



# GIEWS Country Brief Lesotho

Reference Date: 16-January-2023

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Above-average rainfall forecast for remainder of 2022/23 cropping season
- Large import requirements resulting from reduced 2022 cereal production
- Elevated inflation rates reflect high international prices
- Food insecurity increases due to high prices and low cereal production

## Above-average rainfall forecast for remainder of 2022/23 cropping season

The bulk of the 2023 cereal crop was planted by December 2022 and the harvest is expected to begin in May 2023. Seasonal rainfall had a timely start in October 2022 and by the end of December cumulative rainfall amounts were above average in all districts, supporting crop emergence. According to weather forecasts, average to above-average rainfall amounts are expected to continue between January and March 2023. Although these weather conditions are likely to benefit crop development, the current high prices of inputs may lead to a reduction in fertilizer application, with potentially negative effects on yields.

Harvesting of the 2022 winter wheat crop concluded last November and the total 2022 cereal outturn, including the production of the main summer season coarse grains, is estimated at 35 000 tonnes, about 30 percent of the previous five-year average. The low output reflects the impact of torrential rainfalls in December 2021 and January 2022 that caused crop losses and low rainfall amounts at the end of the cropping season that curbed yields.

## Large import requirements resulting from reduced 2022 cereal production

Reflecting the low cereal crop harvested in 2022, the total import requirement in the 2022/23 marketing year (April/March) is forecast at a high level of 252 000 tonnes. It includes 146 000 tonnes of maize and 86 000 tonnes of wheat, mainly sourced from South Africa, plus minor quantities of rice.

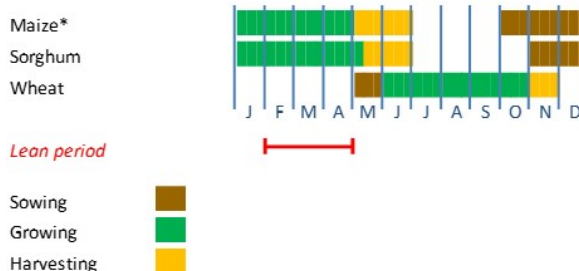
## Elevated inflation rates reflect high international prices

According to the National Bureau of Statistic, the annual inflation

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Crop Calendar

(\*major foodcrop)



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Cereal Production

	2017-2021 average	2021	2022 estimate	change 2022/2021
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	95	90	28	-68.9
Sorghum	19	25	1	-96.3
Wheat	5	6	6	-5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>-71.4</b>

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

rate was estimated at 8.5 percent in October 2022, slightly down from a high of 9.2 percent in September, but still well above the 2021 levels. As the country is a net importer of key staple food commodities and energy, domestic prices have been largely influenced by the high level of international prices.

## Food insecurity increases due to high food prices and low cereal production

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis conducted in August 2022, about 320 000 people, 22 percent of country's population, are currently facing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) levels of acute food insecurity and the situation is expected to persist until March 2023, just prior to the main harvest period for the 2023 crops. Over 60 percent of the acutely food insecure people are located in rural areas. The overall level of food insecurity is above the five-year average, mainly driven by the exceptionally low crop production obtained in 2022 and high prices of food.

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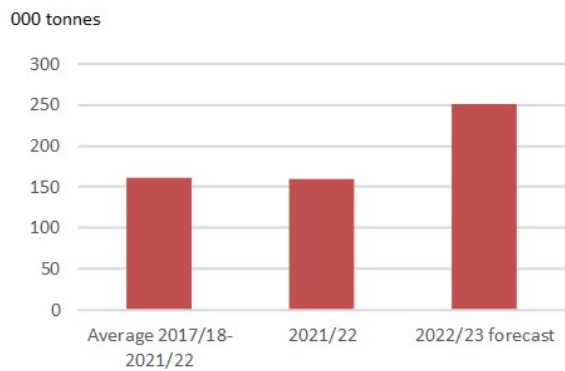
### Data source:

The cereal supply and demand data included in this brief originates from the FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance System (CCBS). The CCBS is a unique database created and continuously kept up to date by the GIEWS and Basic Foodstuffs Teams of the Markets and Trade Division, with data since 1980. It contains annual supply and utilization balances for the main cereals produced and consumed for over 220 countries/areas, from which (sub) regional and global aggregates are drawn. For more information see the note on the GIEWS website at: <https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/>.

The food price data included originates from the FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool. The FPMA Tool database includes monthly retail and/or wholesale price series of major foods consumed in over 95 countries and weekly/monthly prices for over 80 internationally traded foodstuffs and feedstuffs. Visit the tool on the GIEWS website here: <https://fpma.fao.org/>.

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### Cereals Imports



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