



GIEWS Country Brief Myanmar

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- After late start, near-average monsoon rains facilitated plantings and early crop development
- Rice exports in 2019 forecast at above-average level
- Wholesale prices of “Emata” rice increased seasonally in June but remained below last year’s levels
- Persistent conflicts severely affect large numbers of people

After late start, near-average monsoon rains facilitated plantings and crop development

Planting of the predominantly rainfed main season paddy crop, which accounts for more than 80 percent of the annual production, normally starts in May, with the onset of the monsoon rains, and continues until July.

In 2019, the monsoon rains started in the second dekad of June, almost three weeks later than the normal onset. Since then, near-average rainfall favoured planting operations and improved vegetation conditions of germinating crops in the main paddy producing areas. Between May and June, well below-average rains were reported in some important rice producing areas, including Sagaing and Mandalay regions (both located in the central dry zone and in part irrigated) and Shan State. Rainfed parts in these areas have already exhibited below-normal vegetation conditions, rising concerns on the impact on yield potential (see VHI map). A short period of torrential rains in the first dekad of July increased river levels, causing flooding and minor crop losses in localized areas of Kachin, Rakhine, Chin and Mon states, and Bago and Sagain regions. Overall, the area planted is estimated to be close to the previous year’s high level supported by strong domestic demand and the effects of the official programmes promoting rice production. The 2019 secondary season crops, for harvest in the second quarter of 2020, will be planted at the end of the year.

Planting of the 2019 main maize crop started in June and is expected to continue until August. Below-average rains in June in key producing areas, including Shan State and Sagain Region, caused some delays to planting operations. However, if rains improve in the next weeks, it is still possible that planted area reaches the previous year’s high level. Maize is expected to be a preferred crop by farmers due to strong demand from the domestic feed market and from China (Mainland). Some concerns exist due to localized damages caused by Fall

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Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



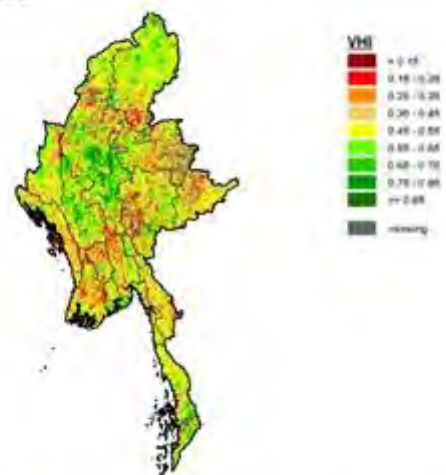
lean period

Sowing
Growing
Harvesting

Source: FAO/GIEWS, FAO/WFP CFSAM 2009.

Myanmar - Vegetation Health Index (VHI)

June 2019



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

Armyworm (FAW). According to the latest information from Myanmar's Plant Protection Division, so far, the FAW affected only 5 200 hectares or about 1 percent of the 2019 main crop, mostly in Shan State and Bago and Sagaing regions.

Rice exports in 2019 forecast at above-average level

Rice exports in 2019 are forecast at 2.4 million tonnes, well above the five-year average, on expectations of ample exportable availabilities and increased demand, particularly from China (Mainland). In 2019, the two countries have signed some agreements aiming at facilitating trade.

The country exports also small quantities of maize. In the 2019/20 marketing year (July/June), maize exports are forecast to be close to the previous record level, reflecting the continuing strong demand from China (Mainland).

Wholesale prices of “Emata” rice increased seasonally in June

Wholesale prices of “Emata” rice (known as “Indica” rice), the most consumed variety in the country, registered steady declines between March and May 2019, weighed by the 2018 bumper harvests and lower demand for exports. In June, prices increased by 6 percent in line with seasonal trends, reflecting tightening market availabilities. Overall, in June, prices were below their year-earlier levels.

Persistent conflicts severely affect large numbers of people

Persistent conflicts since the resurgence of violence in Rakhine State in late August 2017 triggered large-scale population displacement. According to the latest data from UNOCHA (May 2019), an estimated 160 000 people were internally displaced in Rakhine State and 106 500 in Kachin and northern Shan states. In Rakhine State, the livelihoods of the affected population have been further exacerbated by limitations of movement. In addition, as of May 2019, an estimated 910 000 refugees from Myanmar sought refuge in Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh due to the ongoing conflict. Most IDPs are affected by high levels of food insecurity as the conflict is hampering the delivery of adequate humanitarian assistance and impending the restoration of local livelihoods. The July floods affected large numbers of people, displaced at least 21 000 individuals, resulted in losses of stored crops and seeds as well as small livestock.

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Cereal Production

	2014-2018 average	2018	2019 forecast	change 2019/2018
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	28 884	30 400	30 500	0.3
Maize	1 955	2 300	2 400	4.3
Sorghum	247	250	260	4.0
Others	398	383	363	-5.2
Total	31 483	33 333	33 523	0.6

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.