



GIEWS Country Brief Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Reference Date: 28-June-2021

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Planting of winter crops ongoing at slow pace due to shortages of diesel
- Import requirements of cereals in 2021/22 forecast below average
- Concerns over continued poor access to food

Planting of winter crops ongoing at slow pace due to shortages of diesel

Planting of the 2021 main maize and minor rice crops is underway at a slow pace due to shortages of diesel, which are expected to curb the planted area. Imports of diesel declined significantly since November 2020, in the context of international sanctions. Small farmers, who normally receive subsidized diesel from the government, reported delays and disruptions of planting operations. According to satellite imagery, crop conditions are currently favourable in key producing departments of Barinas, Cojedes, Guarico and Portuguesa, as abundant precipitation amounts in April 2021 benefitted soil moisture levels (VHI map). Rainfall amounts declined in May and are forecast at a below-average level in June, with likely negative effects on yields. However, weather forecasts point to a high likelihood of average precipitation amounts in July and August, which are expected to favour the establishment of late planted crops.

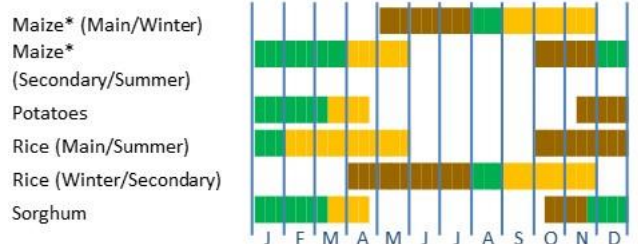
Harvesting of the 2021 main rice and minor maize crops concluded in May and production is expected to increase moderately from a record low level in 2020. The year-on-year increase is mainly due to a modest expansion of the planted area and higher yields. During this season, yet available diesel reserves enabled planting operations in the last quarter of 2020. Planting was also supported by the year-on-year improved availability of agricultural inputs, following alliances between public companies and private sector representatives. Reflecting favourable weather conditions and the increased use of agricultural inputs, yields are estimated to be above the previous year's low levels. In some producing areas, harvesting operations and commercialization of harvested crops were reportedly disrupted by the dwindling access to diesel.

Cereal output in 2021 is forecast below the levels produced during the pre-crisis (2010-2014) period, when the country's average output was about 3.4 million tonnes.

Venezuela

Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)

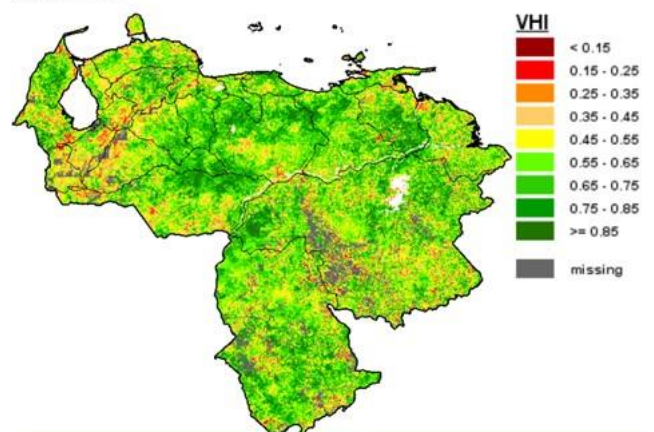


Sowing
Growing
Harvesting

Source: FAO/GIEWS.

Venezuela - Vegetation Health Index (VHI)

May 2021



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

Import requirements of cereals in 2021/22 forecast below average

Import requirements of cereals in the 2021/22 marketing year (July/June) are forecast at below-average levels. The lower requirements are mainly due to reduced domestic consumption needs, reflecting the declining population since 2017 following the high levels of emigration.

Cereal imports in 2019 and 2020 were below the previous five-year average, as the country's import capacity has been severely curtailed by the depreciation on the domestic currency and a sharp decline in oil export revenues, amid a tightening of international sanctions in 2017. To facilitate imports, the government has relaxed its strict currency exchange controls and has granted permission to private traders to import essential items. The government also lifted import and value-added tax on a number of products, including cereals ([FPMA Food Policy](#)).

Concerns over continued poor access to food

The national economy, highly dependent on oil production and exports, is forecast to contract in 2021 for the eighth consecutive year. With the persistent negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that have compounded the already severe macro-economic crisis, the access to food of the most vulnerable households is expected to deteriorate throughout 2021 due to widespread losses of income-generating activities and soaring food prices. According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, in response to the poor economic conditions, an estimated 5.6 million people (nearly 20 percent of the population) emigrated, as of early June 2021.

In order to improve the food security conditions of vulnerable households, the government signed an agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP) in April 2021 to roll out a school feeding programme. This aims to deliver food to 183 000 school children by the end of 2021 and to extend the coverage to 1.5 million children by the end of 2023. In addition, the government plans to continue delivering food packages to the vulnerable households in 2021 through the Local Committees for Supply and Production programme (CLAP), which purchases cereals from local farmers.

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GIEWS Country Brief Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Reference Date: 05-June-2020

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cereal production in 2020 forecast well below pre-crisis level
- Import requirements of cereals in 2019/20 marketing year estimated at low level
- Food security situation likely to worsen in 2020
- Policies implemented to mitigate impact of COVID-19 amid large fiscal deficit

Cereal production in 2020 forecast well below pre-crisis level

Harvesting of the 2020 cereal, main rice and minor maize, crops is nearing completion and production prospects are unfavourable due to considerably reduced plantings and expected low yields. Shortages of agricultural inputs and fuel significantly affected yields, which were exacerbated by reduced rainfall in the February-April period in key producing centralwestern areas (see ASI map).

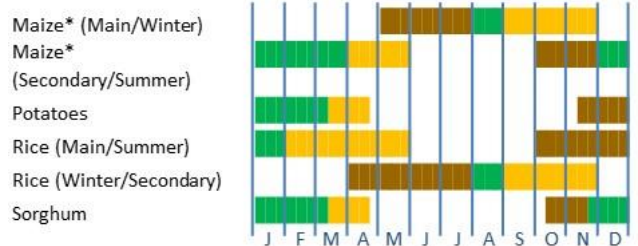
Planting of the minor rice and main maize winter crops started in late May. Seasonal rains started from the last week of May and precipitation amounts are forecast to increase in the June-August period, which could instigate plantings for subsistence farming. However, the aggregate planted area is expected to decline significantly due to the acute scarcity of inputs and fuel. According to farmers associations, supplies of imported agricultural inputs for the winter season covered just 5 percent of the national requirement¹. Amid the low availabilities of inputs and fuel, producers have emphasized the need of using crop rotation practices with non-cereal crops that require less inputs than cereals². Under the Government's *Plan de Financiación y Soporte* (Financing and Support Plan), an agricultural credit scheme of USD 20 million was launched in late April 2020³ to boost agricultural production, especially of cereals. Furthermore, FAO-Venezuela is distributing agricultural inputs (bio-fertilizers) and short-cycled vegetable and bean seeds to smallholder farmers in producing states (Falcón, Lara and Portuguesa) to support agricultural production for self-consumption.

Although official estimates are not available, cereal production in 2020 is expected well below the levels produced during the pre-crisis (2010-2014) period, when the country's output averaged about 3.4 million tonnes.

Venezuela

Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)

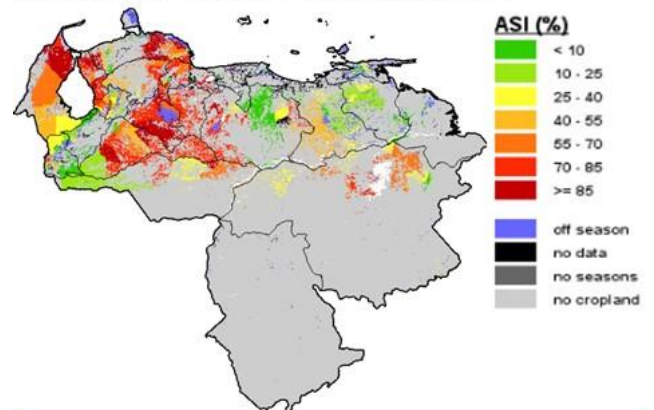


Sowing
Growing
Harvesting

Source: FAO/GIEWS.

Venezuela - Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)

from start of season 1 to Dekad 3, May 2020



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

Import requirements of cereals in the 2019/20 marketing year are estimated at low level

Import requirements of cereals in the 2019/20 marketing year (July/June) are estimated to have declined for the fourth consecutive year, reflecting the high levels of emigration since 2015 and, therefore, lower domestic consumption needs. In addition, the country's capacity to import has deteriorated due to the continued depreciation of the local currency against the US dollar and the dwindling level of foreign exchange reserves, following the decline in oil revenues and the imposition of international sanctions in August 2017.

Food security situation likely to worsen in 2020

According to the Food Security Assessment conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in the third quarter of 2019, about 9.3 million people (one-third of the population) were estimated to be food insecure and in need of assistance, of which 2.3 million (8 percent of the population) were classified as severely food insecure⁴. As of early May 2020, about 5.1 million Venezuelans (17 percent of the total population) decided to leave the country due to the high prevalence of food insecurity⁵. More than half of the total Venezuelans hosted in Colombia and Ecuador (about 1.2 million people) are estimated to be acutely food insecure and in need of assistance⁶. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, about 68 000 Venezuelan migrants returned to the country as of 28 May 2020⁷, triggered by reduced job opportunities due to the containment measures in neighbouring countries. This is likely to strengthen the domestic demand of food and put a strain on the already limited resources of the country, increasing the number of people in need of food assistance.

The food security situation is expected to worsen in 2020 as cereal production is likely to decline and import requirements may not be fully met. The plummeting prices of oil amid the COVID-19 outbreak have reduced export earnings, worsening the country's capacity to purchase imports. In addition, logistical constraints due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to have a negative impact on food access of urban and peri-urban communities.

Policies implemented to mitigate impact of COVID-19 amid large fiscal deficit

In an attempt to contain the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government issued a Decree to restrict the movement of people and commodities and suspend non-essential activities, which was recently extended until 12 June 2020. The Decree, however, sets out a number of exceptions, allowing the movement of people working in the food and agriculture sectors, including supermarkets and small food retailers.

In order to guarantee the supply of food, preferential access to fuel, electricity and transport, permits are given to companies working along the food supply chain. The Government also plans to pay the salaries of employees of small and medium enterprises affected by the confinement measures and suspend the payments of credit debts and mortgages from March 2020 for a period of six months. To guarantee households' food consumption, despite the already large fiscal deficit, the Government allocated USD 14 million to increase the number of food supply centres (community-based and State-run outlets and trucks)⁸. The Government also introduced maximum prices on various basic food items and expanded the coverage of cash transfer programmes, including the new *Bono Quedate en Casa* (Stay at Home Subsidy).

^{1/} [Banca y Negocios](#), January 2020.

^{2/} [Minuta Agropecuaria](#), May 2020.

^{3/} [Venezolana de Televisión](#), April 2020.

^{4/} [Venezuela Food Security Assessment](#), February 2020, WFP.

^{5/} [Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela \(R4V\)](#), accessed on 3 June 2020.

^{6/} [Global Report on Food Crises 2020](#), April 2020, Food Security Information Network.

^{7/} [Ansa Latina](#), May 2020.

^{8/} [Vice-presidency of Venezuela](#), April 2020.

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GIEWS Country Brief Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Reference Date: 05-December-2016

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cereal production in 2016 anticipated to remain below average
- Cereal import requirements for 2016/17 marketing year estimated at high level
- Consumer prices anticipated to increase sharply in 2016

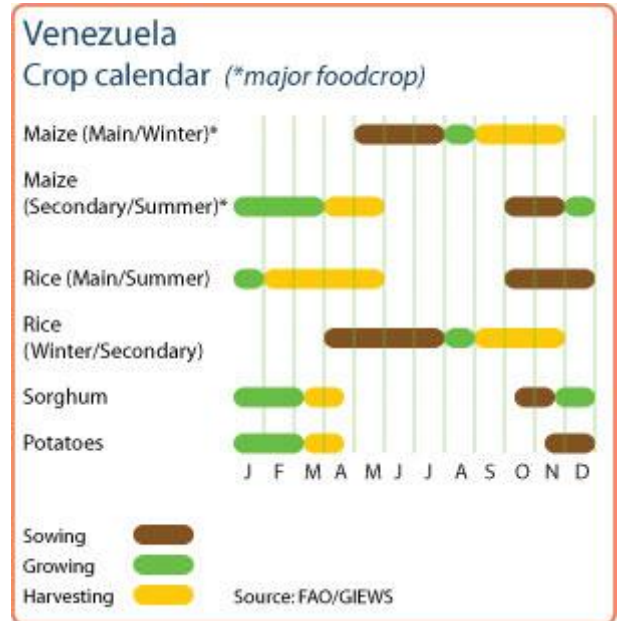
Cereal production in 2016 forecast to remain at below-average level

The aggregate 2016 cereal production is forecast by FAO to remain at a well below-average level of about 2.8 million tonnes. This mainly reflects lower-than-anticipated plantings of main cereals, maize and rice, due to difficulties in accessing inputs, coupled with the effects of severe El Niño-induced dry weather at the beginning of the year. The harvest of the main winter maize crop is virtually concluded, while the harvest of the secondary summer crop was completed in May. While no official figures are yet available, preliminary reports from producer organizations point to a harvested area of 435 000 hectares or 12 percent above last year's drought-reduced level, but still below the 600 000 hectares target for the year. The economic downturn, which has adversely affected the agriculture sector, made it difficult to access needed inputs lowering the area sown, despite significant Government efforts to facilitate the access to seeds and fertilizers. Aggregate 2016 maize production is anticipated at 1.9 million tonnes or 3 percent above last year's drought-reduced level, but still below average. By contrast, the 2016 rice crop is estimated by FAO at 750 000 tonnes, below last year's level as water deficits and difficulties accessing inputs constrained the area sown.

Planting of the 2017 summer season crop is well advanced. Prospects for the season are uncertain. Latest remote sensing data show that rainfall levels have significantly improved, but residual dryness still remains across most of the country. Continued problems with the provision of inputs may also constrain the area sown during the season.

Cereal import requirements for the 2016/17 marketing year estimated at high level

FAO anticipates that cereal import requirements for the 2016/17 marketing year (July/June) will reach 4.6 million tonnes or 24 percent above last year's level. The increase reflects low



Venezuela
Cereal production

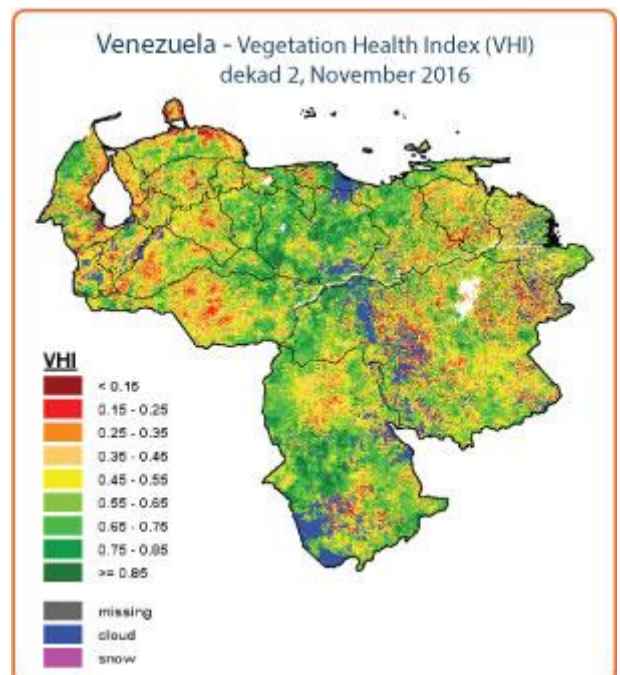
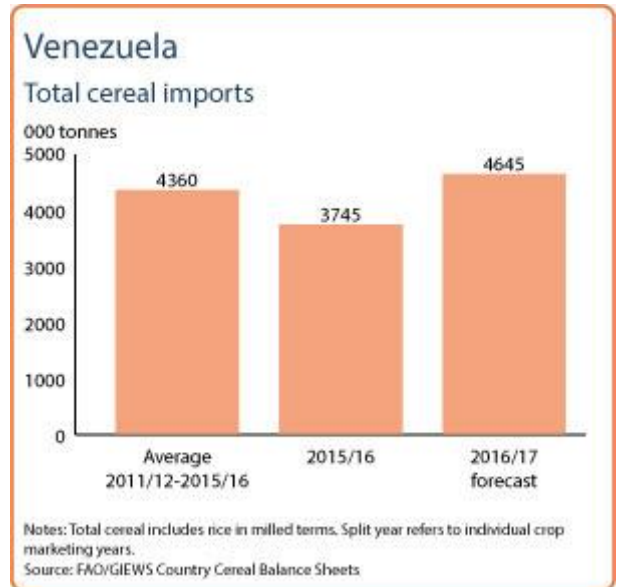
	2011-2015 average	2015	2016 forecast	change 2016/2015
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2 099	1 840	1 900	3
Rice (paddy)	949	836	750	-10
Sorghum	177	66	120	82
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3 225	2 743	2 771	-1

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

carryover stocks from 2015 as a result of drought-reduced outputs and this year's below average production.

Consumer prices anticipated to increase sharply in 2016

No official data on consumer prices has been published since December 2015. According to those figures consumer prices in 2015 were 180 percent above their level from a year earlier with the food and beverage price index increasing by more than 300 percent. The latest forecast from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) anticipated an increase in consumer prices in 2016 of 476 percent from the previous year, as severe food shortages and lack of foreign exchange reserves have continued to exert strong upward pressure on prices.



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GIEWS Country Brief Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Reference Date: 17-August-2016

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cereal production in 2016 anticipated to remain below average
- Cereal imports in 2016/17 marketing year forecast to increase
- Consumer prices under strong upward pressure
- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Colombia agree to re-open borders

Cereal production in 2016 forecast to remain at below-average level

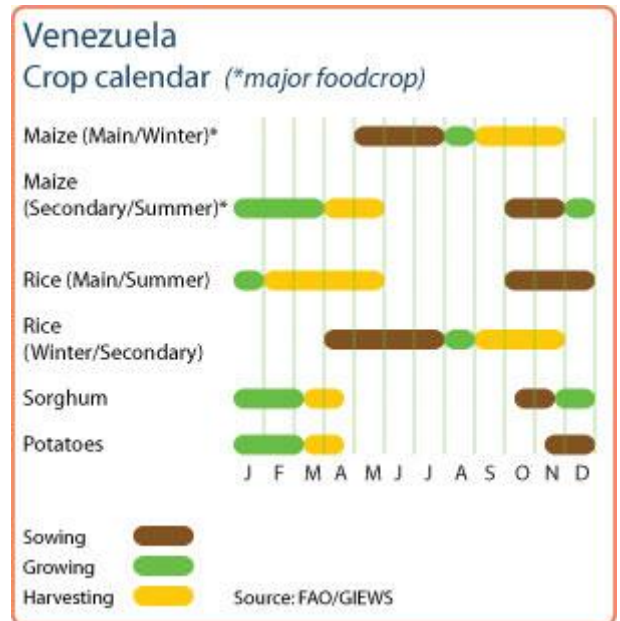
Harvesting of the 2016 first season rice crop concluded in May and the output is estimated to have remained close to last year's drought-reduced level, mainly reflecting difficulties in accessing inputs coupled with the effects of severe El Niño-induced dry weather. Planting of the second season rice crop will conclude in early September and prospects for the season are uncertain. Although official forecasts are not available, the economic downturn, which has adversely impacted the agriculture sector, is anticipated to keep the second season output at a below-average level, as input shortages, despite significant Government efforts to facilitate access to seeds and fertilizers, and water deficits continue to constrain the area sown. Based on the first season results and these early prospects for the second season, the aggregate 2016 rice output is forecast at 750 000 tonnes, 10 percent below last year's level. However, this figure may yet be revised downward pending on final information about the second season plantings.

Planting of the 2016 main season maize crop concluded in July under improved weather conditions, according to remote sensing data for the month. However, constrained access to inputs are expected to have kept sowings at a below-average level.

Overall, the aggregate 2016 cereal production is anticipated to remain at a well below-average level of about 2.8 million tonnes.

Consumer prices reportedly continue to increase

The Venezuelan Consumer Price Index reached a record level in December 2015, increasing by 180 percent from a year earlier. The food and beverage price index in December 2015 was more than 300 percent above its year earlier value, reflecting the particularly tight supply situation for food commodities. Although,



Venezuela
Cereal production

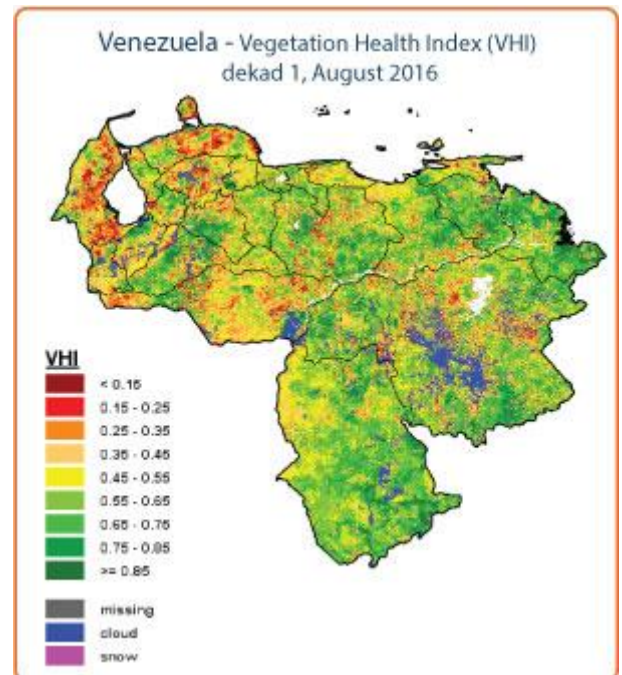
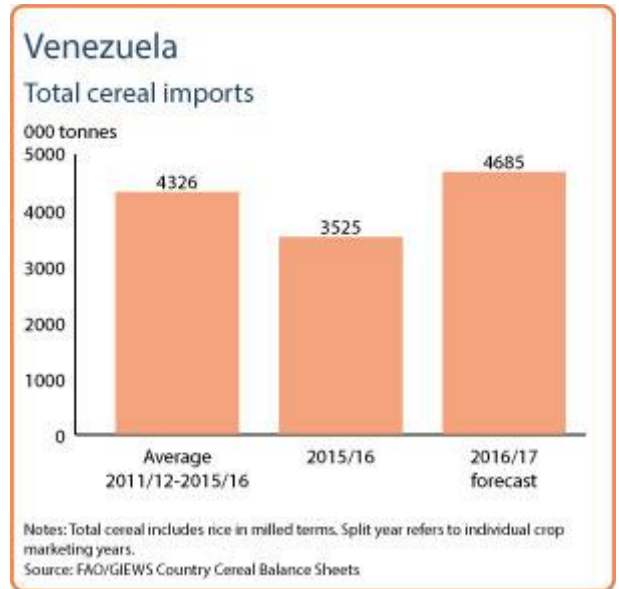
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Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

no official data has been published since, severe food shortages and lack of foreign exchange reserves have continued to exert strong upward pressure on prices in 2016.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Colombia agree to re-open borders

The governments of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Colombia reached an agreement on 12 August 2016 to gradually re-open their border crossings, which had been closed since 19 August 2015 to prevent food smuggling from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The agreement foresees the opening of five border crossings for use by pedestrian traffic and will facilitate access to food and medicines by Venezuelans. Previously, the border was temporarily opened from 10 to 11 July 2016, enabling Venezuelans to purchase food and other items which are in severe shortage in the country.





GIEWS Country Brief Venezuela

Reference Date: 17-June-2016

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cereal production in 2016 anticipated to remain below average
- Cereal imports in 2016/17 marketing year (July/June) forecast to increase
- Consumer prices under strong upward pressure

Cereal production in 2016 forecast to remain at below-average level

Harvesting of the 2016 main season rice crop and the secondary season maize crop is nearly concluded. Although official forecasts are not available, the economic downturn, which has adversely impacted the agriculture sector, coupled with severe dry weather due to El Niño, are anticipated to keep the first season cereal output close to last year's drought-reduced level.

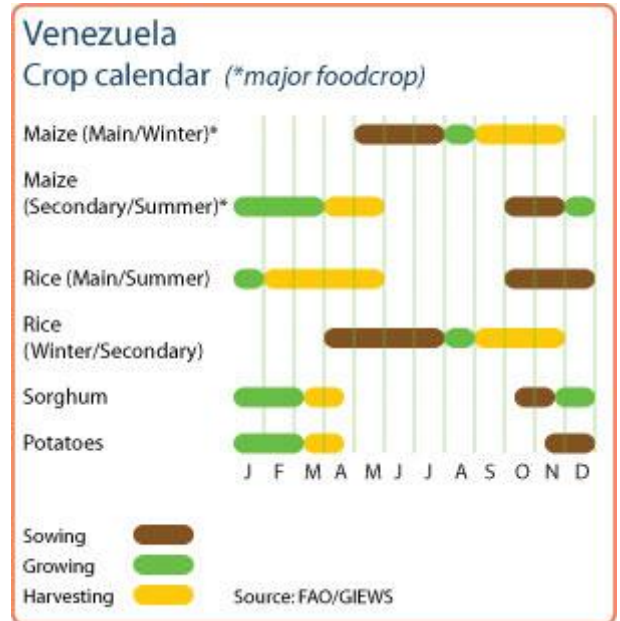
Planting of the 2016 main season maize crop and secondary season rice crop is ongoing and is expected to conclude in July under improved weather conditions according to the latest remote sensing data. However, constrained access to inputs are likely to keep sowings below average levels. Cereal production in 2016 is, therefore, anticipated to remain well below average.

Cereal imports in 2016/17 marketing year (July/June) forecast to increase

Given the anticipated below average cereal output in 2016, a larger proportion of the national cereal requirement would need to be met with imports in the 2016/17 marketing year (July/June). The country has relied on cereal imports to cover more than half of its domestic utilization over the last five years. However, declining foreign exchange earnings from crude oil, the country's main export, and a strong depreciation of the local currency, resulted in a significant decline in cereal imports in the 2015/16 marketing year. Cereal imports for 2016/17 are forecast at almost 4 million tonnes, 575 000 tonnes higher than the previous year, the bulk of which is accounted for by rice and wheat imports. This forecast, however, assumes that the country will be able to generate the needed foreign exchange to pay for these imports.

Consumer prices reportedly continue to increase

The Venezuelan Consumer Price Index reached a record level in December 2015, increasing by 180 percent from a year earlier. No official data has been published since then. However, the



Venezuela Cereal production

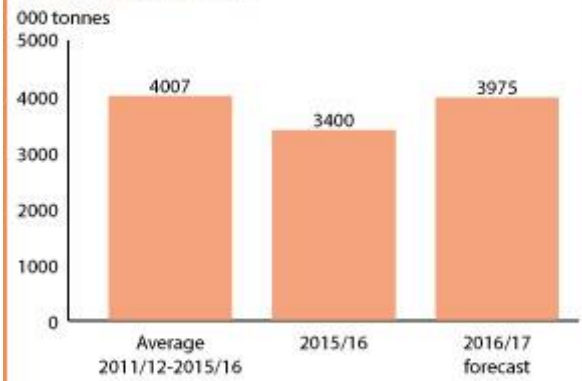
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Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

severe domestic supply shortages and lack of foreign exchange reserves continue to exert strong upward pressure on prices in 2016.

Venezuela

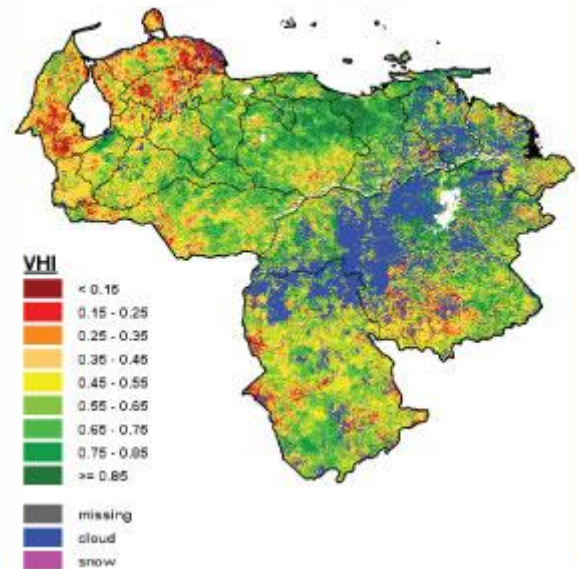
Total cereal imports



Notes: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Venezuela - Vegetation Health Index (VHI) dekad 1, June 2016



Reference Date: 21-December-2015

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Early prospects for 2016 cereal production poor due lack of incentives for producers and lack of foreign exchange for much-needed inputs to sector
- Prospects for 2015/16 cereal import levels uncertain in view of difficult economic situation
- Consumer prices continued to increase steadily throughout 2015

Cereal production poor in 2015

Although firm information is lacking, cereal production in 2015 is estimated to have fallen to a relatively low level reflecting the negative impact of the country's difficult economic conditions on the agriculture sector. Controlled prices for the main products do not reflect increased production costs and thus provide little incentives to farmers and the lack of foreign exchange is an impediment to acquiring inputs, equipment and spare parts. Furthermore, analysis of satellite-based data indicates that seasonal rainfall was below normal in many of the crop-producing areas for the second year in succession, which has likely been a further limit on production. Planting of the first 2016 rice and maize crops is ongoing under generally favourable weather conditions in the main producing regions of Portuguesa, Guárico and Barinas. However, with no change in current policies and given the unfavourable economic climate for producers, sown areas are expected to remain at similar levels to last year and any significant increase in production seems unlikely at this stage.

Uncertain outlook for cereal imports in 2015/16 marketing year (July/June)

Given the reduced level of cereal production estimated in 2015, a larger percentage of the country's utilization needs would be expected to have to come from imports in the 2015/16 marketing year (July/June). The country normally relies quite heavily on cereal imports and estimates indicate that already in 2014/15, shipments into the country increased on account of continuing strong demand in the face of faltering domestic production. Imports are forecast to retract somewhat in 2015/16 given indications that the poultry industry is expected to cut back production reducing demand for feed, also a reflection of the difficult economic situation and the uncertainty surrounding the availability of foreign exchange for overseas purchases.

Consumer prices reported to have increased steadily in past months

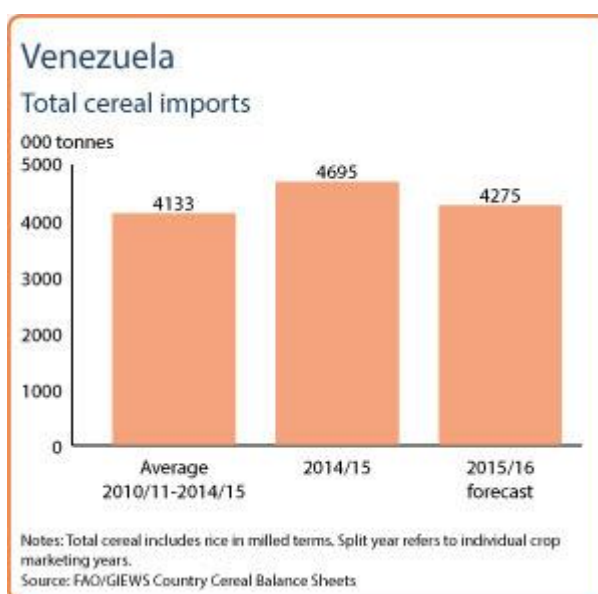
The Venezuelan consumer price index continued to rise during all of 2015. The increase is being sustained by high demand for food and the high rate of inflation.



Venezuela Cereal production

	2010-2014 average	2014	2015 forecast	change 2015/2014
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2 090	2 271	2 000	-12
Rice (paddy)	951	1 276	1 070	-16
Sorghum	242	132	130	-2
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3 284	3 680	3 201	-13

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets



Reference Date: 23-July-2014

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Early prospects for the 2014 cereal production poor
- Cereal imports strongly increased for the 2013/14 marketing year (July/June)
- Consumer prices continue to increase in May

Early prospects for the 2014 cereal production poor

Planting of the 2014 main season maize crop and the secondary rice crop is virtually completed. According to satellite-based information, the rain has been generally below-average from April to mid-July particularly over the northern areas of the country. The FAO Agricultural Stress Index (ASI) data confirms unfavourable vegetation conditions, in main producing states of Barinas, Guárico and Portuguesa. The insufficient precipitation is likely to have resulted in reductions plantings and yields of early-planted crops. Early forecasts point to a marked reduction of maize production from last year's above-average levels, reflecting mainly lower plantings. Following a satisfactory 2014 main season rice crop, harvested until last May, the aggregate output is tentatively forecast at around last year's level. Aggregate grain production is tentatively forecast at 3.4 million (paddy) tonnes. However, this forecast could be revised downward even further if low precipitations continue during the rest of the season.

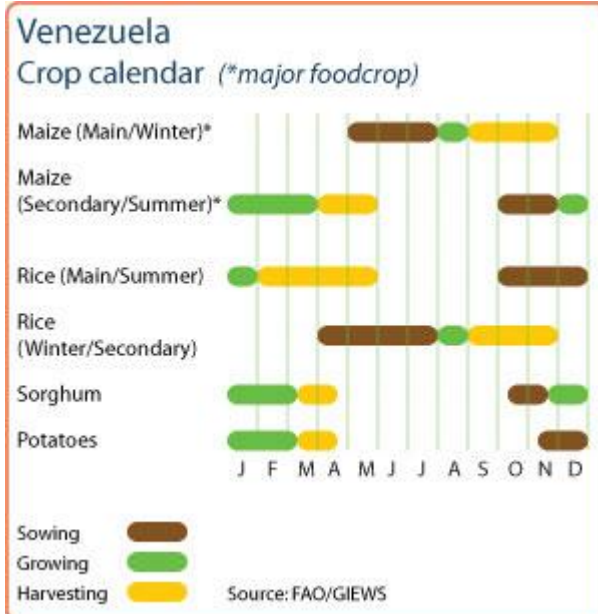
The acute dry weather has also resulted in severe losses to the livestock sector due to poor pastures conditions and water shortages. In the main livestock producing departments of Zulia, Barinas and Guarico at least 300 000 heads of cattle are reported at risk due to the lack of adequate water and feed.

Cereal imports strongly increased for the 2013/14 marketing year (July/June)

Estimates for cereal imports for the recently-concluded 2013/14 marketing year (July/June) show a sharp rise from a year ago. The increase mainly reflects higher imports of maize due to high demand from the feed industry, coupled with a sharp decline of the 2012 production which reduced domestic supplies. Wheat is totally imported, and imports increased mainly reflecting population growth. Total Imports are estimated at almost 4.7 million tonnes or 23 percent up from the 2012/13 marketing year.

Consumer prices continue to increase in May

The Venezuelan consumer price index continued to rise for a third month in May; it increased 5.7 percent from April and is almost 61 percent higher than in May 2013. The increase in the consumer price index is being sustained by high demand of various food items. Of the basket of goods that compose the consumer price index, food items suffered the second highest increase in May from its level from a year earlier, reaching a value of 834.9, up 75 percent from May 2013.

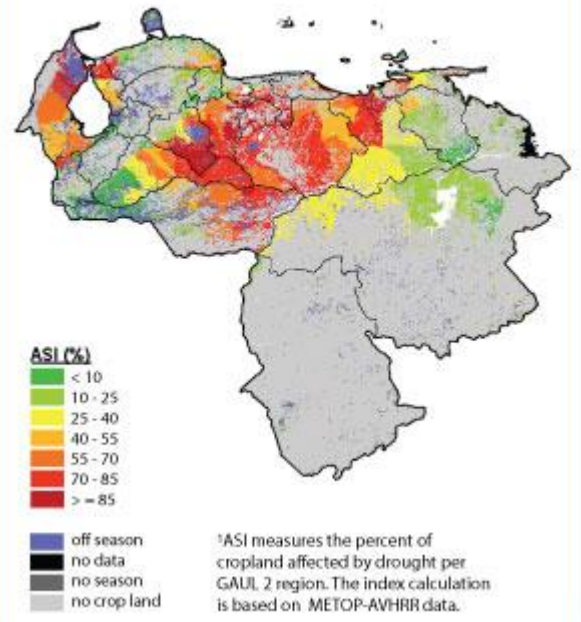


Venezuela
Cereal production

	2009-2013 average	2013	2014 forecast	change 2014/2013
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	2,119	2,247	2,035	-9
Rice (paddy)	925	940	940	0
Sorghum	435	401	425	6
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3,481	3,589	3,401	-5

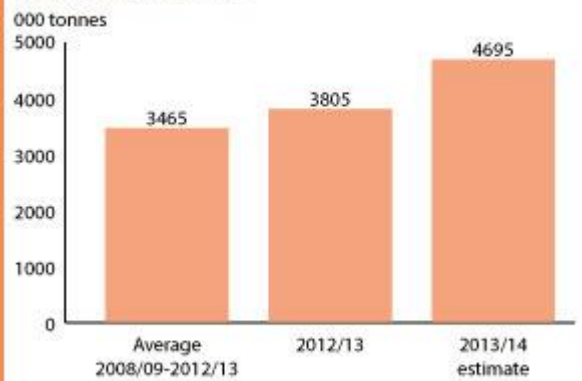
Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Venezuela - Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)¹
 from start of season 1 to dekad 2 July 2014



Venezuela

Total cereal imports



Notes: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 23-June-2014

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Favourable prospects for the sowing of 2014 cereals
- Cereal imports strongly increased for the 2013/14 marketing year (July/June)
- Consumer prices continue to increase in May

Favourable prospects for the sowing of 2014 cereals

Planting of the first rice crop is ongoing under favourable weather conditions in the main producing regions of Portuguesa, Guaranas and Barinas. Area planted is anticipated to remain high driven by strong local demand and to farm price support programmes, that total upwards of USD 1 100 per tonne. If weather continues to be favourable for the rest of the season, and assuming a normal second rice season, expectations are for production to remain above 900 million tonnes.

Planting of the main maize season is ongoing under favourable weather conditions. Area planted has been preliminarily forecast to remain at similar levels to last year.

Cereal imports strongly increased for the 2013/14 marketing year (July/June)

Estimates for cereal imports for the recently-concluded 2013/14 marketing year (July/June) show a sharp increase from a year ago, driven primarily by strong demand for wheat and maize. Imports are estimated at almost 4.7 million tonnes or 24 percent up from the 2012/13 marketing year.

Consumer prices continue to increase in May

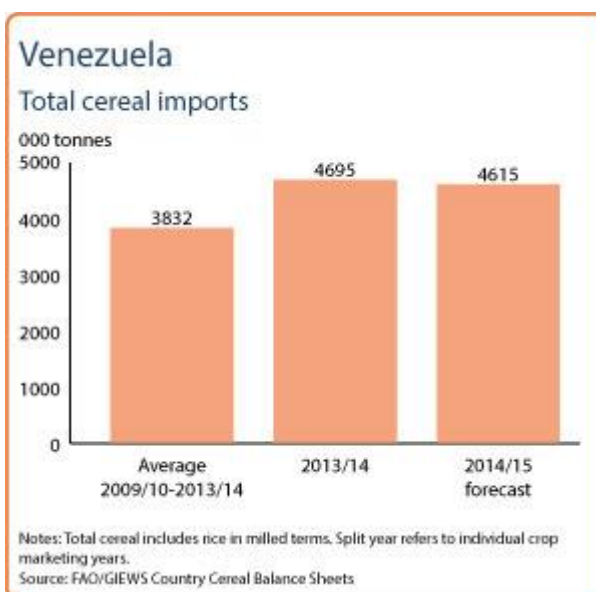
The Venezuelan consumer price index continued to rise for a third month in May; it increased 5.7 percent from April and is almost 61 percent higher than in May 2013. The increase in the consumer price index is being sustained by high demand of various food items.



Venezuela Cereal production

	2009-2013 average	2013	2014 forecast	change 2014/2013
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	2 321	2 548	2 548	0
Rice (paddy)	925	940	940	0
Sorghum	478	500	500	0
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3 725	3 989	3 989	0

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets



Reference Date: 25-October-2013

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Cereal production to increase further in 2013
- Cereal imports forecast higher for the 2013/14 marketing year
- Food inflation continues to increase

Cereal production to increase further in 2013

Harvesting of the 2013 winter main maize season and the secondary rice season is well advanced. The aggregate 2013 maize production (winter and summer cropping seasons) is forecast to increase 4 percent from last year to about 2.5 million tonnes. The rise in production reflects larger sowings and higher yields due to government support through the provision and financing of agricultural inputs.

The 2013 rice production is expected to rise to about 1 million tonnes, 11 percent up on the previous year's level as a result of an increase of almost 14 percent in total planted area over the main summer and secondary winter seasons, especially in the main producing states of Portuguesa and Barinas.

Cereal imports forecast higher for the 2013/14 marketing year

Early forecasts for the 2013/14 marketing year (July/June) point to an increase of 9 percent in cereal imports, mainly reflecting sustained demand for both maize and wheat. By contrast, rice imports are tentatively forecast to decrease by some 13 percent from the previous year as a result of this year's good production.

Food inflation continues to rise

Driven by the high demand for food, food inflation continued to increase in August reaching almost 3 percent. However, the year-on-year food inflation rate reached 63 percent.

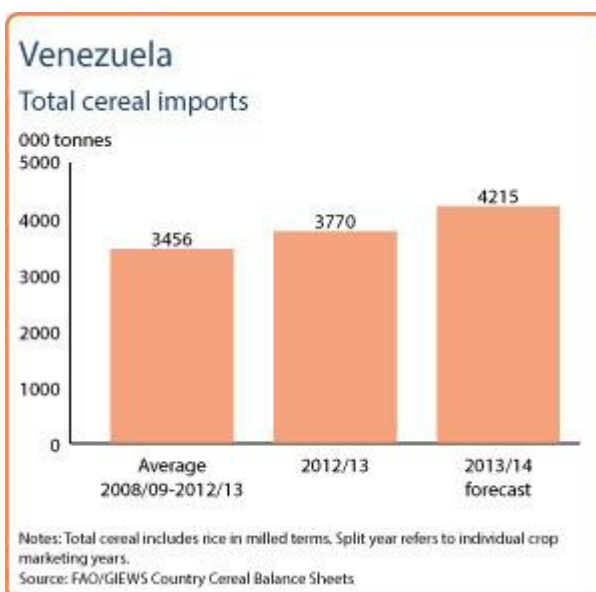


Venezuela

Cereal production

	2008-2012 average	2012	2013 forecast	change 2013/2012
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	2 410	2 460	2 548	4
Rice (paddy)	1 009	925	1 025	11
Sorghum	454	500	500	0
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3 875	3 886	4 074	5

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets



Reference Date: 07-August-2012

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Official forecasts point to sharp increase in the 2012 maize and rice production
- Inflation rate slows down in the first six months of 2012

Cereal production to increase in 2012

Sowing of the 2012 winter season rice and maize crops was completed in July, under favourable weather conditions. Assuming normal precipitation during the remainder of the season, production is officially forecast to increase markedly from last year's reduced level. This mainly reflects Government production support programs, which include, higher producer prices, distribution of agricultural inputs and credit facilities. The first summer season cereal output, harvested earlier in the year, was estimated to be good. In aggregate, official forecasts point to a recovery in 2012 maize production (summer and winter seasons) to some 3 million tonnes, 42 percent up from the 2011 level and record. Rice production is anticipated at about 1.1 million tonnes, 33 percent higher than in the previous year.

The inflation rate in the first six months of 2012 was 7.5 percent, well below the record highs reached at the same time in the past four years (15 percent in 2008, 11 percent in 2009, 16 percent in 2010 and 13 percent in 2011). This is mainly the result of several measures adopted by the Government to regulate prices of basic food goods. The national food scarcity index, which measures the absence of products on the market, fell to 12 percent in June from 14 percent in May.



Venezuela Cereal production

	2007-2011 average	2011	2012 forecast	change 2012/2011
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2 406	2 118	3 000	42
Rice (paddy)	1 051	845	1 122	33
Sorghum	448	491	500	2
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3 906	3 455	4 623	34

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 29-February-2012

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- 2012 cereal planting intentions indicate an increase in area planted
- 2011 rice production higher than in 2010, but maize output lower
- Inflation at high levels

Cereal plantings to increase in 2012

The summer rice crops (October-May), which are currently in the growing phase, were affected by rodent infestation in February. An assessment is being made of the number of hectares hit. Sowing of the 2012 winter rice and maize crops will begin in April/May.

The total area under rice is forecast to expand by 12 percent, and the area sown with maize by 14 per cent. To boost agricultural production and reverse last year's reduction in the maize, soya beans and sugarcane harvests, the Government is planning to distribute agricultural inputs before sowing and set producer prices at profitable levels.

Rice production higher in 2011, but maize output lower

Total rice production in 2011 was 1.1 million tonnes — 22 percent above the previous year's figure. This reflects a significant improvement in yields and the strategy of setting prices in line with costs. Maize production in 2011 is expected to be lower than in 2010, owing to the flooding caused by torrential rainfall during the agricultural season and delays in sowing which affected yields.

Inflation at high levels

Inflation was 27.6 percent in 2011, slightly above the previous year's figure and the highest in Latin America. This was despite a November 2011 law setting maximum prices for a series of goods and services, which were added to the list of basic products regulated since 2003. The food scarcity index, which measures the absence of products on the market, rose from 15.2 percent in December 2011 to 16 percent in January 2012.



Venezuela
Cereal production

	2006-2010 average	2010	2011 estimate	change 2011/2010
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2 382	2 400	2 350	-2
Rice (paddy)	1 126	900	1 100	22
Sorghum	462	440	469	7
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	3 971	3 741	3 920	5

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 10-June-2011

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Heavy rainfall affected sowing of the 2011 maize crops
- Recovery in rice yield predicted for 2011

Sowing of 2011 maize affected by rainfall

Above average rainfall in April and May have delayed the sowing of the 2011 maize crop and led to losses of crops that were sown early. The most affected areas are the states of Portuguesa, Táchira, Cojedes and Barinas where substantial reductions in the area sown for this season are expected. Heavy rainfall is also affecting vegetable yields.

Recovery in rice yield predicted for 2011

The 2011 rice crops are currently being sown. The early outlook is favourable due to heavy rainfall and to government measures to support production after the reduced yields produced last year as a result of a prolonged drought and floods. Official forecasts indicate that production could increase by up to one-third if weather conditions remain normal throughout the main agricultural season of 2011.



Venezuela

Cereal production

	2006-2010 average	2010	2011 forecast	change 2011/2010
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2 382	2 400	2 350	-2
Rice (paddy)	1 126	900	1 100	22
Sorghum	462	440	469	7
Others	462	440	469	7
Total	3 971	3 741	4 065	9

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 02-November-2010

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Adverse weather affected the main maize crop Non-oil export continue to contract

Following a prolonged drought, recent torrential rains have caused some damage in the Caribbean coastal areas

Since the end of September and throughout the month of October, heavy precipitation was recorded throughout the country, particularly in the Caribbean coastal areas. The heavy rainfall has caused landslides and flooding. This intense rainfall followed a severe and prolonged drought which has persisted since December 2009 and has also affected the important farming state of Guarico. Caracas, the capital city, has also been affected by the torrential rains causing damages. The National Assembly has approved a further mobilization of funds of VEF 250 000 000, equivalent to almost USD 60 million for reconstruction.

Harvesting of the main maize crop is underway; estimates indicate a decline

Harvesting of the main winter maize and secondary rice crops is well advanced. Preliminary forecasts point to a significantly reduced maize output, about 23 percent compared to the previous year and 15 percent compared to the previous five years average. This is mainly due to the severe drought conditions that affected the main producing states at the beginning of the cropping season. In addition, the nationwide measures for rationing of power, following lack of water for the hydropower plants is also having an overall negative impact on the entire agricultural sector.

The secondary season paddy harvesting is currently underway, The overall 2010 paddy production, estimated at about one million tonnes, is about 7 percent below the previous year.

Producers demand higher prices for their crop to sustain rising production costs

Despite a slight rise in producer's prices for paddy rice and maize, fixed at VEF1,56/Kg and VEF1,15/Kg, farmers still contend that this rise is not sufficient to compensate for the increase in production costs.

Non oil export revenue continued to contract by 9 percent year on year to USD 775m in comparison to levels approaching USD 2bn in the early 2000s. In contrast the total export earnings rose by 10 percent year on year, which has been attributable to higher oil prices that have lifted oil export revenue by 11 percent, to USD15.3bn.



Venezuela Cereal production

	2004-2008	2008	2009	change
	average		estimate	2009/2008
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2354	2600	2000	-23
Rice (paddy)	1047	1080	1002	-7
Sorghum	470	436	466	7
Others	2	1	1	0
Total	3873	4118	3469	-16

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 08-April-2010

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Prolonged drought affects agricultural production and energy supply

From December 2009, a prolonged drought is affecting South-Eastern and Western areas of the country, including the important agricultural state of Guarico. Therefore, the planting of 2010 winter cereal crops, which is scheduled to start with the arrival of the first rains in late April, could be delayed. This emergency has also caused a reduction in 2009 summer crops production.

As a consequence, 2009 aggregate maize output is estimated to decrease by more than 20 percent compared to the good harvest obtained in 2008.

As an emergency response to limit the use of water resources, since January 2010 the Government has implemented a plan of nationwide measures to ration electricity with greater use of oil fuelled plants instead of hydroelectric plants.



Venezuela

Cereal production

	2004-2008 average	2008	2009 estimate	change 2009/2008
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2354	2600	2000	-23
Rice (paddy)	1047	1080	1002	-7
Sorghum	470	436	466	7
Others	2	1	1	0
Total	3873	4118	3469	-16

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 25-January -2010

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Severe drought conditions to disrupt 2010 rice plantation
- Good preliminary estimates for maize production

Severe drought conditions persist in Southern and Western Venezuela

Severe drought conditions persist in the South-East and western regions of the country, including the farming states of Guarico.

This situation is causing problems to the agricultural sector as the production has been cut back to cope with water scarcity in major basins of the country and electric power has been rationed.

The internal energy requirements will be covered by oil fueled plants with a strong negative impact on oil export.

Development of rice plantation at risk due to water scarcity for irrigation systems

Rice crop development, which is scheduled to be harvested from February to May, could be hampered by the scarcity of water in the dams considering the fact that they provide water to the major irrigation systems. Estimates are that the actual water reserves can supply approximately only half of the total amount of hectares usually irrigated.

Good preliminary estimates for 2009 maize crop production

Harvesting of the main summer crop is completed and preliminary estimates point at a good maize production of 3 million tons, well above last year's average output.

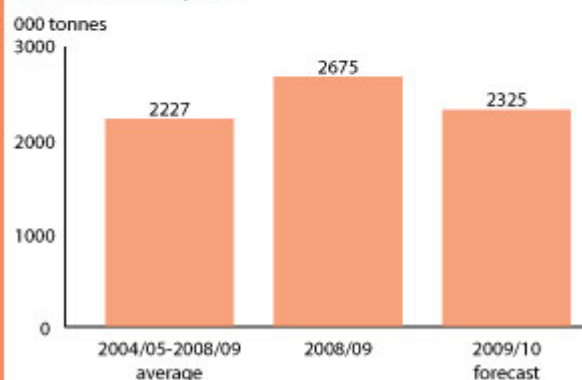
Venezuela

Cereal production

	2004-2008	2008	2009	change
	average		forecast	2009/2008
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	2309	2376	3000	26
Rice (in milled terms)	665	770	0	-100
Sorghum	470	436	466	7
Others	2	1	1	0
Total	3446	3583	3467	-3

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Total cereal imports



Notes: Total cereal includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Reference Date: 10-September -2009

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Rice production is expected to decrease from 984 000 to 950 000 tonnes in 2009/2010
- A good forecast maize production could lower import requirements for 2009/2010

The main agricultural areas of the country have had good rainfall

After the prolonged drought affecting several agricultural departments during the sowing season and during the first stages of the development of the winter crops, rainfall in the past few weeks has been between 10 and 50 mm, mainly in the agricultural areas north of the Orinoco River.

Rice production estimates have been revised downwards

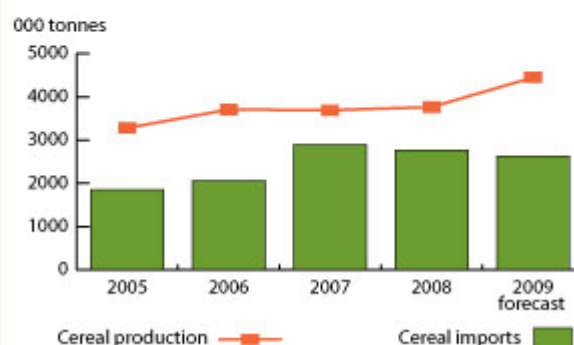
Winter rice is currently being harvested in the main rice-growing departments of the country (Guarico, Barinas and Portuguesa). Despite the resowing needed to offset the repercussions of the prolonged drought in the agricultural regions north of the Orinoco River, dry paddy output in the 2009/2010 agricultural season is expected to total 950 000 tonnes compared with initial forecasts of 984 000 tonnes.

The country is moving towards reducing maize imports

Thanks to the expected high maize output, which is now forecast at 300 000 tonnes (approximately 25% higher than last year's production figures), during the 2009/2010 commercial season maize imports are expected to decline and to stabilise at roughly around 600 000 tonnes.

Cereal production and imports Venezuela

Cereal production	2004-2008	2008	2009	change
	average		forecast	2009/2008
	000 tonnes		percent	
Maize	2309	2376	3000	26.3%
Rice (milled)	772	952	984	3.4%
Sorghum	470	436	466	6.9%
Other	1	1	1	0%
Total Cereals	3552	3765	4451	18.2%



Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets