

Crop Situation Update



United Nations World Food Programme
Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System

Crop Situation Update
April 2008
Issue 8

Highlights

- Communities in the Hills and Mountains of the Far- and Mid-Western Development Regions face a serious threat to food insecurity due to poor winter crop production (20-40 percent crop loss). This, coupled with rising food prices and high rates of poverty and malnutrition in these areas, place the population at high risk.
- This situation is likely to become more severe as of June when households will have depleted their wheat stocks and become dependent on markets for their food supply.
- Under the ongoing emergency operation WFP is assisting almost 150,000 beneficiaries in the most food insecure communities in the Far- and Mid-Western Development Regions.
- WFP is monitoring Nepal's poor to better understand the impact of rising food price on their food security.

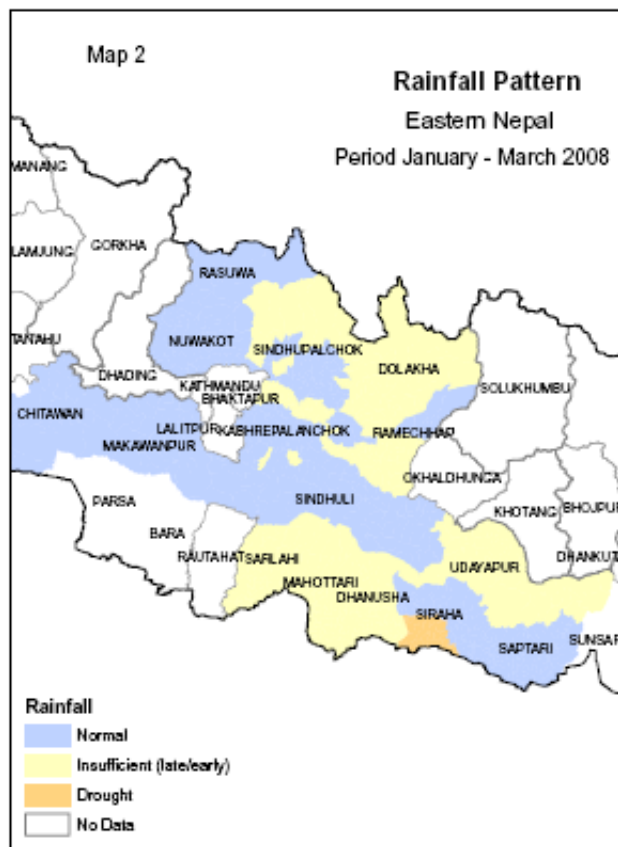
Summary

Wheat is the primary winter crop in most districts, followed by barley and in some districts, lentils, potatoes or mustard. At the national level the wheat production is expected to be normal.

The area of concern is the Hill and Mountains of the Far- and Mid-Western Development Regions, where crop production is expected to be 20 to 40 percent less than normal. This area is an already chronic poor region of the country¹ and with rising food prices, food insecurity in these areas is likely to deteriorate. The situation is likely to become severe from June onwards when the households run out of their meager wheat stock harvested in April and May.

The wheat production is expected to be normal in the Central and Eastern districts because of good rainfall. In the Terai, rainfall was generally insufficient, but available moisture from last monsoon and better access to irrigation should normalize production in these districts.

The WFP Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System (FSMAS) is continuously surveying 40 of Nepal's districts to update information on the crop situation, rainfall patterns, market developments, disaster incidences, peace situation and food security. The following update summarizes findings for the January to March 2008 period. The data is based on interviews with the District Agriculture Development Offices (DADO),



¹ Reference Nepal Poverty Map, CBS/WFP/WB, 2007

discussions with farmers, other key informants and the WFP field monitors' own observations.²

Situation details

Wheat and barley, Nepal's main winter crops, are growing throughout most of the country. Lentil and mustard are Dang's main cash crops, currently being harvested and lentil is also important in Kapilvastu. Potatoes are being grown or harvested in six Central Region districts, namely Dolakha, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Ramechhap, Sindhupalchowk and Kavre. In fact, Kavre's potato production is expected to increase by two thirds because of an increase in cultivation area. Farmers in Jumla (Mid-West) and Makwanpur (Central) also report a growing preference for potatoes which has a better guarantee of good production and can be exchanged for cooking oil, salt and rice, or can be sold in the market for cash income.

The overall situation in the Central and Eastern Regions appears to be better than in the Far- and Mid-Western Regions. These Central and Eastern districts predict normal production, except in Chitwan which was affected by hailstorms and Dolakha, where diseases and insufficient rainfall affected potato and wheat crops.

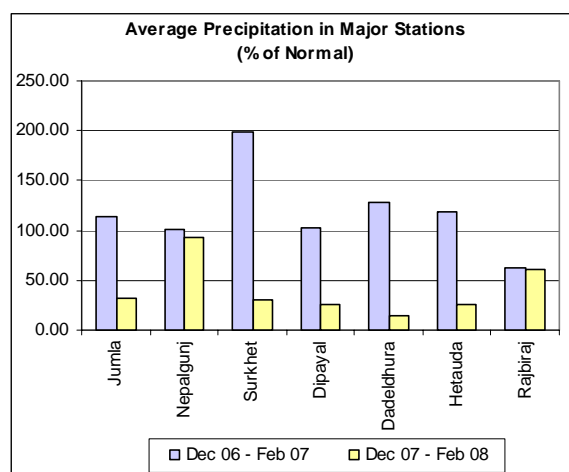


Chart 1

In the Western, Mid-Western and Far-Western districts, the Terai districts coped better than the Hill and Mountain districts. Most Hill and Mountain districts in the Far- and Mid-West predict a 20 to 40 percent decrease in wheat production compared to last year, due most often to insufficient rain and in some cases, to hailstorms. Pyuthan should recover from last year's poor wheat production and return to normal and Dang could exceed normal mustard production levels by 10 percent. A few VDCs in Rukum also experienced yellow rust diseases in wheat.

Predicted production improved in districts that had experienced timely and sufficient rains, i.e. in the Central and Eastern Regions. The Terai's wheat production should be normal despite the lack of rain thanks to irrigation and the soil's humidity, resulting from last year's monsoon season.

The field monitors' report of rainfall patterns (Map-1) is mostly consistent with the information provided by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) (Chart-1). As presented in Chart 1, the DHM reported lower than normal precipitation in most of its major monitoring stations during the December 2007 to February 2008 period. December and January were particularly dry months, which severely damaged winter crops (wheat and barley).

Maps 3 to 6 show the situation of wheat, barley, and potato crops in the districts covered by the WFP's field surveillance. The crop situation in the different districts is summarized in the district summary at the end of this Update.

CROP SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF RISING FOOD PRICES

During the past year, wheat and rice prices have increased by 10 to 35 percent. India's ban on rice exports to Nepal, rising fuel prices, fuel shortages and transportation strikes have all contributed to the higher costs of commodities. The mountains and remote hills have been the most affected because of their lack of road and market infrastructures.

In January 2008, FSMAS found that the extreme poor, who make up about 15 percent of Nepal's population, had suffered the most from the increased food prices.³

The combination of poor crop production, widespread poverty and malnutrition, and increasing food prices in the Hill and Mountain districts of the Far- and Mid-Western regions pose a serious threat of food insecurity, particularly among the extreme poor.

CONCLUSION

A normal crop production is expected in the Terai and the Eastern and the Central Regions. However in the Hill and Mountain districts of the Far- and Mid-Western Regions, a production loss of 20 to 40 percent is predicted, which poses a severe risk of food insecurity for the people in the area. The situation could deteriorate further as of June. Given the recent increases in food prices, these populations are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity.

WFP is responding through its ongoing emergency operation in these affected areas, covering approximately 150,000 beneficiaries who have been severely affected by the poor winter crop harvest.

Through its FSMAS, WFP is continuously monitoring Nepal's poor to better understand the impact of rising food price on their food security.

Crop Situation Updates are produced by WFP Nepal as part of the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System.

All information products produced by the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System are available on the UN Nepal Information platform (www.un.org.np) or on the following WFP website: <http://vam.wfp.org/country/docs?country=524>

For more information please contact the Food Security Monitoring and Analysis Unit, World Food Programme
Patan Dhoka Road, Lalitpur
PO Box 107
Tel 5542607 ext 2420-5

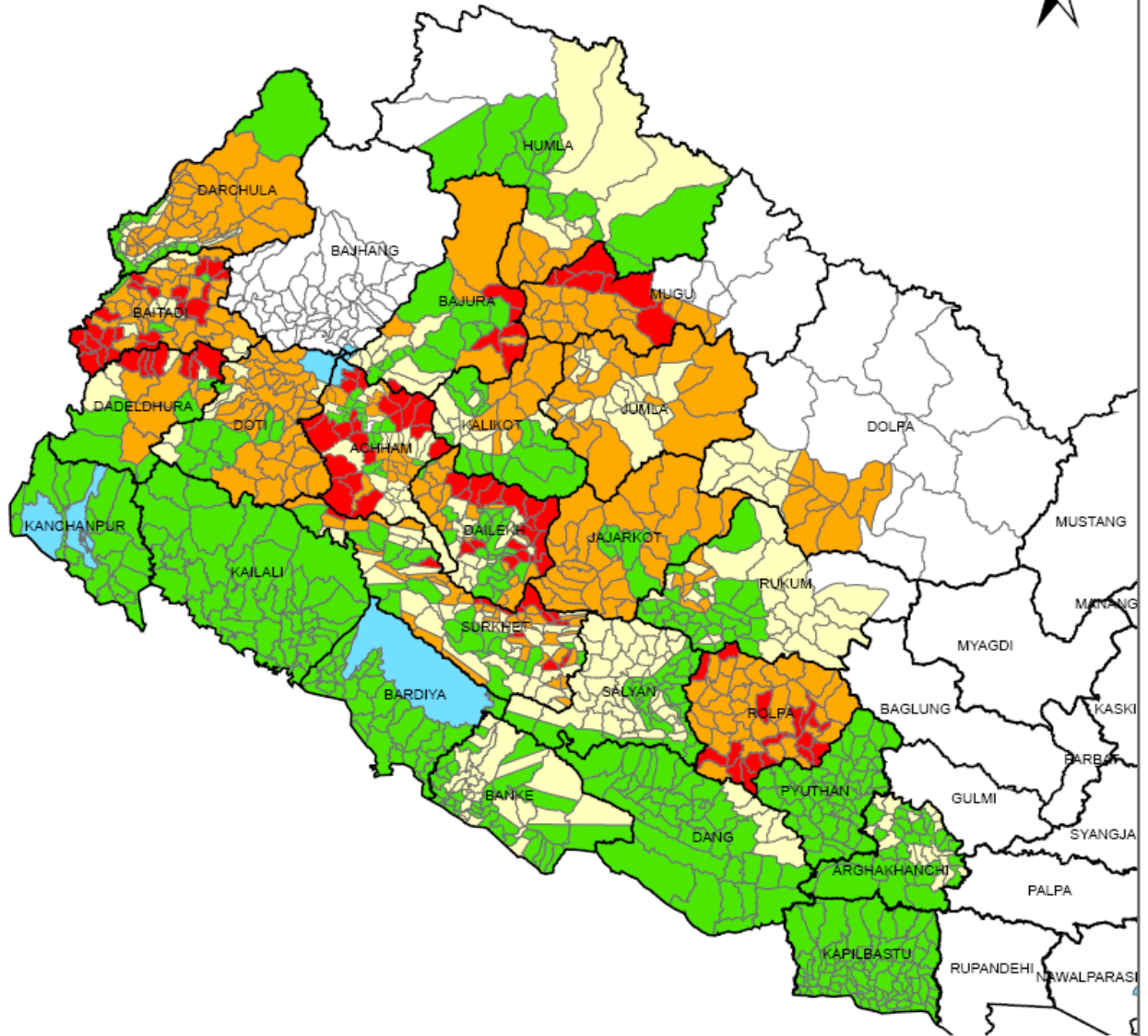
² The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has not yet published their winter crop production estimate. Overall they expect a normal production year. The estimates presented in this situation update are based on WFP's field surveillance.

³ See WFP (2008) Market Watch. February, Issue 3. WFP Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System: Lalitpur



Wheat Crop Condition

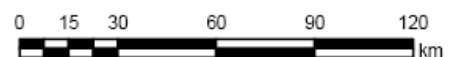
Western Nepal - March 2008



Legend

Crop Condition

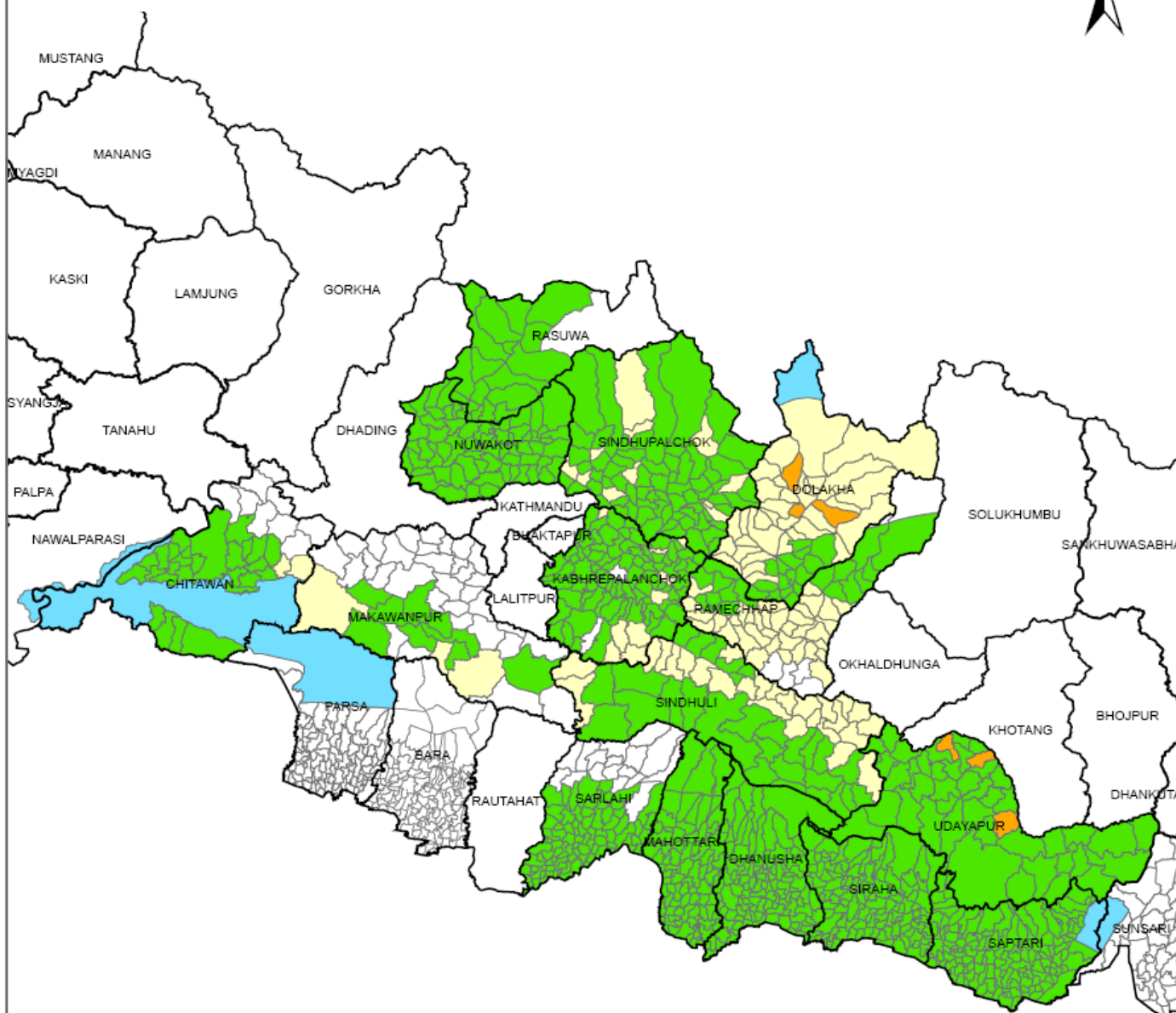
- Normal or Good
- Moderate (10 - 20 % less than normal)
- Poor (20 - 40 % less than normal)
- Very Poor (40 - 60 % less than normal)
- Not Applicable
- National Parks/Wildlife Reserve/No Population Area
- District Boundary



Map 3

Wheat Crop Condition

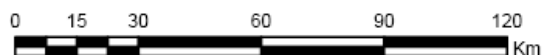
Eastern Nepal - March 2008



Legend

Crop Condition

- Normal or Good
- Moderate (10 - 20 % less than normal)
- Poor (20 - 40 % less than normal)
- Very Poor (40 - 60 % less than normal)
- Not Applicable
- National Parks/Wildlife Reserve/No Population Area
- District Boundary

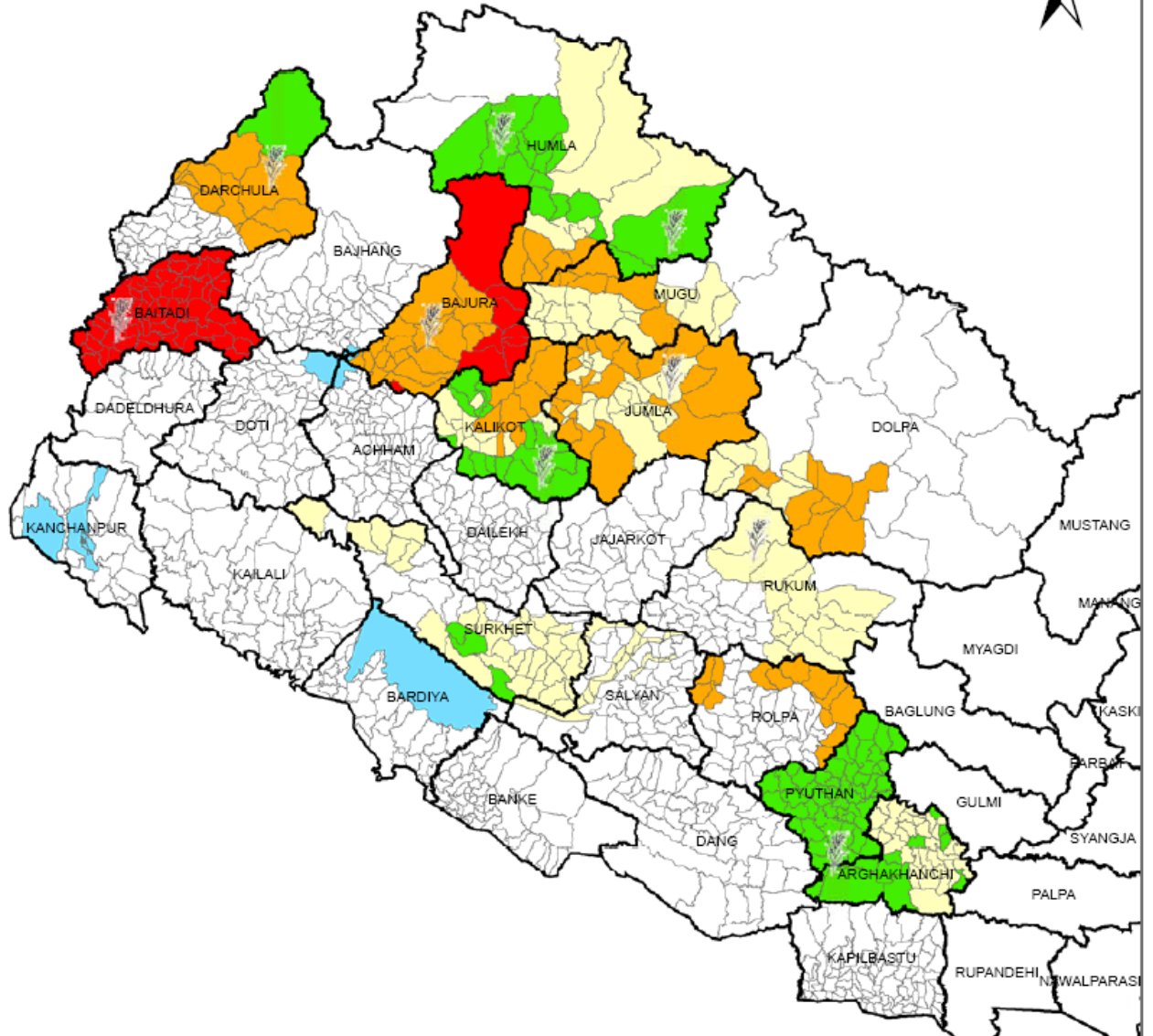


Map 4



Barley / Potato Crop Condition








Western Nepal - March 2008

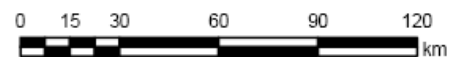


Legend

-  Barley
-  Potato

Crop Condition

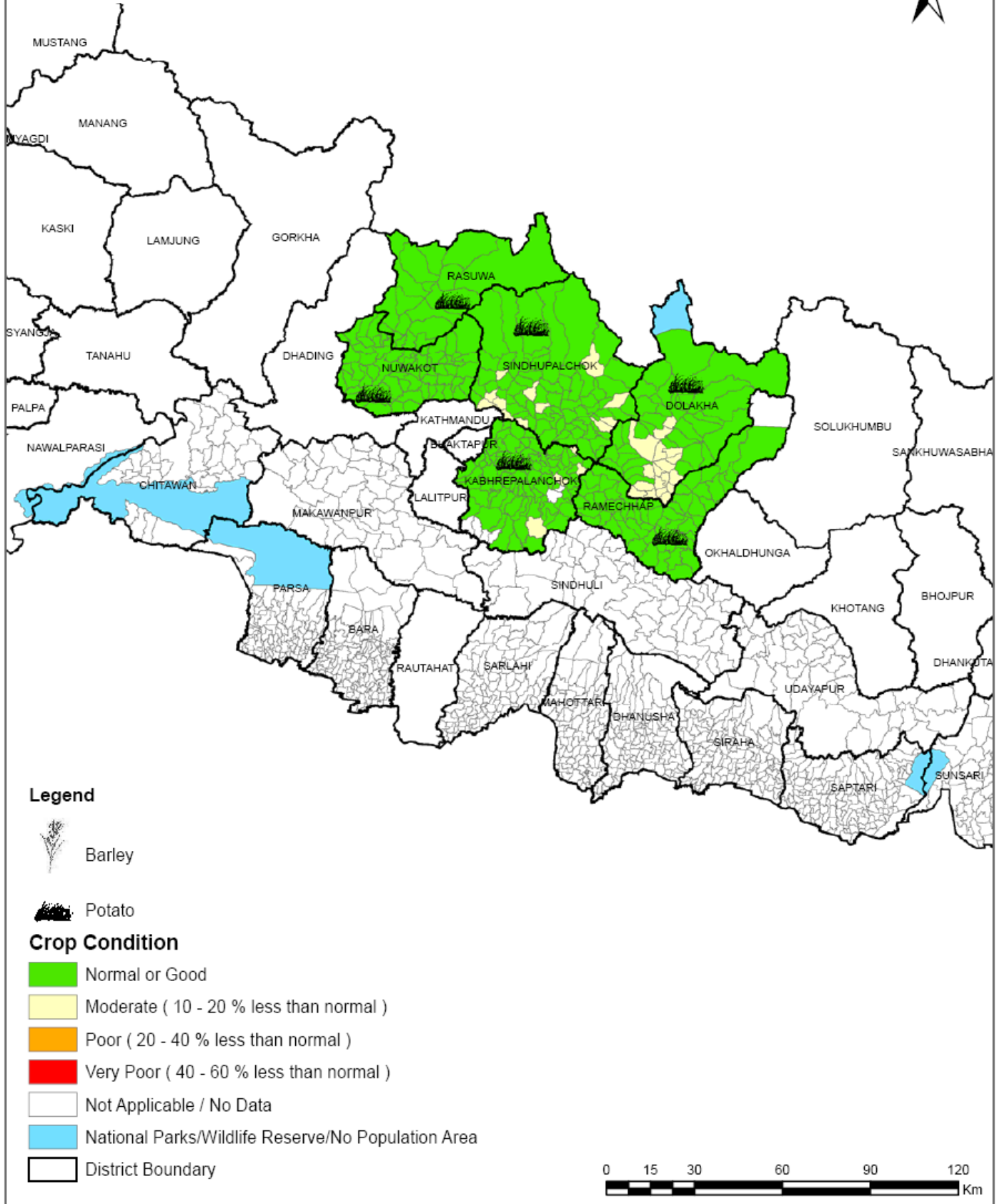
-  Normal or Good
-  Moderate (10 - 20 % less than normal)
-  Poor (20 - 40 % less than normal)
-  Very Poor (40 - 60 % less than normal)
-  Not Applicable / No Data
-  National Parks/Wildlife Reserve/No Population Area
-  District Boundary



Map 5

Barley / Potato Crop Condition

Eastern Nepal - March 2008



Map 6



District summary

The tables below provide details on the crop situation in the districts covered by the WFP Food Security Monitoring and Analysis System. Districts have been ranked and classified in terms of the overall crop situation in the district. This means that the crop situation in certain parts of the district may be worse or better than the overall district ranking. In addition, the information provided in the tables focuses on areas with bad crop conditions.

FAR-WESTERN REGION

Crop condition	Crop produced (Early estimate)	Comparison with previous year and normal situation
VERY POOR CROP CONDITIONS		
Achham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (16,100 Ha). About 20% of the district has access to seasonal irrigation 	DADO's early estimate indicates a decrease in production by about 60% compared to normal years in upland areas, and 10-20% in low land (irrigated areas). Overall the situation is worse than last year.
Baitadi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (21,500 Ha) Barley (700 Ha) 	Overall production is expected to decrease by more than 40% compared to last year.
POOR CROP CONDITIONS		
Bajura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (4950 Ha) Barley (1072 Ha) 	A 70% reduction compared to normal years is estimated in the northern and eastern belt due to insufficient and late rainfall. Hailstorms damaged crops in Chhatara VDC. A decrease of about 30-40% is estimated in the remaining areas.
Dadeldhura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (7,939 Ha), 27% is irrigated 	Overall production is expected to decrease by 30-40%.
Darchula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (5975 Ha) Barley (1050 Ha) 	A decrease in wheat production up to 40% compared to normal years is estimated. Barley is likely to decrease by about 30-40%.
Doti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (16,000 Ha), 50% has access to seasonal irrigation 	The wheat production might decline by 10% in lowland (irrigated) and 30-50% in upland (non-irrigated).
NORMAL CROP CONDITIONS		
Kanchanpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (33,250 Ha), 41.80% is irrigated 	Normal production overall.

MID-WESTERN AND WESTERN REGIONS

Crop condition	Crop produced (Early estimate)	Comparison with previous year and normal situation
VERY POOR CROP CONDITIONS		
Mugu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Production may be lower than last year and 50% less than normal.
Dailekh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat on 21,037 Ha, which is 900 Ha less than last year 	A decrease in yield of about 60% compared to normal years is expected, and the total production could be 25% less than last year. Normal rainfall and irrigation improved the crop situation in the central and southern belt.
Rolpa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (main) Barley (second) Potatoes (in some VDCs) 	Poor everywhere, particularly where there is no irrigation (available in 3953.5 Ha out of 8548 Ha). Barley production may decrease by 40%.
POOR CROP CONDITIONS		
Kalikot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (covering 75% of district) Barley (25%) 	Worse wheat production due to poor rainfall. This year, the whole district was affected by the lack of rain, not just the north.
Jajarkot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Poor in most of district due to lack of rain except in a small part of district where it will be normal thanks to irrigation. Rust disease affected production estimates in two wards. Overall, 20-40% less than normal year. Same as last year.
Jumla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barley (main) Wheat (second) 	Production should be moderate in lowland where there is irrigation and poor in highland. Production will be less than last year due to lack of rain.
Humla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Normal-moderate, except for the southern tip, where production will be 20-40% less than normal.
Dolpa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Crop production may decrease by 20-40% compared to last year (and normal years) due to lack of rain.
Surkhet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Overall production is expected to decrease by about 20-30% compared to last year.
MODERATE CROP CONDITIONS		
Rukum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Wheat is normal-moderate, except in a few VDCs where it is poor because of yellow rust diseases or where there has not been enough rain or snowfall.
Salyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Wheat is estimated to decrease about 20% in northern, western areas due to insufficient rainfall. Wheat in eastern and southern belts is normal thanks to normal rainfall and irrigation.
NORMAL CROP CONDITIONS		
Pyuthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat Barley 	Increase in wheat production by 30-35% compared to last year, but last year was affected by neckblast disease and was less than normal. Barley now back to normal production; last year was affected by hailstorm in upland.
Arghakhanchi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat 	Wheat production may be 10% less than normal because of lack of rain.
Dang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lentils (main) Mustard (second) Wheat in five VDCs 	Mustard production 10% more than last year (more than normal) Wheat production is moderate because of late rainfall.
Kapilvastu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (main) Lentils 	Increase in crop production compared to last year (should be normal).
Bardiya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat on 18,000 Ha 	80% of the district has access to irrigation.
Kailali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat 	Fertile land, improved seeds and irrigation available.
Banke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat 	The production is estimated to decline compared to last year.



CENTRAL AND EASTERN REGIONS

Crop condition	Crop produced (Early estimate)	Comparison with previous year and normal situation
MODERATE CROP CONDITIONS		
Ramechhap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (4,700 Ha) Potato (3,040 Ha) 	Wheat production similar to last year, but around 20% less than the normal year. Potato production is expected to be normal.
Dolakha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (4,625 Ha) Potato (2,500 Ha) 	Wheat production is normal to moderately poor. Potato production is expected to decline slightly compared to last year.
NORMAL CROP CONDITIONS		
Rasuwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (842 Ha) Summer potatoes (1800 Ha) Winter potatoes (685 Ha) 	Crop condition/production is better than last year.
Nuwakot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (5,595 Ha) Summer potatoes (754 Ha) Winter potatoes (2,800 Ha). Spring paddy (4,403 Ha). 	Crop condition/production is better than last year.
Sarlahi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat 	Normal production is expected if there are no hailstorms in April.
Dhanusha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (29,500 Ha) 	Production should increase compared to last year, as the cultivation area has increased by about 37% and crop situation is good.
Mahottari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (25,243 Ha) 	Production should increase due to a 20% increase in cultivation area compared to last year.
Siraha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat 	Normal production expected.
Saptari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (15,500 Ha) 	Normal production expected.
Chitwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (7,990 Ha) 	Production is likely to decrease by up to 20% in certain areas where the crop was damaged by hailstorm during March 2008.
Makwanpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (4,160 Ha) 	Normal wheat production is expected overall. People in the northern belts are more inclined to farm vegetables as this pays more than wheat.
Sindhupalchowk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (10,500 Ha) Potatoes (3,850 Ha) 	Overall wheat production is estimated to be normal. Potato production should increase slightly compared to last year.
Kavre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (11,050 Ha) Potatoes (7099 Ha) 	Normal wheat production is expected overall. Potato production has increased by about 68% compared to last year as the crop cultivation area increased.
Sindhuli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (5,600 Ha) 	Normal production expected.
Udayapur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheat (4,830 Ha) 	Normal production expected.
