



GIIEWS Country Brief Liberia

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Production of rice and cassava in 2022 forecast at above-average levels
- Below-average cereal imports forecast in 2022
- Prices of rice and other key food products significantly higher on yearly basis
- About 373 000 people estimated to be acute food insecure in 2022

Production of rice and cassava in 2022 forecast at above-average levels

Harvesting of the 2022 paddy crop, virtually the only cereal grown in the country, is ongoing and it is expected to be completed by end-December. Cumulative rainfall amounts between June and October were adequate to satisfy crop water requirements, enhancing crop development across most of the country. The provision of subsidized seeds and fertilizers by the government supported plantings and boosted yields. Minor crop losses were caused by rainfall deficits in July and August across the country and by localized floods in June and July in northwestern areas.

According to official estimates, 2022 aggregate paddy production is forecast at nearly 288 000 tonnes, about 10 percent above the five-year average. Cassava production, a key staple that substitutes rice in the diet of poor households, is estimated at 686 000 tonnes, about and 15 percent above the five-year average.

Below-average cereal imports forecast in 2022

The country relies significantly on imports to meet its domestic cereal requirements. In the 2022 calendar year, imports of rice are anticipated at 350 000 tonnes, about 6 percent below the five-year average. Imports of wheat and wheat flour in 2022 are anticipated at an historic low of 12 000 tonnes, nearly 75 percent below the five-year average. The reduced imported quantities of cereals are mostly associated to global supply chain disruptions, high international prices and the interruption of shipments of wheat from the Black Sea Region, amid macroeconomic difficulties that limited the country's import capacity.

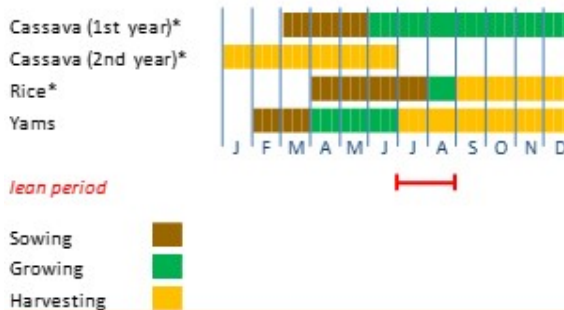
Prices of rice and other key food products significantly higher on yearly basis

As of May 2022 (latest available data), retail prices of imported rice increased on average by 8 percent year-on-year, with peaks

Liberia

Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

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Cereal Production

	2017-2021 average	2021	2022 forecast	change 2022/2021
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	262	256	288	13.0
Total	262	256	288	13.0

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

of up to 35 percent year-on-year in some southeastern regions, particularly River Gee County. Prices of other key food products, including palm oil and cowpeas, registered significant increases and, as of May 2022, they were up to 65 percent higher on a yearly basis. The high prices of rice and other food products mostly reflect the increased transportation costs and trends in international markets of essential commodities. Prices of locally produced cassava remained generally stable between May 2021 and May 2022, reflecting above-average market supplies.

About 373 000 people estimated to be acute food insecure in 2022

According to the latest Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis, about 373 000 people are estimated to face acute food insecurity (CH Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) during the October-December 2022 period, including nearly 7 500 people in CH Phase 4 (Emergency), reflecting a slow economic recovery from the pandemic-induced downturn and elevated food prices that severely constrained food access to the most vulnerable households, particularly in southeastern counties and urban centres across the country.

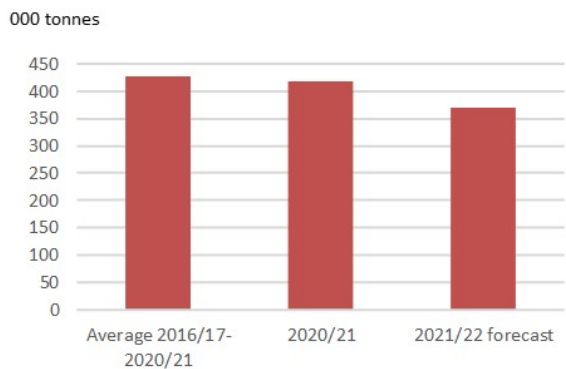
Weather hazards and forced migration were other factors negatively affecting livelihoods and food security of the vulnerable households. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), floods in northwestern areas affected almost 90 000 people in mid-2022. Furthermore, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of October 2022, the country hosted more than 2 500 refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from Côte d'Ivoire.

Levels of acute food insecurity are expected to increase in 2023. Food availability and access are likely to remain limited by high food prices and below-average imports, exacerbated by the unfolding effects of the war in Ukraine on international trade and commodity prices. An expected further slowdown in economic domestic growth in 2023 is likely to compound food insecurity conditions for the most vulnerable households. In the June to August 2023 lean season period, over 530 000 people are projected to face acute food insecurity, including about 21 350 people in CH Phase 4 (Emergency).

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Liberia

Cereals Imports



Notes: 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.