

THE FOOD SITUATION IN GHANA – 2009/2010

**PAPER PRESENTED AT
REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE
FOOD SITUATION AND THE 2009
HARVEST PROSPECTS IN THE SAHEL
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1.0 RECAP OF FOOD SITUATION IN 2008/2009

Farm production in 2008/2009 cropping season was good in both the southern and northern sectors of the country as a result of Government's intervention in promoting good farm production practices and the favourable good rainfall and evenly distribution for the year 2008-2009 which culminated in significant increase in crop yields.

Consequently, there were significant increases in farm production of about 20% to 114% for the cereals, about 50% increase for the legumes and 3% to 11% for the starchy staples in the 2008/2009 cropping season as compared to the 2007/2008 cropping season.

Food Prices in the major markets were relatively high throughout the year despite the good harvest and production recorded. The high prices may be attributed to (a) low domestic cereal production especially in the 3 Northern Regions in 2007/2008 cropping season and (b) global food price hikes following the high world market crude oil prices and the significant shift to bio-fuel production in the industrial countries.

1.1 National Programme to Support 2009/2010 Cropping Season

Despite the favourable weather and good farm production of food commodities, the government initiated a number of programmes to support the 2009/2010 cropping season. These programmes include:

(a) Fertilizer Subsidy Support Programme

The government accepted to continue with the provision of 50% subsidy on the prices of 4 types of fertilizer (NPK 15-15-15 and 23-10-05, Sulphate of Ammonia and Urea). The selling prices remain fixed for food crop farmers purchasing with fertilizer coupons. About 30,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer are being subsidized in the current cropping year to assist farmers increase the fertilizer usage and consequently the output for the year. The programme has a total cost of about GH¢15 million.

(b) Block Farming

Another programme initiated in the year is the introduction of block farming for the communities in six (6) regions – Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Brong-Ahafo, Central and Ashanti Regions. Various tracts of land are ploughed and handed over to the beneficiaries, especially youth, to cultivate specific crops of maize, rice and soyabean. The government provided the beneficiaries, especially youth, with good varieties of seed and planting materials and in-kind credit facilities for inputs especially agro-chemicals to cultivate these crops. The farmers (youth) provided the land and labour.

Table 1.1: Estimated Cropped Area under Block Farming (2009/2010)

REGION	CROP AREA (HA)					
	Maize		Rice		Soyabean	
	Grains	Seeds	Grains	Seeds	Grains	Seeds
NORTHERN	744	95	3,953.0	100	96.0	-
UPPER WEST	965	155	115.6	28	-	-
BRONG-AHAFO	1,016	156	320.4	70	950.8	-
CENTRAL	800	200	-	-	-	-
UPPER EAST	-	-	890.0	230	250.0	-
ASHANTI	440	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	3,965	606	5,279.0	428	1,296.8	-

(c) Improvement in Extension Delivery

Another programme is to resource, adequately, Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) to conduct crop and livestock demonstrations to show the best practices and proven technologies in about 12,500 communities in the country. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture is also employing the use of audio-visual mobile vans, print media for agricultural technology dissemination.

(d) Irrigation Development

To mitigate the effects of unreliable rainfall and increase employment opportunities in the dry season, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture is rehabilitating existing irrigation facilities especially in the northern sector of the country in order to expand the area under irrigation. The Tono, Vea and Subinja dams have been rehabilitated for the current cropping season.

Promoting Quality Planting Materials

The government continues to improve access to improved seeds and other planting materials. The Grains and Legumes Development Board (GLDB) has been provided with the necessary logistics together with the private sector to produce the necessary planting materials for distribution to farmers.

Promoting Mechanization

To modernize agriculture, the government is promoting increase use of mechanized services. Farm tractors, agro-processing machinery have been imported and sold at subsidized rates to farmers. Ten (10) mechanization service centres are being developed in communities to provide services to farmers who cannot own their tractors. Twenty (20) tractor-mounted drilling rigs have been installed across the country to provide water for farmers.

Project Programmes

Several activities are being undertaken towards increasing food availability and utilization. Current projected programmes being implemented include:

- a) Inland Valley Rice Development Project
- b) Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Project
- c) Afram Plans District Agricultural Development Project
- d) Nerica Rice Dissemination Project
- e) Northern Rural Growth Project

Fisheries Development

Main measure to improve fish production is to provide fingerlings to farmers. More hatcheries and feed mills are being built around the country to encourage aquaculture production.

2.0 CONDUCT OF THE 2009/2010 CROPPING SEASON

2.1 Weather and Rainfall Situation

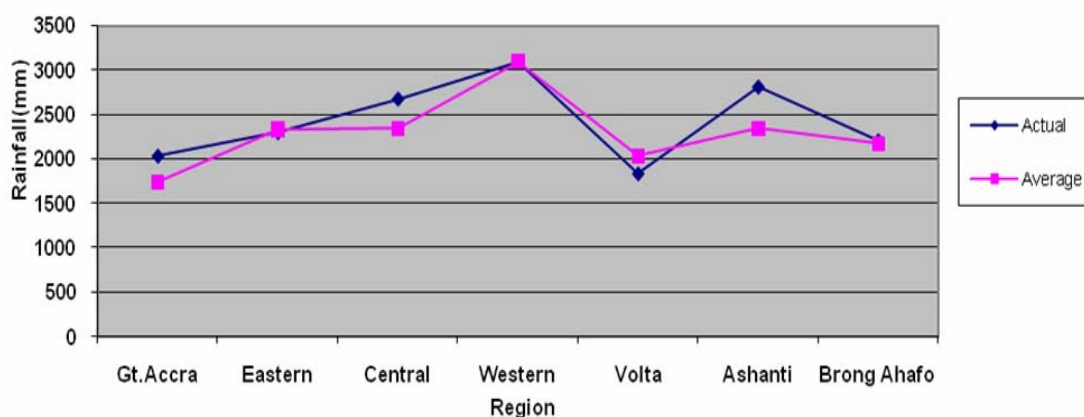
The global atmospheric circulation patterns behaved abnormally during the year. This affected the pattern of rainfall over the country. The start of the rains delayed in most parts of the country. Though the overall rainfall amounts recorded between March and August, 2009 could be described as normal, distribution was uneven.

In the southern sector of the country, the amount of rainfall recorded during the 2009/2010 cropping season (March to July 2009) was lower in Eastern and Volta Regions, compared with the 30-year average (see table 2.1 and fig. 2.1). The Eastern and Volta Regions recorded lower than average rainfall recorded in the transitional zones (Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Eastern and Volta Regions).

Table 2.1: Total Monthly Rainfall (March-July 2009) Compared with 30-year Average – Southern Sector

REGION	Total Monthly Actual Rainfall (mm)						Total Monthly 30-Year Average Actual Rainfall (mm)						% Change Actual vrs 30-Year Average
	March	April	May	June	July	Total	March	April	May	June	July	Total	
Gt. Accra	122	385	345	973	207	2,032	165	308	409	677	187	1,746	16.4
Eastern	352	337	485	721	404	2,299	382	443	501	618	391	2,335	-1.5
Central	191	326	412	1,018	727	2,674	296	391	558	785	315	2,345	14.0
Western	189	370	494	1,374	666	3,093	322	428	737	1,141	466	3,094	0.0
Volta	222	376	188	815	233	1,834	253	337	444	584	415	2,033	-9.8
Ashanti	352	410	361	1,056	629	2,808	373	415	515	611	429	2,343	19.8
Brong Ahafo	406	414	394	411	580	2,205	358	414	479	561	362	2,174	1.4

Fig. 2.1: Total Monthly Actual Rainfall vrs 30-Year Average (March-July 2009)– Southern Sector

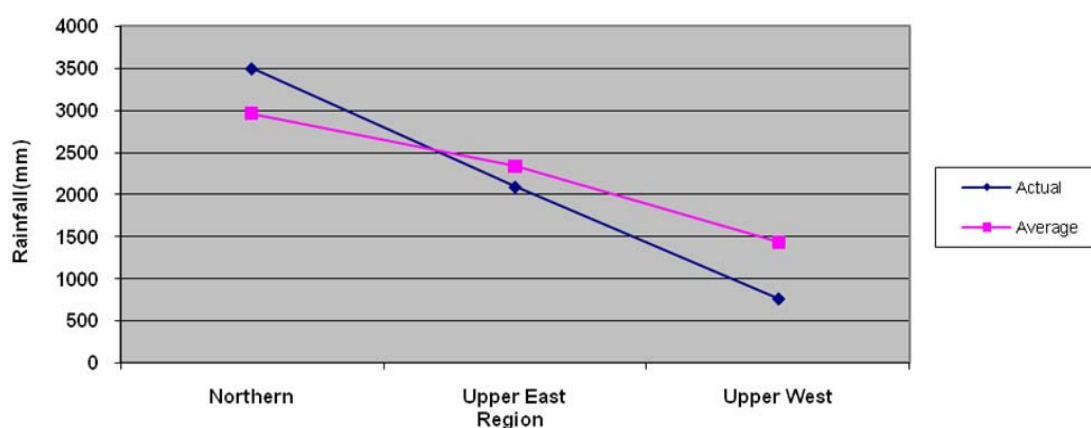


In the northern sector, the Northern Region of Ghana experienced above average rainfall during the period of April to August. Rainfall amounts in Upper East and Upper West Regions were below average (see table 2.2 and fig. 2.2).

Table 2.2: Total Monthly Rainfall (April-August 2009) Compared with 30-year Average – Northern Sector

REGION	Total Monthly Actual Rainfall (mm)						Total Monthly 30-Year Average Actual Rainfall (mm)						% Change Actual vrs 30-Year Average
	April	May	June	July	August	Total	April	May	June	July	August	Total	
Northern	544	476	549	1,074	858	3,501	370	494	638	704	755	2,961	18.2
Upper East	123	237	511	386	835	2,092	515	274	353	519	678	2,339	-10.6
Upper West	74	105	229	163	191	762	140	223	274	369	433	1,439	-47.0

Fig. 2.2: Total Monthly Actual vrs 30-Year Average (April-August 2009) – Northern Sector



According to the Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMA), Brong-Ahafo and parts of the Ashanti Regions are expected to have an extension of rains into October 2009.

2.2 Crop Performance

In the southern sector, erratic rainfall during the cropping season has affected crop development. There was drought in April and May 2009 affecting maize crop during its critical period. Areas affected most were the transitional zones of Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Eastern and Volta Regions. The effect of the erratic rainfall in the southern sector may be less severe on the starchy staples of cassava, yam, cocoyam and plantain.

In the northern sector, weather condition during the cropping season appears to be favourable for crop development. In the three (3) Northern Regions, crop performance has been very favourable until the end of August when heavy rains started destroying some farmlands. In the Northern Region, for example, heavy rains destroyed farmlands in six (6) districts. They are Tolon-Kumbungu, Central Gonja, East Gonja, Kpandai, Zabzugu-Tatale and West Mamprusi.

The growth of cereal plants (maize, millet and sorghum) and the legumes have been very satisfactory. Continuous rain to the end of October 2009 is likely to result in substantial output for the 2009/2010 cropping season.

Environmental Conditions

No pests and disease outbreaks have been reported in the districts and regions except the flooding that has been mentioned above.

2.3 Livestock Situation and State of the Grazing Lands

There has not been current livestock survey. The country continues to import both live animals particularly from neighbouring countries and livestock products from the European Union (EU) and the neighbouring countries especially Republic of Togo, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire.

Table 5: Projected Livestock Population in 2009/2010

Type of Livestock	Cattle	Sheep	Goat	Pig	Poultry
Estimated Livestock Population	1,450,000	3,490,000	4,400,000	525,000	40,000,000

As a result of adequate rains, there has been enough pastures and water for livestock. It is envisaged that the growth of the grasses and herbage will be sustained to the end of the year 2009.

3.0 PROSPECTS FOR THE 2009 CROPPING SEASON HARVEST

- 3.1 The major season crop performance has not been as good as the previous year (2008), even though food commodities are currently available on the market.
- 3.2 Food commodities prices remain high.
- 3.3 The minor season rains have commenced and if it continues favourably, then a good harvest will be experienced and this is likely to offset the low maize output in the major season.
- 3.4 In general, outputs for all commodities are forecasted to increase except maize which is likely to decline by about 5%. Millet and sorghum is forecasted to increase by 10%, whilst groundnut and cowpea are about 3%. Overall, cereal production is expected to increase marginally by about 1%. Starchy staples and legumes are also projected to increase by 2% and 3% respectively. Marginal increases of 1-5% are expected in the starchy staples. Significant production increase of about 20% is expected in total rice production due to the rehabilitated Tono and Vea dams for rice production, reactivated Aveyime dam to cultivate about 1,200 ha of rice and the Nerica rice promotional activities in four (4) regions of the country.

Preliminary production estimates compiled for the major crops are indicated in the table below:

Table 3.1 Preliminary Production Estimates for 2009/2010

CROP	Total Domestic Production in 2008/2009	Preliminary Production Estimates in 2009/2010	% Change
Maize	1,470.0	1,397.0	5%↓
Rice (Milled)	181.1	217.0	20%↑
Millet	193.8	213.0	10%↑
Sorghum	330.9	364.0	10%↑
Cereals	2,175.8	2,191.0	0.7%
Cassava	11,351.0	11,465.0	1%↑
Yam	4,894.8	5,140.0	5%↑
Plantain	3,337.8	3,405.0	2%↑
Cocoyam	1,688.3	1,705.0	1%↑
Starchy Staples	21,271.9	21,715.0	2.1%
Groundnut	470.0	484.0	3%↑
Cowpea	179.7	185.0	3%↑
Legumes	649.7	669.0	3.0%