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Highlights

Household food security remains good for most parts of Uganda where household food stocks are adequate. Following the beginning of the harvest in Kotido and Moroto Districts (Karamoja Region), availability of cereals has improved especially in the western parts of the districts. Maintained soil moisture benefits the second season cereal crops (and other crops) that is in advanced stages of growth and requires moisture until early December for proper grain filling. Areas of Masaka and Rakai Districts, which were affected by extended dry periods, have registered poor bean yields that will reduce production. No significant movement of livestock has been observed in Kotido and Moroto Districts where pastures and water continue to be good. Improvement in rainfall since late September augurs well for improved pastures in Mbarara District; however, the supply of water remains low in a few places.

The market supply of cereals and other crops, including banana (*matooke*), sweet potatoes is good where prices are affordable enabling household's access to food from the market. The September harvest of "Lira beans" in Lira District of northern Uganda led to decline in prices and increased household access. Approximately 30,000 Metric tons of maize from Kapchorwa District's harvest, which started in October, is expected to be available for the market in December. In past years, much of the maize surplus grown in Kapchorwa District has been sold to Kenya mostly through informal trade and this is not expected to change this year.

An outbreak of Ebola, a highly contagious and deadly viral disease was reported in Gulu District, northern Uganda, in October where the majority of the reported cases were from Aswa County and Gulu Municipal Council areas. The strain, which is similar to the Sudan sub-type that occurred in Sudan a few years, is dangerous but less virulent compared to that which ravaged the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the mid-1990s. Through a concerted effort of the GoU, the World Health Organization (Geneva and Uganda Country Office), Center for Communicable Disease (CDC), Atlanta, and other international health and humanitarian organizations, the disease has been successfully controlled and managed thereby reducing its spread. Only four cases of the Ebola disease have been reported outside Gulu District, in Masindi and Mbarara Districts, one and three respectively. By mid-November, the total number of suspected cases in Gulu District was 320 with 103 deaths (app. 34%); three cases in Mbarara and one in Masindi District. The Ministry of Health and partners in this effort have in place a vigorous campaign of surveillance and testing to identify new outbreaks and cases, isolation from healthy communities and education of the population on prevention of the disease, care for the sick and containment of the disease. The disease does not pose any serious and wide spread threat to health and food security.

The security situation in Gulu and Kitgum District remains stable but uncertain with isolated reports of rebel activity, mainly in Kitgum District. Humanitarian organizations continue providing food and non-food aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the two districts. The World Food Programme continues to provide food aid assistance to the IDPs and in October, the agency temporarily stepped up its rations to IDPs in order to reduce on movement on people therefore reduce on the spread of the Ebola disease.

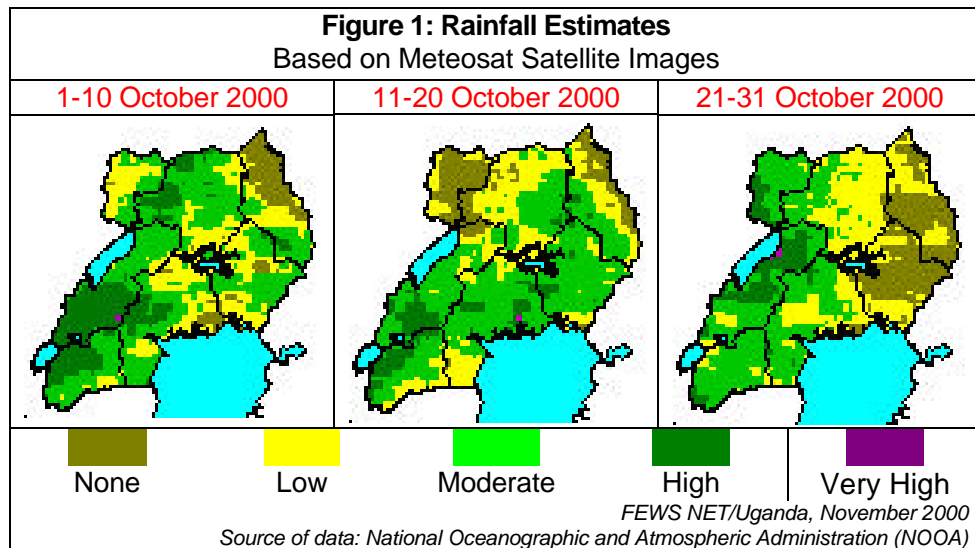
1.0 Food Security Analysis

Household food stocks and access to food, including access to markets, continue to be good for most districts across Uganda. The harvest in Kotido and Moroto Districts (Karamoja Region) has improved supply of cereals there. A large proportion of the second season cereal crop is in advanced stages of growth and requires moisture until early December for proper grain filling. Commercial supply of banana (*matooke*) from Mbarara District to urban markets is good while sweet potatoes come from Soroti and Kumi Districts. No significant movement of livestock has been observed in Kotido and Moroto Districts where pastures and water continue to be good. Improvement in rainfall since late September augurs well for improved pastures in Mbarara District; however, the supply of water remains low in a few places.

2.0 Factors Affecting Food Availability

2.1 Rainfall: Most districts of Uganda continued to experience well-distributed rainfall over October with a slight improvement registered in western and southwestern Uganda, which had a late start to the season, in September, and where lower than normal seasonal rainfall totals have been recorded. A perceptible decline in rainfall distribution was observed in eastern districts during October, a likely sign for an early end to the season. If so, this confirms the Department of Meteorology’s prediction issued in August 2000 for an early end to second season rains in several regions of the country, including eastern Uganda. October marked the beginning of the normal dry season in Kotido and Moroto District, northeastern Uganda, where predominantly dry conditions have been reported since the beginning of the month.

Figure 1, on the right, is based on *Meteosat* satellite imagery provides fair estimation of the spatial distribution of rainfall for the three dekads (ten-day periods) of October. The images corroborate ground station and field reports of improved precipitation in western and southwestern Uganda and dry conditions in the northeast during October.



2.2 Crop Calendar and Production: The second cropping season is into its final month in central, eastern, northern and Lake Victoria Basin districts. More than sixty percent (60%) of the maize crop in major growing districts of Masindi, Kabarole and Kasese Districts of western Uganda and Iganga, Kamuli through to Mbale in the east is in the

tasselling or post tasselling stage. According to District officials in Lira and Apac Districts, northern Uganda, most of the maize crop there has also formed tassels. In all these districts, the crop requires moisture for at least three more weeks to reach full maturity and favorable climatic and agronomic conditions augur well for a good harvest. For now, there is no significant threat to early planted maize and District Department of Agriculture Officials, the Investment in Developing Export Agriculture (IDEA) and FEWS Net Projects predict near normal maize production for the major producing districts.

The maize harvest in Kapchorwa District of eastern Uganda, which started in October, is underway where an estimated 50,000 metric tons is projected this season. Sixty percent (60%) of the crop is expected to be available for the market by December. In past years, much of the maize surplus grown in Kapchorwa District has been sold to Kenya mostly through informal trade and this is not expected to change this year.

Farmers in Kotido and Moroto District are busy harvesting sorghum, a staple crop in the region, which was affected by poorly distributed rainfall and will result in a lower than normal harvest out of this single cropping season. However, the harvest has temporarily improved households' access to food and food security especially in the western parts that experienced a relatively better rainfall regime. The central and eastern counties of Kotido and Moroto, on the border with Turkana, western Kenya, were reportedly most affected by the dry conditions, limiting crop cultivation and leading to much below normal crop harvest. Millet and sorghum, principle crops in eastern, northern and northeastern Uganda, have already formed heads and are reportedly performing well. Farmers expect an average harvest, which is expected to start in December.

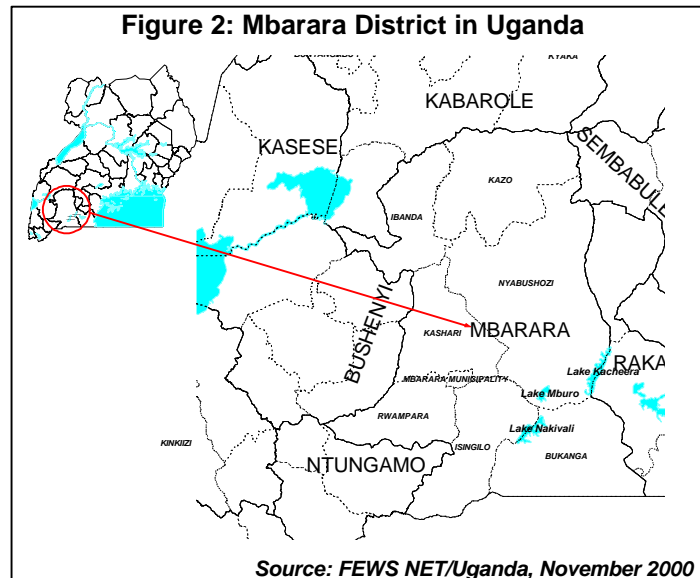
The bean harvest in central areas and Mbale District, eastern Uganda, started in October. The main bean harvest in Kasese District, western Uganda, and other major growing areas is expected to begin before the end of November. Harvest for the popular "Lira beans" that are commonly grown by farmers in northern Uganda started in September in Lira and Apac Districts. The dry commodity is already available for the local market and export to Rwanda, Uganda's southwestern neighbor.

2.3 Pasture and Livestock Conditions in Kotido and Moroto Districts: No significant livestock movements have been observed in these northeastern pastoral districts. According to district Departments of Agriculture and Livestock officials and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) active in Kotido and Moroto, pasture and water conditions continue to be adequate for most of the region.

2.4 Update on Crop and Livestock Conditions in Mbarara District, Southwestern Uganda: In late October, FEWS Net carried out a rapid assessment of Mbarara District to update on crop and livestock conditions. This followed reports of a late start to the second and major rainy season, which limited farmers' cultivation activities, availability of pastures and water in some areas.

In discussions with district agriculture officials, FEWS Net was informed that household food security remains good as households are able to access food, such as bananas (*matooke*) and sweet potatoes, from their fields as well as from the market where prices are affordable. On seasonal performance, the district officials indicated that with exception of Ibanda and Kazo Counties in northern Mbarara, the season started nearly one month later than normal in most parts of the district. Agroecological conditions in Ibanda and Kazo Counties are similar to those of southern Kabarole and the counties received rains on time

in August and early September that supported crop cultivation. Consequently, crops in these areas are in advanced stages of development compared to other parts of the district. In the field, FEWS Net observed and confirmed that a combination of late start to the season and predominantly poorly distributed rainfall experienced since the beginning of the season has limited farmers' cultivation activities in central and southern parts of the district. Many farming households in Kashari, Rwampara, Isingiro and Bukanga Counties only started cultivating in late September when the rains



begun and where approximately seventy five percent (75%) of the cereal crops -- maize, millet and some sorghum -- have germinated but are still in delicate infancy stages. In a few areas, farmers were still busy in the field sowing crops, two months later than normal. With most of the cereal crop still in the early growth stages and requiring precipitation through January 2001 to mature, farmers and district officials expressed concern for likely low crop yield and production in central and southern counties if rains cease in December as predicted by the Department of Meteorology. Apart from cereals, improvement in rainfall distribution since October has benefited beans, cowpeas, irish and sweet potatoes, bananas and coffee, which are doing well. Availability of vegetable crops augments households' food needs. No significant threat to food security was reported or observed and despite a late start to the season that may affect cereals, districts officials do not anticipate any serious food security problems in the district.

The current rainfall favors vegetation "greening", which has improved availability of pastures for livestock in the district, especially Nyabushozi County, a main pastoral area. Livestock farmers mainly rely on natural grass for pastures with very limited use of improved pasture varieties. This together with long periods of grazing without rest has led to reduction in the quality of pastures, making it highly susceptible to variation in weather conditions. On average, ground water supply is good, however, low rainfall intensity and distribution experienced now and in past several seasons limits replenishment of reservoirs in some locations where it remains low. According to district veterinary officials, water is the main limiting factor for livestock production in Mbarara District. FEWS Net will keep monitoring for seasonal developments.

1.42.5 Market Conditions: Supply, Prices and Trade

The supply of food to major markets across the country continues to be good and has improved in Kotido and Moroto Districts where the harvest begun in early October. Cereals from the past season -- maize, millet or sorghum -- are available in adequate quantities in all district markets including areas affected by civil insecurity, such as Gulu and Kitgum Districts in northern Uganda and Bundibugyo District in the west. The average wholesale price of dry maize grain is US\$ 25,000 per 100-kilogram bag, about the same as in September. However, increase in price of the commodity has been observed in Kaseese

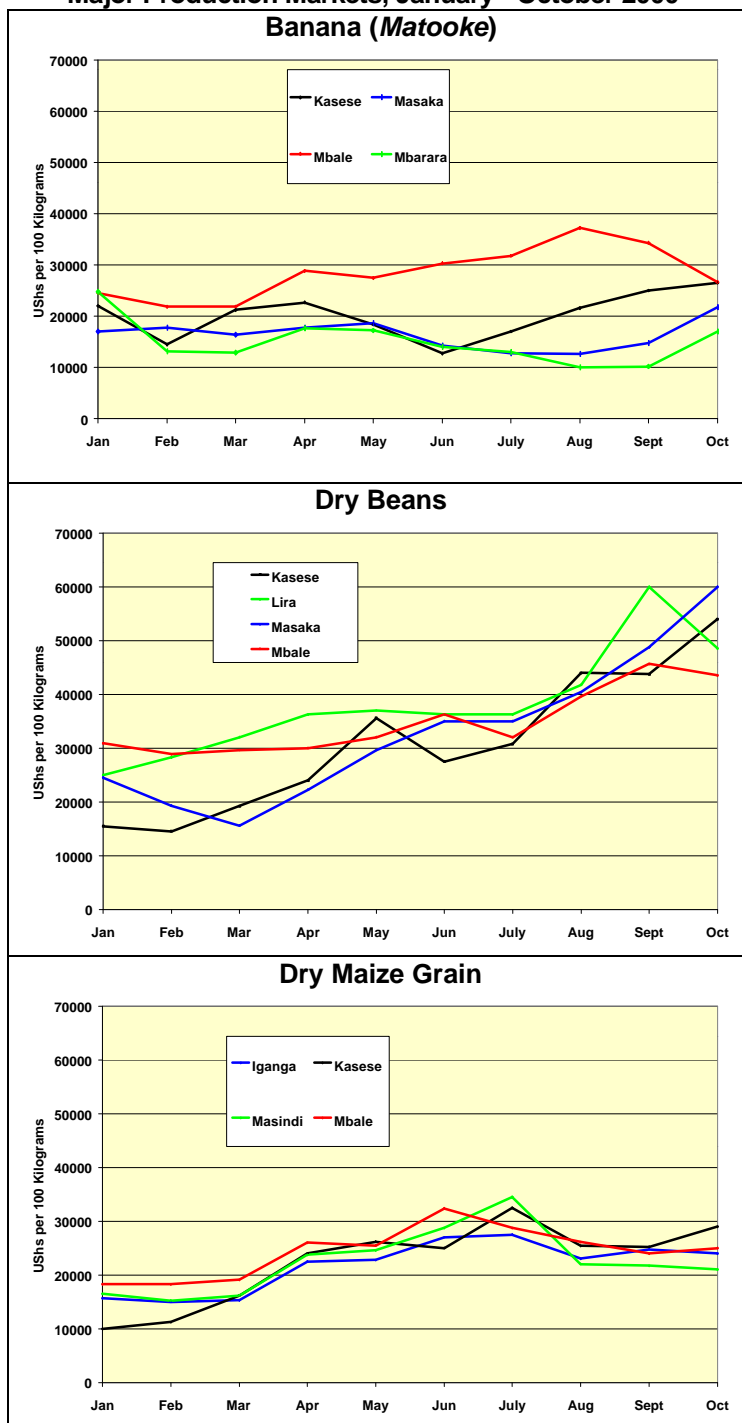
District, western Uganda, where large and medium size commodity trading firms report limited stocks of maize grain.

Overall, bean prices continued to rise over October, indicating diminished supply. In Kampala, a 100 kilogram bag of beans cost an average US\$ 56,000/= on the wholesale market whereas the same quantity of beans sold for about US\$ 50,000 in district markets. Masaka and Rakai Districts, which have experienced poorly distributed rainfall over this second season that affected crop yields and where below normal bean production is projected, recorded the highest increase in price of beans over October of approximately US\$ 11,000/= for a 100 kilogram bag. Following the start of the harvest of "Lira beans" in Lira District and other northern districts in late September, market prices declined thereby improving households' access to the market. Figure 3 on the right shows wholesale price trends for bananas, beans and maize since January 2000.

In September, farmers in Soroti and Kumi Districts, eastern Uganda, started harvesting sweet potatoes whose supply to urban markets, as far as Kampala, has greatly improved. Supply of fresh and dry cassava to markets is adequate.

Overall, food supply remains good and food access appears to be normal for most of the country. FEWS Net does not envisage any serious household food security problems in the immediate future.

Figure 3: Crop Prices for Bananas, Beans and Maize in Major Production Markets, January - October 2000



Source: The Market Information System (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture) and FEWS NET, November 2000

3.0 Update on Humanitarian Conditions

3.1 Ebola in Northern and Southwestern Uganda Under Control, No Significant Threat to Health, Household Food Security: In October, an outbreak of a contagious and deadly viral disease was reported in Gulu District, northern Uganda, mainly concentrated in Aswa County and Gulu Municipal Council areas. Within days of the initial reported case, the Ministry of Health, Gulu District Medical Office (Government of Uganda, GoU) and international community immediately responded and identified it as strain of Ebola similar to the Sudan sub-type that occurred in Sudan a few years. Although dangerous, this strain is less virulent compared to that which ravaged the Democratic Republic of Congo in the mid-1990s. Measures were put in place to prevent and control spread of the disease, identify affected persons as well as care for them. Through a concerted effort of the GoU, the World Health Organization (Geneva and Uganda Country Office), Center for Communicable Disease (CDC), Atlanta, and other international health and humanitarian organizations, the disease has been successfully controlled and managed thereby reducing its spread to other parts of the country. Few cases of the Ebola disease have been reported outside Gulu District with three (3) confirmed cases in Mbarara District, Southwestern Uganda, where another outbreak occurred at the end of October. According to the Ministry of Health, the suspected number of people infected with Ebola to date in Gulu District is 320 with 103 deaths (app. 34%); there are three confirmed cases in Mbarara and one in Masindi District.

The Ministry of Health and partners in this effort have in place a vigorous campaign of surveillance and testing to identify new outbreaks and cases, isolation from healthy communities and education of the population on prevention of the disease, care for the sick and containment. This has reduced the risk of wide spread incidence of the disease and greatly reduced threat to household health and food security.

3.2 Humanitarian Response to Populations at Risk: The security situation in Gulu and Kitgum District remains stable but uncertain with isolated reports of rebel activity, mostly in Kitgum District. Humanitarian organizations continue providing food and non-food aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the two districts. In October, the World Food Programme (WFP) temporarily stepped up its rations to IDPs in order to reduce on movement on people therefore reduce on the spread of the Ebola disease.