



## Editorial

This monitoring cycle marks the late harvesting season of the main crops of wheat, barley, and potato as well as planting season of paddy and millet (refer also to Seasonal Calendar on p. 11). In most of the monitored districts, yields of harvested crops are higher than last year. Supplemented by cash incomes from livelihood strategies, such as collection and sale of the *Yarshagumba* herb, mango and ginger production, and employment in WFP supported RCIW projects, respondent households' food stocks are generally also higher than last year.

However, the late monsoon rains this year appear likely to affect yields of crops that are currently under cultivation adversely. The disappointing early harvest of potato in some parts of the country substantiates predictions of further shortfalls.

But this reporting cycle did not show up evidence of a general deterioration in food security in the districts and VDCs covered by WFP/VAM Food Security Monitoring.

## Effect of Late Monsoon Pending

The crops most likely to be affected adversely by the delayed monsoon rains this year include rice, maize and millet and these will not be harvested for another several months. The actual effect of the late rains can therefore not be determined yet.

Predictions of the yield vary greatly from district to district and within districts. Not all are negative. In central and eastern regions, farmers generally agree that the 5-15 days delay in rice transplantation they faced will not suppress yields. Other yield predictions are very negative and in the range of 60-70 percent decreases.

Neither upbeat nor gloomy forecasts are reflected in prices of basic foodstuffs other than the vegetables and cash crops already harvested at lower levels in a few districts, though. Market prices have changed little from the previous to current

monitoring cycle. In brief, the full effect of the delay in rains on household economies is yet to materialize and will also depend on the rainfall throughout the rest of this cultivation season.

## Monitoring Suspended 1½ Months

In an effort to deepen the general understanding of food security and livelihoods in rural Nepal, WFP/VAM is launching a nationwide Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis. It covers a sample of 43 districts, 168 wards, and 1,680 households randomly selected to represent all rural areas in the country. The study will serve as a baseline against which future Food Security Monitoring will measure changes. It will be published and shared publicly in December.

From August 26 to October 10, the Field Monitors normally engaged in Food Security Monitoring will collect data for this study instead.

This means that the next Food Security Bulletin will not be launched until December. It will be based on the new WFP/VAM computer-based data collection system that enables receipt and analysis of data real-time.

### Food Security Monitoring (FSM) 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. In addition, each field monitor randomly selects 5-15 households to interview once in a cycle. The repeat households were selected through purposive sampling to represent vulnerable segments of the given population, for example, in terms of their physical isolation and limited landholding.

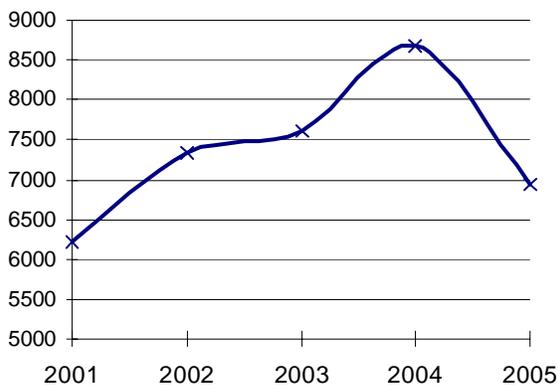
Additionally, one field monitor is assigned to collect migration data at 3 main Terai border points with India. He checks official migration records against spot interviews with migrants as they cross the border

## Dailekh District

WFP/VAM sent a mission to Dailekh District from July 24 to 29 to conduct a rapid assessment of early indications of the impact on crops of the late monsoon this year.

**Production.** At the time of the mission, the potato harvest was over and showed a clear reduction over last year. Dailekh produced 8,676 MT of potato last year but only 6,941 MT – about 20% less – this year and that in spite of an increase in the area planted: up from 676 to 690 ha. The resulting relative shortage of potato in the market has pushed prices up by as much as 200% in some markets. While making potato more expensive to the buyer, the price hike also compensates producers who bring less to market. The decrease returns the district production to 2002 levels at which point however fewer farmers were engaged in potato production.

**Production (in MT) of Potato in Dailekh**  
Data Source: DADO, Dailekh

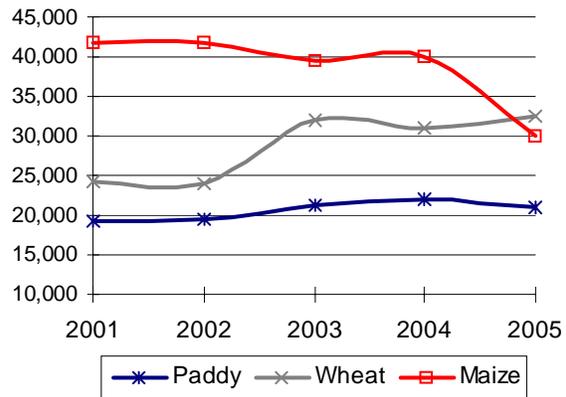


While not harvested at the time of the mission's visit, it would appear that also the maize crop is affected adversely by this year's delay in the monsoon rains. WFP and FAO, in consultation with the DADO of Dailekh and Ministry of Agriculture, project a 25% decrease in maize production this year. The one and a half month delay set back production particularly in the eastern, western, and southern belt of the district.

Rice, on the other hand, is projected to see a minor 5% reduction in yields, year-on-year.

Consequently, the District Food Management Committee (DFMC) has requested extra 50 MT of rice, over and above their regular August-September quota of 90 MT, from the Nepal Food Corporation (NFC).

**Production (in MT) of Cereal in Dailekh**  
Data Source: DADO, Dailekh



**Income.** This monitoring cycle being a busy agricultural season, agricultural wage labor tops the list of employment activities – on own land or for a wage – of respondent households. The other principal income earning strategies included the RCIW programme, implemented by WFP and partners, through which 8,781 households earned 100 kg of rice and 3,000 NRs. in cash. Another 911 households found employment in government-supported construction works, such as road and health post construction, which earned them between 1,500 and 2,800 NRs.

**Price.** The market price of other crops, particularly rice, has not changed much compared to last year. Among the 10 WFP/VAM repeat survey communities, four recorded a year-on-year decrease and two no change in retail rice prices. In other words, the impact of the delayed monsoon rains on the market price of food items, other than potatoes and vegetables, does not seem significant.

**Movement.** In general, there are no restrictions on the movement of people and commodities in Dailekh. The exception is the RNA's reported limitation of foodstuffs moving into Naumule VDC: persons entering this area can carry a maximum of 25 kgs of rice at a time.

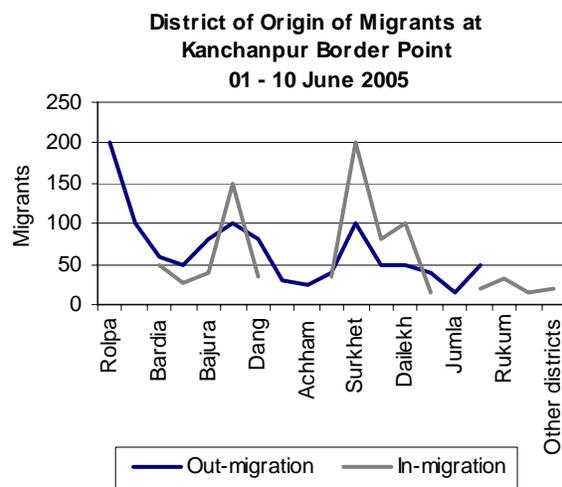
**Migration.** During this monitoring cycle, the repeat survey communities saw 28 members leave for and 233 return from short-term labor opportunities in India. Respondents cited improved security and a busy agricultural season as the principal reasons for the large number of returns.

## Short-term Migration

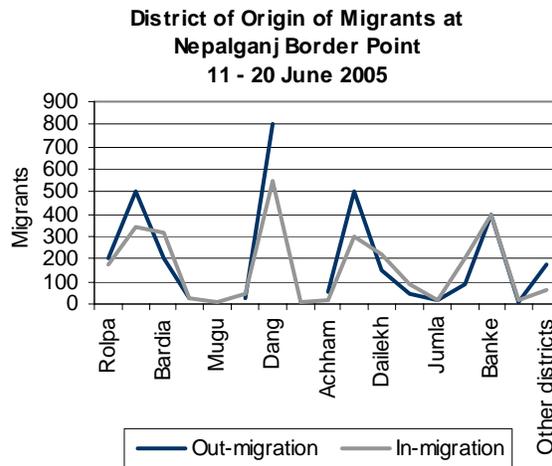
One WFP/VAM Field Monitor is assigned to collect migration data at 3 main Terai border points with India. He checks official migration records against spot interviews with migrants as they cross the border.

**Kanchanpur Border Point.** The number of people leaving Nepal through Kanchanpur Border Point in search of employment in India in the first 2 weeks of June varied greatly amongst the districts. Rolpa, with 200 people leaving, had the highest number of out-migrants while Jumla, with 15, had the lowest. About 35% of the migrants from Rolpa, Dailekh, and Surkhet stated that they were leaving because of apprehensions about CPN(M) recruitment drives. Most of them migrated to Simla (to work in apple orchards and vegetable farms) or Garhwal and Haridwar (to work in road construction projects). In total, 1,140 migrants left through Kanchanpur Border Point during the monitoring period of June 1-10.

Kailali, Surkhet and Dailekh had the highest number of people returning during the first two weeks of June. In contrast, Banke and Bajhang had the least number of people returning. In total, 860 migrants returned through Kanchanpur Border Point in the first two weeks of June.



**Nepalgunj Border Point.** Of the three border points monitored, Nepalgunj saw the highest number of migrants crossing. Approximately 3,200 people left during the period in which this border point was monitored: June 11-20. Dang (800), Salyan (500) and Surkhet (500) represented the highest absolute numbers of out-migrants. They mainly left in search of employment in the Indian

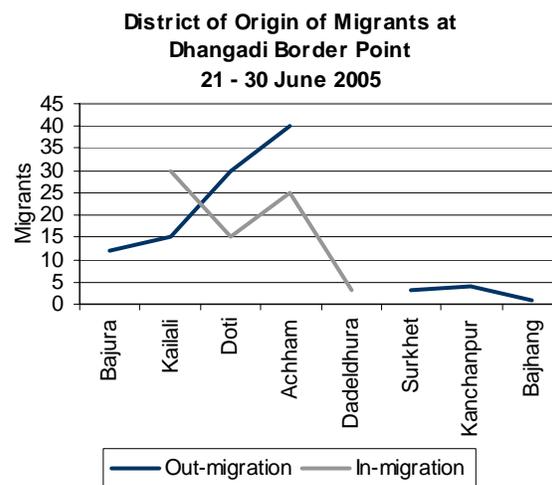


cities of Garhwal, Badri-Kedar, Simla, Kashmir, and Laddakh.

Dang, Banke and Salyan saw the highest number of migrants returning home during the second and third weeks of June. In contrast, for the same period, Kathmandu and Mugu had less than 10 people returning. In total, 2,800 migrants returned through the Nepalgunj Border Point during the monitoring period of June 11-20.

**Dhangadhi Border Point.** In the last 10 days of June, a total of 105 people migrated through this crossing point. The motivation they most commonly cited was concern about their security back home.

In the last 10 days of June, 73 migrants returned through the Dhangadhi Border Point.



## Far Western Region

Seven WFP/VAM Field 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 harvesting season for wheat, barley, and potato in the Far Western Region. The harvest of wheat and barley is generally better than last year while that of potato is less because of the inadequate rainfall during this year's growing season.

In Bajura, the wheat yield per hectare reached 1.4-1.6 MT in upland and 1.8-2.2 MT in lowland areas which translates into an increase of 30-40% over last year. In Doti, wheat, barley, potato and *Masuro* (lentil) yields increased by about 25% year-on-year to 1.6 MT/hectare. In Bajhang, wheat and barley yields are up by 25-30% over last year. Also the barley harvest in the high mountain region of Bajhang enjoyed an increased yield of about 25-30%. The predictions in Food Security Bulletin 9 of 25-50% wheat yield increases in Darchula were confirmed during this monitoring cycle. In Baitadi, estimates of this year's increase vary. Respondents under WFP/VAM's Food Security Monitoring expect 40-55% increase in wheat and barley yields over last year but the DADO (District Agricultural development Office) predicts an overall 20% increase. The DADO of Dadeldhura expects 7% year-on-year increase in wheat and barley yields for the whole district.

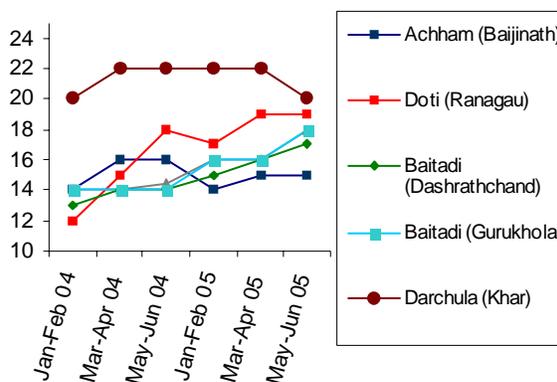
In contrast, the rainfall gap during April, May and June affected the potato harvest in six VDCs of northern Bajhang adversely and reduced production by about 50%. Among the five VDCs around the headquarters of Dadeldhura, where the potato cultivation is most popular, farmers reported a loss of 60-70% in potato production over last year.

This monitoring cycle is also the planting and cultivation season for paddy, maize, and millet in the Far Western Region. The delayed monsoon rains are expected to affect yields adversely. For instance, maize planting was delayed by 20-25 days and paddy planting delayed by about a month in Bajura. According to DADO, only 15% of the total maize and paddy plantation was done in time in Doti, in areas where there is irrigation facility. In other areas, the planting of these crops was significantly delayed, thus making farmers concerned that the production this year might be

reduced by 20 to 50% in non-irrigated upland farms. Paddy planting in Bajhang was also delayed by 10-15 days. In Parakatne and Dangaji VDCs where people used to spread paddy seeds instead of planting them the seeds dried out this year due to sun burn and farmers are preparing to plant millet in those plots. Maize planting was also delayed by 15-20 days in Bajhang and farmers had to re-sow maize in 20 VDCs after the maize sown earlier failed to grow due to dry weather. Maize and paddy planting in Darchula and Baitadi was also delayed by about a month, except in irrigated areas. The actual effect on yields remains to be determined when these crops are harvested over the next several months. For example, several farmers assessed that 5-15 days delays would not affect yields adversely.

**Price.** Except in Achham, Bajura, and Doti, prices of food items have increased slightly compared to last year. The reason for this appears to be the increase in prices in the Terai sourcing markets or hikes in transportation costs.

**Retail Price of Rice (NRs/kg) in Select Sourcing Markets**



In Achham, market prices are almost the same as they were last year in three of the WFP/VAM repeat survey communities and lower in two others. This is due to the improvement of the road to Sanfebagar and steady supplies of food this year. Last year, 55 days of Bandh disrupted supplies along the road to Sanfebagar.

In Bajura, retail prices of basic foodstuffs are lower in district headquarters than last year. For example, rice prices have gone down by 6 NRs./kg. This is because the road has been extended to

Budhabagar, closer than Sanfebagar by 15 km, and because the supply of food, including from WFP and NFC, has been regular.

**Movement.** This monitoring cycle has seen few changes in restrictions on the movement of goods and people imposed by the warring parties.

In Achham, food delivery to the villages from headquarters is allowed with permission from the RNA but strictly prohibited in the other direction by the CPN(M). The CPN(M) blockade of Dadeldhura HQ has been lifted in May and hence there is currently no restriction on food movement from villages to headquarters and vice versa. In Bajura, traders have to pay taxes on the commercial value of goods to the CPN(M). In Bajhang, there is a pass system by which CPN(M) controls migration but no restriction on the movement of commodities. The district headquarter of Darchula was under blockade during May and June and this limited movement of food to the headquarter; however, there was no restrictions on other intra-district food or people movement except on goods originating in Tallosorad and part of Mallosorad VDCs.

**Income.** A total of 10,123 participants from 5,723 households in Achham worked for 62 days in the WFP supported RCIW programme and received 67 kg of rice and 2,000 NRs. in cash per person. Some 3,400 households from six VDCs of Bajhang were also earning a stable income through the RCIW programme, generally enough to keep their households food secure for another 1-2 months. Another 5-600 participants earned 5-6 kg of rice per day from RCIW works in Bhumiraj, Kuwakot and Bhatna VDCs of Baitadi.

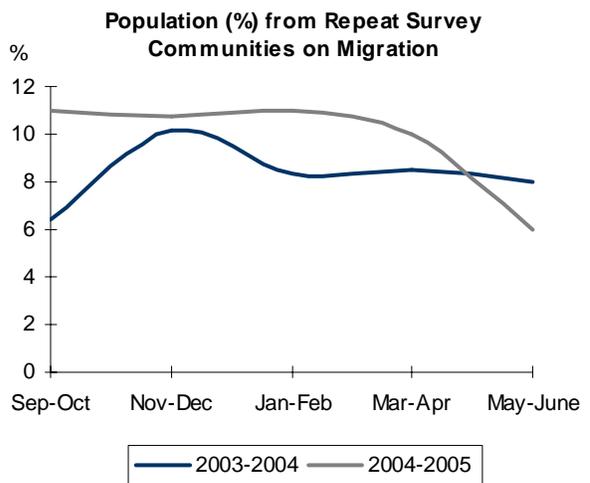
*Yarshagumba* collection has provided a major source of income in Bajhang and Darchula during this monitoring period. This year, the price of *Yarshagumba* has gone up by 5,000 NRs./kg. About 5-600 persons from six northern VDCs of Bajhang were collecting anywhere between 50 and 1,200 pieces and thus earning between 1,200 and 30,000 NRs. per person. Similarly, eight to ten thousand persons from Darchula were collecting an average of 500 pieces of *Yarshagumba* and earning 14,000 NRs. per person.

In Bajura, some 250-300 persons earned about

150-200 NRs. per day by working for construction works implemented by DFID/ASHA in Dadakot and the district headquarter. Similarly, 100 to 150 persons were employed in the headquarter to Jhulaghat road construction in Dadeldhura and about the same number of people in the suspension bridge project in Doti helping them earn 100-150 NRs. per day. Another 200-250 persons were employed in school construction works in Bajhang implemented by DFID and the District Education Office.

Other income generating strategies in the Far Western Region during this monitoring cycle included agricultural wage labor, collection and sale of wild fruits and fire wood, selling milk and agricultural produces, portering and traditional occupational skills such as weaving, and bamboo handicrafts. Survey communities in Doti, Achham and Dadeldhura also had significant incomes from remittances from short term migration.

**Migration.** Due to the harvest time of wheat and barley and planting season of paddy, more people tended to return home from than leave for labor migration during this monitoring cycle. Yet, in the repeat survey communities of Bajura, fewer returnees were recorded than during the same monitoring cycle last year. Respondents cited their sense that the security situation remained difficult and the CPN(M) active in recruitment campaigns as main reasons for this. In Darchula, reports indicated that more people left for than returned from India this cycle.



On the other hand, in Achham, out migration was less this year than it was at the same time last year due to the delayed monsoon which kept people home for cultivation. The same applied to Dadeldhura. Also in Baitadi, more migrants returned than left and they cited the labor opportunities provided by RCIW as the main reason

#### **Yarshagumba: An Alternative Source of Livelihood in Darchula**

About 6,000-7,000 households from 20 out of the district's 47 VDCs have been involved in the collection and sale of *Yarshagumba* in Darchula in the past five years. The herb is found in Khandeshwor and Ghusa VDC. Every year, elderly and children below 10 years of age stay behind as much of the working age population leaves home in search of the valuable herb from mid-May to mid-July. They sell their collection to local traders who in turn sell it to Tibetan traders at the Sino-Nepal. Collectors are usually paid 90,000 to 125,000 NRs./kg of *Yarshagumba* by the Nepali middlemen who pay the CPN (M) a tax of 35,000 NRs./kg. before selling it on to the Tibetans.

Particularly the people from the remote mountain VDCs of Khandeshwori, Ghusa, Rapla, and Byas have turned *Yarshagumba* collection into their main livelihoods strategy - earning enough during these two months to buy food for the whole year. Their land is not fertile and location quite isolated but thanks to *Yarshagumba* nine out of ten houses in these VDCs now have Solar Power to run their lighting and new television sets.

This season, however, they were disappointed with the herb the quantity of which they claim had been halved over last year. Some respondents even claimed they had not made an income this year due to the reduction.

This is of course a very local story but it points to the rich variety of livelihoods in Nepal and underscores the importance of understanding the many different ways in which they are composed, currently being stretched or not, and vulnerable to shocks such as this. The objective of the forthcoming WFP/VAM nationwide Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis is precisely to develop this level of understanding of rural livelihoods.

## Mid Western and Western Regions

Thirteen WFP/VAM Field Monitors survey food security in the 12 Mid Western Hill and Mountain districts of Dailekh, Dolpa, Humla, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, and Surkhet in addition to the Western Terai district of Rupandehi.

**Production.** May and June are the harvesting season for the main crops of wheat and barley in most parts of the Mid Western and Western Development Regions. The exceptions are the high mountain areas of Dolpa and Mugu where wheat and barley are still under cultivation and will not be harvested for another several months. This is also the season for planting and cultivation of the main cereals of paddy, millet and maize and lesser crops, including beans, apple, ginger, and potato, in several parts of the regions.

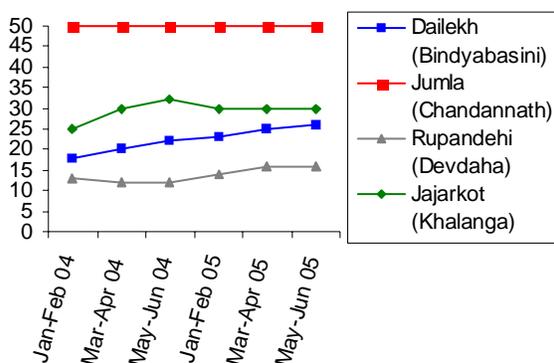
Overall, wheat production is up year-on-year. In the upper belt of Jajarkot, this year's wheat harvest turned out far better than last year: in Rokayagaun and Nayakabada VDCs, yields reached 1,600 kg/ha which compares favorably to the norm of 1,280 kg/ha. The extended snow coverage in Kalikot helped augment wheat yields this year. The irrigated areas of Rupandehi saw production increases while the non-irrigated ones did not. Also in Rolpa and Humla, wheat harvests are up, in Rolpa by as much as 20%, year-on-year; in Humla, the barley harvest is also expecting to turn out well. Predictions in Mugu for both barley and wheat are similarly upbeat.

However, in Dolpa, wheat and *uwa* (alpine barley) harvested in 16 VDCs in the middle and lower belts turned out at 25-35% lower levels than last year due to inadequate rainfall for the pollination of crops. In Surkhet, farmers estimate the reduction to be around 5% over last year; in Jumla, they also expect a decrease but are unsure about its scale.

This year's delayed monsoon is estimated to have affected paddy, millet, and maize crops to varying degrees across the Mid Western and Western Development Regions. The delayed rains have caused delays in the planting or transplantation of the crops. The actual effect on yields remains to be seen at the time of harvest, over the next several months. The same applies to beans, ginger, apple and potato – key cash crops – for which less rainfall during the period of growth generally means less yields.

**Price.** In general, retail prices of basic food stuffs have changed little over last monitoring cycle in the Mid Western and Western Development Regions. As usual, some district headquarter markets see different price fluctuations than rural markets do because of the particularly severe restrictions on movement of goods into headquarters in place. For example, respondents in Dolpa headquarter attribute the 10% increase in rice prices there to CPN(M) restrictions on the number of mules allowed to transport food items into headquarters. Also, in Khalanga, the district headquarter of Pyuthan, rice prices increased from 14 to 18 NRs./kg in the course of just one month due to the CPN(M) blockade which was only lifted on July 4.

**Retail Price of Rice (NRs/kg) in Select Sourcing Markets**



Conversely, Jajarkot basic foodstuff prices are down over last year in the repeat survey communities of Jhapra and Rautgaon VDCs because there is no CPN(M) blockade and wheat production has increased during this cycle. Also, the price of maize and wheat has gone down significantly in Ramidada, Sakla, Laha and Dadagaun VDCs due to higher production this year.

In Rolpa, the price of rice has gone down from 23 to 18 NRs./kg, year-on-year, after the CPN(M) lifted its six-month long blockade in June 2005. Also in Rukum, the price is lower due to fewer blockades than last year.

In Salyan, rice prices in Dadagaon, Kotmaula, and Marke communities are up by about 2 NRs/kg over last year. Respondents however consider the increase normal and attribute it to a general hike

in transport costs. The same explanation is offered in Surkhet where rice is also up by around 1 NRs/kg.

In Sulichaur market, which serves almost all parts of Rolpa district except HQ, the price of rice decreased by 1 NRs./kg – reportedly due to an oversupply in the market caused by FSRP/GTZ distribution. In the Terai district of Rupandehi, the price of rice has increased to 16-17 from 12-13 NRs/kg last year. Respondents claim that landowners are orchestrating this price hike so as to augment profits.

**Movement.** Generally, there has been no significant change on the restrictions or ease on the movement of people and food items during this monitoring cycle compared to the last. One significant exception is in Humla where all restrictions by CPN(M) on the movement of people and food have been lifted enabling unhindered access from the villages to district headquarter and vice versa. In most other districts, there is generally no restriction on movement from one village to another but restrictions on movement between villages and headquarters.

Particulars include Dolpa where mules are an important means of food transport but are taxed a registration fee of 200 NRs. per year plus 200 NRs. per trip by the CPN(M). In Surkhet, both the conflicting parties ask for details of travel between villages and headquarters. In Jumla, permission is required from both parties before such travel can be initiated. In June, Pyuthan headquarter was under blockade by CPN(M). In Rolpa, Salyan, and Kalikot, movement within villages outside of the headquarters is generally allowed in contrast to movement to and from headquarters. In Rolpa, the CPN(M) applies a pass system for movement from the villages to headquarters. In Jajarkot, a similar system has been rescinded from May 2005.

In Kalikot, due to serious restrictions on movement of food to headquarters, it is supplied almost exclusively by air. While there are no restrictions on traveling from village to village and headquarters to villages, the movement of people from headquarters to the villages is restricted.

**Income.** Some 10,500 participants in Humla, Jumla, Mugu, Dolpa, Kalikot, Jajarkot, Dailekh,

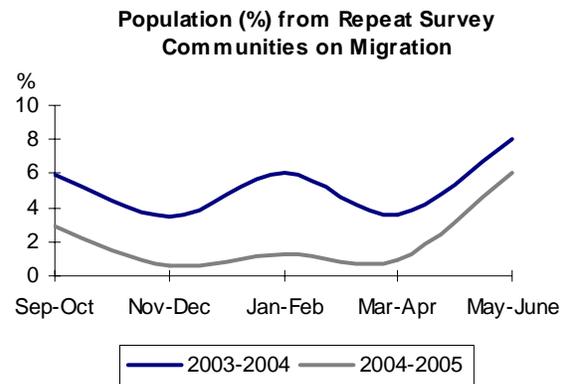
Salyan and Pyuthan have been benefiting from rice rations through the Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW) programme by WFP, GTZ and SNV. Similarly, participants from 12 VDCs in Rukum and Rolpa have been benefiting from a construction program by GTZ/FSRP. Further, 100-150 Dalit households were employed on the Karnali Highway construction site for a daily wage of 150 NRs.

A major source of income in this monitoring cycle has been *Yarshagumba* collection. Due to the delayed rainfall and thus a prolonged dry condition after the melting of snow, the quantity of *Yarshagumba* has been adversely affected this year, with reports of 50% year-on-year reductions in quantity. Since the price also went up by about 65%, the cash income that collectors earned is generally at least year's levels, though. However, fewer people are reported to have participated. One collector is estimated to be able to gather 10-20 pieces of *Yarshagumba* a day which translates into 500 to 1,000 NRs. per day or 5-10,000 NRs. for the entire season.

In Jumla and Kalikot, many households reported income from other Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP), such as *Guchichyau* (Morel Mushroom) and *Jatamashi*.

**Migration.** Short-term migration in the Mid Western and Western Development Regions has generally decreased or remained the same compared to last year, except for Pyuthan and Jajarkot. In Pyuthan, people are reported to have migrated for labor in India or the Terai markets due to income constraints and security concerns. In June alone, more than a thousand youths are reported to have left the VDCs of Arkha, Rajwara, Puja, Khung, Narikot, Liwang and Tushara. From Jajarkot, reports suggest that 1-1,500 youths left for India out of fear of CPN(M) conscription. Reports also mention that about 1,200 youths from 8 VDCs in Jajarkot went to Dolpa to participate in the profitable *Yarshagumba* collection and trade during this monitoring cycle.

In Rolpa, overall short-term labor migration rates are down over last year because of CPN(M) restrictions on migration. Nonetheless, respondents estimated that about 4,000 youth left for India, around 1,400 of them through the Nepalgunj border crossing point.



In Dolpa, only seasonal migration for *Yarshagumba* collection within the district was reported. In Surkhet, fewer people than last year left during this monitoring cycle because crops were not harvested yet. CPN(M) restricts migration from Surkhet and migrants leave in the night or early morning to avoid being noticed. If they are, they will have to pay a tax of 10 NRs. per day of their stay abroad upon returning home. In Mugu, several hundred people who left for India during the winter season returned to participate in the agricultural works of this cycle. People from the Khatyad area did not migrate to India this year because of RCIW work opportunities and a sense of improved security. Half of the 3,000 or so migrants who had gone to India from western and southern parts of Mugu returned home with savings of about 2-2,500 NRs. each.

Migration from Jumla is also down because of the late agricultural season and absence of CPN(M) recruitment campaigns compared to last year. Respondents also cited the labor opportunities with the Karnali highway project and the RCIW programme as reasons why more people stayed behind this year. In Salyan, respondents said they would migrate only after the completion of cultivation.

## Central and Eastern Regions

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

**Production.** This monitoring cycle covers a complex agricultural season in the Central and Eastern Development Regions. Potato, early varieties of paddy and maize, mango, watermelon, and upland wheat are being harvested. May and June also see the planting of millet and the bulk of the paddy crop as well as cultivation of maize.

Actual or expected yields are a mixed picture. On the positive side, mango and watermelon yields in Dhanusha, Saptari, and Siraha are up to 5 times last year's. In Dhanusha, respondents cited the nursing sediments left by last year's flooding as the principal reason for the increase. Wheat harvests in the upland areas of Nuwakot, Rasuwa, and Ramechhap are as good as or better than last year's. This completes the picture depicted in Food Security Bulletin 9 of a strong wheat harvest 2005.

The potato harvest in southern parts of Dolakha and all of Makwanpur is up year-on-year; in Makwanpur by as much as 15-20 percent. Also the early crop variety of paddy in Saptari, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, and Udayapur have turned out yields at or above last year's levels; in Parsa, yields from both the early paddy and the early maize varieties are similar to last year's.

Finally, predictions of the upcoming maize harvest in upland Rasuwa are positive. The same applies to the main paddy crop in Makwanpur, Ramechhap, Parsa and Sindupalchok. In Nuwakot, the forecast for both main paddy and millet crops is cautiously optimistic.

On the negative side, the ongoing harvest of early maize in Sindupalchok, Nuwakot, and Udayapur tentatively suggests 25-40 percent year-on-year decreases in yields. Early paddy yields in Makwanpur appear to be just 10% below last year's but the potato harvest in Rasuwa, northern Dolakha and Ramechhap will disappoint if the prediction of a 25% year-on-year decrease turns out to be true.

The cultivation of the main maize crop variety has

been affected by the delayed monsoon rains. Particularly Dolakha, Dhanusha, Makwanpur, and Sindhupalchok expect yields to be at least 1/3 less than last year. If slightly less downbeat, predictions for Siraha, Rasuwa and Udayapur main maize yields are also negative. It is too early to tell what the exact reduction will be for the main maize crop in the Central and Eastern Development Regions this year but everywhere except Rasuwa respondents predict a cut in yields due to the delayed monsoon.

In Saptari, Udayapur, Dhanusha and Dolakha, the transplantation of the main paddy crop-highly sensitive to timing and amount of rains-also appears to be adversely affected. Last year, farmers in Dhanusha postponed transplantation to August because of excess rains. This year, they have done so because of the lack of rain. In northern Dhanusha, the dry spell let farmers to decide against cultivating the early variety of paddy, and agricultural wage laborers missed out on an important income opportunity.

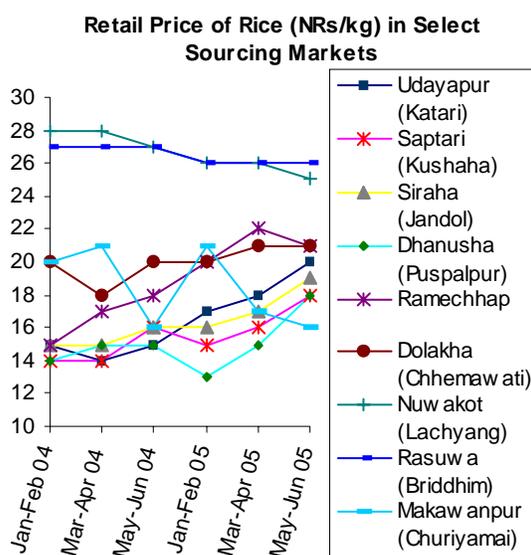
Millet seedlings are less sensitive to the amount and timing of rains but this year's monsoon delay is nonetheless expected to lead to lesser yields in Dolakha. In Ramechhap, yields might turn out to be at last year's level but these are not very good to begin with: excess rain destroyed many seedlings before they were transplanted. This year, absent rains are expected to have had the same effect.

In short, vegetable and early variety food crop harvests have been good, in general; the notable exception is early maize in three districts. At the time of data collection, the results of this year's main food crop harvests were still pending. Yet, district officials' and producers' guesstimates are in agreement that the main maize season has been severely affected by the delayed monsoon in all but one district, main paddy season upset in four districts and millet season in two districts.

**Price.** Market prices of basic foodstuffs have changed little over last monitoring cycle or year. In Lavtoli and Puspapur VDCs of Dhanusha markets saw a slight hike in retail rice prices as demand increased with the influx of families from Bandipur VDC in Siraha seeking refugee from the fighting there. In Rakathum VDC of Ramechhap, rice

prices decreased slightly after the extension of the road to Nepalthok in Sindhuli district was completed.

Where the monsoon rains remained absent during the time of data collection, markets tended to see slight price decreases because roads that were inaccessible during the heavy monsoon rains of last May and June were open. Correspondingly, where the monsoon had arrived, prices increased, as would be expected.



**Income.** This monitoring cycle being a busy agricultural season, agricultural wage labor tops the list of employment activities – on own land or for a wage – of respondent households. The other principal income earning strategies were RCIW programmes, implemented by WFP and partners, and remittances from family members on migration. To a lesser degree, logging, firewood collection, and day labor on public construction projects contributed to household economics across the Central and Eastern Development Regions. Porterage and caste-specific labor, such as blacksmithing, were the least generally mentioned strategies among respondents.

Local variation include Saptari where illegal logging is a nonetheless profitable source of employment for a reported 1,500 people, mango sales engage perhaps more than ten times that number of people who can earn 6-10,000 NRs. per month, and GTZ, LGP and Garib Sanga Biseswor support small cottage industries where employees earn a

reported average daily wage of 100 NRs. Also in Siraha, this is mango season and sales of the fruit occupied members of all surveyed communities at the time of data collection. Parsa sees sizeable proportions of its rural population seek wage labor opportunities in the nearby Birgunj factories this time of the year. They earn anywhere between 100 and 200 NRs. a day. In Rasuwa, some respondents secured employment at the Chilime Hydropower Plant.

**Movement.** As in last monitoring cycle, there are no restrictions on the movement of either people or commodities in Dhanusha, Saptari, and Siraha. Respondents in Saptari and Siraha also have not reported cases of harassment by vigilante groups claiming affiliation with the CPN(M) this cycle. Siraha district headquarters host about 350 landlords and traders from Axe VDC who claim they cannot return out of fear of CPN(M) reprisals.

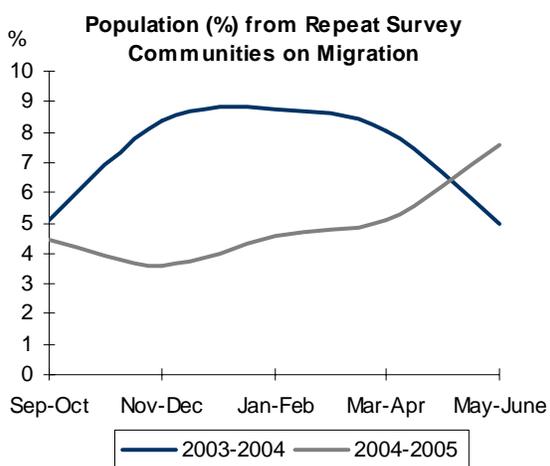
Restrictions reported in Food Security Bulletin 9 have been lifted in Dolakha where respondents no longer claim they fear moving about the district. Makwanpur's restriction on food movement into district headquarters has also been rescinded. The same applies to Ramechhap where the only restriction now is found in Lakwanpur VDC, on the border to Kavre district, where the CPN(M) require verbal permission to enter. Also Rasuwa and Nuwakot district populations have enjoyed virtually no restrictions on movement this cycle.

New restrictions have been imposed in Parsa by the RNA which monitors and requires permission for intra-district movement of food and Sindhupalchok where the CPN(M) curbs the free movement of newcomers and RNA limits the amount of dry food that leaves district headquarters. In Udayapur, this cycle sees the CPN(M) check and tax commercial transports by 4% of their value.

The data confirms the trend that WFP/VAM's Food Security Monitoring has identified over the past two and a half years: movement restrictions are imposed by the two warring parties in their strategic interest and continuously subject to change. During bandhs and blockades, however, these varied, local regulations tend to be superseded by rigorous limitations on the movement of people and commodities, including food items, in all districts.

**Migration.** The rate of short-term labor migration in Central and Eastern Development Regions continues to rise, over both last cycle and year-on-year rates. The WFP/VAM Food Security Monitoring data on short-term migration is collected from communities that are visited repeatedly. On the one hand, it implies that the sample is small and hence not representative of the regions. On the other hand, the strategy picks up even slight trend variations with great accuracy. The trend that this produces from Central and Eastern Development Regions differs from the other three regions by its sustained growth rate over the past several months.

The WFP/VAM data suggests that migration rates are lower if and when people have economic opportunities in their home districts. For example, residents in Lavtoli VDC in Dhanusha cited the RCIW programme as their reason for staying through this cycle. In Hariharpur and Puslapur VDCs, this season's extensive and profitable mango business was described in the same way. Conversely, people from Makwanpur's Raigon VDC said they migrated for employment in neighboring Rautahat and Sarlahi districts because the RCIW programme had ended. In Saptari's Malekpur VDC, two new brick factories were considered pull-factors behind this year's reduction in migration.



Migration and returns coincide; different people clearly migrate for different reasons and different periods of time. In the repeat survey communities in Rasuwa, ten people returned from migration to participate in this cycle's busy agricultural season while four embarked on migration to Kathmandu and another two to Malaysia and Qatar, respectively for labor. Also in Kushaha VDC of Saptari, an increasing number of people were reported to have left for Malaysia and Qatar during May and June. In four of the repeat survey VDCs in Udayapur, as many as one-third of all migrants headed to Malaysia this cycle.

## Seasonal Calendar

Region	Rice		Wheat		Maize		Millet		Barley		Potato		
	Planting	Harvesting	Sowing/Cultivation	Harvesting	Sowing/Cultivation	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-Jul	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-Jul	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-Jul	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: HMG/N Department of Agriculture