erratic monsoon rains and now are expecting a 50% to 100% crop failure due to the lack of moisture this winter. Food availability and access in the targeted areas are severely limited due to the last winter's drought conditions.

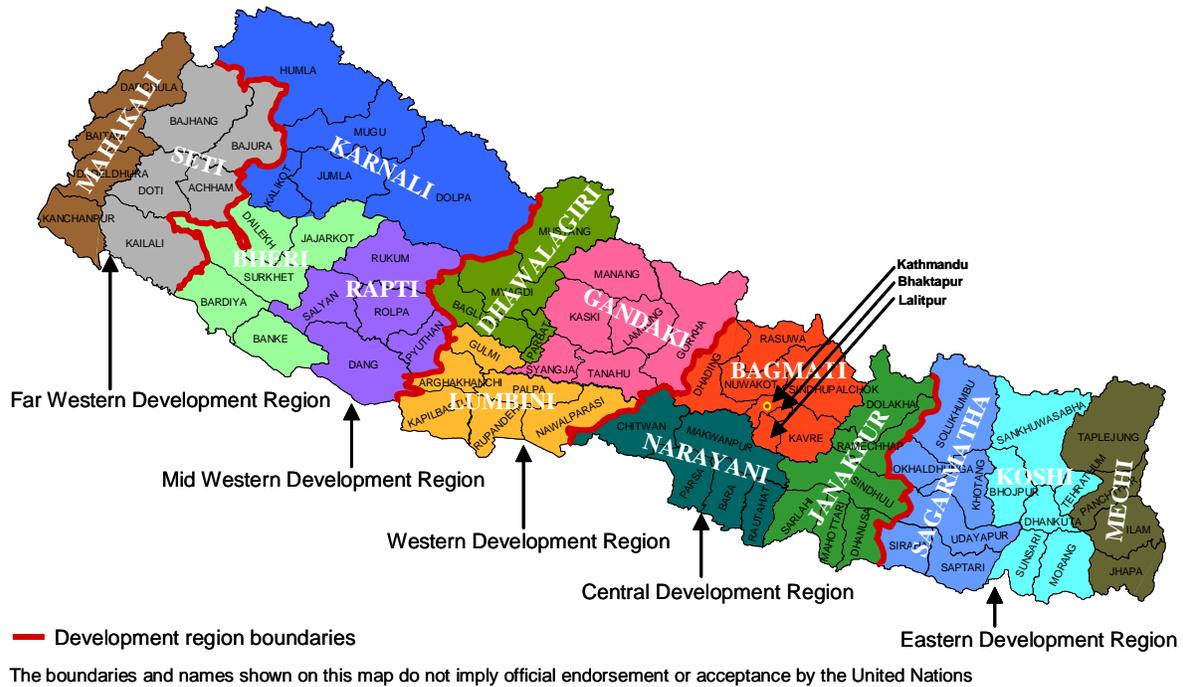
The proposed intervention will provide emergency food assistance to 225,000 beneficiaries for a period of 3 months. Using a summarized and accelerated FFW modality, i.e. "FFW-Light," WFP will distribute 80kg of rice per household against 20-work days. 14 kg of Wheat Soya Blend/Corn Soya Blend will also be distributed to beneficiary households as a take-home, blanket supplementary feeding ration intended to support the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children 6-24 months. Logistic constraints are likely to render implementation challenging and might force prioritization of intervention districts.

Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) in Nepal

World Food Programme monitors food security in the 32 Districts where it implements development activities in Nepal. The Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK Government has funded, and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit of WFP Nepal has managed the project since its inception in October 2002.

Thirty field monitors monitor 32 Districts and 3 border points with India. 29 of them collect household and community data on food security in these 32 Districts. They aim to conduct about 1,500 repeat household interviews, in 150 VDCs, during every two-month monitoring cycle. One field monitor is assigned to collect migration data at 3 main Terai border points with India.

Development Regions, Administrative Zones and Districts



Far-Western Region

Seven Monitors survey food security in the 7 Hill and Mountain districts of Achham, Baitadi, Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Darchula and Doti.

Production. This monitoring cycle is the season of wheat harvesting in the Far-western Development Region. Reports from survey communities across the region indicate an overall decrease in wheat production compared to last year.

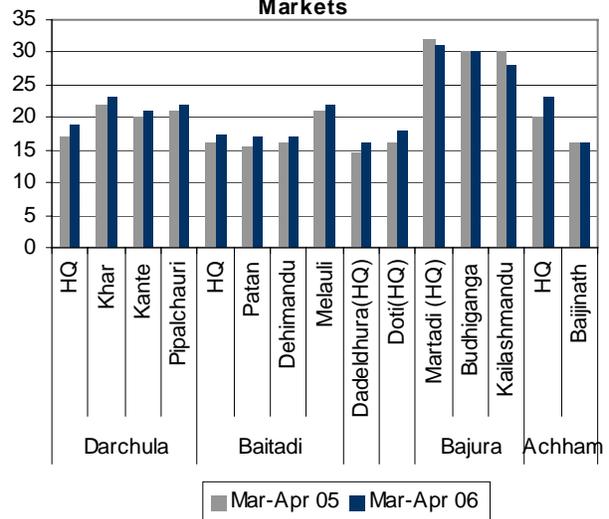
VAM survey communities in Doti, Darchula, Bajhang, and Achham reported a 40-50% decrease in wheat production compared to last year. The harvest in Dadeldhura and Baitadi is reported to be 50-60% less than last year and 70-95% less in Bajura. Throughout the region, these reductions are attributed to the winter's long dry spell. In some cases, such as in Achham and Bajura, hailstorms in April were also a significant damaging factor.

DADO has confirmed this year's low production in several districts. DADO estimates of the decreased production for Baitadi, Doti, and Dadeldhura are lower than reported in the survey communities, at 15%, 40% and 40% respectively, though for Bajura the estimates are similar to those gathered in the communities.

Potato has been planted in 200 hectares of land in five VDCs in and near to Amargadhi, Dadeldhura. The harvest is expected in June.

Price. The price of food items has generally increased this monitoring cycle, compared to last year. In Dadeldhura, Doti, Bajhang, and Achham, the price of rice increased by NRs. 1-2/kg. Baitadi and Darchula experienced slightly higher

Fig. 1 Retail Price of Rice (NRs/kg) in Main Markets



increases, NRs. 2-3/kg and NRs. 4/kg respectively. The rise of market prices is attributed to low summer crop production, increases at the source markets, and elevated transportation costs.

Survey communities in Bajura, interestingly despite low production, reported a NRs. 1-2/kg decrease for rice in the headquarters market and communities. This is due to the lifting of a previous CPN (M) restriction on the movement of food to the district and removal of a CPN (M) 3% tax.

Across the region, market prices increased during the period of the general strike called by the Seven Party Alliance (SPA). In Doti, however, traders maintained prices at normal levels during the strike, despite limited stocks, to show their support of the people's movement. Elsewhere, normal market prices were resumed only at the end of the strike period.

Income. Through the Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW) programme, some 7,896 persons in Bajura, 400 in Bajhang, 1,150 in Baitadi, and 5,450 persons in Dadeldhura received 4 kg of rice/day. Through the programme supported by DFID/RAP, approximately 9,000 persons in Achham and 2,184 in Doti earned 2 kgs of rice plus NRs. 60/day.

Other development programmes provided significant opportunities to many people in the region, including over 2,000 people in Darchula, 1,800 in Baitadi, 400 in Achham, 300 in Bajhang, and 350 in Baitadi. Supported by agencies like DFID/Community Support Programme and CARE Nepal/ASHA, these participants received NRs. 100-150/day for the construction of drinking water systems, irrigation canals, schools, and health posts. The role of development programmes as an income strategy has increased in this region compared to last year, largely due to the improved security situation.

Remittances were also a significant income source this monitoring cycle, as many people were returning home from employment opportunities in India. Those returning reported bringing earnings of NRs. 2,500-10,000 each.

In addition, in several districts, survey communities report engaging in the collection and sale of natural products. In Bajhang, some 800-1000 people from higher elevation areas were collecting *Yarshagumba* this cycle. 200 households in Dadeldhura also collected and sold *Jhyau* (fungi product), *Dalchini* (cinnamon), and *Rittha* (soap nut). Several hundred households in the district headquarters of Dadeldhura additionally reported producing and selling juice from rhododendrons.

A combination of a number of other livelihood strategies also continue to be used in the region. For example, in Darchula, Dadeldhura, and Doti, milk and milk product sales helped support households in areas near the district headquarters. In Bajhang, portering and mule shepherding employed 300-400 and 100 people, respectively.

Movement. The movement of food and people was disrupted during the CPN (M) *Bandh* called from March 14-20 and SPA general strike from April 6-24. Outside of these times, movement was free throughout the region, with the exception of Baitadi. In Baitadi, CPN (M) restrictions have hindered the movement of food from Dehimandu to the Tallo Sorad area (Melauli market), though the CPN (M) restriction on the movement of goats and *ghee* from the village areas to Tallo Sorad and road head areas has been lifted.

Migration. This monitoring cycle includes both the *Bishu* festival (Nepali New Year, April 14), which is celebrated widely in the region, and the winter harvest. For these reasons, this cycle traditionally sees a number of migrants returning to their home districts during this time.

Overall, as expected, this cycle has seen significant in-migration across the region. Darchula received at least 1800 returnees and Baitadi received 350. In the VAM survey communities, 164 people in Dadeldhura have returned this cycle. It is interesting to note that many of those trying to return this monitoring cycle had difficulty doing so during the SPA general strike. Returnees from Achham, Bajhang, Doti, and Bajura all report being stuck in the bordering cities of Nepal and India for some time while movement was curtailed.

Mid Western and Western Regions

Fourteen Monitors survey food security in the 12 Mid Western Mountain and Hill districts of Dailkeh, Dolpa, Humla, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, and Surkhet, in addition to the Western Terai district of Rupandehi. Migration patterns are also monitored at 3 border points with India. There was no monitoring in Jumla and Mugu during this reporting cycle.

Production. This monitoring cycle marks the start of the main harvesting season of winter crops in the Mid-western and Western Development regions. Harvesting is largely complete in the hill belt but can continue up to August in the higher altitudes of these regions.

Overall, reductions in wheat production have been reported across the Mid-west and Western regions and are attributed to the dry spell this winter. VAM survey communities in Rupandehi, Pyuthan, Salyan, and Dolpa indicate a 30-50% decrease in production compared to last year, while survey communities from Surkhet and Rolpa report a 50-70% decrease. More severe crop damage was seen in Dailekh, Kalikot, Jajarkot, and Humla, where production is 70-100% less than last year. The adverse production conditions created by the dry spell were exacerbated by hailstorms in Kalikot, Dailkeh, and Jajarkot. DADO in several districts confirm this year's reduced winter yields, though at a lesser extent. DADO estimate decreases of 22% in Surkhet, 50-60% in Dailekh, and up to 70% in Rolpa.

Barley was harvested in eight districts this cycle. Survey communities in Rukum and Salyan reported reduced production, by 35% and 60% respectively, largely due to the winter dry spell.

Maize cultivation has also begun in nine districts of the region and can continue through June, depending on altitude. Planting was delayed in Surket from March until April due to the lack of rain. Reports confirm though that the recent April rains have supported good plant growth and optimistic forecasts for the next harvest.

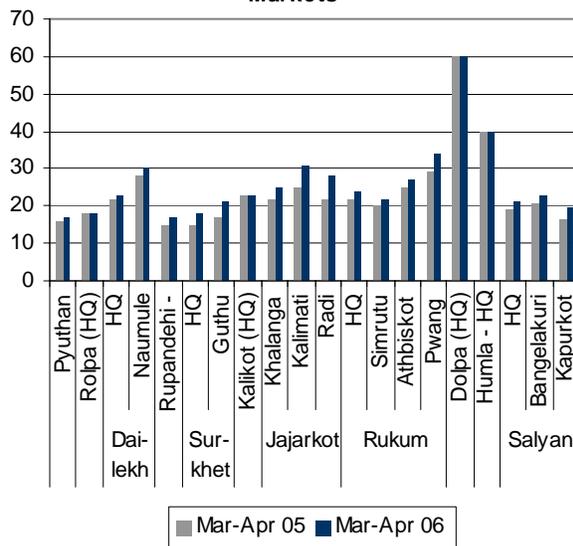
Price. Overall, this monitoring cycle has seen a moderate increase in the price of food items across the survey districts in the Mid-western and Western regions. Rupandehi, Rukum, and Salyan reported

increase in price of rice by NRs. 2-3/kg, while survey communities in Humla observed an increase of NRs. 3-5/kg of rice, wheat, barley and millet, which has been attributed to this season's low wheat and barley production. Surkhet and Jajarkot indicated increases at NRs. 3-6/kg of rice, due to lower production and higher prices in source markets.

During the general strike called by the SPA this cycle, Kalikot also reported a temporary rise in rice prices by NRs. 7/kg due to limited stocks in Rakam with high demand in the district's drought-affected areas.

Only Dolpa and Rolpa reported no change in the price of rice in district headquarters and in main markets. In Dolpa, this is because food delivery to the district headquarters by helicopter was largely continued. Market prices in Rolpa were kept steady by the CPN (M).

Fig. 2 Retail Price of Rice (NRs/kg) in Main Markets



Income. Many of the districts in these regions have reported being significantly affected by this winter's low wheat production. With limited food stocks, this monitoring cycle saw many people, particularly in Rolpa, Dailekh, Kalikot, Rukum, and Dolpa, broaden their livelihood and coping strategies. Overall, wage labour in construction and agriculture, remittances, firewood and herbal collection, and NTFP handicraft sales were the main income

strategies for the survey communities in these areas.

RCIW continued to be a significant employment source in Kalikot, Pyuthan, and Dailekh. The programme provided work for more than 1,800 people in Kalikot, 2120 persons in Pyuthan, and with WFP's new PLIC programme, over 8,500 people in Dailekh. Rice has not yet been distributed for this work, though is expected to be received by households in June.

Remittances were reported as a considerable income source for approximately 10,000 people returning to Kalikot and Salyan. Returning from work in India, these individuals brought home NRs. 7,000 to 25,000 each.

Herbal collection, usually undertaken during this monitoring cycle, was delayed and reduced this year due to the winter's prolonged dry spell. In the Syalakhadi VDC of Rukum, 300 households earned a total of NRs. 150,000, much less than the NRs. 700,000 last year, from the collection of *Yarshagumba* and *Panch Aunle*. Similar conditions of limited wild/NTFP harvests were reported in Jajarkot.

In addition, survey communities in Rupandehi and Jajarkot report the sale of *tapari* (plates made from *salwood* leaf) and bamboo baskets by approximately 125 households. Almost 100 households in the Gonaha and Hattiban VDCs of Rupandehi were able to earn NRs. 3,500 through agricultural labor opportunities from this season's harvest. VDCs close to the district headquarters in Dolpa, Humla, and Salyan also have been engaging the collection and sale of firewood.

Movement. This monitoring cycle included a CPN(M) *Bandh* from March 14-20 and a SPA general strike from April 6-24. Across the region, the movement of food and people was limited during these times.

In addition, movement was restricted in Rolpa during this cycle, where people were required to take permission for travel from the CPN (M). Security Forces in Surkhet similarly restricted the

movement of food items between the headquarters and village areas.

Outside of the days of *bandh* and strike, movement was free in Pyuthan, Dailekh, Rupandehi, Rukum, and Humla. Reports from Kalikot also indicate the movement of food from the district headquarters to six drought-affected VDCs, which for the last eight years have not seen the free movement of food.

Migration. This monitoring cycle includes a time that traditionally observes individuals from the region returning home for the winter crop harvest and summer planting.

As expected, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Dailekh, Kalikot, Humla, and Salyan all reported more people returning from previous migration than leaving this cycle. It is reported that 4,400 persons returned home to Dailekh, due to the improved security situation and ongoing RCIW project in the district. Similarly, some 5,000 people in both Kalikot and Salyan and 1,200 people in Humla returned home this monitoring cycle.

In contrast, Surkhet, Jajarkot, and Rukum have reported increased out-migration, as compared to last year at this time. 145 persons, compared to 58 last year, left Satakhani VDC this cycle. Similarly Jajarkot reported 4,040 people leaving, compared to 1,320 people last year. The greater numbers leaving these districts are attributed to the decrease in winter crop production and the subsequent reduced household food stocks.

Central and Eastern Regions

Nine Monitors survey food security in the 12 Mountain, Hill and Terai districts of Dhanusha, Kavre, Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Parsa, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, Saptari, Sindhupalchok, Siraha and Udayapur.

Production. This monitoring cycle is traditionally the harvesting season of wheat and potato in the Central and Eastern Development Regions. Wheat harvest is complete or will be completed by the end of May in the monitored districts.

Overall, wheat production has been lower than last year, largely due to the long dry spell this winter. VAM survey communities in Ramechhap, Parsa, Dhanusha, Makwanpur, Siraha, Saptari, Kavre, Dolakha and Sindhupalchok report a 20-30% decrease in production compared to last year. The reported decrease of wheat production in Udayapur was more significant at 30-50%, and slightly less so in Rasuwa and Nuwakot with an estimated 15-20% decrease. DADO figures from Makwanpur and Udayapur confirm this year's reduced production, but estimate the impact to be at a lesser extent with an approximately 15-20% decrease.

Potato was also harvested during this cycle in five districts. While Rasuwa and Nuwakot reported a 20-30% increase in production compared to last year, due to this year's healthy crop, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, and Kavre all experienced decreases in production (30%, 30% and 10% respectively). The reductions are attributed to an infestation of tuber moth in Dolakha and the lack of rainfall in Kavre.

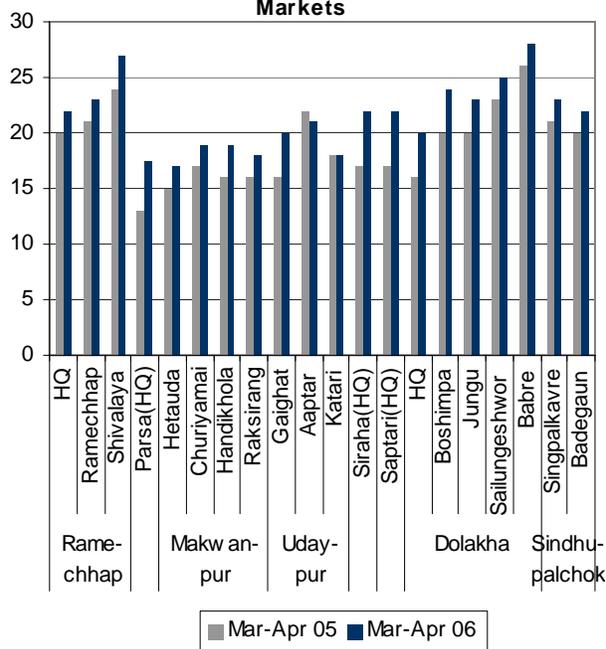
Maize plantation has been completed in most of the hill districts. Plant condition is good due to the April rains and a strong maize harvest is expected in July-August.

Mango cultivation and vegetable production are also reported in Dhanusha and Siraha. Usually the main income generating activities of many in the survey communities of these districts, These activities have been impacted by the dry winter.

Price. The price of food items has increased across the Central and Eastern Regions. The price of rice has increased by NRs. 1-3/kg in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Ramechhap and Parsa. Udayapur,

Dolakha, and Kavre reported the largest increases of this area with NRs. 4/kg. The rise of market prices is attributed to low summer crop production and an increase of prices at the source markets. Parts of Udayapur reported decreases in market prices due to improved road access developed with RCIW support and the subsequent lower costs of transportation.

Fig. 3 Retail Price of Rice (NRs/kg) in Main Markets



It is important to note the impact of the general strike on market prices this cycle. Significant price increases were reported due to transportation constraints and low food stocks related to the strike. During this time, the price of rice increased by NRs. 4-6/kg in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Siraha, and Saptari and by NRs. 8-10/kg in Makwanpur and Parsa. Market prices returned to pre-strike levels after April 24.

Income. Though the *Bandh* and general strike of this monitoring cycle limited the income opportunities of many in these regions, wage labour in construction and agriculture, portering, vegetable and livestock sales, and fire wood collection remained the main livelihood strategies in all of the survey districts this cycle.

RCIW works were operational in Udayapur, Siraha and Dhanusha. In Udayapur, 750 households

received 300-400 kg of rice, while 2,000 households in Siraha received 40-50 kg of rice, in correspondence with the amount of work completed in each district. Other road construction work in Ramechhap, supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation, provided NRs. 200/day for a small number of households while river bank protection and community construction projects offered NRs. 85/day and NRs. 45/day, respectively, to communities in Udayapur.

Agricultural wage labour remained an earning opportunity for people in Parsa, Makwanpur, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, and Kavre this monitoring cycle, as employment was available harvesting winter crops. Reports from Dhanusha also make note of a significant number of households in Mahendranagar, Laboli, and Godar VDCs earning from buffalo milk sales.

Portering was observed in survey communities in Churiyamai VDC of Makwanpur, Chilaune VDC of Udayapur, and Rakkathum VDC of Ramechhap. Usually providing earning opportunities in Rasuwa and Nuwakot as well, portering for trekkers was not a significant income source in these districts this cycle due to the general strike.

Movement. This monitoring cycle observed a CPN(M) *Bandh* called from March 14-20 and a SPA general strike from April 6-24. Movement of food and people was completely stopped at these times.

In addition, in Makwanpur, Security Forces restricted personal and food movement between the district headquarters and village areas after an encounter with CPN (M) armed forces in early March. In Parsa, CPN (M) cadres restricted road travel, allowing movement of only those going to the district headquarters in support of the SPA general strike.

Movement of people and food was restored with the end of the general strike.

Migration. This monitoring cycle is traditionally a time of in-migration. The general strike and unavailability of income opportunities, however, have contributed to reports of both in- and out-migration during this cycle.

In Rasuwa, Ramechhap and Nuwakot, many of those who previously left to Pokhara, Kathmandu, and Bhaktapur for wage labour and portering opportunities have returned. Out-migration from these districts was limited during this cycle. The VAM survey communities in Saptari, Dhanusha, and Dolakha reported increased out-migration, as compared to last year at this time. 67 persons in Sapatri and 36 from Dhanusha left for India, as compared with 62 and 21 people, respectively, last year. Similarly, 170 people, compared to 120 last year, from Dolakha left for Kathmandu. These increases are attributed to the effects of the general strike and fewer income opportunities at home.

It is interesting to note that migration to India from Parsa was observed in the survey communities for the first time. Approximately 40 people from each community left their communities in search of alternative employment, as regular industrial opportunities in the district headquarter were not available due to the general strike.

Seasonal Calendar

Region	Rice		Wheat		Maize		Millet		Barley		Potato		
	Planting	Harvesting	Sowing/ Cultivation	Harvesting	Planting	Harvesting	Planting	Harvesting	Sowing/ Cultivation	Harvesting	Planting	Harvesting	
Eastern	Mountain	May - Jul	Oct - Dec	Nov - Jan	3rd week Mar - May	Dec - Apr	Jun - Sep	May - Jul	Oct - Dec	Oct - Nov	Mar - Apr	Dec - Feb	Jun - Aug
	Hill	May - Aug	Sep - Dec	Oct - Jan	Feb - May	May - Sept	Oct - Dec	May - Aug	Oct - Dec	Sep - Nov	May - Jul	Dec - Mar	June - Aug
	Terai	Apr - Aug	Oct - Nov	Sep - Dec	Mar - May	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	May - Jul	Sep - Nov	Sep - Nov	Apr - Jun	Summer Feb - Apr Winter Oct - Dec	Summer Jul - Sep Winter Feb - Apr
Central	Mountain	May - Aug	Oct - Dec	Oct - Dec	Mar - Jun	Feb - Jun	Aug - Nov	Jun - July	Oct - Jan	Oct - Dec	Apr - Jun	Mar - Jun	Aug - Oct
	Hill	May - Aug	Oct - Dec	Oct - Dec	Mar - Jun	Apr - Jun	Jun - Sep	May - Jul	Oct - Jan	Oct - Dec	Mar - Jun	Jul - Sep	Dec - Feb
	Terai	May - Aug	Aug - Dec	Oct - Jan	Mar - May	Feb - May	May - Sep					Sep - Nov	Dec - Mar
Western	Mountain			Oct - Dec	May - Jul	Feb - Apr	Aug - Oct	Mar - May	Aug - Oct	Oct - Dec	May - July	Feb - May	Aug - Oct
	Hill	May - Aug	Sep - Dec	Oct - Dec	Mar - May	Feb - Jun	Jun - Sep	May - Sep	Sep - Dec	Sep - Jan	Feb - May	Oct - Feb	Jan - Jul
	Terai	May - Aug	Oct - Dec	Oct - Jan	Feb - Apr	Apr - Jul	Jul - Sep	Jun - Aug	Oct - Dec			Sep - Nov	Dec - Feb
Mid Western	Mountain	Mar - Jul	Oct - Dec	Oct - Jan	Apr - Aug	Mar - Jun	Aug - Oct	Mar - May	Oct - Nov	Oct - Jan	Apr - Aug	Feb - Jun	Jun - Nov
	Hill	May - Aug	Oct - Dec	Sep - Dec	Mar - May	Apr - Jun	Aug - Oct			Sep - Nov	Mar - May	Oct - Feb	Sep - Dec
	Terai	May - Jul	Oct - Dec	Oct - Dec	Feb - Apr	Apr - Jul	Aug - Oct	Oct - Dec	Feb - Apr	June - Jul	Sep - Nov	Sep - Nov	Dec - Feb
Far Western	Mountain	Apr - Jun	Aug - Oct	Oct - Dec	Apr - May	Mar - Jun	Jun - Oct			Oct - Dec	Mar - May	Oct - Apr	Apr - Aug
	Hill	May - Aug	Sep - Nov	Oct - Dec	Mar - May	Apr - Jul	Aug - Oct	May - Jul	Sep - Nov	Oct - Dec	Mar - May	Summer Jan - Apr Winter Sep - Nov	Summer Jun - Sep Winter Feb - Apr
	Terai	May - July	Sep - Nov	Oct - Dec	Feb - Apr	Summer May - Jul Winter Feb - Mar	Summer Aug - Sept Winter May - Jun	Jun - Aug	Oct - Dec	Oct - Dec	Feb - Apr	Sep - Nov	Dec - Feb

Source: Department of Agriculture