

SKBN Coordination Unit

Humanitarian Update

March 2021



A market in Yabus, Blue Nile (March 2021)

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Staple food prices continued to atypically increase during the harvest period

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Farm preparations for the next planting season continued across Southern Kurmuk County. According to the Secretariat of Agriculture (SoA), a total of 360 *feddans* (373.32 acres) of farmland are expected to be ploughed this year in Chali, Wadaka, and Yabus payams. Out of the 360 feddans, one of the implementing partners will plough and provide seeds for 100 feddans targeting 25 households.

However, the project is constrained by lack of equipment and machinery, including tractors, hoes, and axes.

On the other hand, for the next planting season, farmers chose three types of sorghum that are thought to be resistant to diseases and drought: Wad-Hamad, Mareiba, Najaath, and Arfragadamak.

According to the post-harvest survey, the 2020/2021 yield was recorded at 25 to 40 per cent of average yields (lower than last year), primarily due to pest infestation and a dry spell. As a result, 10 per cent of households had remaining food stocks that would only last through April. As a result of poor harvests, 90 per cent of households depended on markets, while only 10 per cent could afford to buy food in the required quantities. To cope with the low household purchasing power, households increased dependence on income from seasonal agricultural labor provision and traditional gold mining for income.

Market functionality was fully operational in Balila, Yabus Bala, Moguf and Mayak. However, food prices continued to increase, particularly for white sorghum, a staple food crop from South Sudanese Pound (SSP) 600 to SSP 700, constraining household purchasing power. Similarly, there was an increase in fuel (from 200 Ethiopian Birr to 300 Ethiopian Birr), soap, and cooking oil. On the contrary, a decrease in gold prices was recorded in Balila and Mayak markets.

Highlights

465 S4 candidates sat for South Sudan Secondary School Exams 2020/2021

Price hikes for food, fuel and other essential goods

Ongoing harvest of 2020/2021 season continued, but with poor crop yields

South Kordofan

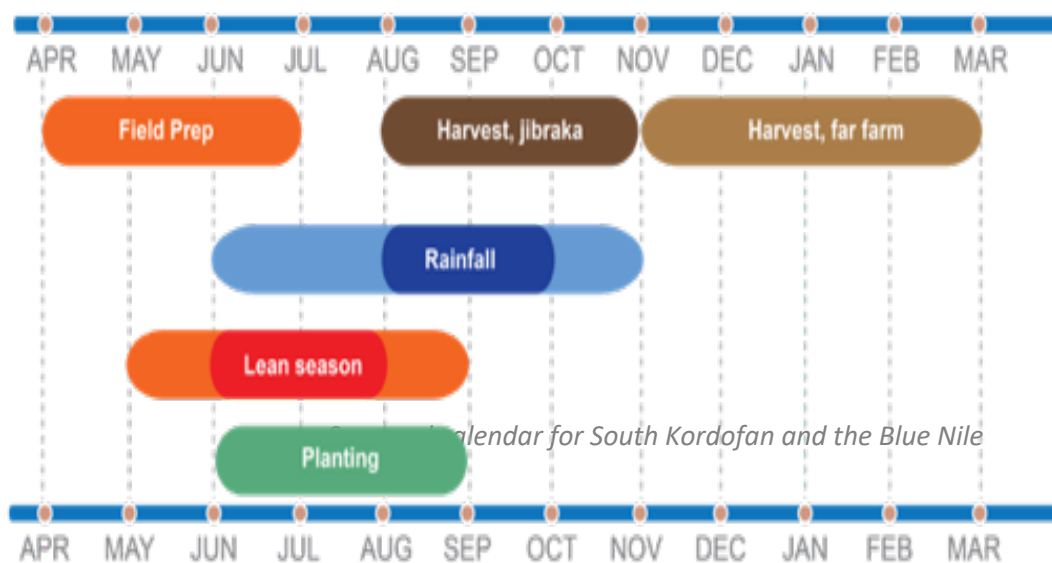
Threshing of cowpeas and sorghum in Thobo A & B Counties on far farms and mechanized schemes continued in March. Meanwhile, farmers in Heiban, Um Durain, and Western Kadguli prepared fields for the planting season.

There was a 15 percent increase in the number of households that depended on markets in Dallami, Heiban and Um Durain Counties, this increased demand causing a rise of food prices (particularly for sorghum, cowpeas, sesame and groundnuts).

Western Jebel

Despite a poor harvest, most households depended on their production. This information was gathered from the monitored markets of Mandarin, Kamari, Wali, and Kule in Dilling, and Friday Market in Lagawa Counties and household interviews.

Price increases of food and non-food items were recorded as a result of the devaluation of the Sudanese Pound and high transportation costs between areas of production and main markets, lifting the purchasing power of households depending on markets. Given meager labor opportunities, food insecurity is likely to increase.



COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Despite the existing challenges, Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA) and Secretariat of Health (SOH) continue to work closely with implementing partners to raise awareness of COVID-19 pandemic in the Two Areas.

NEEDS:

Identified needs and gaps in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Two Areas include:

- Increase soap, hand washing facilities, and water supply in public settings;
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, specimen containers to transport samples to neighbouring countries, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves at facilities as well as stationery;
- Improve communication and timely reporting (e.g., provision of VHF radios and internet support);
- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a broader coverage;
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness in the Two Areas;
- Improve levels of medicines and medical supplies stocks in the SPLM-N controlled areas; and
- More funding in the health and WASH sectors across the region to meet the substantial existing gaps.

EDUCATION

465 Senior Four candidates sat for the South Sudan Secondary School Exams

Schools will resume in April after a break of two weeks. Distribution of food and stationeries to 12 schools (458 bags of sorghum, 84 sack of beans, salt, cooking oil, sleeping mats, and cooking utensils) was distributed by UNICEF and WFP in Chali, Wadaka, and Yabus Payams. Schools in the unreachable areas of Amoro Hills and Zosok were also among schools listed for the WFP feeding program.

South Kordofan

421 S4 candidates sat for the South Sudan Secondary School Exams 2020/2021 (254 males and 167 females).

Western Jebel

44 candidates sat for the S4 South Sudan Secondary School Exams 2020/2021.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Lack of essential drugs in the Two Areas

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Health centers continued to register a lack of essential drugs across the Blue Nile. According to implementing partners, the subsequent drug distribution will only take place in May, which will harm the already overstained sector. On the other hand, the Secretariat of Health confirmed receipt of leprosy drugs from the Federal Ministry of Health in Khartoum.

Southern Kordofan

According to County Health Directors, malaria, acute watery diarrhea, and cough were reported in all counties across South Kordofan in March. In Thobo, for example, acute watery diarrhea claimed 11 lives (6 adults and 5 children).

Western Jebel

The only hospital in the area registered 359 upper and lower respiratory infections, 177 malaria, 98 eye infections, 55 skin diseases, and 56 urinary tract infections in March.

On the other hand, the malnutrition screening of 233 children in the 4 counties (Lagawa, Dilling, Habilla, and Al Sunut), 116, was recorded with Mid-upper arm circumference measurements between 115mm and 124mm and 117 at <115mm. A total of 452 antenatal cases were attended. 366 women received folic acid.

WASH

Unsafe drinking water for thousands in the Two Areas

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

Water remains a challenge in most parts of Blue Nile, particularly in Khormajilla/Ras Khor, Mofu, and Mayak (Wadaka payam). Moreover, there was no distribution of WASH items (chlorine and water filters). On the other hand, most households, schools, and markets lack latrines and practice open defecation. Insufficient water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) continue to contribute to the high prevalence of diarrheal diseases. Intervention in this sector is highly recommended, particularly before the rainy season.

South Kordofan

According to the Secretariat of Water Resources and Engineering, safe drinking water remains a challenge. Most people and animals share a limited number of the available water points, thereby exposing communities to water-borne diseases.

Western Jebel

154 handpumps, as well as 39 water-yards in the area, require maintenance. Clean drinking water remains a challenge, particularly in Sillara, Alfrshaya, and Karko payams in Dilling County. In these locations, people walk for several hours to reach water points.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Huge existing gaps in the veterinary sector

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

A presence of tsetse flies was witnessed in Mayak and Mofu (Wadaka payam). The area has not received vaccinations since 2019. With funding gaps in this sector, livestock health is threatened, particularly for those communities that rely on their livestock to survive. If their animals die, their chances of accessing necessities, like food, decreases.

South Kordofan

According to Animal Health Coordinator, malignant pustule (skin rashes and wounds), anthrax, pulmonary pustule, diarrhea, and respiratory infections still affect cattle, particularly in Dallami County. With no veterinary drugs available, families that could afford resorted to buying drugs from cross-line markets. There is a need for intervention to train animal health workers as well as veterinary campaigns.

Western Jebel

Livestock theft is on the increase in the area, making it difficult for livestock to access water and better pasture. Besides, umzagalla disease was reported across the region.

PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY

Blue Nile (Southern Kurmuk County)

March 21, 2021: Tension on the border area between Yafta (Wadaka Payam) and Maban, South Sudan, left one person dead.

Internal movements and returnees were witnessed in March. The main reason for returnees was the search of land for cultivation. For example, in Chali payam, around 70 households returned in search of land for cultivation at the onset of the planting season. Several returnees from Ethiopia were also witnessed in Hillat Jadidi/ Khor hassan, Moguf, and Yabus Bala in Yabus payam.

South Kordofan

On 26/3/2021, 20 heads of cattle were looted at Umdurdu village, Kumbur payam

On 13/3/2021, 8 goats were reportedly stolen from Kuluruna village, Sabat payam

On 10/3/2021, 20 heads of cattle were looted from Laru village, Kumbur Payam

On 1/3/2021, 25 heads of cattle were taken from Laru village, Kumbur Payam

The SKBN CU reports security incidents according to the information received from a variety of sources. This information does not include a comprehensive verification of perpetrators or damages.

This monthly update on humanitarian issues in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states is compiled by the SKBN Coordination Unit. With three main functions of information, coordination and advocacy, the SKBNCU strives to put out regular and accurate information on the humanitarian situation of people affected by the conflict since 2011.

Please send your comments to advocacy@skbncu.org