The food security situation has improved significantly compared to the previous quarter (July—September 2012) and the situation is reportedly stable overall according to the NeKSAP District Food Security Networks (DFSNs) of seventy-two districts across the country.

Exceptions were found in twenty-five Village Development Committees (VDCs), mostly in Rukum and Dailekh districts where pocket areas have been classified as “moderately food insecure (Phase-II)”. This is attributed to maize crop production failure coupled with limited employment opportunities.

For the rest of the country, the food security situation has improved due to the summer crop harvest and increased availability of other income sources: overall household income and purchasing power has increased through sales of high value commodities and a rise in wage rates. The NeKSAP DFSNs reported good sales of high value crops across the country: citrus, ginger, honey, large cardamom, and dairy products in the hills; sugarcane, fish, nuts, and banana in terai; and apple and NTFPs (Jatamasi, Katuki, Sugandhawal etc.) in the mountains. According to the Nepal Rastra Bank, wage rate index has increased by 29 percent compared to the same period last year.

Despite the overall seasonal improvement in the food security situation, a significant number of population, equivalent to a quarter of rural households, reportedly consume an inadequate diet. Dalits, wage labourers and households in the mountain region have a higher incidence of inadequate food consumption.

A joint crop verification mission of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD), WFP and FAO reported that the production of main summer crops of Paddy, Maize and Millet has declined by 11.3, 8.3 and 3.0 percent respectively compared to last year (2011/12). The total summer crop output for 2012/13 is estimated at 6.8 million MT: 4.5 million mt for paddy, 2.0 million mt for maize, and 0.3 million mt millet.

The food security situation is expected to deteriorate in the Far Western Hills and Mountains, Karnali, and in some VDCs of Rukum and Dailekh over the next quarter.

**Table 1. Food Security situation and outlook**

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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karnali</td>
<td>≥</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far-Western Hill and Mountain</td>
<td>≥</td>
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<td>↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapti-Bheri Hills</td>
<td>≥</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Terai</td>
<td>≥</td>
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<td>↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central &amp; Eastern Terai</td>
<td>≥</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Hill and Mountain</td>
<td>≥</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Hill and Mountain</td>
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<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Hill and Mountain</td>
<td>≥</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classification key**
- Generally food secure
- Moderately food insecure
- Highly food insecure
- Severely food insecure
- Humanitarian emergency/ famine

Recent harvest of summer crops coupled with incomes from High Value Commodities (HVCs), remittances, and wage employment have contributed to seasonal improvement in household food security.

Food security situation over the next quarter is expected to remain stable in most parts of the country except for the Far Western Hills and Mountains and Karnali, where seasonal deterioration is projected due to the depletion of household food stocks, and rise in food prices. Dolpa, Humla, Bajura, Bajhang, and Darchula districts are likely to experience deteriorating food security situation.

Those VDCs of Dailekh and Rukum that are currently under the Phase II require close monitoring as the situation might further deteriorate to the Phase III (“highly food insecure”).
Food Security Situation, October–December 2012
Source: NeKSAP District Food Security Networks

NeKSAP Food Security Phase Classification:

- **Phase 1. Generally Food Secure**
  - Usually adequate and stable food access/availability. Adoption of traditional coping mechanisms that are part of the community's usual pattern. No significant changes in levels of malnutrition. Sustained access to food stocks and assets.

- **Phase 2. Moderately Food Insecure**
  - Moderately inadequate food access/availability recurrent during lean periods. Adoption of reversible coping strategies. Probable occurrence of natural disasters causing bearable loss of food stocks and assets given the adaptive capacity of local society.

- **Phase 3. Highly Food Insecure**
  - Highly inadequate food access/availability usually due to prolonged stresses or severe sudden shocks. High levels of malnutrition. Starting irreversible coping strategies that threaten livelihood assets. Probable occurrence of natural disasters causing losses of food stocks and assets at the limit of society's capacity to cope.

- **Phase 4. Severely Food Insecure**
  - Severe/critical lack of food access/availability usually due to prolonged stresses or severe sudden shocks. Very high levels of malnutrition. Widespread adoption of irreversible coping strategies that critically deplete livelihood assets. Probable occurrence of natural disasters causing very high losses of food stocks and assets overcoming local society's capacity to cope.

- **Phase 5. Humanitarian Emergency**
  - Extreme lack of food access/availability due to devastating natural disaster (large scale and intense earthquake).

Maize crop failure due to poor rain, disease, and hailstorm coupled with limited employment opportunities leave 22 VDCs into a state of "moderate food insecurity in Rukum and Dailekh districts.

Food Security Maps are available for download on the NeKSAP Google site:
https://sites.google.com/site/nefoodsec/home/food-security-phase-classification-maps
Figure 1. Number of VDCs by FS Phase (Source: NeK SAP DFSNs)

The food security situation has improved significantly compared to last quarter with a total of 25 VDCs classified as "moderately food insecure" (Phase II), according to the NeK SAP District Food Security Networks (DFSNs). In the Mid and Far Western Hills and Mountains where some one-third of the VDCs were classified as the Phase II during July-September 2012, the situation has also improved (Figure 1). The seasonal improvement is mainly attributed to the recent summer crop harvest, increased household income and purchasing power, and well-functioning market with stable food supply.

NeK SAP household data confirms the positive change. Adequacy of food consumption, measured by diversities and frequencies of consumption of different food items by households, has improved with some 76 percent of rural households reportedly consuming adequate food during the reporting period, compared to 69 percent in July-September 2012 (Figure 2). Households in the mountain region are likely to consume poorer diet where the incidence of inadequate food consumption was as high as 36 percent (Figure 3). Those households that consume inadequate diet are more likely to be poor, rely on wage labor and from the disadvantaged group like dalits (Source: NeK SAP household survey).

Figure 2. Household food consumption by season (Source: NeK SAP household survey)

Figure 3. Incidence of inadequate food consumption by eco-belt (Source: NeK SAP household survey)

Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Chronic Food Insecurity Analysis

IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Analysis was implemented in September 2012. The exercise was led by the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) with active participation and cooperation by the GoN (13 ministries and/or line departments), FAO, WFP and seventeen other organizations from UN, I/NGOs and civil society. The analysis was supported by the IPC Asia FAO regional project.

The chronic analysis was conducted by each of the fifteen sub-regions (3 eco-belts * 5 development regions). The IPC prototype tools for classifying chronic food insecurity were applied and a total of 24 indicators pertaining to food availability, access, utilization, water, sanitation, vulnerability, nutrition and mortality were looked at during the analysis.

With reference to the IPC chronic food insecurity reference table, each of the fifteen sub-regions was classified into four different levels: "low chronic (Level-1)" "moderate chronic (Level-2)" "high chronic (Level-3)" and "very high chronic (Level-4)". The most chronically food insecure zones across Nepal are the Mid and Far Western Mountains classified as the Level-4, followed by the Mid and Far Western Hills and parts of the Central Hills and Mountains.

Chronic food insecurity can only be measured over a longer period of time, while acute food insecurity can be evidenced quickly due to the presence of shocks, and seasonal food insecurity. Hence a given geographical area can experience a certain level of chronic food insecurity and simultaneously have varying phases of acute food insecurity: for the Oct-Dec 2012 monitoring cycle, the Mid-Western Mountains are classified as "Phase-I" for acute food insecurity where the same area is classified as the "Level-4" of chronic food insecurity.

SUMMER CROP PRODUCTION

According to a joint crop verification mission of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD), WFP and FAO that took place in December 2012, the production of main summer crops of paddy, maize and millet have declined by 11.3, 8.3 and 3.0 percent respectively compared to last year (2011/12). The 2012/13 total summer cereal crop output is estimated at 6.8 million MT with the breakdown of 4.5 million mt for paddy, 2.0 million mt for maize and 0.3 million mt for millet. Although the production declined significantly compared to last year, the output of this year is almost equivalent to the past five-year average (2007/08—2011/12) since the country experienced a bumper summer crop harvest last year.

At sub-regional level, some areas experienced a sharp decline in production: in the Mid and Far Western Hills, maize production was reduced by 17 percent; in the Central and Eastern terai, more than 20 percent of paddy loss was reported with the highest loss of 70 percent in Siraha district. Such a loss of paddy and maize in the major production belts might not only lead to a rapid depletion of household food stocks but it might also contribute to increasing market prices. In the Mid and Far Western development regions where food availability is a concern, the loss of domestic production would have an immediate negative impact on food security.

WINTER CROP

Wheat and barley are the major winter crops in Nepal that are currently growing except upper Dolpa and Mustang where wheat has been harvested during summer. Information obtained from the NeKSAP District Food Security Networks (DFSNs) indicates a normal growth of wheat despite poor soil moisture during the germination period except some parts in the Mid Western region where the growth has been moderately impaired due to low soil moisture for seeding (Map-3).

Although the production outcomes are yet to come, an early indication reveals normal production estimates for wheat. This is confirmed by the NeKSAP household survey with 80 percent of sampled households anticipating a normal wheat production for 2012/13. A good wheat harvest is expected in the areas with prolonged monsoon.

REGIONAL SITUATION

As revealed by the first advance estimate of Kharif crop production, summer paddy production in India has increased by three percent compared to its five year average production. India has lifted the export ban of non-basmati rice since February 2011, which is expected to continue easing the official import of rice from India.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

During the reporting period, a total of 3,025 mt of food has been provided for some 42,000 households, mostly in remote areas of the Mid and Far Western Hill and Mountain regions. Most of this assistance (97 percent) was provided by WFP through its livelihoods and assets creation projects, while the remaining three percent came from the Chinese government and was targeted to districts bordering with Tibet.

Subsidized rice from the Nepal Food Corporation (NFC) has also helped people in food deficit districts accessing food. Around 2,100 mt of rice were made available by NFC in Karnali and Far-western mountain districts during period. According to the NeKSAP DFSNs, the NFC rice stock as of December 2012 was recorded at: 20.0 mt for Jumla, 7.1 mt for Mug, 1.3 mt for Humla, 1.5 MT for Rukum, and 447.0 MT for Achham, Bajura, Bayang, and Darchula. This stock is expected to ease food availability in the lean season. The NFC food is mostly available at the district headquarters of those remote districts with limited quantity.

Table 2. 2012/13 Summer Crop Production percentage change by eco-belt (Source: MoAD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Ecological belt</th>
<th>Percentage change in production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>-39.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>-3.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tarai</td>
<td>-23.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>-14.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>-0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tarai</td>
<td>-29.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tarai</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid western</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>26.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>-1.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tarai</td>
<td>-9.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far western</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>4.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>-0.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tarai</td>
<td>-0.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With increased incomes from sales of High Value Commodities (HVCs), higher wage rates and remittances, as well as improved market connectivity, households experienced a better access to food. Key HVCs traded in this quarter include orange, ginger, and large cardamom.

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Wage labor, crop sales, and remittances were the top three sources of household income during the reporting period, with their respective share at 27 percent, 19 percent, and 17 percent (Figure 4).

### HIGH VALUE CROPS

October-December is a period of Citrus (especially mandarin and sweet orange) in the mid hills. Preliminary estimates by NeKSP District Food Security Networks (DFSNs) indicate some NPR 2.15 billion (equivalent to USD 27 million) revenue earned through citrus sales in the major citrus pockets. For instance, in the Mid Western Hills where some ten thousand households are involved in orange production, an average household income from the sale of orange is estimated at NPR 30,000. Similarly in Sidhuli and Ramechhap some one-thousand households earned NPR 150,000 each from sweet orange. In Myagdi, the average income from orange ranges from NPR 20,000 to 200,000.

Sales of ginger, cardamom, sugarcane and vegetables also contributed to household income during the reporting period. Districts in the Mid-Western, the Western and the Eastern Hills are reported to have generated comparatively better incomes from ginger sales this year as the farm gate price has increased significantly. The price hiked up to 100 percent compared to last year in Salyan, Pyuthan, Rukum and Surkhet districts. In Salyan alone, some two thousand farming households have earned NPR 36,000 on average through the sale of 2500 MT of ginger. Similarly, in Ilam, Panchthar, Dhankuta, Terathum, Bhojpur, Tapplejung, and Udayapur districts ginger has generated the revenue of NPR 590 million in total. Sales of fresh vegetables, sugarcane and nuts have also contributed to household incomes, especially in terai districts. For instance, some 35 thousand farming households of Banke and Bardiya have supplied 15,000 MT vegetables to six collection centers and earned NPR 375 million.

Farm gate prices of key high value crops have shown an increasing trend during the later half of the this monitoring cycle (Figure 5). Cabbage and cauliflower, which are the major vegetables in this period rendered good incomes to the small holder farmers as farm gate price rose up to NPR 30 per kilo in December. Beans and apple, which are the major crops for mountains also provided lucrative income to the farmers in this period. Apple, which was traded at NPR 30 per kilo in December is a period of Dashain, WFP livelihoods and asset creation projects provided employment opportunities in urban areas. Development sector has also contributed to food security through increasing food availability and people's access to food. For instance, WFP livelihoods and asset creation projects provided employment opportunities to some 25,000 vulnerable households in urban areas of the Mid and Far Western Hill and Mountain districts. The beneficiaries earned some NPR 46 million in total.

### WAGE EMPLOYMENT AND REMITTANCES

Public works such as road and hydro projects, industries, and private construction works were the major sectors absorbing a large number of wage laborers during the reporting period. For instance, public works of road and hydro projects have employed 2,460 labours per day from 46 VDCs of Sindhuli, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Rasuwa and Sindhupalchok, generating wage opportunities worth NPR one million per day. Similarly in the Eastern Hills, road construction has provided wage labor opportunities equivalent to NPR 10 -15 thousands/month for some 4,000 people. With the expansion of real estate businesses, private construction works also provide significant employment opportunities in urban areas. Development sector has also contributed to food security through increasing food availability and people's access to food. For instance, WFP livelihoods and asset creation projects provided employment opportunities to some 25,000 vulnerable households in remote areas of the Mid and Far Western Hill and Mountain districts. The beneficiaries earned some NPR 46 million in total.

Wage rate has increased substantially in recent period. It has been reported that wage rate has gone up by 40 to 50 percent during the past two years in most of the areas (Source: NeKSP DFSNs). Wage rate index, as reported by the Nepal Rastra Bank, has increased by 28 percent compared to the same period last year.

It is worth noticing that those households rely on wage labour are among the most vulnerable (see page 3 "Food Security Outcomes"). Availability of wage labour opportunities are extremely limited in remote areas as reported by the NeKSP DFSNs. Remittances account for the third largest share of household income during the reporting period. According to the NeKSP household survey, six in every ten households in the Far Western Hills and Mountains have at least one household member out-migrated. Although there is no data indicating the number of in-migrants and the amount of remittances, remittances can be said to have contributed to improving the household food security during this reporting period as it is the season of in-migration for Dashain and paddy harvest.
MARKET AND PRICES

As per the latest macroeconomic situation report released by the Nepal Rastra Bank, the year-on-year inflation as measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 10.4 percent in December 2012, compared to 7.5 percent. The inflation rates are higher than the same period last year but have remained low compared to two years ago (December 2010). The exception was the price index of transport that stood high at 15.1 percent (Figure-6).

National average retail prices of recently harvested crops such as coarse rice and potato seasonally declined, while lean season commodities such as pulses and wheat flour marginally increased as compared to last quarter (July-September 2012).

Spatial variations in retail prices deserve attention. Consumers in the mountains had to pay significantly higher prices compared to the ones in terai: 62.5 percent more for rice, 165.5 percent more for wheat flour, and 32.3 percent more for lentils in October–December 2012 (Figure-8). The differences were even larger during the last quarter of the monsoon season, when consumers in the mountains had to pay 71 percent, 296 percent and 34 percent higher prices for rice, wheat flour and lentil respectively. The supply situation during the period of October to December 2012 was reportedly stable due to an improved conditions of roads and trails in the hill and mountain districts with a smooth operation of transport services.

Purchasing power of poor and vulnerable households: Wage to Cereal Terms of Trade

Terms of trade (TOT) is the ratio of average daily wage rates and average retail prices of food commodities and is used to assess the purchasing power of households depending mainly on daily wages for livelihoods.

The TOT between agricultural wage and coarse rice price varies spatially and temporally (Figure-9). In December 2012, ToT was low at 7.3 kilo in the mountains, where prices of food items are significantly high despite a higher wage rate. In terai, on the other hand, the ToT was higher than the mountains and the hills with 11.8 kilo in December 2012.
HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

Despite the positive changes in the overall food security situation, data from NeKSAp Household Survey shows that 24 percent of surveyed rural households have consumed inadequate diet during Oct-Dec 2012 (Figure-2). Figure 10 compares the consumption of food items between inadequate and adequate food consumption households. Those households with inadequate consumption have typically consumed less protein rich food and green vegetables. Pulses are consumed less than 2 days a week, green vegetables about 3 days a week and there is almost no intake of meat/fish/eggs, milk/dairy products and fruits. Sources of pulses and vegetables remained similar to the last cycle: households access pulses mostly from market and vegetables from their own production.

CEREAL CROP UTILIZATION

According to NeKSAp DFSNs, physical utilization of major cereal crops (paddy, maize, and millet) varies across different sub-regions. While rice is largely used for human consumption, a large portion of maize is reportedly used for livestock feed (even up to 80 percent in the Western Hills and Mountains), and millet as well as naked barley for fermentation (even up to 80 percent in the Eastern Hills and Mountains). Though alternative use of cereals (such as for feed and fermentation) is believed to increase livestock production and household incomes, it reduces the food available for human consumption. Hence, careful assessment of cereal usage needs to be undertaken and taken into account in establishing the contribution of cereal production towards food security.

BOX-3. OPEN DEFEICATION FREE (ODF) VDCs

State of household and community sanitation perpetuates food insecurity. As an indicator of sanitation, this issue probes into use of toilets (number of ODF VDCs as an indicator) and access to drinking water. Out of 3,849 VDCs/municipalities of 72 districts, only 689 (18 percent) are ODF declared as of December 2012 (Source: NeKSAp DFSNs). It is to be noted that ODF campaign is moving aggressively in the Mid and Far Western Development Regions. Although less number of VDCs has declared ODF in the central and eastern hills and mountains, some 61 and 53 percent households are said to have access to toilet facilities in these areas (CBS, 2011).

HOUSEHOLD SHOCKS AND VULNERABILITY

With harvest of summer crops and completion of monsoon, household shocks and vulnerability have decreased. NeKSAp household survey confirms this phenomenon; number of households experiencing food insecurity shocks reduced to 16.5 percent as compared to 25 percent in the last cycle (July-September 2012).
Food Security Outlook

The food security situation is expected to remain stable over next quarter. However households with limited food stocks from summer crop production and poor income opportunities, especially in the Mid and Far Western Hills and Mountains, are likely to experience a seasonal deterioration in food security due to depleting household food stocks coupled with poor market access caused by snow at high altitudes. Income opportunities from NTFP and temperate fruits will also be constrained in this period.

Though summer crop production has decreased significantly compared to last year, its impact on food security can be estimated only after winter crops (wheat and barley) are harvested. Early symptoms indicate positive prospects for wheat production in most of the areas.

The Phase-II (“moderately food insecure”) VDCs in Dailekh and Rukum deserve a close monitoring as the situation is anticipated to deteriorate in some of the VDCs, shifting to Phase-III (“highly food insecure”), which could undermine household livelihoods and assets.

NeKsap Project Update

NeKsap Review

NeKsap Review process was initiated in December 2012 with active participation of various stakeholders. The main objective is to review the indicators, methodology, reporting and institutional linkages in the spirit of strengthening and institutionalizing NeKsap into the government structure. The expected outputs are the following:

- Revised indicators and methodology for NeKsap food security phase classification with greater relevance;
- The NeKsap phase classification approach is streamlined with that of the integrated Phase Classification (IPC) version 2.0;
- The NeKsap food security monitoring reporting is better synchronized with the GoN reporting system;
- Institutional arrangement for the NeKsap is revised for effective and efficient implementation at all levels including policy and technical levels as well as district, regional and central levels to ensure its long-term institutional and financial sustainability;
- Recommendations, if any, on other NeKsap components other than the phase classification, such as crop monitoring and assessment, market and price monitoring and household food security monitoring.

The field review process completed so far included community interaction, and district and regional consultations workshops in sixteen districts in the five development regions.

The review process will be concluded with a national level consultation workshop in March 2013.

Detailed district food security information

The Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKsap) currently monitors 72 districts across Nepal. The information collected forms the basis for this bulletin. Detailed food security bulletins will be made available upon request in English and Nepali.

Cluster 1. Karnali

Dolpa, Humla, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugul

Cluster 2. Far-Western Hill & Mountain

Achham, Bajhang, Bajura, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Darchula, Doti

Cluster 3. Rapti-Bheri Hills

Dailekh, Jajarkot, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Surkhet

Cluster 4. Western Terai

Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardiya, Banke, Dang, Kapilbastu, Rupandehi

Cluster 5. Central and Eastern Terai

Nawalparasi, Chitwan, Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Siraha, Saptari

Cluster 6. Western Hill and Mountain

Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahu, Arghakhanchi, Gulmi, Palpa, Syangja, Parbat, Myagdi, Mustang, Manang, Kaski

Cluster 7. Central Hill and Mountain

Sindhuli, Ramechap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Kavrepalanchok, Nuwakot, Rusuwa, Makwanpur, Dhading

Cluster 8. Eastern Hill and Mountain

Taplejung, Panchthar, Sankhuwasabha, Ilam, Okhaldunga, Khotang, Dhanuka, Udayapur, Solukhumbu, Bhojpur, Terathum

This Food Security Bulletin is based on (i) data collected from 955 households of 57 districts (Hill: 400 households; Mountain: 240 households and Terai: 315 households) during October-December 2012 as a part of the Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKsap), (ii) NeKsap District Food Security Network Meetings across 72 districts and other information sources as referenced.

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