



Kassala, Sudan
Food Security Monitoring, December 2015



World Food Programme

Executive Summary

- The food security situation was found to have deteriorated compared to the 2014 and 2015 rounds of food security monitoring. The deterioration was seen across sampled households in all three localities covered by the food security monitoring (Hamashkoreeb, North Delta and Telkok). Households in Telkok were the least likely to be food secure.
- The principal driver of the observed food security deterioration was declining purchasing power, compounded, and in part caused, by the poor agricultural season. The below-average food supply from the current season warranted continued close monitoring of food prices and households food security.
- Household food consumption remained stable in North Delta and Telkok, indicating that despite shocks to purchasing power, most households were still able to achieve acceptable diets. A deterioration was seen in Hamashkoreeb locality, where the proportion of households with poor food consumption increased. Households in Hamashkoreeb were more likely to have poor food consumption compared to North Delta and Telkok.
- Sorghum prices were 28 percent higher than what they were in same time last year, and 41 percent higher than in May 2014. The price of sorghum was expected to keep increasing in the coming months, due to poor agricultural production, especially in the northern parts of the state.
- A dramatic decline in purchasing power was seen in Telkok locality, with more than half of all households being unable to afford the local food basket. Less dramatic declines were observed in North delta and Hamashkoreeb localities. Key contributors included increased food prices and below-average job opportunities and agricultural production in the current growing season. A very large proportion of households in Hamashkoreeb relied on unsustainable livelihoods (including livelihoods based on firewood and charcoal).

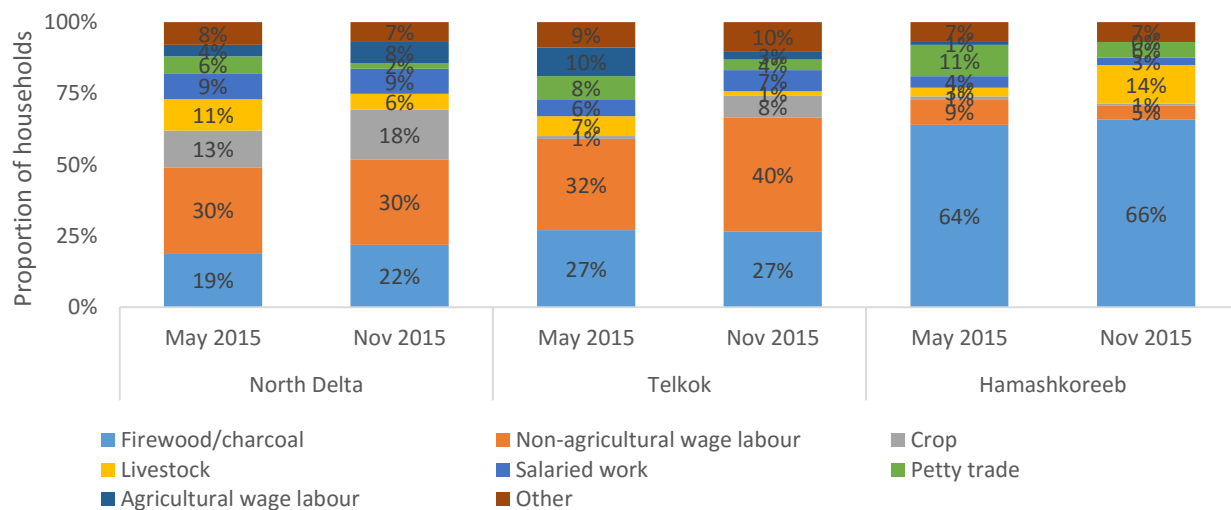
A Description of the Sample

Data collection for round four was carried out in November 2015, the beginning of the early harvest season. A total of 600 households distributed across 25 sentinel sites were surveyed in Kassala state.

Livelihoods

The main livelihood activity in Hamashkoreeb locality was collection and sale of firewood and charcoal, while non-agricultural wage labour and charcoal sale represented the primary income sources in North Delta and Telkok localities. The livelihood pattern of the population was similar to the same time last year. Households in Hamashkoreeb locality, appeared to have fewer livelihood options compared to the other two localities. The large number of households engaged in firewood and charcoal livelihood activities may increase the risk of environmental degradation. The seasonal increase in the proportion of households in North Delta locality who depended mainly on income from sale of crops was a result of improved access to irrigated land from Atbara seasonal river. However, wage labour remained the main livelihood of households in this locality, as well as in Telkok locality.

FIGURE 1: MAIN LIVELIHOOD

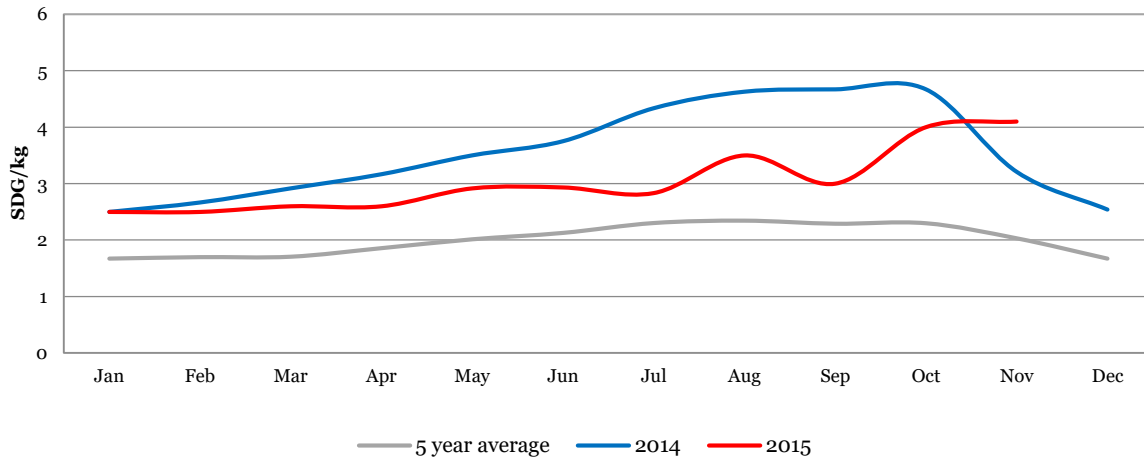


Markets and Prices

Sorghum prices were 28 percent higher than what they were in same time last year, and 41 percent higher than in May 2014. The price of sorghum was expected to continue to increase in the coming period, due to the poor agricultural production caused by the late and short rainy season, especially in the northern parts of the state.

The terms of trade between sorghum and goat decreased by 10 percent compared to May 2015, in a trend that favoured livestock producers. This trend was resulted from stable sorghum prices and increasing prices of goat. The price of goats was likely to decrease in the coming months due to the poor pasture conditions ensued from the late and short rainy season.

FIGURE 2: SORGHUM PRICES IN KASSALA MARKET



Purchasing Power

The price of a local food basket was used as a benchmark against which to compare household income, to determine the level of purchasing power. The cost of the local food basket in November 2015 was 5.9 SDG per capita which was 41 percent higher than at the same time last year.

Partly as a result of the substantial price increase, a significant decline in purchasing power compared to same time last year was observed in Telkok, North delta and Hamashkoreeb localities.

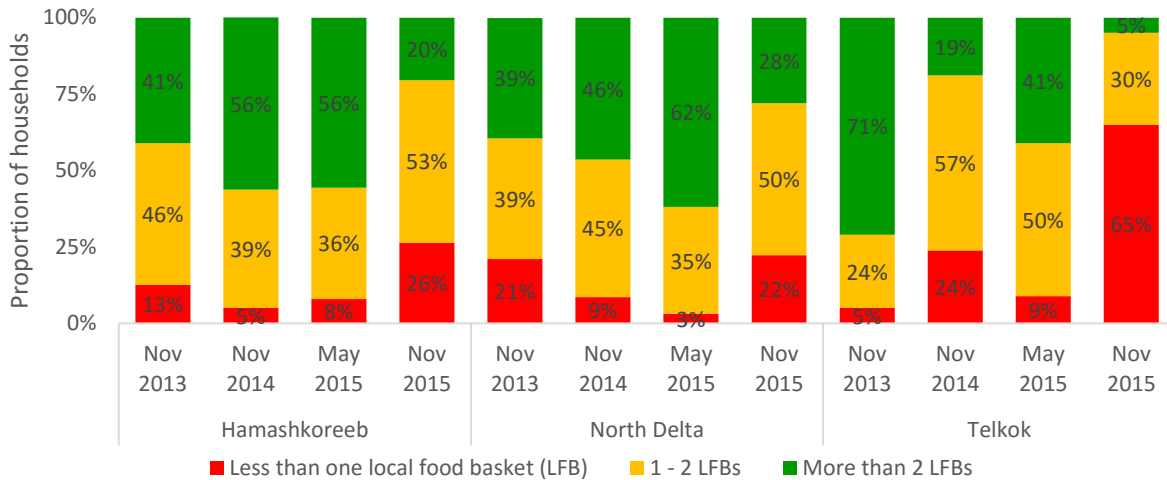
The proportion of households who could not afford the cost of one local food basket increased across the three localities, from 9 to 65 percent in Telkok locality, from 8 to 26 percent in Hamashkoreeb locality and from 3 to 22 percent in North Delta locality. The deterioration in

Telkok was dramatic. The diminished purchasing power among the sampled households could be attributed to higher food prices and the negative impact of the low agricultural production resulting in part from El Nino.

The Local Food Basket

The local food basket consisted of the following 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 requirement 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 local food basket), 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: HOUSEHOLD PURCHASING POWER

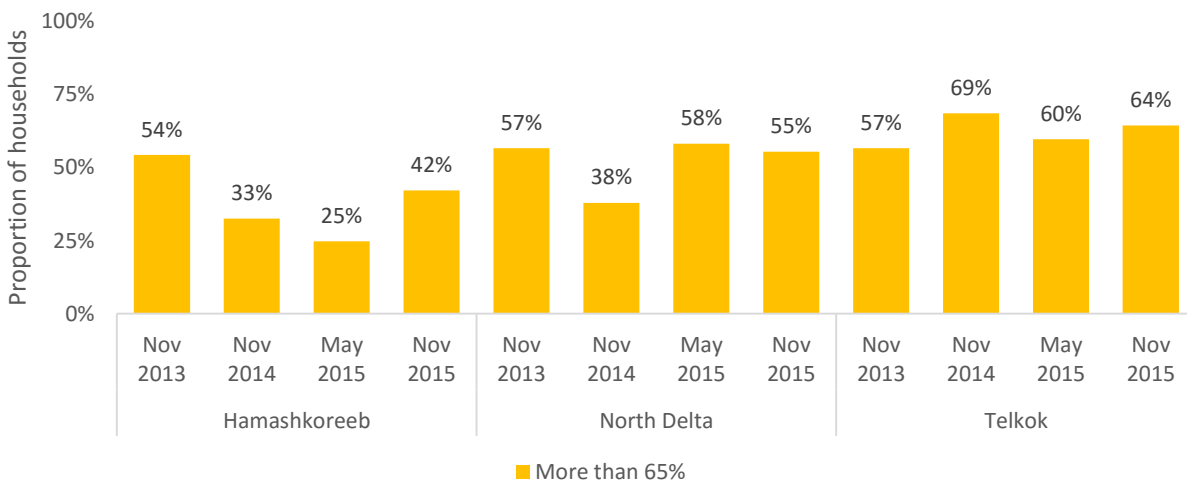


Household Expenditure

The percentage of households who spent more than 65 percent of their expenditure on food (a threshold above which households are more likely to experience economic stress) increased compared to May 2015 in Hamashkoreeb, from 25 to 42 percent, but remained largely unchanged in North Delta and Telkok. Cereals accounted for a large percentage of total monthly expenditure, followed by milk, cooking oil and sugar.

Despite the deterioration in Hamashkoreeb, the proportion of food expenditure was still greater in North Delta and Telkok.

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



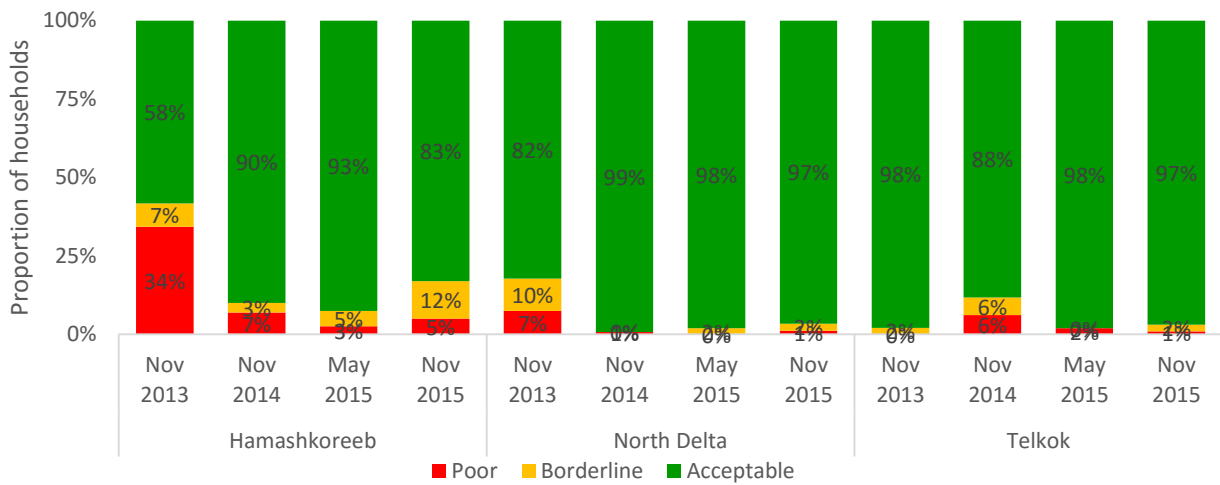
Household Food Consumption

Household food consumption in Hamashkoreeb had slightly deteriorated from May to November 2015, but remained stable in North Delta and Telkok. The negative trend in Hamashkoreeb could be attributed to the declining purchasing power and the decline in food access. Despite the deterioration, more than 4 in 5 households had acceptable diets in Hamashkoreeb. Acceptable diet was nearly universal among sampled households in North Delta and Telkok.

The Food Consumption Score

Food consumption data was collected and analyzed using standard WFP methodology: the variety and frequency of different foods consumed over a seven day recall period was recorded to calculate a weighted Food consumption score. 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.

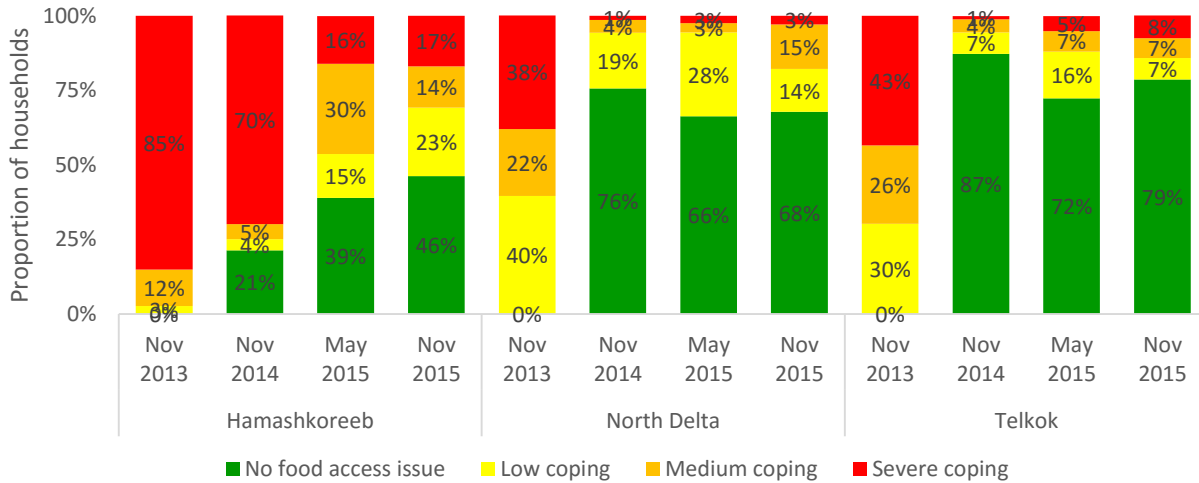
FIGURE 5: HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION



Perceived Food Access

Households were asked if there were times in the one 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. The proportion of households who reported having experienced food access issues in Hamashkoreeb locality declined by 7 percentage points compared to May 2015, but had improved considerably compared to the same time last year. In North Delta and Telkok localities, the situation remained largely unchanged. Perceived food access issue was generally worse in Hamashkoreeb locality, mainly as a result of limited income sources and the poor agricultural season.

FIGURE 6 : PERCEIVED FOOD ACCESS



Food Security

The food security situation deteriorated across the surveyed localities compared to May 2015 and the same time last year. Compared to May 2015, the percentage of food secure households decreased by 38 percentage points in Telkok locality, by 20 percentage points in Hamashkoreeb, and by 14 percentage points in North Delta. Households in North delta locality were more likely to be food secure, with 81 percent of the sampled being food secure, compared to 69 percent in Hamashkoreeb locality and only 54 percent in Telkok locality.

The principal driver of the observed food security deterioration was declining purchasing power, compounded, and in part caused, by the poor agricultural season. The below-average food supply from the current season warranted continued close monitoring of food prices and households food security.

FIGURE 7: FOOD SECURITY

