FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GIEWS Country Brief
Myanmar

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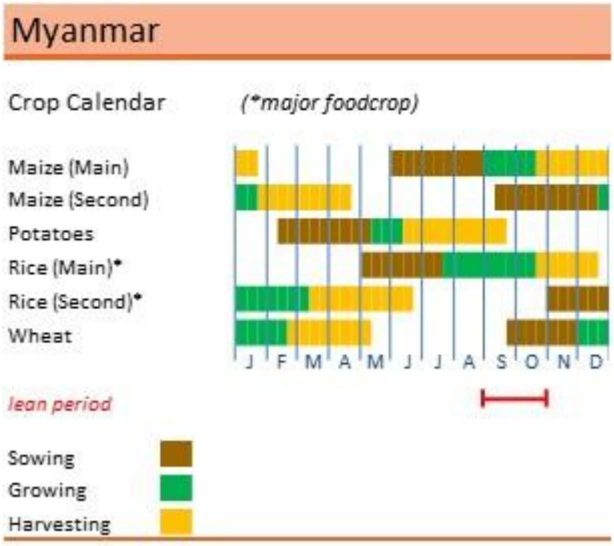
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Main paddy crop area in 2020 estimated at an above-average level**
- **Aggregate cereal production in 2019 estimated close five-year average**
- **Exports of rice in 2020 forecast at above-average level**
- **Wholesale prices of “Emata” rice in August were well above year-earlier levels**
- **Persistent conflicts and economic constraints due to COVID-19 pandemic severely affect large number of people**

Main paddy crop area in 2020 estimated at an above-average level

Planting of the 2020 predominantly rainfed main season paddy crop, which accounts for more than 80 percent of the annual production, started with a slight delay due to below-average monsoon rains in May and June. Starting from the first dekad of July, precipitations were generally near the average in the northern parts of the country, benefitting the planting and germination of the crops. By contrast, in parts of central and southern rice producing areas, rains remained below average throughout July, affecting early crop development. In particular, below-normal vegetation conditions, as of July, were reported in Rakhine, Eastern Shan, Kayin and Mon states, and in Magway and Bago regions, raising concerns on the impact of dry weather conditions on yields. Rains were above average from the first dekad of August, bringing some relief to the areas affected by dry weather conditions and allowed planting operations to progress. Overall, the area planted is forecast at an above-average level, supported by strong domestic demand and the effects of the official programmes promoting rice production.

Planting of the 2020 main maize crop was completed at the end of August. Below-average rains in June and July in key producing areas, including Shan State and Sagain Region, caused some delays to planting operations. Improved rains from the first dekad of August allowed planting operations to pick up. The area planted is expected at an above-average level, as farmers prefer maize crop due to strong demand from the domestic feed market. Some concerns exist due to localized damages caused by Fall Armyworm (FAW).



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

Myanmar

Cereal Production

	2014-2018 average	2018	2019 estimate	change 2019/2018
		000 tonnes		percent
Rice (paddy)	26 340	26 100	25 600	-1.9
Maize	1 836	2 000	2 200	10.0
Sorghum	247	250	260	4.0
Others	401	393	393	0.0
Total	28 824	28 743	28 453	-1.0

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

Aggregate cereal production in 2019 estimated close five-year average

The 2019 season was completed at the end of June 2020. The aggregate cereal output is estimated at 28.5 million tonnes, close to the five-year average.

Rice exports in 2020 forecast at above-average level

Rice exports in 2020 are forecast at an above-average level of 2.6 million tonnes, due to ample exportable availabilities. The country exports also small quantities of maize. In the 2020/21 marketing year (July/June), maize exports are forecast at 1.4 million tonnes, close to the previous record level, reflecting the continuing strong demand from China (mainland).

Wholesale prices of “Emata” rice at high levels in August 2020

Wholesale prices of “Emata” rice (also known as “Indica” rice), the most consumed variety in the country, have generally increased between March and August 2020, supported by strong domestic demand during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, in August 2020, the prices of rice were above their year-earlier levels.

Persistent conflicts and economic constraints due to COVID-19 pandemic severely affect large number of people

Persistent conflicts in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, Kayin and Shan states have triggered large-scale population displacement since 2017. As of June 2020, an estimated 235 000 people, mostly women and children, were reported to be internally displaced, sheltering mainly in Rakhine and Kachin states. Most IDPs are experiencing high levels of food insecurity, with the COVID-19 restrictions on movements hampering an adequate delivery of humanitarian assistance. In addition, income losses and a decline in the remittances due to the impact of COVID-19 is expected to affect the food security situation of most vulnerable households. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been also severe on agricultural households relying on international markets to export high value commodities. This is the result of decreasing international demand and limited access to the international markets, following cross-border movement restrictions, especially in the areas along the borders.

Food security remains a concern for an estimated 860 000 refugees from Myanmar, who sought refuge in Cox’s Bazar District in Bangladesh.

COVID-19 and measures adopted by the Government

In late March 2020, in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government implemented several measures, including movement and travel restrictions, the closure of educational institutions and the countrywide ban on all forms of mass gatherings. The transportation of goods and agricultural activities has been authorized to continue in order to ensure adequate market availabilities.

The Government implemented a MMK 200 billion (about USD 140 million) COVID-19 plan to provide loans at reduced interest rates to the affected businesses.

On 26 June 2020, the International Monetary Fund approved a USD 356.5 million Emergency Assistance Package to address the urgent financial needs as a result of COVID-19.