



Red Sea State, Sudan

Food Security Monitoring, May 2015



World Food Programme



Highlights

- Data collection was carried during May 2015 which represented the beginning of the summer harvest in Tokar locality and the pre lean season in Agig and Durdeeb.
- The food security situation in May 2015 was worse than in November 2013/14 in Durdeeb and Agig localities and remained unchanged in Toker. The stability of the food security in Toker was attributed to the beginning of the harvest season.
- The prices of sorghum decreased in Red Sea during May 2015 compared to April 2015 and to the same time last year. The reduction in the sorghum prices was a result of good sorghum production in the last agricultural season.
- Purchasing power remained at a similar level to previous rounds of food security monitoring. One fourth of the households in Agig, Toker and Durdeeb could not afford the cost of one local food basket.
- Dietary diversity and food frequency of households in Tokar locality was better in May 2015 than in previous rounds. In Durdeeb, household food consumption was poorer than previous rounds. The proportion of households who had poor consumption increased from 13 to 33 percent compared to November 2014.
- The main livelihood activities for over 50 percent of households in Agig and Durdeeb were non-agricultural labour and collection and sale of firewood and grass. In Toker, production and sale of charcoal represented the main income sources for 45 percent of households, followed in importance by agricultural wage labour.

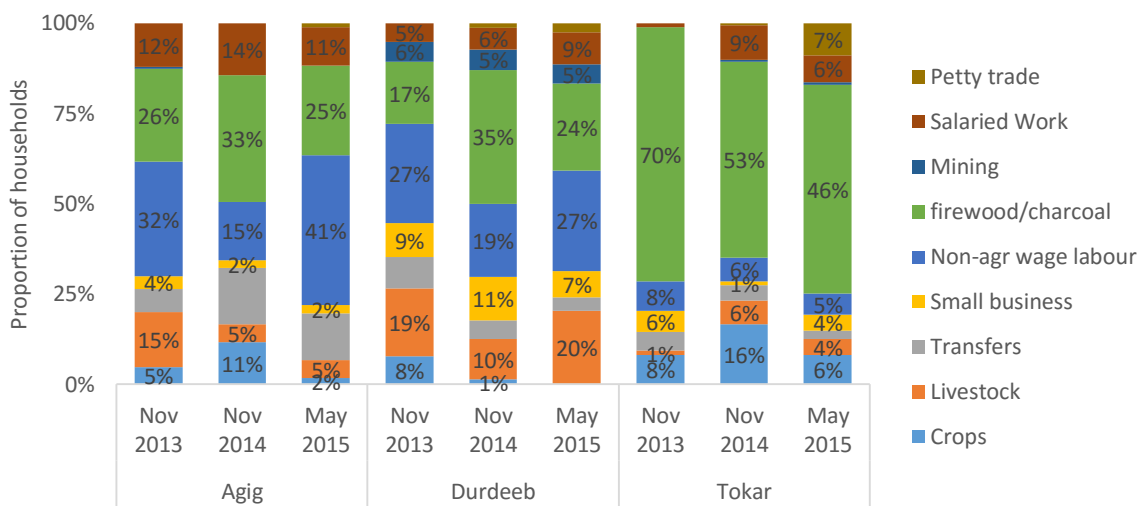
Background

WFP launched the Red Sea Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) in November 2013, following recommendations in the 2012 Comprehensive Food Security Assessment to strengthen surveillance. The main objective of the FSMS is to better understand and monitor the food security situation in the state, focusing on the most vulnerable localities of Tokar, Durdeeb and Agig. In May 2015, WFP in collaboration with the Humanitarian Aid Commissioner (HAC) and the State Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) conducted the third round of the food security monitoring. The 25 sentinel sites, distributed over the three localities were assessed to track trends in food security. A total of 625 households were interviewed.

Livelihoods

The primary livelihood activities in Tokar, Durdeeb and Agig were firewood collection, charcoal making, non-agricultural wage labour and agricultural wage labour. Meanwhile, income activities such as sale of crops and agricultural labour, sale of livestock and transfers (such as gifts and remittances) represented secondary income sources for households in assessed localities. The percentage of households in Tokar who depended on firewood and charcoal at the time of data collection was less than in previous rounds. This was mainly due to seasonal factors, with households engaging in agricultural activities and having access to income from sale of crops. The type and pattern of livelihoods activities in Durdeeb and Agig remained similar to May 2014 with a slight shift as a result of seasonality.

FIGURE 1: MAIN LIVELIHOODS

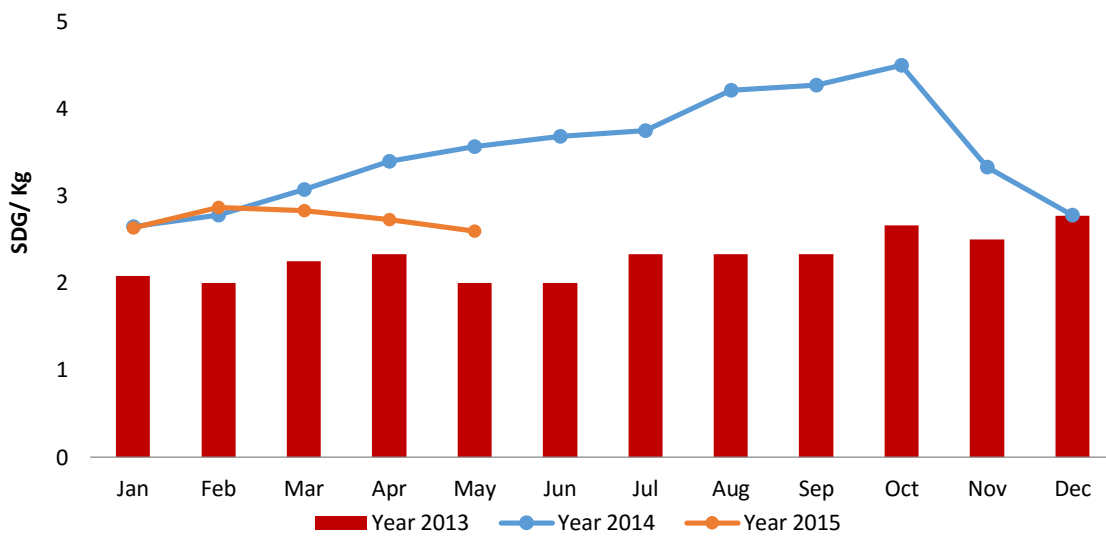


Markets

The price of sorghum in May 2015 was lower than at the same time in 2014, but 27 percent higher than at the same time in 2013. Sorghum price was relatively stable in 2015, but it was expected to increase as the lean season approaches. Goat price was relatively stable as well and followed a normal seasonal pattern. The price of livestock was expected to decrease with more supply to the market due to excessive sale during lean season.

The terms of trade between sorghum and goat decreased by 46 percent between May 2015 and May 2014 favoured livestock owners. This was due to stable sorghum prices and the increasing trend of livestock supply to the markets.

FIGURE 2: SORGHUM PRICES IN PORT SUDAN MARKET



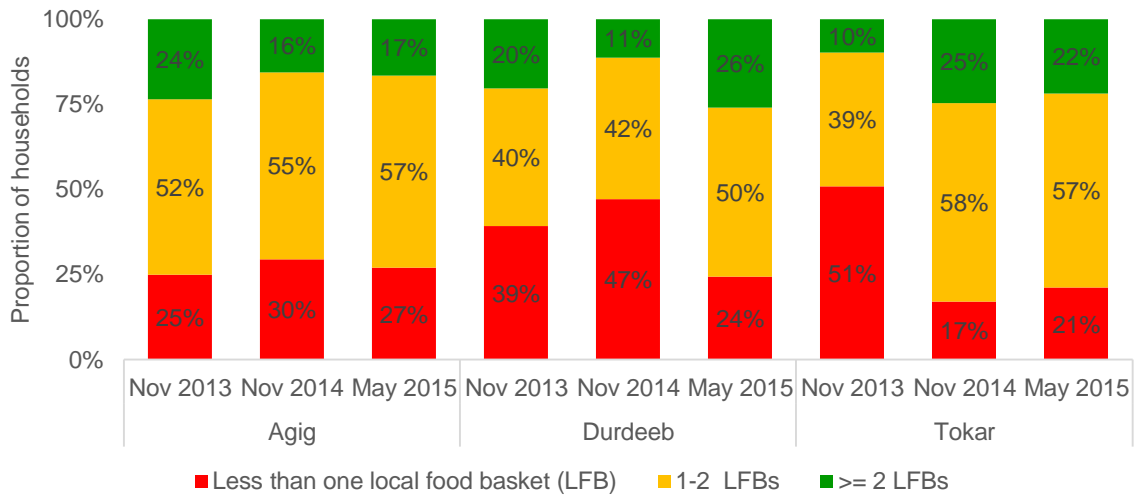
Purchasing Power

Household purchasing power was determined by comparing household total expenditure with the cost of a local food basket (LFB). The cost of the local food basket in May 2015 was 3.83 SDG per day per capita, 4.5 percent higher than in November 2014. Approximately one fourth of the households in Agig, Toker and Durdeeb could not afford the cost of one food basket. Overall purchasing power was poor and remained similar to previous rounds. Among the main reason behind poor purchasing power was the limited access to diversified income sources and the increasing price of some the food items in the basket.

The local food basket (LFB)

The LFB consisted of nine food items: cereals (sorghum), milk, dry vegetables, cooking oil, goat meat, cow meat, onions and sugar. The amount of each food item was computed so as to minimize the cost of the basket, while meeting the minimum requirements of 2,100 kilocalories per person per day. Households were classified as having poor purchasing power (households that could not afford the cost of one LFB), borderline purchasing power (households that could afford between one and two baskets) and acceptable purchasing power (households that could afford more than two baskets).

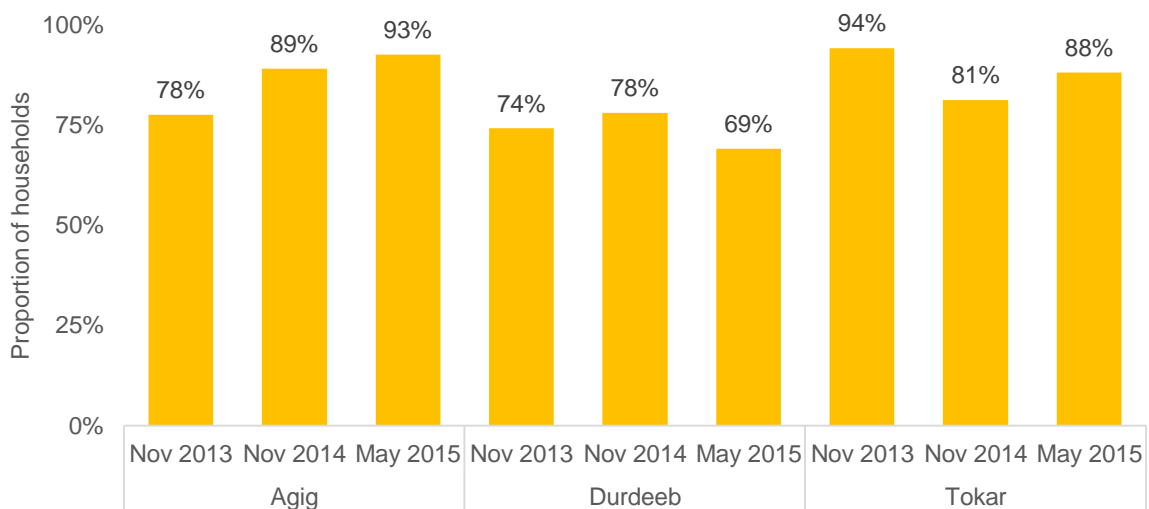
FIGURE 3: PURCHASING POWER



Household Expenditures

The expenditure on food as a percentage of total expenditure was used as a proxy indicator of household economic stress: The higher a household's the share of food expenditure, the greater the likelihood of increased vulnerability to price and income shocks. A commonly used threshold for the share of food expenditure (above 65 percent) were used to identify households more exposed to economic vulnerability. The average household's share of total expenditure spent on food was 82 percent. This is exceeding the threshold (65 percent) and slightly higher compared to November 2014 (82 percent). Households tended to allocate around 32 percent of their total monthly income to cereals, 12 percent to cooking oil and 11 percent to sugar. The large proportion of total expenditures spent on food negatively affected households ability to cover priority non-food needs such as education and health care.

FIGURE 4: PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS SPENDING MORE THAN 65 PERCENT OF THEIR EXPENDITURES ON FOOD



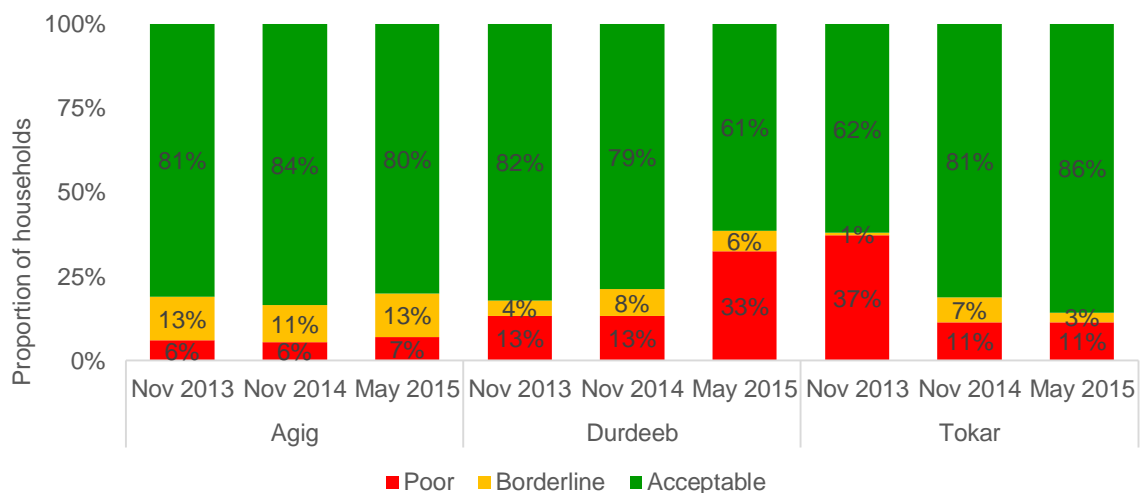
Household Food Consumption

Food consumption data was collected and analysed using standard WFP methodology: the variety and frequency of different foods consumed over a 7 day recall period was recorded to calculate a weighted food consumption score (FCS). Weights were based on the nutritional density of the foods. Using standard threshold, households were classified as having either “poor”, “borderline” or “acceptable” food consumption.

Dietary diversity and food frequency of households in Tokar locality was slightly better in May 2015 than in November 2014, and had improved substantially compared to November 2013. In Durdeeb, household food consumption was poorer than in previous rounds, with more than one third of the interviewed households having poor consumption compared to 13 percent in November 2013 and 2014.

In May 2015, 86 and 80 percent of households in Toker and Agig localities had acceptable food consumption. There were considerable differences in dietary diversity and food consumption between localities; habits and food taboos could be among the reasons contributing to the differences.

FIGURE 5: HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

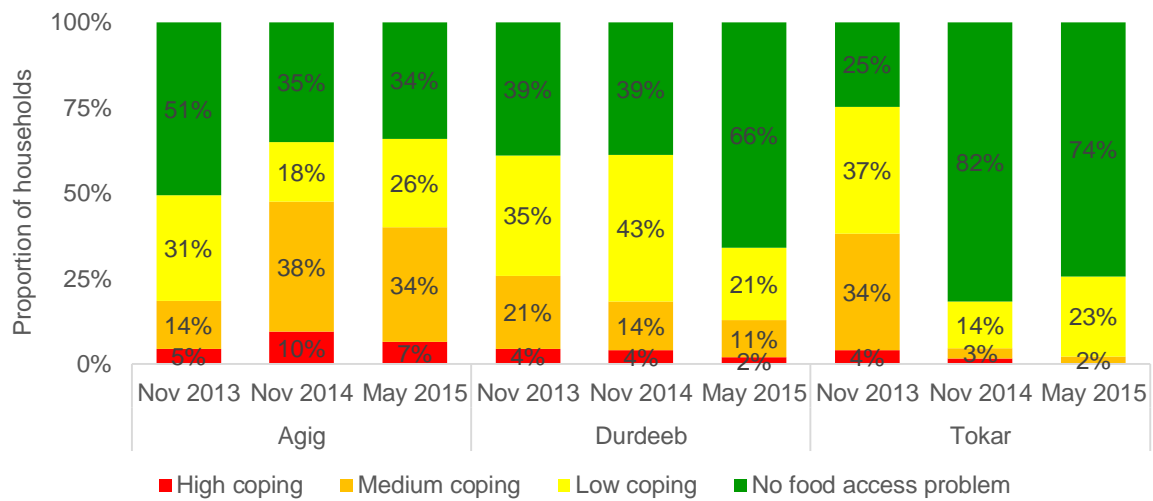


Food Access Problems

Households were asked if there were times during the week prior to data collection when they did not have enough food (or money to buy food). If they experienced such situations, they were asked what strategies they employed to cope with the shortage.

Food access problems in May 2015 in Agig and Toker were relatively similar to November 2014, while it was better in Durdeeb compared to the same period. However, the level of severity had lessened in both localities. The reported food access problems were most severe in Agig, where 7 percent of the sample reported engaging in severe coping mechanism activities and 60 percent had used either low or medium-severity coping strategies. The commonly used coping mechanisms included relying on cheaper and less preferred food, borrowing food, and reducing the number of meals per day.

FIGURE 6: COPING STRATEGIES

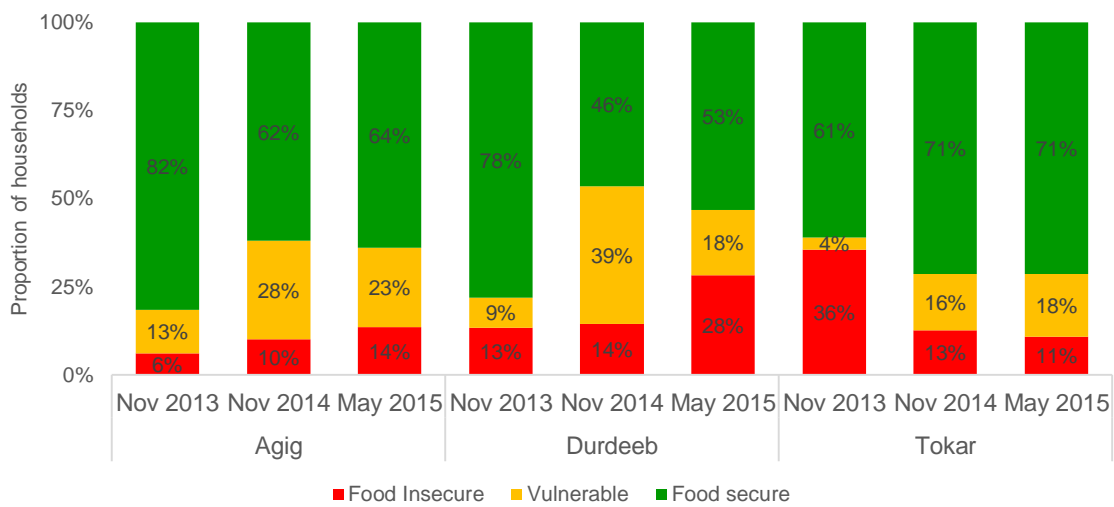


Food Security

As in previous round of food security monitoring in Red Sea, both acute and chronic food security were estimated at the household level, with a focus on food access. Acute food insecurity was measured using three indicators of a short-term nature: share of monthly expenditure spent on food, weekly food consumption and monthly purchasing power. Chronic food insecurity was constructed from asset wealth (the number of assets owned by the households), food consumption and the share of expenditure spent on food. For both composites households were classified as either food insecure, vulnerable or food secure.

The acute food security situation remained largely unchanged in Tokar and worsened in Agig and Durdeeb compared to previous rounds. The stability of the level of food security in Tokar was attributed to improvements in food access resulting from the start of the summer harvest season that had increased food availability and helped stabilize the price of the local food basket. In the others two localities, acute food security was expected to deteriorate as the lean season approached.

FIGURE 7: ACUTE FOOD SECURITY



The level of chronic food security in May 2015 remained unchanged in Agig and deteriorated in Durdeeb and Tokar compared to November 2014. The analysis revealed that the prevalence of chronic food insecurity was much higher than acute food insecurity, suggesting that food insecurity is persistent in Red Sea due to the high level of poverty and environmental degradation.

FIGURE 8: CHRONIC FOOD SECURITY

