



Jaffna Food Security Bulletin

August 2007



Summary

- All commodities have to be brought into the peninsula by ship, resulting in high prices.
- Basic food commodities are available; however open market commodity prices fluctuate depending on supply and are high compared with the rest of the country.
- The decision by the Government to increase shipping capacity for food assistance, particularly WFP food shipment and agricultural inputs, as well as to control selling prices by private traders should help reduce prices.
- The volatile security environment continues to disrupt supply chains and farming activities, thereby hampering local food production.
- Farmers have started cultivating in line with the crop calendar but, due to increased fuel prices and limited availability of agricultural inputs, at a lower level than pre-isolation but higher than 2006. Availability of agricultural inputs is much less than the estimated total requirement of 1340 MT.¹

Background/Economy

- Population: approx. 640,000.
- IDP population: approx. 23,847.²
- The closure of the A9 main highway has significantly reduced imports of food, medicine, agricultural supplies, fuel and other essential items. Inter-district trade has become impossible. Livelihoods have been lost and purchasing power of the population has decreased.
- Prolonged under-supply of consumer goods, fuel and other energy supplies, as well as low supplies of input materials for local agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors all contribute to the critical economic conditions.

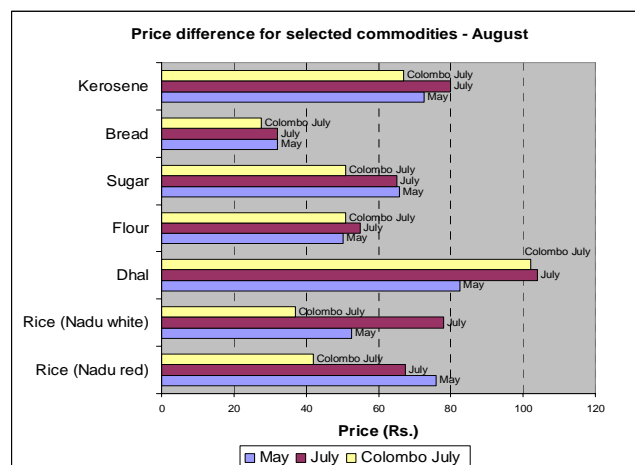
¹ Situation Report (22) - District Secretariat ,Jaffna

² Ministry of Resettlement, 30 July 2007

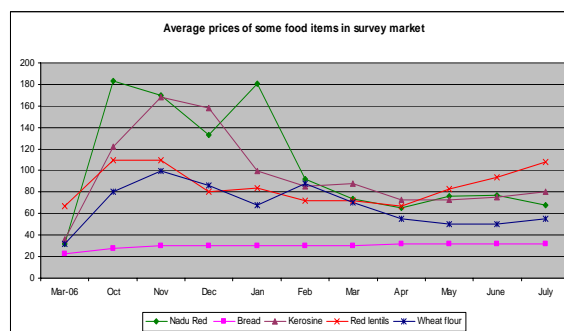
- Many income generating activities have been lost or significantly decreased due to security restrictions, the closed economy, high costs of production, lack of raw materials, lack of marketing opportunities, inadequate transport facilities, etc.

Food Security

- Most food items are currently available in Jaffna, but prices in the market are high even for essential food items.
- Price differences between Jaffna and Colombo vary according to commodity, but Jaffna is always more expensive (see table below).

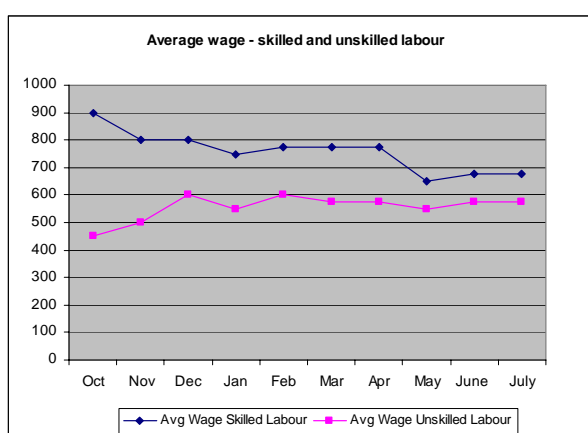


- Prices of all essential commodities except rice (red nadu) and sugar increased slightly when compared to prices in May 2007.
- Overall, prices are lower than last year. However, after a period of stabilization prices appear to be rising again.³



³ WFP Monthly Price Bulletin.

- 45% of the families in Jaffna are dependent on sources other than work for their main foreign remittances, charity, pension, social welfare etc. Further the Needs Assessment Survey for Income Recovery conducted by ILO revealed that this percentage is four times higher than the national average.⁴
- ILO estimates that unemployment and underemployment is high among the local population. Accordingly wages for skilled and unskilled labour have been gradually decreasing during 2007. However wages for skilled and unskilled labour have been increased slightly since May 2007.⁵



- Many people do not have sufficient purchasing power to buy foods at current market prices.

Nutrition

- In March 2007, a total of 2,452 children under 5 years were anthropometrically measured in Kayts division. The prevalence of acute malnutrition was 19.9% (<-2SD), Severe malnutrition (<-3SD) was 4.9% in the Kayts division⁶.
- Data indicates an increase in acute malnutrition among children less than five years in the whole district, from 18% in November 2006 to 22.4% in May 2007⁷.
- In May, the DPDHS conducted a nutrition survey for schoolgirls in grades 11, 12 and 13. Out of 7,154 surveyed, 2,005 girls had inadequate weight and height i.e. BMI

⁴ NSRI – ILO October 2006

⁵ Joint UN NE Situation Monitoring Report.

⁶ DPDHS Jaffna.

⁷ DPDHS Jaffna.

below 18.5 due to protein energy malnutrition.

- UNICEF's nutritional rehabilitation programme is currently feeding 228 severely malnourished children in Jaffna.
- From August 11th 2006 to August 11th 2007, distribution of the nutrition supplementation from WFP (Corn Soya Blend) and Government (Thripasha) has been severely disrupted by the limitation in supply, aggravating the nutrition situation.
- 9,000 moderately malnourished children under 5 years are receiving UNICEF high energy biscuits.

Food Imports by ship to Jaffna⁸

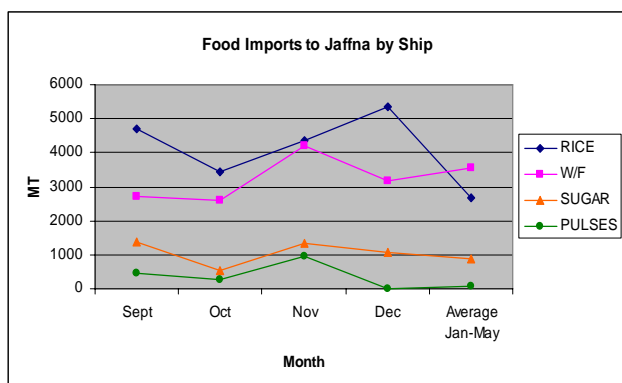
- The Government has recently agreed to prioritize Government and WFP food assistance to Jaffna. WFP expects to send 5,300 MT in September, equivalent to two and half months requirements, this will help to build buffer stocks. From October onwards the monthly requirement of 2,300 tons of WFP food will be regularly shipped.
- WFP estimates that based on a ration equivalent to the WFP distribution (providing some 1,900kcal per person per day out of the recommended daily intake of 2,100kcal), the basic food requirement for the population of Jaffna from the closure of the A9 road (measured from 1 September 2006) to end of August 2007 would be at least 108,000 MT. Of particular concern is the low import of dhal and oil meaning without local supplement, the diet will be lacking protein and fat.

Basic Food Commodities	MT (01.09.06 – 31.05.07)
Rice	31,202
Sugar	8,839
Dhal	2,178
Flour	30,435
Vegetable oil	462
Total	73,116

- A total of 142,972 MT have been shipped from September 2006 to August 2007.

⁸ SCOPP, GoSL

- In July, the estimated total requirement of essential food items for the district was 9,245MT. Only 4291 MT were received, some 46% of the requirement.⁹



*Breakdown of commodities shipped to Jaffna during June/July are not available

- In June /July 2007, WFP was only able to ship a total of 2,598 MT of commodities against its 4,600 MT requirements:

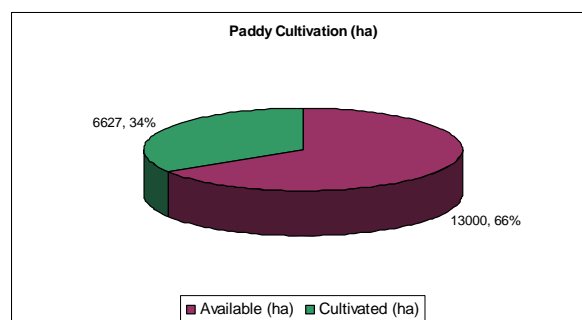
Basic food commodities	MT (June/July)
Rice	1614
Wheat Flour	500
Sugar	155
CSB	150
Lentils	143.5
Vegetable oil	36.4
Total	2598.9

Agriculture¹⁰

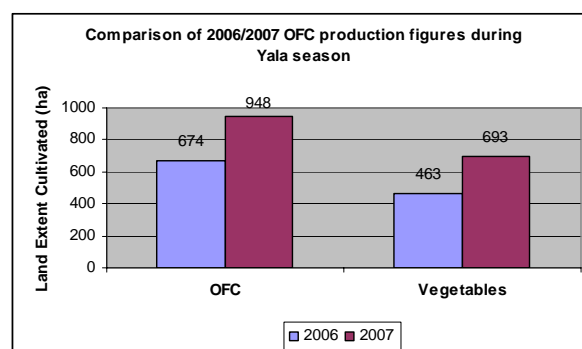
- Agricultural activities formed the prime livelihood for 85,411 farming families including 2,000 farm labourer households in Jaffna.
- The farmers of Jaffna have already missed one season of cultivation due to displacement and conflict in August 2006.
- The cropping calendar for the month of July includes vegetables, green gram, onions and root crops. Cultivation of all of these is ongoing.
- Under the current situation, while most displaced farming households have returned to their homes, they require support if they are to cultivate in the

coming Maha season with planting in October 2007, both for paddy and Other Field Crops (OFC).

- Closure of land supply routes and expanding security zones has left high intensity farming land uncultivated due to the displacement of farmers, lack of spare parts, fuels and agro-chemicals.
- Approximately 15-20% of the agricultural areas (comprising highly productive arable land) is in the high security zones and is inaccessible.



- The average yield of Paddy dropped to 1.5MT/ha during the last Maha season, compared to the usual yields of 3-4MT/ha.
- Yala planting is in progress, out of which vegetable cultivation is progressing at a slow pace due to the lack of sufficient fertilizer. Harvesting of vegetables and OFC is in progress.
- 40% increase in land allocated for OFC and 50% increase in land allocated for vegetables compared to 2006 Yala season.



- FAO plans to supply seed paddy for 500 beneficiaries in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture for the coming Maha Season (2007)

⁹ Situation Report (22) - District Secretariat ,Jaffna

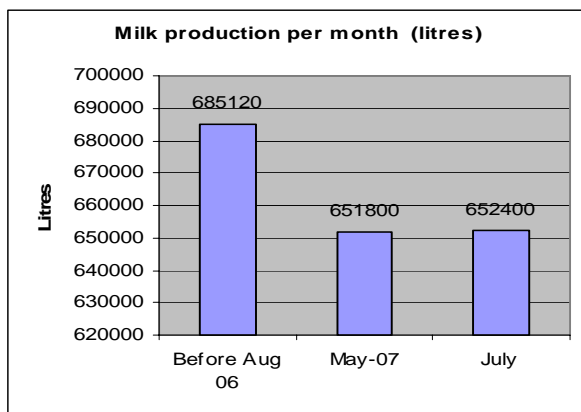
¹⁰ Information provided by FAO.

Livestock

The present livestock situation is as follows:

Poultry Layers	122,200
Other Hens	37,850
Milking Cows	16,120
Other Cows	12,690
Bulls	17,725
Calf	16,820

- Livestock figures are only 36% of pre-conflict numbers.¹¹
- Milk production for month of July is 652,400 litres, a slight increase compared to May 2007.



Fisheries¹²

- There are 15 927 active fishermen in 14 D.S Divisions of Jaffna. For security reasons and ease of monitoring, the military allow only 50% of the fishermen to fish per day on a rotational basis leaving the other 50% unemployed that day.
- Strict security measures on fishing have seriously impacted the industry. Only traditional fishing craft are allowed in the district.

Point Pedro West: Fishing hours 8a.m to 4p.m, distance only 1 km

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K.K.S West: Fishing hours 8a.m to 4p.m, distance 1 to 1.5km

K.K.S East: Fishing hours 8a.m to 4p.m, distance 1 to 1.5km

Sandilipay: Fishing hours 7a.m to 12a.m and 2p.m to 5p.m, allowed 2km only

Kays: Fishing hours 6a.m to 11a.m and 1p.m to 5p.m, distance 1.5 to 2 km

Delft: Fishing hours 6a.m to 4p.m, distance 2km

Chullapuram: Fishing hours 8a.m to 4p.m, distance 2km

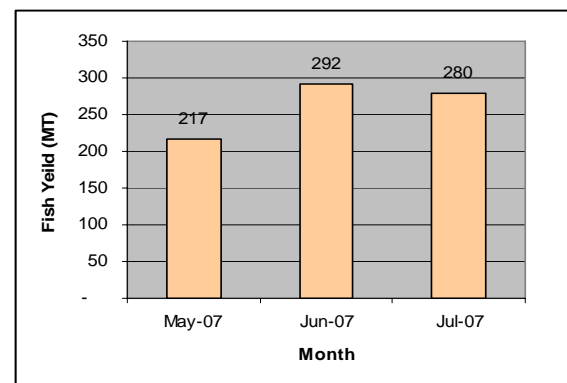
Jaffna west: Fishing hours 8a.m to 4p.m, 2 km

Jaffna east: Fishing hours 8a.m -4p.m, 1km

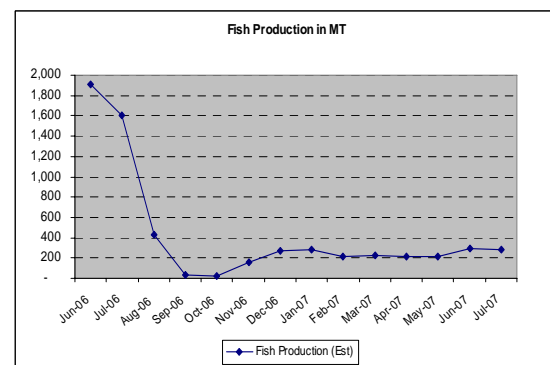
Vellaney: Fishing hours 8a.m -4p.m, distance 1km

Chavakachcheri: Fishing hours 8a.m -11p.m, 1 km only

- Fish production has increased slightly since the beginning of the year, but is still only some 12% of pre-conflict levels, with the consequent affect on household livelihoods.
- Average fish yield for the Month of July is 279.9 MT, 29% higher than May but less than June.



- Fish production figures June 2006 – July 2007:



¹¹ Information provided by FAO.

¹² Information provided by FAO.