1.0. Regional Highlights

The month of June witnessed the planting of all the major crops. This was preceded by early showers in April and May which encouraged farmers to initiate field preparations and planting. The average rainfall in June was between 21mm and 40mm, which is not enough to support proper germination and growth of planted crops. Some districts in the Upper West region, namely Sissala East and Lawra Districts experienced less than normal rainfall towards the latter part of June, which could impede the growth and development of crops in those areas.

Household cereal stocks from the harvests of December 2008 are also dwindling. This could lead to households cutting back on the amount of food they consume. All these are happening at a time when major planting is done.

1.1. Northern Region

- Data was collected from 40 out of the 54 sentinel sites in the region.
- 30% or 12 sites reported empty granaries, which is an improvement over the situation last year when it was 60% or 25 of reporting sites.
- The number of sites recording 3 meals a day has fallen from 52% in May 2009 to 45% in the current month, but it is still better than the 57% reported in June 2008.
- All the reporting sites have reported normal progression of the agricultural season. Planting of major staple crops (maize, millet, sorghum) have been completed.
- Rainfall was generally good in most districts in the region except in a few areas in Bole, West Gonja, Saboba, Yendi, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba districts where it was reported to be less than normal.

1.2. Upper East Region

- Data for this month was collected in 16 out of the 24 sentinel sites in the region.
- The average prices of maize, millet and sorghum experienced a decline compared with the average prices for June 2008; making these commodities more affordable on the market now than they were last year.
- Household food stock levels however continue to dwindle resulting in a higher percentage of sentinel sites reporting empty granaries than was reported last month.
- Of the 16 reporting sentinel sites, 13% recorded empty granaries as compared to 5% in just a month earlier (May 2009).

1.3. Upper West Region

- 10 out of the 24 sentinel sites in the region reported for the month of June 2009.
- Prices of Maize, millet and sorghum continue to increase on the market, although millet has experienced a marginal 2.16 percentage decline in average terms, compared to same time last year.
- Parts of the Lawra and Sissala East districts experienced less than normal rainfall in the latter part of June, impeding the growth and development of crops in those areas.
- 40% of the 10 reporting sites recorded empty granaries.
2.0. Rainfall Situation
The beginning of June 2009 was marked by an uneven distribution of rainfall across the three northern regions. As shown in the satellite images below, the first and third dekads of the month saw most parts of the Northern Region recording between 21mm and 40mm of rainfall; 63% of the reporting sites recorded normal rainfall as compared to 76% in June 2008. The recorded rainfall might not be enough to support the proper development of crops at this particular time of the agricultural season. Overall, the Upper West and Upper East Regions did much better in terms of rainfall.

In the third dekad, parts of the Bole, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, West Gonja and parts of Yendi and Saboba districts recorded some dry spells, with only between 0mm and 20mm of rainfall.

Lawra and Sissala East districts in the Upper West Region, and Yendi District in the Northern Region also experienced a marked reduction in rainfall in the second dekad. Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) officials have confirmed that the reduced rainfall in these areas has retarded the growth of crops especially maize and yam.

On the whole, the rainfall situation looks less promising than the same period last year (2008).

Figure 1: Rainfall estimates for the first dekad of June 2009

Figure 2: Rainfall estimates for the second dekad of June 2009

Figure 3: Rainfall estimates for the third dekad of June 2009
3.0. Progress of the Agricultural Season
The agricultural season is progressing relatively well across the three northern regions. Farmers have planted the major staple crops (maize, millet, sorghum and yam), and are currently preoccupied with weeding and fertilizer application, while rice and soyabean farmers are currently engaged in planting.

The continued implementation of the government’s policy on fertilizer subsidization, according to MoFA officials across the three northern regions has encouraged farmers to increase their acreage. This could result in increased agricultural output if the rains continue to be normal for the rest of the period.

Most sentinel sites (80%) in the Northern Region have reported that the current state of affairs is normal for this time of the year as against the 69% of sentinel sites reported in June last year.

Crop performance is reported by MoFA officials to be generally good across the three regions. However, less than normal rainfall was reported in districts to the south-western part of the Northern Region including Bole, West Gonja and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba as a result of which crop development has been slightly impeded.

Both the Upper West and Upper East regions have reported a normal progression of the agricultural season with 60% and 63% of the sites respectively affirming this.

4.0. Food Security Summary
As the agricultural season progresses, the food security situation continues to be fragile. The month of June has witnessed a further decline in availability of food at both community and household levels. This implies an increase in the susceptibility of households, especially children to malnutrition and other related conditions.

Reports from sentinel sites across the three regions show that household food consumption is on the decline compared to previous months, although the situation is generally better than it was in June 2008.

4.1. Northern Region
With crops having already been planted in the fields, a significant number of households now depend on the markets for their food supplies. However, households are constrained in their ability to afford food commodities due to the high price of cereals on the market. The current price of a 2.5kg bowl of maize in average terms is 5.27% higher than it was in June 2008. Both millet and sorghum are 26.85% higher.

Data from the forty (40) reporting sentinel sites shows that 30% or 12 sites reported empty granaries which is an improvement over the situation last year when it was 60% or 25 of reporting sites.

Although the number of sites recording 3 meals a day has fallen from 52% in May 2009 to 45% in the current month, it is still better than the 57% reported in June 2008.

The rainfall situation in the region is generally normal for this period of the year although it is slightly lower than last year; 63% of the reporting sites recorded normal rainfall as compared to 76% in June 2008. This could be attributed to the somewhat dry spells experienced in parts of the region including Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, West Gonja, Bole and Saboba districts, as indicated in the satellite images (figure 3).
4.2. Upper East Region
Household food stocks continue to dwindle further from the level reported in previous months. Of the 16 reporting sentinel sites, 13% recorded empty granaries as compared to 5% from just a month earlier (May 2009). This situation corresponds to the number of meals consumed per day, which has also reduced from 92% in May, to 88% in June 2009.

Rainfall in the region is generally normal and in fact significantly better that it was in June 2008. 88% of the 16 reporting sites indicated that the rains were normal for this time of the year; in June 2008 it was 42% of 19 reporting sites.

Incidence of people migrating out of the region continues its downward trend with as much as 50% sites reporting less then normal migration.

4.3. Upper West Region
The Upper West Region has the highest incidence of sentinel sites reporting empty granaries in the month of June. 40% of the 10 reporting sites recorded empty granaries as against 30% for the Northern Region and 13% for the Upper East Region.

Household food consumption has dropped quite significantly from the level recorded in May 2009 as well as from the same month last year (June 2008). 70% of the sites reported eating only two meals a day; a marked increase from 58% of the reporting sites in June 2008.

Migration remains largely normal in 90% of the sites. This is a remarkable improvement over last year when only 48% reported normal migration.

5.0. Price Trends and Marketing Activities
The charts below present a comparative analysis of the average prices of major food items (measured in 2.5kg bowls) and that of live goats and guinea fowls as reported from the sentinel sites for each of the three northern regions in June 2008 and June 2009. Generally there has been a marginal upward change in the average prices for most of the food items in all the three regions.

The Upper East Region however, recorded negative changes in the average prices of maize, millet and sorghum. The average prices of livestock (goats and guinea fowls) registered the highest increase, with the Upper West Region topping the chart with 38.30% and 41.46% respectively for goats and guinea fowls.

5.1. Northern Region
The Northern Region has recorded the highest percentage increase in the average prices of the three major staples (maize- 5.27%, millet- 28.85% and sorghum- 26.85%).

There was no commensurate increase in the price of labour however. This experienced the lowest change (0.76%); measured as the cost of manual labour per day. This implies that vulnerable individuals who depend on the sale of their labour for their livelihoods are worse off now than they were in June 2008.

![Graph](image-url)

*Figure 4*

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5.2. Upper East Region

The Upper East Region has experienced a downward change in the average prices of the major staples namely maize, millet, and sorghum, with the price of sorghum going down by as much as 16.62 percent, compared to the average price in the same month in 2008.

![Figure 5](image)

5.3. Upper West Region

The current price situation is generally more favourable than it was last year, particularly for livestock-owning households as the region currently has the highest percentage increase in the average price of live goats and guinea fowls (38.30% and 41.46% respectively) compared to June 2008.

Given the 2.16 percentage decline in the average price of a bowl of millet and the marginal increase in the price of maize, households are able to buy more grains (than could be bought last year) with the income from the sale of one goat.

![Figure 6](image)
6.0. Health and Malnutrition
The nutritional status of children under five (5) years of age in the three (3) northern regions was assessed, using the weight-for-age (WFA) anthropometric indicator. Data was collected from fifteen (15) selected health institutions in ten (10) districts of the 3 northern regions, which are close to the MoFA sentinel sites (Table 1).

Table 1:
Selected health institutions from which nutrition data was taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Health facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>Kassena Nankana</td>
<td>Navrongo RCH Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nayagenia Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bawku West</td>
<td>Yelwoko Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Azuweira CHPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bongo</td>
<td>Anafobisi H/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dua Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulisa</td>
<td>Siniensi Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sandema RCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>Wa Municipal</td>
<td>Gbegrur-Charia Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nadowli</td>
<td>Goli HC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jirapa</td>
<td>Tankuri HC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wa West</td>
<td>Deku, Pilsie, Sirriyiri CHPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Savelugu/Nanton</td>
<td>Savelugu RCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Mamprusi</td>
<td>Janga HC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Karimenga HC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information was obtained from growth monitoring sessions carried out by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) at static/outreach points of these health centres as indicated above. It is important to point out that the weight-for-age indicator taken at these centres measures both short-term (moderate) and long-term hunger (severe).

From the survey carried out, the percentages of underweight children (95% CI) are shown in Table 2 below. It shows data for both moderate and severe malnutrition in children under five years of age, in the respective regions. The data for the month (a period within the lean season in northern Ghana) shows higher levels of malnutrition for Northern and Upper West regions as compared with the Ghana Demographic Health Survey (GDHS) 2008 data for these regions.
Table 2: Prevalence of malnutrition among children monitored in the 3 northern regions of Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total number of children examined</th>
<th>Global (95% CI) (&lt;-2z scores)* Moderate malnutrition</th>
<th>(95% CI) (&lt;-3z scores)** Severe malnutrition</th>
<th>GDHS, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>19.9% (14.9 - 25.0)</td>
<td>8.0% (4.6-11.5)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>34% (24.2-43.8)</td>
<td>17% (9.1-24.9)</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20.8% (13.2-28.5)</td>
<td>5.8% (1.2-10.4)</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CI – Confidence Interval
* < -2z score figures show that the population indicated have their average weight being less than 80% of the standard reference weight for their respective age group.
** < -3z score figures show that the population indicated have their average weight being less than 70% of the standard reference weight for their respective age group.

Table 3: WHO Classification for assessing severity of malnutrition by prevalence ranges among children under 5 years of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity of malnutrition by prevalence ranges (%)</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>&gt;=30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1. Intervention measures
Information from Tables 2 and 3 indicate that severity of malnutrition in the target groups in the Upper East and Upper West regions is high and that for the Northern Region is very high. Within this lean period and in partnership with the appropriate agencies, additional measures to step up food security in children under 5 years of age in all three regions should be seriously and urgently considered.


7.0. Conclusion
The availability of new maize from southern Ghana on the market will hopefully reduce, or at least stabilize prices of the major staples (maize, millet and sorghum) in the coming months.

It is however expected that food availability and access at household level will continue to be fragile as the harvest is still some three months away.

The FSNMS shall continue to monitor the situation and report accordingly.