FOOD SECURITY BULLETIN – 1

Food Security Monitoring System
Data collected in rural areas in November 2008

Highlights

- Overall, in October and November, food security in Tajikistan was at a similar level as in April 2008. Sughd and DRD regions have seen an increase in the number of zones affected by food insecurity over the previous three months, while the conditions in Khatlon region seem to have improved in some areas.
- The food security monitoring in October and November identified almost 650,000 people as severely food insecure and 1.5 million as moderately food insecure (see table page 9 for more details).
- Three zones are of a particular concern: zone 15 (Vakhdat, Fayzabad, Varzob), zone 19 (Baldzhuvan, Khovaling, Muminabad, Shuroabad) and zone 16 (Gafurov). Further assessment of the situation in these zones should be undertaken with a particular emphasis on zone 15, in which up to 225,000 people were found to be at a risk of severe food insecurity.

Overview

The food security situation in the country is at a similar level as during the emergency assessment in April 2008. For the months of August, September and October 2008, the situation has improved in several zones but deteriorated in others (see tables next pages for more details per zones). Data from the round one of the food security monitoring confirmed that the main issue is access to food as most of the households are still finding it hard to purchase food and for many the only way is to rely on remittances or borrowing. IMF data shows that the period from August to October has the highest in-flow of remittances, which could explain more stabilized food security levels in certain zones for that time frame. Fears **that the global financial crisis will negatively affect remittances** and see a massive return of immigrants have not yet been reflected in the data from the survey, nor from IOM. However, recent declarations from the Russian government that it will reduce by half the number of working immigrants in 2009 are worrisome. This should be closely monitored over the next months by IOM and the Government. The Early Warning Indicator system set up by REACT also monitors remittances, for this purpose (www.untj.org/react).

In July, the increase in value of pensions and of some salaries has helped many households move from the severely food insecure to the moderately food insecure.

The data reports that spring harvests (wheat, vegetables, potato) were lower than usual. The 285 farmers and key informants interviewed confirmed this data. These harvests have nonetheless, helped some households to stock up some wheat and potatoes for the coming weeks. Losses are mainly due to the harsh winter, drought and in some areas locusts (see Box 1). Hydromet data and reports from government agencies show that **since April 2008 rainfalls have been below normal all over the country** and especially in June. Rains in early October have come too late for most of the planting (except for the very south of the country: Shartuz and in parts of Kulyab). **Livestock purchases and ownership have also shown some improvement and positive effect on food security** in several zones confirming data from the Ministry of Agriculture. In general, it was found that when households depend more on their own food production, the level of food security is higher.

Food price data:

Wheat: Prices in November have fallen slightly since their peak in August, but remain quite high at 2.45 TJS/kg compared to 1.42 in early 2007; they are at the same level as last year at the same time. Same decreasing trend is observed for wheat flour first grade and wheat grains. **Potatoes**: Price of potatoes has also fallen but remains high compared to last year at an average of 1.70 TJS/kg over the past three months. **Pulses**: Prices have decreased slightly over the past three months but overall they are still uncharacteristically high. Only in Gharm city the prices have fallen. The lowest price is in Gharm city (3 TJS/kg) and the highest in Khorog (5 TJS/kg). **Oil**: After a steep increase in 2007, prices are going down (cotton oil) or stabilizing (vegetable oil). Prices in Khujand have decreased more significantly. Prices remain unusually high though across the country with an average of 8.4 TJS/l for vegetable oil and 7.4 TJS/l for cotton oil. **Other commodities**: Prices of fuel and diesel have recently gone down (except in Khorog) and prices of meat and dairy products remain stable. Reports from many regions also indicate that the price of coal has increased significantly (for example, in Gharm city, 1 ton of coal has increased more than 100% from 350 TJS per ton to 800 TJS this year). Because prices continue to be high, the majority of households in the country cannot afford the daily basic food basket of 2.92 TJS as

defined by the World Bank and the State Statistical Committee. Most households purchase food rather than grow it. The 95 traders interviewed did not mention any significant increase in demand for credit and data shows that households in many zones have not used credit in the past three months.
According to traders, the main reasons for the continuing high prices are wholesale prices and transportation (fuel) costs. 75% of them also indicated taxes as a reason for keeping prices high in local shops.

"Unusual high food prices" is still the most mentioned difficulty all over the country. But other structural problems linked to water and agriculture (lack of water) are still affecting many households and their food security status, forcing some households to adopt negative coping strategies. These include reducing the portion size of meals, selling productive assets (especially animals) or relying on cheaper food of a lesser quality.

Non-food expenditures at the household level have remained the same since April apart from increases in education expenses (October was the beginning of a new academic year; new books, uniforms etc. were purchased) and, in some zones, in health care. The recent religious celebrations have also increased the total expenditures of the households. The **average share of food out of the total expenditures remains high** but reduced slightly (from 73 to 65%). Energy expenditures remained low, likely due to mild weather.

Most of the households have entered the fall season in a weaker economic situation than last year and **half of interviewed households reported their economic situation in October to be worse than a year ago.**

Scenarios and recommendations

In the next three months, the ongoing food, seed and cash distributions should help affected households to either improve their food security status or become food secure. Stocks can be built up for the coming winter months.
Monitoring of remittances remains important as most of the seasonal labour migrants are planning to go back to Russia in the spring of 2009 while Russian authorities have indicated plans for lower labour quotas. Most Tajik labour migrants may face difficulties in legalizing their status next year. Many might not be able to work legally in Russia, possibly forcing them to illegally emigrate with all the precarious consequences. The food security will depend on favourable climatic conditions and the absence of natural disasters (avalanches, landslides). A resumption of cold temperatures would once again increase already high fuel/energy expenditures and translate into electricity and water shortages, impacting human diseases, irrigated crops and animal reproduction and survival. High levels of debts should be closely monitored in the coming months.
Further investigation into the situation in zone 15 is recommended. That zone continues to suffer strong shocks – drought, lack of water, erosive coping mechanisms, high debt levels etc. Households in the zone have few means to improve their situation. Zones 19 and 16 are also of concern. The latter in particular, as it receives little external assistance for preparation for the coming winter.

Box 1 – FAO survey on locust infestation: results

FAO conducted an evaluation of the 2008 locust outbreak project and assessed losses, risks for 2009 and gaps in the fight against locusts.

The project benefited to 74,000 rural farmers as they manage to secure their crops and harvest. Overall, 2 million rural residents indirectly benefited from this project. Awareness campaign and trainings were undertaken targeting farming communities.

FAO estimates that locust control in 6 Districts of DRD, 8 in Khatlon and 4 in Sughd (see map below) allowed for savings up to 18 million USD. Damages are estimated at 3.6 million USD mainly on pastures land.

Locust have been developing earlier than usual and therefore control in many planned districts was not possible affecting directly food security of many households in Isfara, Spitamen Istaravshan, Jabbor Rasulov, Pyanj, Qabodiyon, and Zafarabad.

For 2009, survey of locust populations was conducted in October 2008 providing clear picture of over 150,000 ha infested territories, most of it in Khatlon area. GoT has already allocated 5 million TJS for treatment but many constraints such as cross-border issues, droughts and obsolete control methods may limit the effects of the control campaign in 2009.

For more information, please contact shuhrat.igamberdyev@fao.tj

Food Security Monitoring System – Background and methodology

The April 2008 joint assessment recommended improving the mechanisms to regularly monitor the food security.

The approach used for the FSMS is one which best balances cost and level of detail for a monitoring system, rather than a one-off assessment. The FSMS gathers data every quarter from 665 households and 475 key informants in all rural areas of Tajikistan. The methodology is based on the one also used for the joint assessment in April and was refined with the Food Security Cluster members. It is available on www.untj.org.

As households interviewed in October 2008 are different than in April 2008, comparisons should be made with caution.

Within each zone, it is possible to compare results and start building trends. For the purpose of the FSMS, the same households will be used for each round improving the comparability of the results over time and allowing for an adequate assessment of the situation.

The low number of households in each zone also calls for caution when interpreting the results at a broader scale.

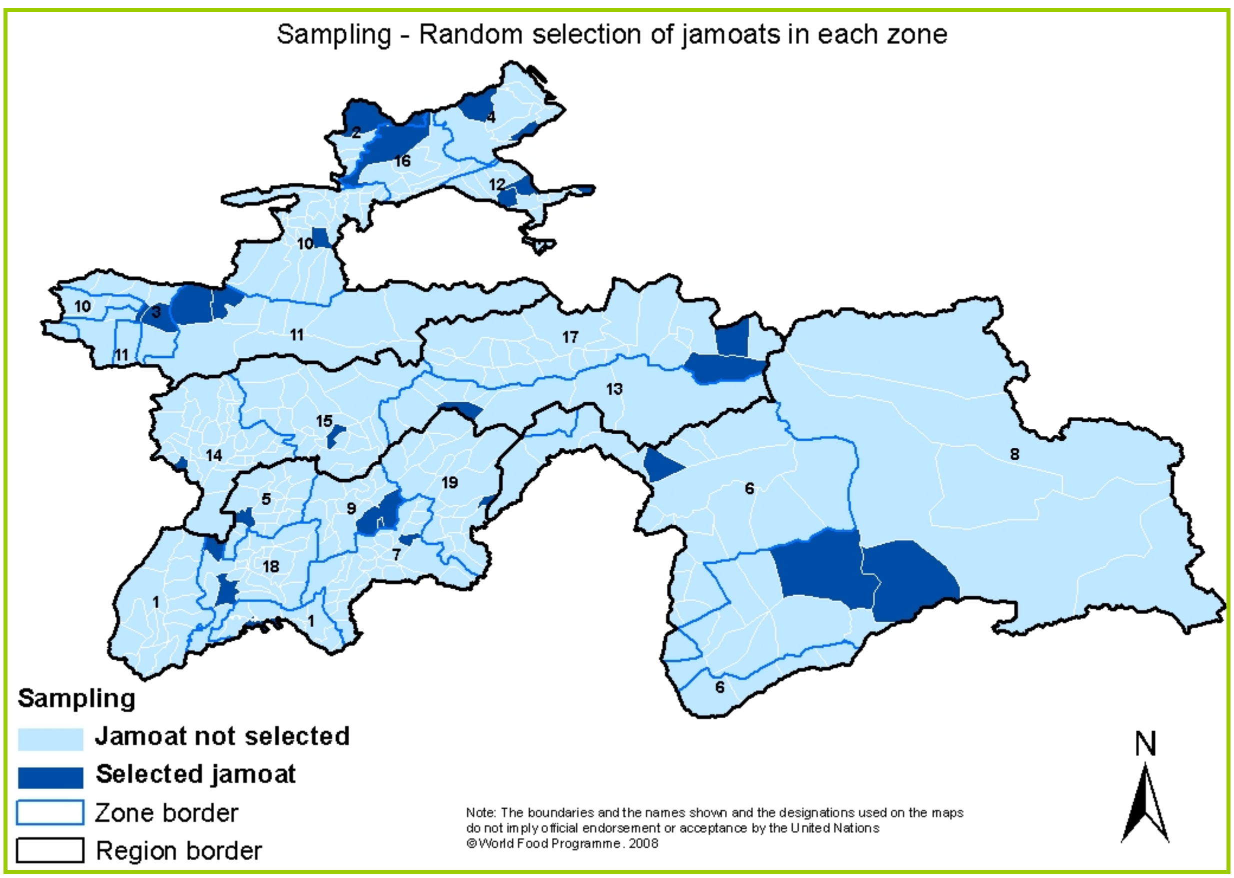
There may be a need for further investigation when figures are strikingly low or high, or significantly different from previous monitoring results.

Data was collected and managed by the NGO CSR Zerkalo and data analysis was conducted by WFP Rome and WFP Tajikistan.

The next round of data collection is planned for January 2009 and will also include nutrition indicators.

For more information on the results and methodology and for a copy of the database, please contact: cedric.charpentier@wfp.org

More details on analysis methodology can be obtained from: chiara.brunelli@wfp.org



Jamoats selected: 1- Panj, 2- Avzikent, 3- Loiq Sherali, 4- Qirquduq, 5- Hiloli, 6- Vanj, 7- Zarbdor, 8- Vankala, 9- Tabnochi, 10- Mujum, 11- Urmetan, 12- Khonaobod, 13- Yakhakyust, 14- Navobod, 15- Gumbuloq, 16- Utkansoy, 17- Alga, 18- Jilikul, 19- Balkhobi

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Zone (district)	Situation Report	Immediate/ Underlying causes	Outlook April-October	Baseline information
Severely Food Insecure Zones (more than 19% of severely food insecure households)				
15 (Vakhdat, Fayzabad, Varzob)	This zone seems to be the most affected by food insecurity over the past 3 months with 89% of it population in food insecurity: around 300,000 people.[1]	All households have reported harvest failure as a main shock from which very few have been able to recover from. As a result many have already started to sell animals, take children out of school and contract new debts. The large size of families did not help satisfying basic food needs. Moreover, key informants indicated that migrants are returning from Russia, which would increase the pressure on the household. Structural issues such as lack of education of the head of household and the lack of agricultural assets are also an influencing factor.		In April, the zone was considered moderately food secure though households already depended highly on remittances (still an important income in October but greatly reduced), this zone has been affected by new shocks, other than food price.
19 (Baldzhuvan, Khovaling, Muminabad, Shuroabad)	Around one third of the households are severely food insecure. Total of roughly 110,000 are food insecure.	Food consumption has gone drastically down and money available for food is lower than in April. 77% of interviewed households reported that food consumed in the past 7 days came from food aid, compensating for a usually high dependence on the market. Here too harvest failure and price increases have pushed households to send more migrants to Russia and to get indebted for it. The increase in health and education expenditure also contributed to worsening the situation.		This zone has been of concern in April due to high numbers of moderately food insecure households. Coping strategies used by households in this zone are among the most negative.
16 (Gafurov)	Two third of the population is considered food insecure (66%) among which 29% severely. Estimated total of food insecure people is 182,000.	Most of the households depend on the market for their food. High prices of food and low incomes (mainly coming from agricultural wage labor) have compromised their access. As a result, more than half of the households interviewed have used credit for buying food but their purchasing power remains very low (biggest gap to reach food basket). Stocks are insufficient for the coming winter months that will be hard on these households, especially the 25% that does not own animals or any asset. Unless the slight increase noted in migration will bring most needed remittances allowing them to buy food.		Households in this zone were already identified as at risk in April. The zone also has the highest level of non-educated heads of households which was confirmed by this round. This is the only zone were unemployment and loss of salary has been constantly reported. High prices remain the main difficulty faced by people.
Highly Food Insecure Zones (between 11 and 18% of severely food insecure households)				
18 Dzhilikul, Rumi, Vakhsh, Sarband, Bokhtar)	Around 40% of the population is food insecure, out of which 19% severely. A total of around 200,000 people could be food insecure.	Most of the households depend on agricultural activities and remittances but 15% of them reported depending on borrowing and begging as a second source of income. The combination of low income, high prices and high reliance on market (60% percent depend on it for more than 70% of their food) make the households in this zone still highly food insecure. Key informants have confirmed increase of migration and other coping mechanisms such as buying food on credit (40%) also confirm the access problems households face in this zone.		Less households fall under the moderately food insecure category than in April (29/19%). Unemployment and chronic economical difficulties have been reported again in October.
2 (Mastcho)	14% are severely food insecure and food insecure population is estimated at 34,000.	Food consumption score in this zone remains the same as in April. Remittances still constitute a big part of the overall income but are in decline and more households rely on agricultural wage labor. Salaries and pensions might also have contributed to increase access to food. Most are still highly dependent on the market for food but 89% own		October survey confirms trends and livelihoods observed in April. Food insecurity was higher in female-headed households and 10% of the interviewed are in this

[1] Data from this zone are unusually high and additional field visit will be conducted soon to check whether data collection was undertaken properly.

		animals especially sheep/goats. Migration has slightly increased as many households are seeking alternative employment. Main difficulty reported is harvest failure which might have a negative impact in the long run as food stocks are low (do not last more than 3 weeks).		situation. New moderately food insecure households come from previously severe food insecurity.
8 (Murgab, Shugnan)	22% of the households interviewed are found to be food insecure in this zone and 12% severely. Total food insecure population: 9,000 people.	Most households cited high prices as the main problem in the zone which led 80% of them to contract debts to buy food. A high number of households do not own especially livestock and 35% reported losses of livestock in the past three months, impacting seriously on their food consumption. As a result, an increase in migration was reported by 25% of the surveyed households and confirmed by key informants. Many households rely on borrowing food from relatives and friends. High level of human diseases was cited as an important shock. Few possess stocks for the coming winter.	↓	Serious increase in food insecurity from 0% of severely food insecure in April to 12% in October. Many households only have 1 source of income and depend on markets.
4 (Asht)	One third of the households surveyed are food insecure (around 34,000 people) out of which 11% in severely.	The main problem of food insecurity is access: from 55% of households receiving remittances in April, it dropped to 10%. Other income sources relate to agricultural wage labor and government jobs. Most households depend on the market for food and 70% of their income is used to purchase to food. The lack of assets does not allow coping with the main problems: high prices and harvest failure. Instead, 80% of the households reduced the portion size and numbers of meals, and decreased non-food expenditures such as on health. Key informants confirmed more arrivals than departures of migrants which might increase pressure on most vulnerable households.	↓	In April, only 3% of the households in this zone were severely food insecure and 15% moderately. The survey confirms few stocks and shows a slightly worse food consumption than in April.
		Moderately Food Insecure Zones (less than 10% of severely food insecure households)		
13 (Tavildara, Nurobad, Ragun)	Around 15% of the population is considered food insecure out of which 9% severely. Total of 8.500 people are food insecure.	The situation in this zone has slightly improved since April. Many households own livestock in this zone and have been benefiting from good prices of meat and dairy products. Food stocks are also high and the relatively low dependence on the market for food and the increase of pensions also contributed to improve food security status. (46% rely on either pension or salaries).	↑	In April, the zone had 19% of food insecure households. Mainly due to high loss of livestock following the winter and a low reliance or access to remittances in the zone.
14 (Gissar, Shakrinav, Tursunzade)	Situation remains roughly the same with 9% severely food insecure and 15% moderately. Estimated food insecure population:170,000	The main source of income remains employees/salaries for 40% of the households. Survey also confirms dependence on market for food. No increase has been noted in migration. The slight increase in food insecure household (from 5 to 9%) is not significant enough to draw conclusion. Irregular rains, harvest failure (reported as main problem) could indicate that situation will worsen but households holds good stocks of wheat and potato for the coming months.	→	Most indicators are confirmed from April survey: low ownership of animals, low levels of education, unsafe water used remain main difficulties.
9 (Dangara, Temurmalik)	9% severely food insecure and 12% moderately. Food insecure population: 30,000	In the past month, many households relied on agricultural wage labor subsequently boosting their income and food expenditures contributing to an improved food consumption. Remittances continue to play an important role in the total income, more than 20% rely on government salaries and therefore benefited form recent increases. Nonetheless, the number of households still relying on credit to purchase food remains high (50%). The number of out-migrants	↑	Situation greatly improved from 19% severely food insecure and high number of moderately food insecure households.

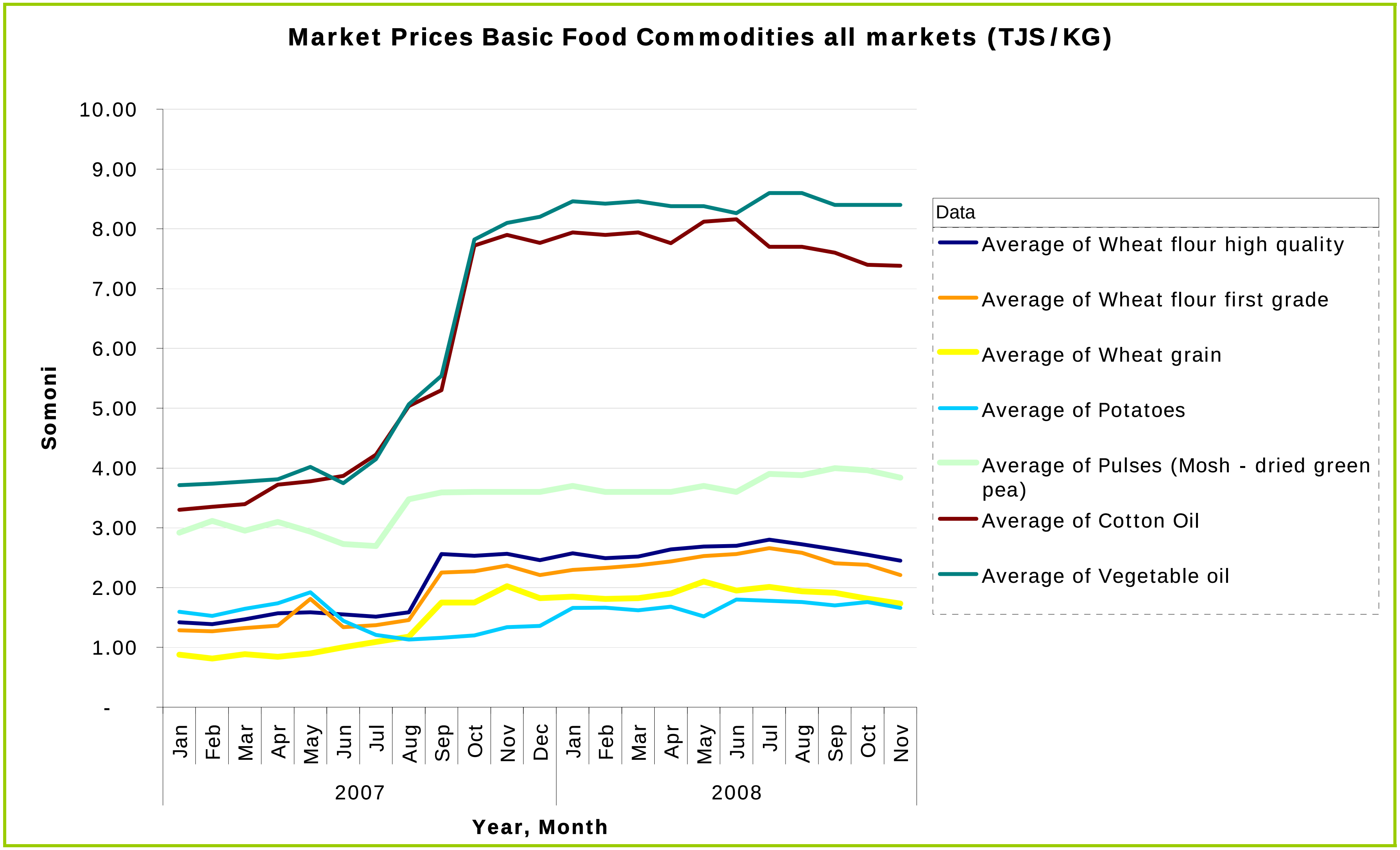
		increased in the past 3 months, contributing to reduction of an already high dependency ratio.		
1 (Shartuz, Khusrav, Kubodiyon, Kumsangir)	6% severely food insecure and 16% moderately. Estimated affected population: 90,000	More households have been relying on remittances which confirms that the strategy adopted by households at the end of the winter is paying off. However most of the population remains vulnerable as income sources are volatile, stocks are not of long duration, half of them are in debts with long period of reimbursement and if economic downturn in Russia materializes, they will be highly affected. Households can nonetheless rely on strong ownership of livestock.	↑	Situation improved from 22% severely food insecure but the number of moderately food insecure remains the same. Survey confirmed large size of families, low level of education for female head of households and high dependence on migration.
5 (Khuroson, Jomi, Ravan)	24% of households interviewed are food insecure among which 6% are severely. Estimated affected population: 75,000	Main shock remains high food prices but also reduced drinking water and human diseases. The households have been addressing those shocks thanks to an increase of remittances as first source of income (and the number of migrants is still increasing) but also by relying more on agriculture and livestock activities over the past three months bringing home one of the highest income of all zones. Food still mostly came from the market and all households interviewed had less than half of their food coming from own production.	↑	Situation improved from 20% severely food insecure and number of moderately food insecure greatly reduced. Survey confirmed high reliance on remittances and government salaries (more households in the sample get their income from salaries)
3 (Panjikent)	12% of households interviewed are food insecure among which 6% are severely. Estimated affected population: 14,000.	The households of this zone have good income (agricultural wage labor), good stocks (especially fruits) depend for 40% on their own production, own poultry and sheep/goats and do not rely on migration as much as other zones do. The main coping strategy to face price increases consists in consuming less preferred and cheaper foods. Harvest failure was cited as an important shock and might affect food security of households depending on agriculture in the coming months.	→	Results are very similar to April period both in terms of food consumption and in terms of food access.
12 (Kanibadam, Isfara)	17% of food insecure (6% severely for an estimated total of 46,000 people.	Despite the highest percentage of female headed households (31%), this zone manages to remain fairly food insecure thanks to good income sources and ownership of animals. But stocks are not particularly high and many households have still not recovered from their main shocks. Apart from high prices, households indicated reduced salaries of household members that could explain some differences since April.	↓	Many households with 2 or 3 income sources. Heavy reliance on remittances. Slight deterioration of food security.
10 (Rasulov, Uroteppa, Gonchi, Spitamen, Shakhristan)	Few severely food insecure households and very few moderately (6%). Estimated food insecure population: 42,500.	Most of the food of the households comes from local markets where they spend 52% of their expenditures on food. Although households do not have productive assets and livestock (apart from donkeys/horses), they can rely on field crops, agricultural wage labor and remittances for a living. Harvest failure was cited by 25% of the respondents as a recent shock and therefore might have a negative impact on households' income in the coming months. But good potato and fruit stocks might limit it.	→	High percentage of households with 2 or 3 income sources. Households relying on field crops such as wheat and potato
7 (Khamadoni, Farkhor, Panj, Vose)	23% are moderately food insecure. None are severely food insecure. 99,000 people food insecure.	Remittances, government salaries, pensions and agricultural wage labor have helped households to get out of food insecurity. At the same time, 83% have contracted debts for buying food. Households still use a high number of negative coping mechanisms and do not own much stock apart from wheat. Food prices, water and pest problems might on the long run push most households back to food insecurity.	↑	Reduction of the number of food insecure might be due in part to change of households sampled. High number of indebted households confirmed.

17 (Gharm, Tojikobod, Jirgatol)	20% are moderately food insecure. None are severely food insecure. 40,000 people food insecure.	Almost no household relied on remittances in the past three months. Instead households received their income from the production and sale of field crops and from pensions and allowances. At the same time, households have reduced their dependence on the market as almost half got their food from their own production allowing them to reduce their food expenditures and strong stocks for the winter. Harvest failure was reported as the main shock by 89% of households and the impact needs to be seen in the coming weeks. This shock was mainly due to lack of water.	↑	Members of households migrate primarily for studies abroad, strong ownership of livestock and good food stocks. High percentage of per capita expenditures.
6 (Murgab, Shughnon)	Very few food insecure household in this zone: 3% moderately. 2,500 people food insecure.	This is the only zone where 12% of the interviewees reported relying on small business as a first source of income. Few shocks were reported over the past 3 months but increase in migration was reported by both key informants and households. Main shocks were high prices and earthquakes.	→	Large number of sheep/goats owned. Medium dependency on market.
11 (Ayni, Kukh. Mastcho)	Very few food insecure household in this zone	Small size households with good food stocks generated by their own production make up for most of the households sampled. 62% rely on field crops and 24% on livestock. 50% can rely on remittances in difficult times. Key informants confirmed return of migrants in the past three months to help in the fields (no respondent reported out-migration). To face high prices and harvest failure, 66% sold more animals. Reduced grazing areas and water quantity problems might have a negative impact on people's livelihood during winter.	↑	Food security improved in this zone where households mostly rely on their own production. No household reported remittances compared to 64% in April.

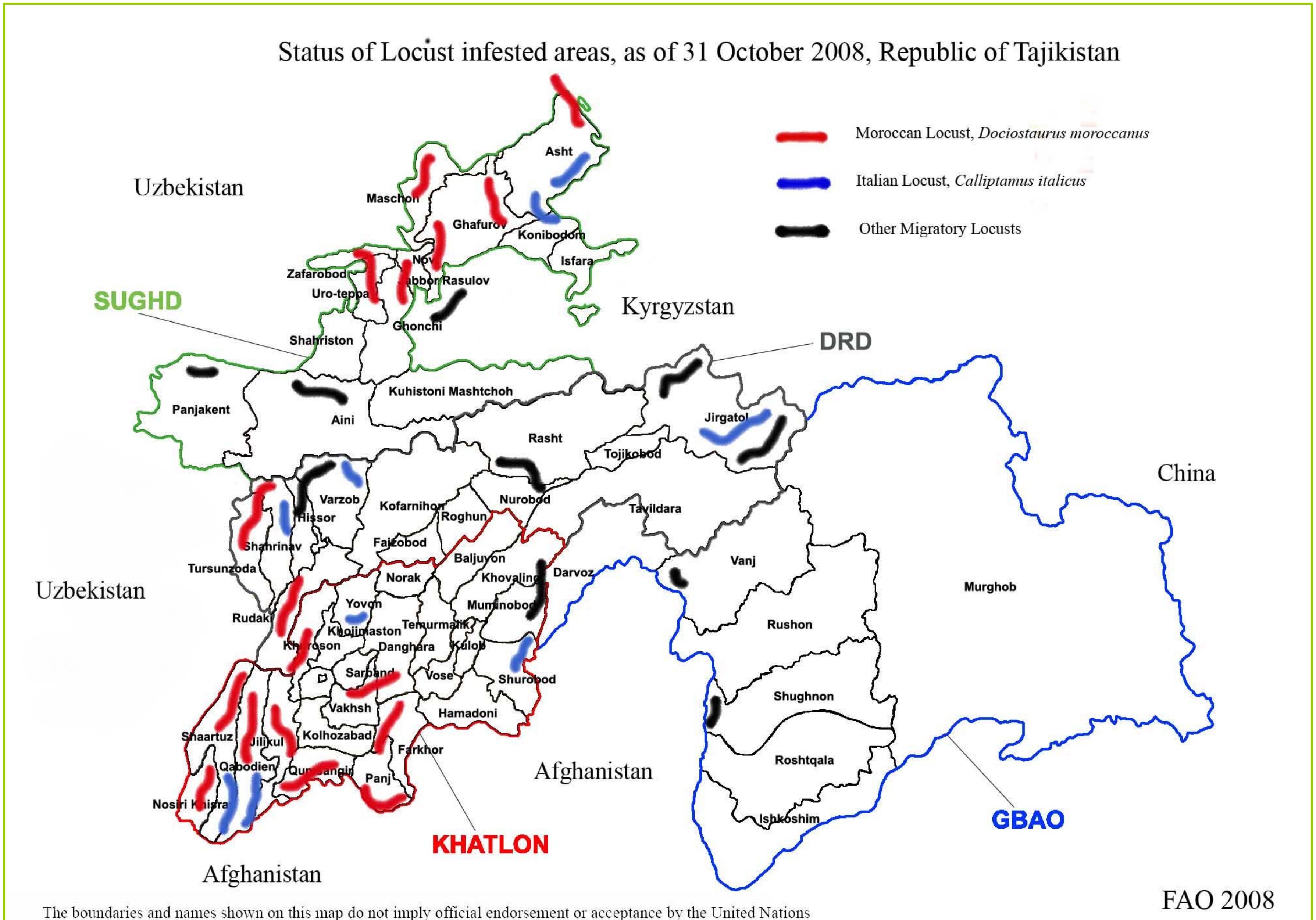
FSMS - RURAL AREAS TAJIKISTAN - ESTIMATION OF NUMBERS OF FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE

Zone	Households	People	Severely food insecure			Moderately food insecure			Total food insecure		
			%	Number households	Number people	%	Number households	Number people	%	Number households	Number people
13	2,057	94,843	9	185	8,536	6	123	5,691	15	309	14,226
14	106,395	711,578	9	9,576	64,042	15	15,959	106,737	24	25,535	170,779
15	43,080	357,963	63	27,140	225,517	26	11,201	93,070	89	38,341	318,587
17	30,140	192,893	0	0	0	20	6,028	38,579	20	6,028	38,579
DRD	**181,672**	**1,357,277**	**20.25**	**36,901**	**298,095**	**16**	**33,311**	**244,076**	**36**	**70,212**	**542,171**
6	13,166	84,434	0	0	0	3	395	2,533	3	395	2,533
8	7,386	41,095	12	886	4,931	36	2,659	14,794	48	3,545	19,726
GBAO	**20,552**	**125,529**	**6**	**886**	**4,931**	**20**	**3,054**	**17,327**	**26**	**3,940**	**22,259**
1	67,534	410,143	6	4,052	24,609	16	10,805	65,623	22	14,857	90,231
5	45,066	314,729	6	2,704	18,884	18	8,112	56,651	24	10,816	75,535
7	51,006	432,047	0	0	0	23	11,731	99,371	23	11,731	99,371
9	18,351	138,492	9	1,652	12,464	12	2,202	16,619	21	3,854	29,083
18	73,618	523,260	19	13,987	99,419	19	13,987	99,419	38	27,975	198,839
19	22,835	180,413	31	7,079	55,928	29	6,622	52,320	60	13,701	108,248
KHATLON	**278,410**	**1,999,084**	**12**	**29,474**	**211,304**	**20**	**53,460**	**390,003**	**32**	**82,934**	**601,307**
2	11,982	77,652	14	1,677	10,871	31	3,714	24,072	45	5,392	34,943
3	26,187	116,665	6	1,571	7,000	6	1,571	7,000	12	3,142	14,000
4	26,266	110,672	11	2,889	12,174	20	5,253	22,134	31	8,142	34,308
10	100,864	531,843	2	2,017	10,637	6	6,052	31,911	8	8,069	42,547
11	18,640	90,519	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	58,980	271,166	6	3,539	16,270	11	6,488	29,828	17	10,027	46,098
16	50,933	276,858	29	14,771	80,289	37	18,845	102,437	66	33,616	182,726
SUGHD	**293,852**	**1,475,375**	**10**	**26,465**	**137,241**	**16**	**41,924**	**217,383**	**26**	**68,388**	**354,623**
TOTAL	**774,486**	**4,957,265**	**13**	**93,726**	**651,571**	**18**	**131,749**	**868,789**	**31**	**225,475**	**1,520,360**

Low numbers of households and sampling method call for caution in interpreting results and numbers presented in the table



Source: WFP, 2008


Status of Locust infested areas, as of 31 October 2008, Republic of Tajikistan
Moroccan Locust, Dociostaurus moroccanus
Italian Locust, Calliptamus italicus
Other Migratory Locusts
Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan
China
Afghanistan
SUGHD
DRD
KHATLON
GBAO
Asht
Maschoh
Ghafurov
Konibodom
Isfara
Zafarobod
Uro-teppa
Jabbor Rasulov
Ghonchi
Shahriston
Panjakent
Aini
Kuhistoni Mashtchoh
Rasht
Jirgatol
Tojikobod
Varzob
Hissor
Shahrinav
Tursunzoda
Kofarnihon
Roghun
Nurobod
Tavildara
Faizobod
Baljuvon
Khovaling
Darvoz
Norak
Yovon
Muminobod
Rudaki
Khojimaston
Temurmalik
Khuroson
Danghara
Kulob
Sarband
Vose
Shurobod
Vakhsh
Hamadoni
Shaartuz
Jilikul
Kolhozabad
Farkhor
Qabodien
Qumsangir
Panj
Nosiri Khisra
Vanj
Murghob
Rushon
Shughnon
Roshtqala
Ishkoshim
FAO 2008
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