



Food Security Update- September 2012

Key Events and Early Warning

Roundup

Purpose: Monthly food security updates outline the key events occurring throughout Myanmar that are currently impacting the food security situation. By focusing on these events, it is possible to highlight areas where food security is likely to deteriorate in the short term, facilitating response and ensuring that all actors are aware of the evolving food security situation. Monthly updates are also intended to provide continuity and context to the WFP's Quarterly Food Security Bulletins. Quarterly Bulletins and Monthly Updates can be accessed online at <http://www.wfp.org/countries/myanmar/hunger-info>.

Source of information: To compile monthly updates, WFP synthesizes information from a variety of sources, including observations from WFP and partner field staff, information from WFP and partner assessment activities, community reports or requests for assistance, government requests for action and information from various media outlets.

Interpretation and use of information: On a monthly basis, WFP classifies townships as "Stable" or "At Risk". Areas are considered "At Risk" if there is a strong likelihood that the food security situation will deteriorate in the near term. Often, this includes areas that have experienced a significant shock. By contrast, an area is considered "Stable" if there is no indication that the situation is changing. WFP also highlights the actions taken to address emerging problems.

Current situation

Key Events in Sept:

- **Heavy rains/Flooding**
 - N. Shan
 - Chin
- **Crop infestation**
 - Wa Special Region
- **Insufficient rain**
 - S. Shan
 - Magway
- **Insufficient money for weeding and insecticides**
 - S. Shan
- **Conflict (ongoing since June 2011)**
 - Kachin
- **Inter-community tension (ongoing since June 2012)**
 - N. Rakhine
- **Rice shortage/ market disruption**
 - Kachin
- **Nutrition/ health concerns**
 - Chin
 - S. Shan

Stable (Region/State at little risk of change in food insecurity)

Locations:

- N. Shan State (Laukai area)
- Kayah State
- Central Rakhine State

At Risk (Region/State at risk of deterioration in food insecurity)

Locations:

- Kachin
- N. Rakhine
- N. Shan (Lashio area)
- S. Shan
- Wa

Key Issues:

Threat to Paddy harvest

Rice shortages and market disruption

Threat to maize harvest

Threat to standing crops from second cultivation (observed wilting)

Malnutrition and health issues among children

Actions Taken/ Needed

Precipitation-related shocks, infestations and lack of access to agricultural inputs---WFP will continue to implement asset creation and other food transfer programmes in N. Shan, Chin and Wa in the near term to bolster livelihoods. The threat to Paddy, Maize and other crops will be monitored as we move into the harvest season.

Conflict/ Inter-community tensions--- In Rakhine State, WFP continues to provide assistance to IDPs in Sittwe and Kyauktaw. In northern Rakhine State, WFP hopes to resume protracted relief distributions in October. In Kachin and Northern Shan States, WFP and other actors continue to provide assistance to displaced populations in accordance with the multi-sector Response Plan. In September, WFP delivered 420 MTs of food to displaced persons.

Malnutrition/ health-related shocks---WFP has reported localized worm infestation and/ or malnutrition in Phekon township (S Shan) to UNICEF and the Head of Station Hospital. In Chin, a Food and Nutrition Survey was recently conducted and data is currently being analysed by the National Nutrition Unit. WFP awaits the final report.

Rice shortage/ market disruption---In Putao (northern Kachin), local sources reported significant rice shortages in the main markets. In response, the government provided a substantial amount of rice to the area as a short-term solution. The situation should be monitored in the near-to-medium-term as rice shortages were due to the underlying situation in Kachin which looks unlikely to change soon.



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Expanded Summary

At Risk

Upcoming Paddy harvest likely to be lower

Kachin	Myitkyina and Bamaw	Conflict continues to impact paddy production levels. Due to fighting and forced relocation from China, the IDP population in Bamaw has increased slightly.
N. Shan	Kutkai, Man Pan, Thein NI, Mone Koe	Most villages in Mon Koe are not producing paddy this year due to insecurity. Heavy rain and unexpected flooding in the last two months have affected lowland paddy yields in Kutkai, Man Pan and Thein NI.
S. Shan	Hopone, Hsihseng, Phekon	Localized heavy rains have severely damaged upland paddies in certain areas. Farmers in Phekon are concerned about 2012 paddy yields due to inability to afford weeding and insecticides.
Wa Special Region	Ai Chen	Localized infestation of paddy fields, with approximately 2,700 Mu (450 acres) affected. Communities impacted anticipate rice shortages in the coming year as a result.
N. Rakhine	Maungdaw	Reports continue to indicate that paddy production has been severely impacted by on-going inter-community tensions. The extent of the shortfall will be monitored as we move into the harvest season.

Rice shortage/ market disruptions

Kachin	Putao	Local reports from the city of Putao indicated significant rice shortages in markets in September. Shortages were a result of disrupted markets flows, due to transportation difficulties associated with the conflict further south. The Government of Myanmar responded by providing assistance to the population (approximately 700 bags of rice).
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Threat to Maize harvest

Chin	Hakha, Madupi, Tonzag, Thantlang, Mindat, Tedim, Kanpetlet, Falam	Abnormal rains across Chin State damaged the maize crop and impacting maize prices throughout the area. Households are coping with lower maize production and higher prices by gathering wild elephant yams, selling these vegetables at high market value.
S. Shan	Hopong, Hsihseng and Phekon	Maize yields are lower this year due to insufficient rains at key times. The price of maize in markets has been affected as well rising more than 150% (from 220 to 550 MMK per viss).

Threat to standing crops from second cultivation (observed wilting)

Magway	Chauk, Yesagyo, Yenangyaung, Pauk, Pakokku	Though farmers were able to plant a second time in the monsoon season (to mitigate drought-related losses experienced in the first planting), a recurrence of insufficient rains in mid-September have damaged crops.
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Malnutrition/ health issues among children

S. Shan	Phekon	WFP has observed localized problems with worm infestation and/ or malnutrition in a couple of villages in Phekon township. Concerns have been relayed to UNICEF and the Head of Station Hospital.
Chin	All townships	A Food and Nutrition Survey, covering all townships, was conducted by the Government recently. Informal reports from survey teams indicate observable cases of acute malnutrition, including severe acute malnutrition, in certain parts of Chin. WFP is awaiting official results from the National Nutrition Center.

Continuing concerns from previous Updates...

Problem	Location	Summary
Paddy harvest	Ayeyarwady, Kayin and Bago	Local and regional rice prices are still being monitored after significant flooding severely affected 126,000 acres of paddy land and completely destroyed 55,000 acres. While the success of the harvest could be mitigated to an extent by post-flood seed distributions (for replanting), the harvest this year will likely be lower than normal in these areas, potentially impacting prices and rice exports.
Sesame, pigeon pea and groundnut harvest	Dry Zone	Harvests are being monitored after drought-like conditions damaged crops in August, leading to as much as a 25% reduction in yield. While replanting was possible, the success of this replanting may have been impacted by another dry spell in September (as pointed out above). Prices of groundnut oil and sesame oil are also being monitored as prices in August were reportedly 70% higher than normal.