



# GIEWS Country Brief Mauritania

Reference Date: 03-April-2020

## FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Record cereal harvest gathered in 2019
- Food prices generally stable following seasonal trends
- Continued assistance still needed for most vulnerable people

## Record cereal harvest gathered in 2019

Seasonal dry weather conditions are prevailing in most areas of the country and planting of the 2020 crops is expected to begin in June-July with the normal onset of the rains.

Harvesting of the 2019 crops finalized in December 2019, while harvesting of off-season rice and low lying area “Walo” crops is underway and will be completed by end-April. Due to favourable rainfall conditions and the timely provision of inputs by the Government, the 2019 national cereal production is estimated at a record level of 473 000 tonnes, over 30 percent above the average of the last five years. Major year-on-year production increases were recorded for maize and rice (paddy).

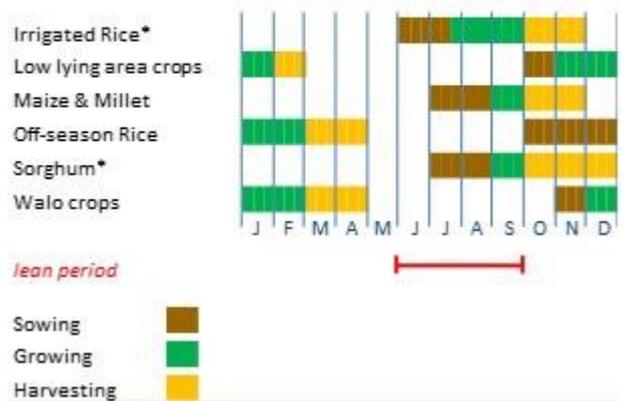
Rains normal start in July and end in September. In pastoral areas, insufficient rains during July and August 2019 resulted in a forage deficit, estimated at about 6 million tonnes of dry matter. The districts of Tagant, Adrar and Tiris Zemour have recorded the largest fodder deficits. In the most affected areas, with the start of the pastoral lean season in April 2020, livestock body conditions are expected to significantly deteriorate due to lack of forage and reduced water points. Currently, the animal health situation is generally stable, with no major disease outbreaks reported.

## Food prices generally stable following seasonal trends

The supply of major food commodities (millet, sorghum, maize and rice) is generally satisfactory for most markets in March, due to adequate food availabilities from the recent harvests and imports from the subregion and international markets. Demand is seasonally stable, mainly by local traders who aim to replenish their stocks and by households for domestic consumption. Prices of coarse grains held steady in January 2020 and were similar to their year-earlier values as a result of the good output in 2019. In addition, the commercialization of off-season local rice, harvested between March and April 2020, is expected to guarantee satisfactory market availability in most producing areas.

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Crop Calendar (\*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

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### Cereal Production

	2014-2018 average	2018	2019 estimate	change 2019/2018
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	266	305	383	25.5
Sorghum	69	87	68	-22.1
Maize	13	12	16	32.5
Others	9	7	7	-7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>15.0</b>

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

In most livestock markets, the supply of animals is adequate with stable prices in January 2020. However, the livestock-cereal terms of trade are generally worsening for pastoralists. In addition, the market value of the animals is expected to decrease between April and June, in areas affected by fodder deficits.

Imports account for two-thirds of the national cereal utilization in the country. Cereal import requirements for the 2019/20 (November/October) marketing year, mainly wheat, are forecast at a near-average level of 570 000 tonnes.

### Continued assistance still needed for vulnerable people

Food security conditions remain of concern in 2020, particularly in Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Assaba districts as a result of fodder production deficits. The agro-pastoral households, affected by recurrent shocks during the last years, are facing the highest prevalence of food insecurity. According to the March 2020 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, about 609 000 people are estimated to be in need of food assistance during the lean season between June and August 2020. As of February 2020, according to the UNHCR, over 60 000 refugees were present in the country, mostly from northern Mali due to persisting civil conflict. Most of the refugees are heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance following the severe disruption of their livelihoods.

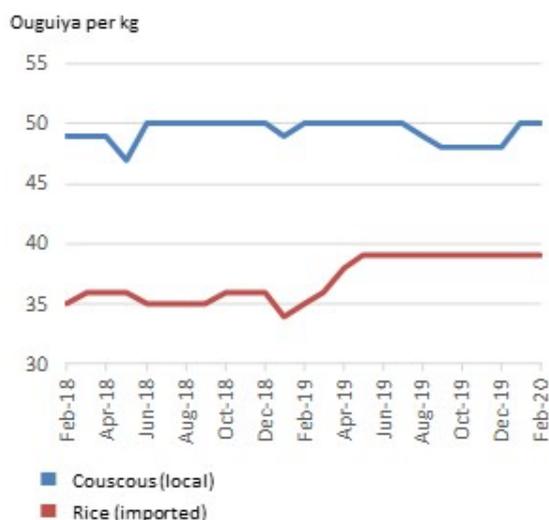
### COVID-19 and measures adopted by the Government

In view of the evolving COVID-19 situation, on 26 March 2020 the Government has created a national social solidarity fund which endowed nearly USD 60 million from public resources and is open to voluntary contributions. This fund is intended to finance, in particular, the acquisition of medicines, the support to 30 000 poor households and the exoneration of customs taxes for the rest of the year for all taxes and duties on imports of wheat, oil, milk powder, vegetables and fruits. According to field reports, the heightened levels of fear have led to some disruptions in the national market supply.

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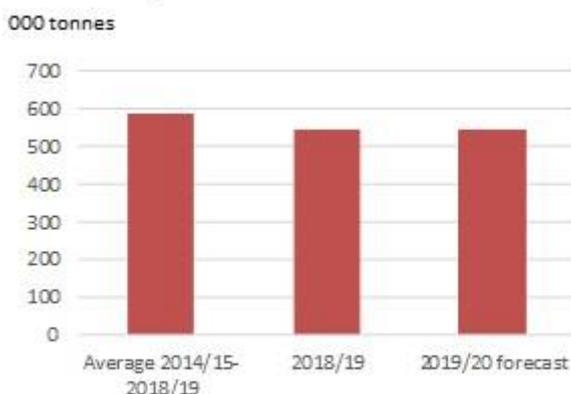
Selected retail food prices in Nouakchott



Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.

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### Cereals Imports



Note: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.