



MALAWI
Vulnerability
Assessment Committee

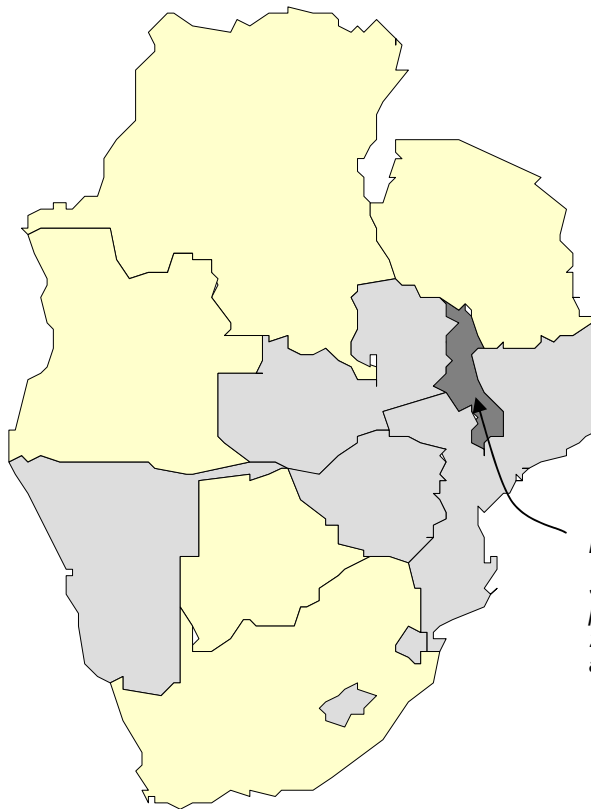
Malawi National Vulnerability Assessment Committee
in collaboration with the ...
SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee



SADC FANR
Vulnerability
Assessment Committee

MALAWI

Emergency Food Security Assessment Report



MALAWI

Some 3,300,000 people (29% of the population) will require an estimated 237,000MT of emergency food assistance through March 2003.

16 September 2002
Lilongwe

Prepared with financial support from DFID, WFP and USAID

PREFACE

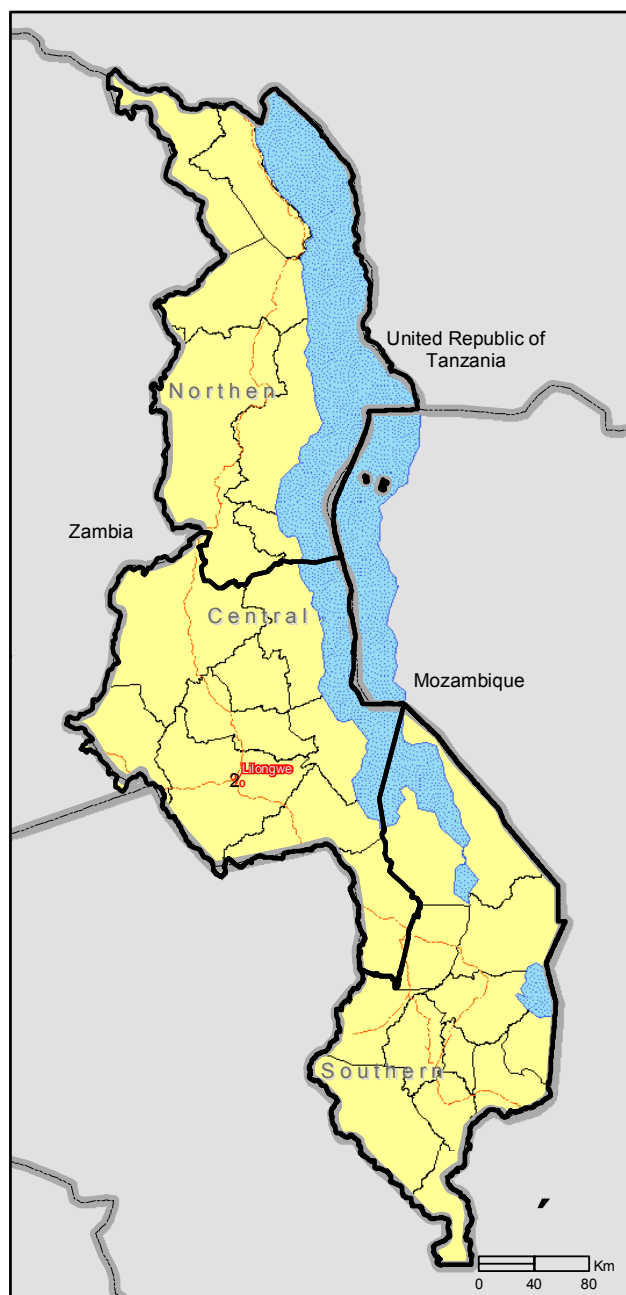
This emergency food security assessment is regionally coordinated by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources (FANR) Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC), in collaboration with international partners (WFP, FEWS NET, SC(UK), CARE, FAO, UNICEF, and IFRC). National VACs in each country—a consortium of government, NGO, and UN agencies—coordinated the assessments locally. This is the first of a series of rolling food security assessments to be conducted in affected countries throughout the region for the duration of the current food crisis.

The VAC assessment strategy has two principal axes. First, it uses a sequential process of ‘best-practices’ in assessment and monitoring, drawn from the extensive and varied experience of the VAC partners, to meet a broad range of critical information needs at both the spatial and socio-economic targeting levels. The sequential nature of the approach not only provides richer details of the “access side” of the food security equation, but it adds the very important temporal dimension as well. From an operational (i.e. response) perspective, the latter is critical. Second, by approaching food security assessment through a coordinated, collaborative process, the strategy integrates the most influential assessment and response players into the ongoing effort, thereby gaining privileged access to national and agency datasets and expert technicians and increases the likelihood of consensus between national governments, implementing partners, and major donors. This ‘partnering’ strategy links the major players and stakeholders including regional institutions, national governments, response agencies, NGOs and donors for on-going, intensive ‘rolling’ assessment coverage of food security conditions on the ground.

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MALAWI EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 2001-2002 maize production (1.6 million MT) was 28% lower than the five-year average and 6% less than the previous year.
- Food balance analysis based on final crop estimates shows that Malawi faces a deficit of 572,000 MT maize equivalent. The government is planning to import 250,000 MT of maize to be sold at a general subsidized price of MK17/kg.
- From June 2001 local maize prices rose dramatically. In the last two months, prices have dropped and begun to stabilize between MK10-MK15/kg, which is 50% higher than last year at this time. Prices are highest in the Central Region and lowest in the Northern Region.



- Twenty-one percent of the population, or 2,200,000 people, are in need of food assistance between September and November. This is expected to rise to twenty-nine percent, or 3,250,000 people, between December 2002 and March 2003.
- According to information gathered at the household level, the most seriously affected areas in terms of the largest number of people in need are found in the Central Region (50%), followed closely by the Southern Region (41%), while the Northern Region is least affected (10%).
- Key factors affecting household food security in the coming months include winter crop production, availability of casual labour (*ganyu*) for cash or food, and availability and price of food in local markets.
- Many households overstretched their coping mechanisms last year, reducing their resilience and increasing their vulnerability in the face of the continued food shortages.

UPDATE ON THE MALAWI FOOD SECURITY CRISIS

I. OVERVIEW

A. MALAWI COUNTRY CONTEXT

Malawi is a predominantly rural (85%) land-locked country in southern Africa with a population of approximately 11.4 million. The majority of rural households are small-holder farmers who are mostly reliant on a single harvest of maize for consumption but with chronic lack of access to seed and fertilizer. Other cereals being produced in much smaller quantities are rice, sorghum and millet.

Cassava is grown more widely in the less-populated Northern region while sweet potato production is increasing in Central and Southern regions but still on a very small scale. Most small-holder farmers also produce groundnuts and other legumes during the year. Major cash crops include: tobacco and groundnuts in the North and Central regions, pulses and cotton in the South and vegetables in all regions of the country.

Over the past 10-15 years Malawi has shifted from being a nationally self-sufficient producer of maize in non-drought years to being dependent on commercial food imports and foreign assistance to achieve a national food balance. The Malawi Government has attempted to alleviate poverty through market liberalization and targeted rural development programmes. However, agriculture still remains the predominant production sector at the macro-level. Increasing inflation has affected the value of the kwacha.

At the household level, with decreased production and higher maize costs, smallholder farmers have become more vulnerable to food insecurity due to decreased purchasing power and increased reliance on purchase of maize from the markets. Smallholder farmers have become more dependent on off-farm earning opportunities for cash or food, most often in the form of agricultural labour or *ganyu*.

Current situation

After a bumper harvest in most of the country in the 1999-2000 agricultural season, smallholder farmers experienced significant production shortfalls in the 2000-01 season. The situation was exacerbated by low availability of maize and rapidly rising prices as well as late planting and erratic rains for the 2001-02 agricultural season.

In **October 2001**, while updating their Household Economy Assessments (HEA) in three livelihood zones in Southern and Central Malawi, SC-UK realized that significant populations in rural Malawi were facing significant deficits in their annual food requirements. With prompting from SC-UK and after experiencing a dry spell in **early 2002** during a critical stage of maize development, the Government of Malawi declared a food crisis.

A meeting on the emerging Southern Africa food crisis was held in Rome in **March 2002** where SC-UK presented their findings, which helped to prompt an inter-agency assessment response to conduct an FAO/WFP CFSAM that was supported with qualitative vulnerability assessment activities.

Immediate targeted food assistance was provided through a bridging EMOP (April-July) and the results from the FAO/WFP mission and SC-UK assessments (**April-May 2002**) helped to determine that 3.2 million Malawians would be in need of food assistance between August 2002 and March 2003.

According to the **July 2002** FEWSNet Malawi Food Security Report, the final smallholder summer crop production figure (1.32 million tonnes) was 13% lower than last year. The final winter maize

production estimates for 2001-02 are projected to be more than 70% the average winter maize production from the past three years (about 83,000 MT). The FEWS Net report, however, states that these higher winter production figures are likely to be over optimistic. In addition it is estimated that a large portion of the maize will be consumed or sold green.

The **July-August 2002** Vulnerability Assessment Committee survey also found that approximately 3.2 million Malawians will need food assistance before the next harvest. In addition, the results provided more detailed information on District level needs and characteristics and descriptions of vulnerable populations at the community level.

B. PURPOSE OF VAC ASSESSMENT

The objective of the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment working group is to employ a series of rolling assessments to:

Determine percentage of populations in need of food assistance at the district level.

Provide input to assist geographic targeting of food resources from September through November 2002.

Provide descriptions of most vulnerable populations at both the regional and community levels.

Update the findings and assumptions from the April-May CFSAM and SC-UK HEA Vulnerability Assessments.

Monitor changes in the food security situation from August 2002 through March 2003.

C. OVERVIEW OF METHODS USED FOR MALAWI VAC ASSESSMENT

Sampling - Purposive Sampling methods were used in order to obtain coverage from all 27 Districts and the majority of Livelihood zones with additional EPAs sampled from districts described as most vulnerable by FAO/WFP CFSAM and SC-UK HEA Vulnerability Assessment. For districts that contain several different livelihood zones, the sample included EPAs from each of the main zones represented, according to population.

Questionnaires - Three separate questionnaires were used to obtain district, community and household level information.

- **District** – Interviews with district level agriculture officials to determine food security status by EPA and ranking in order of vulnerability.
- **Community** – Key informants/leaders to determine wealth groups, main sources of food and income, market access and prices, winter crop production, and access to inputs and water.
- **Household** – 12 to 15 households per village from different wealth groups to collect information on past and present access to food and income - production, access to inputs, current asset holdings, livestock ownership, meals consumed and dietary diversity.

Data collection - The Malawi National VAC Survey was conducted over a 3-week period and the sample covered 1128 households in 81 villages, 65 EPAs, 19 Livelihood zones (of 21) and all 27 Districts. Six teams of 4 persons each were represented by NEC, Ministry of Agriculture, Local Government, National Statistics Office, AFRICARE, AAH, Concern Universal, CADECOM, SC-UK, WVI, FEWS Net and WFP.

Analysis - Data from the household surveys was used to calculate the percentage of households requiring food assistance from September through November. Then linear regression analysis was used to construct a model to predict the national food gap. A weighted index was constructed for each household using 11 predictor variables weighted by their relative contribution to the food gap and controlling for interactions between predictors.

Results - From there, the percentage of households requiring food assistance was calculated for each district. The overall population in need of assistance from September through November was 19.5%, which is slightly higher than the 19% from the CFSAM in April-May. It was estimated that 28.5% of the population would require assistance from December through March 2003. Although

the percentages are essentially the same as the CFSAM and SC-UK HEA but the allocations between districts has changed.

D. KEY FINDINGS

The survey results showed that poverty is a significant contributor to overall household food insecurity. Low cereal production for poor households as a result of unfavourable weather conditions and lack of agricultural inputs has exacerbated the situation for many. From the data, it appears that most middle and all wealthy households will be able to provide for themselves from now until the next harvest.

Key factors affecting household food security in the coming months include winter crop production, availability of casual labour (*ganyu*) for cash or in-kind, and availability and prices of cereals in local markets. From the data, only 19% of all households reported having a winter cereal crop harvest. Many households that received inputs from TIPS or FAO did not plant due to lack of moisture in the soil for crop development and are keeping the inputs for next season. Approximately 65% of the households reported not having seed for their main cereal crops for the upcoming planting season.

For the poorest households, there is a heavy reliance on labour for food and income. It was difficult for them to predict the amount of food or income they could receive from January to March 2003 but overall estimates show heavy dependence on *ganyu* for household food security. The VAC team reported that many people are refusing to work for money but only for maize grain as there is lack of trust in the market and maize prices.

Table 1.1 – Provisional VAC Estimates

	# PEOPLE IN NEED	% TOTAL POPULATION IN NEED	MT CEREAL FOOD AID
SEPT 1-NOV 30	2,200,000	19.4%	80,000
DEC 1-MAR 31	3,250,000	28.5%	156,500
Total: Sept-Mar	3,250,000	28.5%	236,500

Table 1.1 provides the VAC Provisional estimates of population in need of food assistance and the approximate food needs for the two different time periods. Food aid tonnage was calculated using 12 kgs/person/month.

The VAC assessment predicts that approximately 50% of the population in need live in the Central region, 40% in the Southern region and 10% in the Northern region. Central region has historically been more vulnerable, having the highest prevalence of malnutrition, poor health indicators and high dependency on maize production. Those areas bordering Zambia are especially vulnerable due to similar problems in Chipata district in Zambia.

Analysis of the VAC survey data showed that approximately 19% of the population in the country would require food assistance from September through November. This level of need would increase to around 28% of the population from December through March 2003. The rationale is to scale up operations before the 'lean season' begins in a safety net approach to sustaining lives and livelihoods.

Figure 1 show that the districts with the highest percentage of population in need are clustered in the Central region with the exception of Thyolo District in the South. The actual numbers of people requiring assistance from September through November are also clustered in the Central and Southern regions as illustrated in map 2.

As expected the poorest in a population are most vulnerable. Household with no more than just a hoe or axe are very vulnerable. Households owning assets such as bed, chair, table, bicycle, radio are likely not to need assistance, except when there has been illness or death of a productive member. Every community that was assessed by the VAC teams named the elderly, sick and disabled as the most vulnerable in the community. Other socio-economic targeting indicators are

female headship, heavy reliance on labour for food or income, large number of dependents, low dietary diversity and meal consumption reduced to only one time a day.

Figure 1

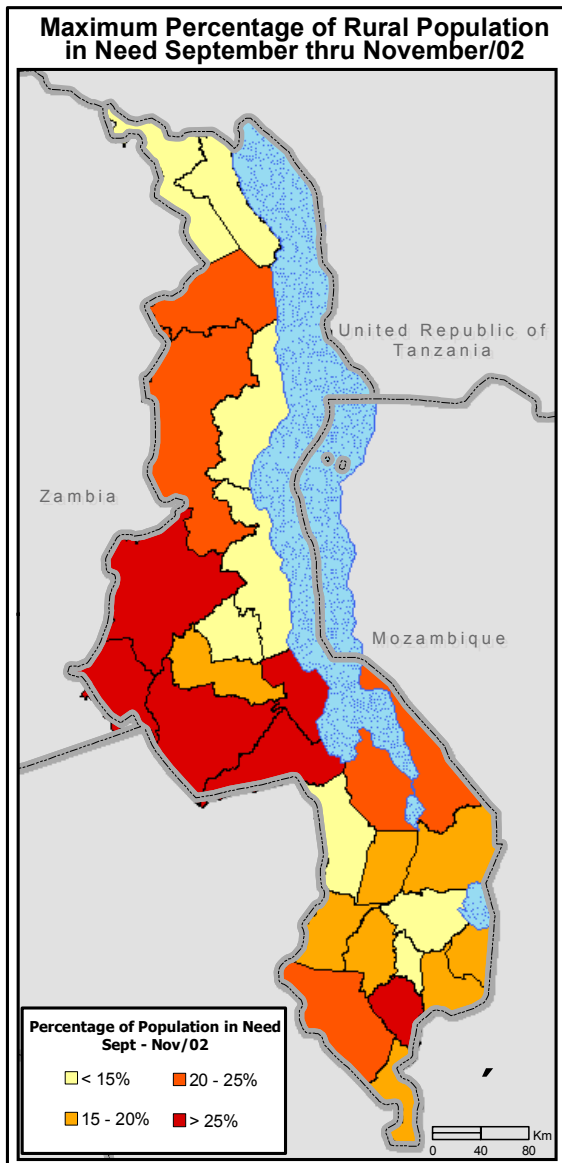
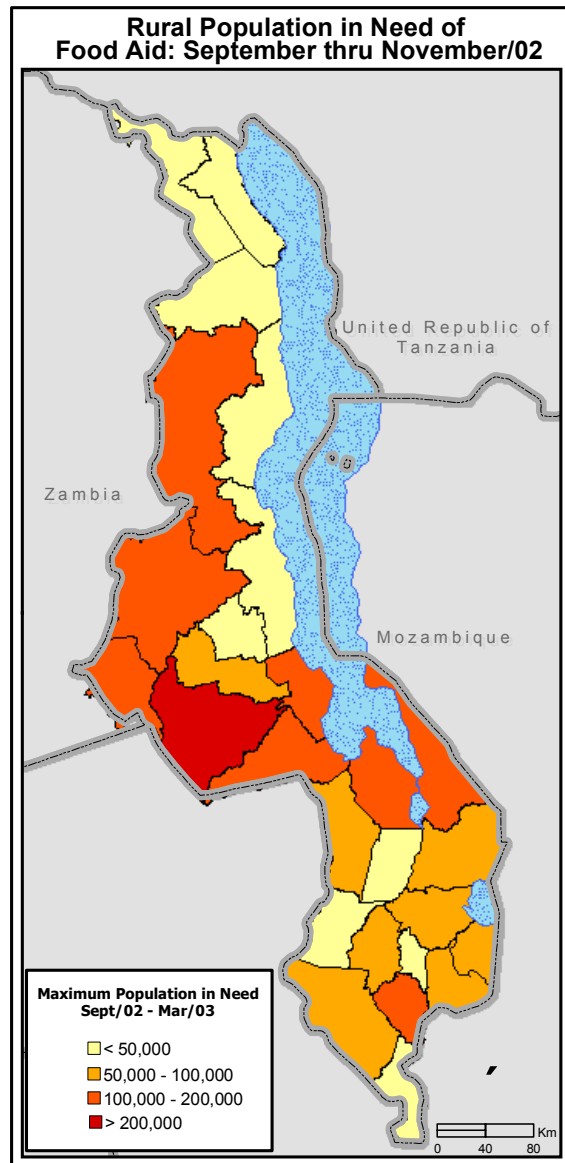


Figure 2



II. MACRO PROCESSES AND TRENDS

A. UPDATE ON FINAL ROUND GOVERNMENT CROP ASSESSMENTS

The final round of 2001-02 crop production estimates were released on June 20th by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. These figures are presented in Table 2.1 and compared to the April-May 2002 CFSAM projections. The final smallholder maize production figure of 1.48 million tonnes is about 3.5% lower than the CFSAM projection of 1.54 million tonnes. The final smallholder cereal production of 1.64 million tonnes was 3.1% lower than 1.69 million tonnes from the CFSAM estimates.

With estate maize included, the final maize and cereal production figures were 4.2% and 3.9% higher than the mission estimates. The 2001-02 final maize production figure of 1.60 million

tonnes was 6% less than the final figure of 1.71 million tonnes from 2000-01 and 28% less than the 5-year average (1996-97 to 2000-01). According to the latest FEWSNet Malawi Food Security Report, the final smallholder summer crop production figure (1.32 million tonnes) was 13% lower than last year. This year, estate maize production is estimated to be 5% lower than the 2000-01 production year.

Table 2.1 – Comparison of CFSAM estimates and MoAI final estimates

2001-02 production	Final maize	CFSAM maize	Final cereal	CFSAM cereal
Smallholder summer	1,319,044 MT		1,468,070 MT	
Smallholder winter	166,288 MT		172,963 MT	
Total smallholder	1,485,272 MT	1,538,700 MT	1,641,033 MT	1,693,800 MT
% Difference	3.5% lower		3.1% lower	
Estate maize	117,999 MT	-	117,999 MT	-
Total	1,603,271 MT	1,538,700 MT	1,759,032 MT	1,693,800 MT
% Difference	4.2% higher		3.9% higher	

(Source: FAOWFP CFSAM Special Report & FEWSNet Malawi)

In order to have a more accurate assessment of cassava and sweet potato production, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation created a multi-sectoral team this year, which estimated a final cassava production of 1.5 million tonnes as compared to the initial estimate of 3.1 million. Sweet potato production estimates were also significantly lower with the new methodology down from 2.8 million tonnes to 1.1 million tonnes.

The food balance analyses based on the final crop estimates suggest that the country faces a deficit of 337,000 MT (maize equivalents) for the 2002-03 consumption year. The analysis included maize, rice, sorghum, millet and cassava. In terms of maize only, the deficit is 633,000 MT.

Table 2.2 – Comparative national cereal balance

	May 2002 ¹	August 2002 ²	5-Year Average ³
Opening Stocks	27,000	20,000	143,000
Domestic Production	1,694,000	1,827,000 ⁴	2,081,000
TOTAL AVAILABILITY	1,721,000	1,847,000	2,224,000
Domestic Requirements	2,199,000	2,124,000	2,062,000
Planned Exports	0	0	24,000
Desired Closing Stocks	7,000	60,000	88,000
TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	2,206,000	2,184,000	2,174,000
DOMESTIC CEREAL GAP	-626,000	-337,000	50,000
Commercial Imports Received	0	42,000 ⁵	62,000
Food Aid Received	0	24,000	1,000
TOTAL IMPORTS RECEIVED	0	66,000	63,000
Commercial Imports Expected	277,000	208,000	0
Food Aid Expected	208,000	184,000	0
TOTAL IMPORTS EXPECTED	485,000	392,000	0
TOTAL IMPORTS	485,000	458,000	63,000
UNFILLED CEREAL GAP/SURPLUS	-141,000	121,000	113,000

1. FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission estimate.
2. SADC Regional Early Warning Unit and Malawi Government figures.
3. SADC Regional Early Warning Unit, based on government figures, 1997/98 to 2001/02.
4. All cereals, plus cassava converted to maize equivalent.
5. Government imports only, excludes private trade.

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR WINTER CROPPING SEASON

Climatic conditions - According to the FEWS Net Malawi Food Security Report, most areas of the country have continued to experience dry conditions and cool weather. However, there has been some rain in parts of the southern highlands and along the lakeshore.

Availability of inputs - The Government predicts a significant increase in winter maize production over past years – almost twice as much as in the previous three years. Much of this estimated increase is due to the Government’s Targeted Input Programme, which has been distributing maize and legume seed and fertilizer for winter cultivation to more than 300,000 households. In addition, the FAO office has targeted 50,000 farming households in Salima district (one of the most affected areas) for assistance and has already distributed hand hoes and seeds for winter cultivation and are also planning to distribute fertilizer as soon as it’s made available.

Harvest outlook - The final winter maize production estimates for 2001-02 are projected at 166,228 MT (FEWSNet Malawi) which is 17% higher than the second round estimate and more than 70% the average winter maize production from the past three years (about 83,000 MT). Since the crop is just now being planted, these figures are simply estimates. Normally, the Southern region is the highest producer of winter maize but this year, the Central region is predicted to produce the most. Since the April-May CFSAM team found that the districts most affected by the food security crisis were in the Central region, some of the winter inputs programmes have targeted families in this region and hence, the higher production figures. *The FEWS Net report, however, states that these higher winter production figures are likely to be over optimistic, especially in the Central region which is expected to have a 195% increase over previous years.* It is estimated that a large portion of the maize will be consumed or sold green due to the already desperate household food security situation for most smallholder farming families. In addition, many farmers who received inputs did not plant due to extreme dry conditions of soils.

C. MARKET PRICES OF MAIZE AND LIVESTOCK

Local market maize prices continue to drop in most areas after reaching unprecedented during the pre-harvest period in February-March 2002 when they were 5 to 6 times higher than the previous year.

Chart 2.1 – Trends in maize prices from selected markets (Source: FEWSNet Malawi)

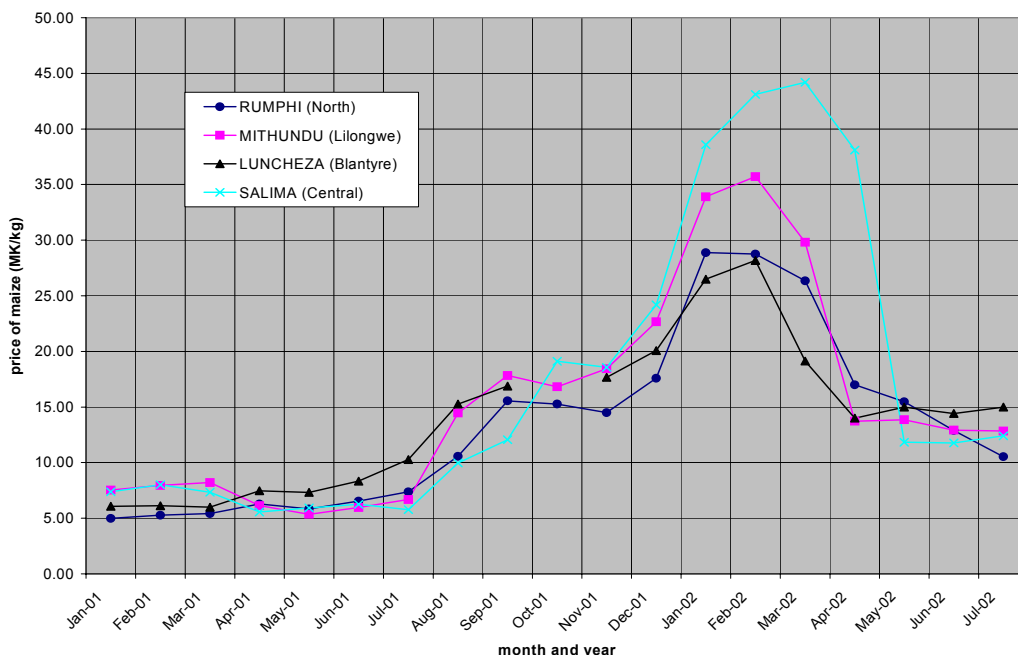


Chart 2.1 highlights the trend in market prices of maize (per kg) since January 2001. In almost all areas, the increases started in July 2001 and first peaked in September before embarking on a continuous increase that peaked in February 2002 for Blantyre (28 MK), Rumphu (29 MK) and Lilongwe (36 MK) and March for Salima (43 MK) in the Central region. By May 2002, all regions had seen rapid decreases in maize prices, which appear to have stabilized between MK 10 and MK 15 per kilogram.

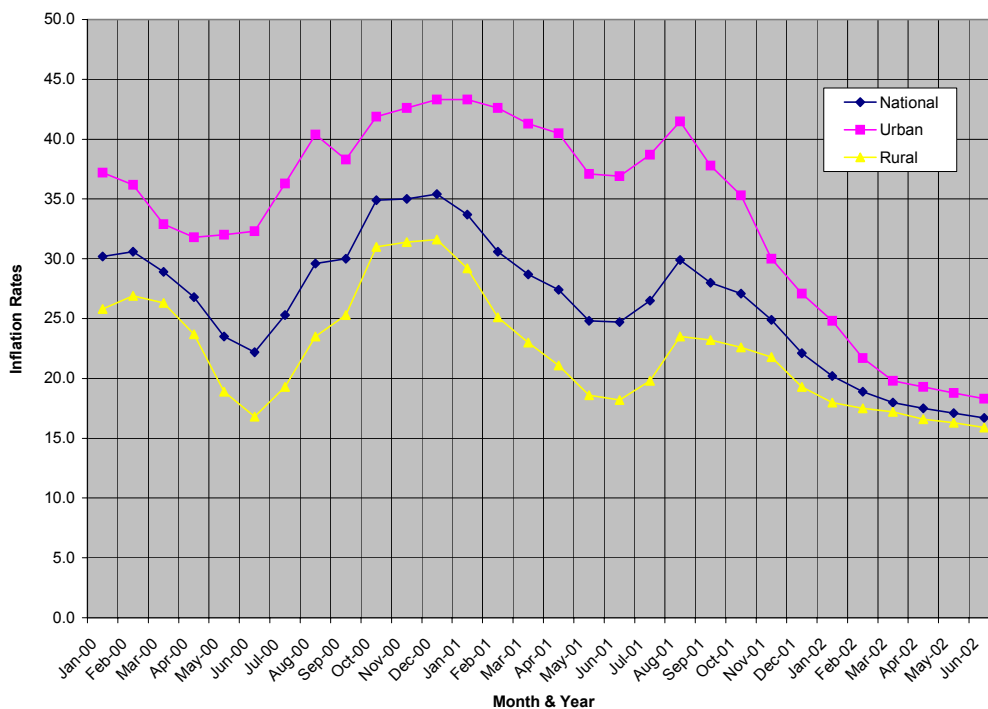
The highest market price by July 2002 was MK 22/kg in Mchinji (Central region) while the lowest (MK 8/kg) is found in Chitipa (Northern). In fact, many market prices are below the ADMARC fixed prices of MK 17/kg of maize.

When the hunger period started in January 2002, people started selling livestock at very low prices. Normally cattle sell for MK 10,000 but sold as low as MK 2,000 during that period. For goats, the normal price is MK 1,200 but were sold at MK 200-400 during the crisis while chickens went for as little as MK 15-20 from a normal price of MK 150-200 (Department of Animal Health and Industry).

The Department of Animal Health and Industry predicts that prices of livestock will drop earlier (around late November) this year as a result of the food security crisis. There is really no opportunity for government intervention in price controls. However, it's difficult to predict the price drops this year as fewer smallholder farmers have few numbers of livestock to sell.

The value of the Malawi Kwacha has remained stable at around 76 to USD \$1 since mid-May. The stability of the local currency and the stability of the local food prices have resulted in a continued drop in the inflation rate as indicated in Chart 2.2 below. Overall, inflation in both rural and urban areas has been dropping consistently since August 2001 with a greater decrease found in urban areas.

Chart 2.2 – Trends in inflation rates (Source: National Statistics Office Malawi)



D. LEVEL OF COMMERCIAL IMPORTS REALIZED AND COMMITTED

The National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) has received its final shipment of maize from South Africa, bringing the total to 136,000 MT which is 14,000 MT less than the original contract of

150,000 MT. The shortfall was due to an increase in maize price, which reduced the purchasing power of the government funds.

There are plans by the Government to purchase an additional 250,000 MT of commercial maize through the NFRA, which will be sold at a general subsidized price of MK 17 per kilogram through ADMARC, and NFRA. There will be no targeted sales (ie. coupons) but will be targeted towards the 2nd tier of purchasing population – ADMARC warehouses will be monitored to detect illegal truckload sales. (Personal communication, WFP Country Director)

At the time of the CFSAM report, commercial imports were forecast at 225,000 MT so perhaps the additional imports (11% higher) will offset the decreases in final smallholder production (3.5% lower).

In addition, the NFRA has received funds from the European Union for the purchase of 38,000 MT of maize to replenish the Strategic Grain Reserve. Tenders have already been awarded for the local purchase of 15,200 MT and for the final amount of 22,000 MT of imported maize.

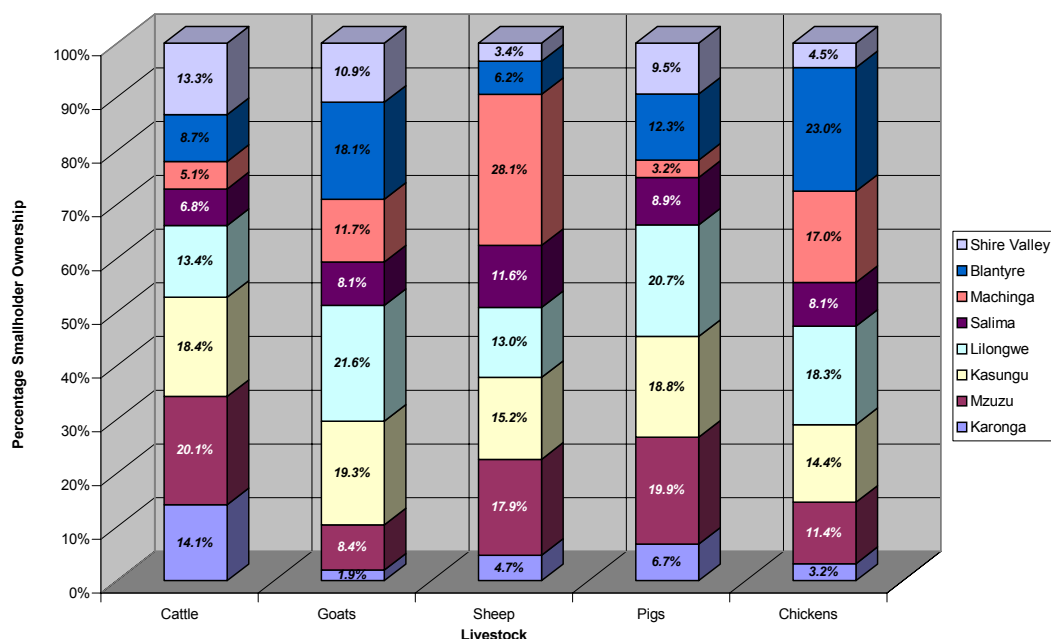
According to the most recent figures from the World Food Programme office in Malawi, 85,967 MT of maize (50% EMOP requirement) has been confirmed along with 17,371 MT CSB (33.6% requirement) and 12,851 pulses (34.4% requirement). Yet to be confirmed are another 52,000 MT maize and 3,633 MT CSB. Total amounts dispatched from June 1st to August 23, 2002 are 9,738 MT under the bridging EMOP.

E. GENERAL LIVESTOCK CONDITIONS

In June, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation released livestock figures from the Annual Livestock Census was last conducted in December 2001, before the onset of the food security crisis. The estimates show that there were nearly 750,000 cattle, 1.67 million goats, 115,000 sheep, 456,000 pigs, and 7.3 million chickens when the census was conducted.

There is a general consensus that the current figures are substantially lower due to high livestock sales during the Feb-March peak of the hunger season. The Agricultural Estimates Committee has agreed to conduct future annual censuses in April-May at the same time as the final crop estimates.

Chart 2.3 – Results of December 2001 Annual Livestock Census (Source: MoAI, 2002)



The percentage contributions from each ADD are presented in Chart 2.3 where it is shown that the most cattle are found in the Northern region while the most goats can be found in Central and North. More than 28% of sheep are raised in Machinga ADD and pigs are more commonly found

in Central and Northern areas. The most poultry are found in Blantyre ADD. Shire Valley (South), Salima (Central), and Karonga (North) ADDs are the lowest producers of smallholder livestock.

There are more busy cattle markets in the Southern Regions (5) than in the North (3) and Central (2). During this food crisis, the people in the South were probably most affected in terms of emergency livestock sales, followed by Central, with those in the North least affected.

As for effects on commercial production, there have been substantial increases in imports of dressed chickens and table eggs (for consumption) this year, primarily in the past 2-3 months due to lack of feed for Malawian commercial producers - most coming from Zimbabwe.

Grazing situations appear to be adequate for now in most areas with no problems reported. The only major disease to regularly affect Malawi is Newcastle Disease in chickens. Usually in drought situations, the incidence of livestock disease is not increased but mostly during floods. Government no longer sponsors dipping tanks. There appears to be no shortage of draft power in Malawi for most smallholder farmers.

F. GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS

As already mentioned, the Government is actively involved in facilitating the commercial importation of maize for the markets. In addition, through funding from the EU, they have been able to purchase about 40,000 MT of maize locally to replenish some of the stores in the Strategic Grain Reserve in preparation for worsening food security conditions early in 2003. The Government also actively supported the distribution of inputs through the Targeted Inputs Programme (TIP), funded by DFID.

In response to the current crisis, the Government, along with cooperating partners, is implementing a Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme (JEFAP) to provide assistance to affected people. Between June and August 2002 the programme has been targeting half million beneficiaries. The JEFAP plan to increase the number of beneficiaries to 2.1 million in September and finally up to 3.2 million during the hunger season between December and March 2003.

G. FOOD AID RESPONSE TO DATE

The World Food Programme office has developed a four-month bridging EMOP from June through September that aims to distribute 56,500 MT of food aid. The Southern Africa Regional EMOP (July 2002 to March 2003) plans to provide about 143,500 MT of cereals and fortified foods.

To date, the European Union is providing 55,000 MT of food aid to Malawi with 15,000 MT targeted for vulnerable groups (children under five years, expectant and nursing mothers, and the elderly). About 30,000 MT will be used for emergency food aid and the remaining 10,000 MT will be kept as a reserve for the future.

In May 2002, the US Government arranged their first donation of 15,040 MT of food assistance that was received at the end of the month. In addition, 3,000 MT was redirected from Food for Peace in Tanzania to support the emergency operation in Malawi. In June 2002, USAID provided a grant for \$90,000 to support the EU Supplemental Feeding Programme.

In June, USAID/Malawi and the Government of Malawi agreed to re-program funds for balance of payments support to provide US\$10 million to import 35-40,000 MT of maize. In late July 2002, USAID arranged a second shipment of 8,440 MT of food assistance, which should arrive in Malawi in early August. In September 2002, a third shipment of 20,000 MT maize and 2,000 MT beans will be delivered.

According to the most recent figures from the World Food Programme office in Malawi, 85,967 MT of maize (50% EMOP requirement) has been confirmed along with 17,371 MT CSB (33.6% requirement) and 12,851 pulses (34.4% requirement). Yet to be confirmed are another 52,000 MT maize and 3,633 MT CSB. Total amounts dispatched from June 1st to August 23, 2002 are 9,738

MT under the bridging EMOP. Donors include ADB, Canada, ECHO, EU, the Iceland and Luxembourg governments, IE, UK and USA as well as private donations.

H. AREAS PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY THE CRISIS

Many of those districts that were determined to be most vulnerable from the CFSAM in April-May have received some assistance through the Targeted Inputs Programme (TIP) and FAO's emergency inputs programme. This assistance is expected to increase winter crop production - primarily in the Central region with less in the South.

Maize prices in the markets have dropped dramatically as of July 2002, but there is no guarantee they will remain low. The relative purchasing power of rural Malawians is unknown at this point, but is assumed to be lower than normal because of asset depletion during the hunger period in February-March 2002.

In some districts there is great variation in levels of vulnerability of the population. In short, there are many 'pockets' of vulnerable people and the second round assessment is attempting to identify these 'pockets' through consultation with district level authorities.

The July-August VAC survey found that the Central region is the most vulnerable in the country, followed by the South. These findings are consistent with other studies in that the highest prevalence of stunting, some of the lowest provision of health services and relative rates of poverty are in the Central region.

The situation remains precarious and should be monitored closely over the next several months, especially when assessing the impact of an improved winter harvest on overall food security in the country.

III. COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND EMERGENCY FOOD AID NEEDS

A. NUTRITIONAL INDICATORS

Note: Results from recent nutritional surveys will be submitted later in September 2002.

a. Nutrition Trends and comparisons (MDHS)

- *Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2000* covered 15,421 households and 10,560 children 0-59 months of age. Comparisons between the 1992 and 2000 MDHS are found in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 - Malnutrition in children 0-59 months

	1992 DHS	2000 DHS	North	South	Central
Stunting	49%	49%	39%	45%	56%
Wasting	5%	6%	5%	6%	5%
Underweight	27%	25%	17%	25%	28%

- *Stunting* (chronic malnutrition) has not changed between 1992 and 2000. Much variation across regions with the highest in Central, middle in South and lowest in North. Stunting is significantly higher in boys than in girls. Stunting in children < 3 years in Malawi (44% - DHS 2000) is 3rd highest in Sub-Saharan Africa – higher than Zimbabwe (27% - DHS 1999), Mozambique (36% - DHS 1997) and Zambia (42% - DHS 1996).
- *Wasting* (acute malnutrition) is slightly higher in 2000 – appears to be an equilibrium over time and across regions. Wasting is slightly higher in girls than in boys.
- *Underweight* (global malnutrition) has decreased slightly over time. Quite low in the North and much higher in Southern and Central regions. Underweight in children < 3 years is 28% which is in the mid-range for SSA – higher than Zimbabwe (14%), Mozambique (26%), and Zambia (26%).
- The vulnerable period for young children is 2-21 months – stunting is highest (69%) at 21 months, wasting is highest (12%) at 11 months, and underweight (40%) is highest at 17 months.

- *Maternal malnutrition* (low body-mass index) is 7% overall for mothers of children < 5 years of age – 5% in the North, 6% in Central and 8% in the Southern region. This compares to 4.9% in Zimbabwe, 10.9% in Mozambique, and 9.2% in Zambia.
- *Summary* – Central region has the worst nutritional outcomes for children < 5 years in the country, according to the MDHS 2000.

b. Micronutrient overview (Vitamin A, iodine, iron deficiency)

- *Vitamin A supplementation* in women (2 months post-partum) is 42% overall – 50% in the North, 42% in the South, and 39% in the Central region. Vitamin A supplementation in children under five is 71% with little variation between the regions.
- *Night-blindness* (sub-clinical vitamin A deficiency) during the most recent pregnancy was reported in 4% of Malawian women.
- *Measles vaccination* for children 12-23 months (standard age range for representative coverage) is 84% which is the second highest in SSA. Low measles immunization rates are associated with vitamin A deficiency, especially during food crises.
- In 2000, adequately *iodized salt* was found in 54% of households with children < 5 years of age. Use of iodized salt was higher in the Northern region (60%) than Central (53%) and Southern regions (55%).
- It is not known what the prevalence of *iron-deficiency anaemia* is in Malawi, as national micronutrient surveys have not been conducted in the country. From the MDHS, 67% of women surveyed received *iron supplements* in their last pregnancy. However, only 17% of those took the recommended dosages.

c. Child feeding practices

- In Malawi, 45% of mothers exclusively breastfeed infants during the first six months, while 93% of mothers introduce complementary foods from six to nine months.
- The current food insecurity will affect care practices, due to the increased workloads of women as they search for food. The lack of adequate food also means that children are not getting the quality and quantity of food required for healthy growth.

d. Current nutrition situation

- Reports from the total of 26 surveys in 24 districts will be presented as an addendum to the National Food Security report with results from six surveys being presented the first week of September, while another six in mid-September with all 26 surveys from 24 districts completed and analyzed by the end of September.
- The NGOs conducting the surveys are to use 30 by 30 cluster sampling methodologies in order to obtain District level findings. However, it is not clear whether they will draw the sample from all eligible communities in a district or only those where the NGOs are working.
- The District overview will be presented in the context of the food security assessment findings presenting sub-national trends in malnutrition from the last quarter of 2001 and first half of 2002.
- Oxfam GB conducted a nutrition survey in Thyolo and Mulanje districts in March 2002, and the prevalence of malnutrition in the two districts was 7.2% and 6.2% respectively.
- Save the Children Fund UK conducted surveys in Salima and Mchinji in December 2001 (6.6% and 10.2%), in late March (19% and 12.5%) and in June (9.7% and 7%). The significant increases between rounds 1 and 2 were primarily due to the pre-harvest hunger gap and skyrocketing prices of maize on the market – *there are questions regarding the sampling methodology as well as the representativeness of the data for the Districts.*
- World Vision International conducted surveys in Nayuchi and Kiyunga agricultural development projects (ADP) in Machinga district. The first survey in Nayuchi only was in October 2001 and found a wasting prevalence of 6.8% while the second survey was conducted in January-February 2002, during the peak of the hunger gap where the wasting prevalence was 4.1% and 4.2% in Nayuchi and Kuniyinda respectively.

- A review of the surveys completed thus far indicates that the situation seems to be worst in the Central region, followed by the Southern region.
- It is desirable that in the November-December round of Vulnerability Assessments, anthropometric data will be collected for children under 5 years of age and their mothers at the community level in order to make linkages between malnutrition and household food security.
- There are no reports of *pellagra*, *scurvy* or other rare micronutrient deficiencies in the country at this point. It is highly unlikely that outbreaks will occur due to the fact that this is a slow-onset emergency and people do have access to a variety of wild foods, which, although not high in macronutrients, often provide adequate micronutrients to the diet.
- A WHO Health Assessment Mission to Malawi in April-May 2002 found no *measles outbreak* during the food crisis and a routine EPI campaign was conducted in August 2002.
- *Cholera outbreaks* were reported during the lean season in February-April 2002 with a case-fatality rate of 2.8% which was of endemic proportions. The WHO team learned that there are seasonal cholera epidemics every year but in times of hunger crisis, they are more severe and thus the health community should be poised to prevent more severe outbreaks before the 2003 harvest.

e. Admissions at the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers

- There are over 90 Nutrition Rehabilitation Units (NRUs) around the country that treat severely malnourished children. The Government of Malawi, UNICEF and NGO partners plan to upgrade these existing structures in order to provide appropriate food and systematic treatments that will promote quick recovery for children during the current food crisis, especially during the upcoming lean period.
- An assessment of 63 NRUs has been completed and shows that an NRU can admit an average of 19 patients during a normal year. However, in January 2002 average NRU admissions peaked at 50 children. Nationally, NRUs have the capacity for about 4,500 to 6000 malnourished children per month.
- As these NRUs cannot handle all the cases of severely malnourished children, it is necessary to have effective supplementary feeding programmes at community levels. NRUs and supplementary feeding programmes must also be complemented by a general ration distribution to ensure an adequate food supply at the household level.

B. HIV/AIDS PREVALENCE AND LINKAGES TO FOOD SECURITY

The impact of HIV/AIDS on household food security is substantial, especially in countries like Malawi that have a high prevalence rate – 15% (UNAIDS, 2002). The National AIDS Control Commission in Malawi conducted a sentinel surveillance study in 2001 where women attending antenatal clinics in selected sites were tested for HIV.

Approximately 20% of the women tested positive with 24.1% in the Southern region, which was statistically significantly higher than 17.5% in Central and 15.9% in the Northern region. Only 10.7% of women from rural areas were positive while 21.1% from semi-urban and 22.5% from urban areas were positive. When related to education level, an alarming 25.9% of women with post-secondary education were infected (Sentinel Surveillance Report, 2001).

The impact of HIV/AIDS at the household level results in increased household size as a result of families caring for orphans, loss of productive members of household due to illness or death, increased costs for care and funeral expenses, and loss of additional productive activity by household members caring for the ill person.

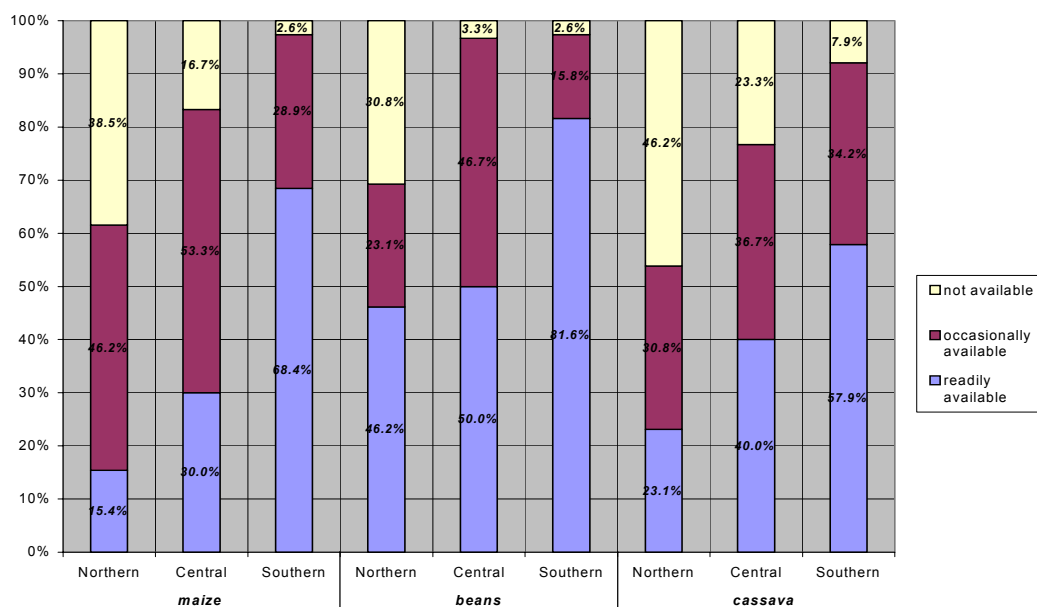
C. ISSUES OF AVAILABILITY

The VAC community interview collected information on availability of certain commodities at the local markets as well as prices of maize in the local markets. The average price of 50 kgs maize was MK 800 in the North, MK 860 in Central and MK 910 in the Southern region. Chart 3.2 shows

the current availability of maize, beans and cassava on local markets as reported by key informants showing that food is more readily available in the Southern Region (n = 38).

Communities in the North rely more on own production with the exception of those in Chitipa who rely heavily on cross-border trading with Tanzania. Only 6% of households in the North reported having winter cereal production while 18% in the South and 24% in the Central reported having winter cereals in production. However, 45% of Northern households, 38% of Central and 31% of Southern households reported cassava or sweet potato harvests between August 2002 and March 2003.

Chart 3.2 – Availability of food in local markets by region (Malawi VAC, Aug. 2002)



D. ISSUES OF ACCESS

In July 2002, the highest market price of maize was in Mchinji, which was identified as one of the most vulnerable Districts from the July-August VAC survey. Poverty and purchasing power are access issues that were measured in the VAC survey.

Measures of poverty in the VAC survey included ownership of household assets – most households owned at least an axe, hoe, sickle or some other farming implement. However, 34% of all households owned 3 or fewer assets – 44% of all households Central, 31% in Southern and only 11% in Northern regions.

The vulnerability analysis also found that 55% of households owned at least one chicken, which was higher than the 49% of rural households from the Relative Poverty Profile of Malawi (NEC, 2001). However 53% of households in the Central region owned no poultry. Poultry ownership was similar between the North and South.

It is also known that the poorest households rely less on production and more on casual labour to purchase for food (Relative Poverty Profile of Malawi, 2001). In all regions, more than 40% of the households surveyed were reliant on casual labour for income. More directly, 30% of all households were relying on 10-140 kgs of food from work, gifts or assistance in the upcoming months. This was highest in the Central region where 34% of households had heavy reliance on in-kind or gifts for food.

E. COPING STRATEGIES

There is still a lot of debate on how to interpret data on use of coping mechanisms by households during times of stress. Some are seasonal coping strategies such as meal reduction and consumption of wild foods during the 'lean' season (usually pre-harvest).

The utility of this information in emergency vulnerability analysis is enhanced when compared to 'normal' years. However, the 'normal' year information is rarely available and researchers must rely on the memory of the villagers being interviewed. In addition, certain other coping mechanisms such as reduction in expenditures and sales of livestock or household assets are biased in that, for very poor households, there are rarely any assets to sell nor money to 'not' spend.

Therefore, those behaviours are more socio-economically specific rather than universal measures of stress response for the most vulnerable. In short, one family's coping strategy may be another's normal way of life. Very poor households rarely eat large portions at mealtimes, usually consume less preferred and wild foods, and regularly eat 1-2 meals a day. During lean periods in normal years, it's not unusual for them to skip meals entirely as a regular part of their daily struggle to survive.

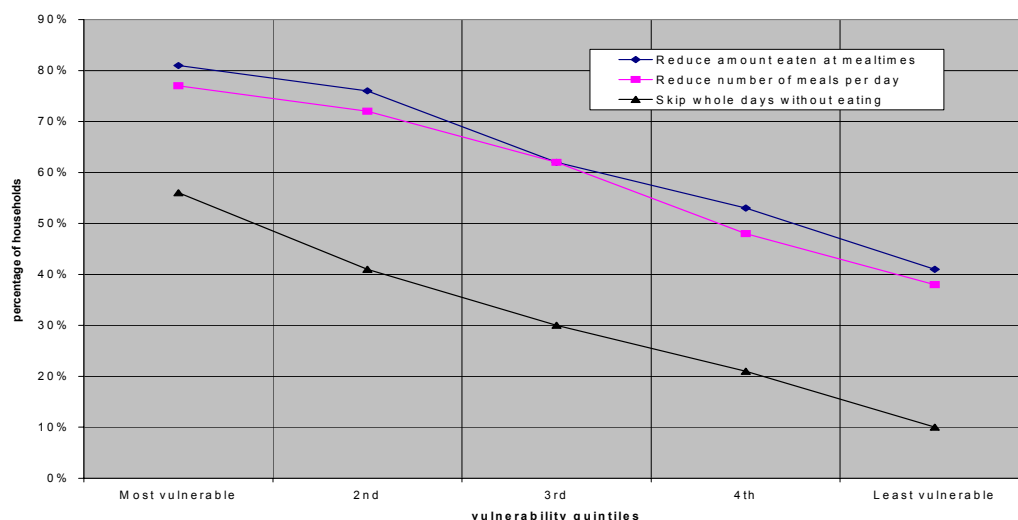
All of these factors make it rather difficult to interpret information collected from the VAC survey on coping strategies. The VAC team felt that the attempt to directly measure coping strategies in the survey was not successful so the analysis used consumption indicators as a measure coping and household food security.

Those consumption-related coping strategies that showed linear relationships with vulnerability were (a) reliance on less preferred foods, (b) getting food from friends or relatives outside the house, (c) regularly reducing the amount of food eaten at mealtimes, (d) regularly reducing the number of meals eaten per day, and (e) skipping whole days without eating in the past month.

Reduction in expenditures on health care and household items was related with increased vulnerability. However, there was not a clear relationship between reductions in expenditure on education or alcohol and tobacco and increased vulnerability.

Most sales of livestock to purchase food increased with decreased vulnerability, which would be expected since some of the wealthier families raise livestock as a source of income. Household asset sales were reported in 5% of the sample but showed no particular pattern in relation to vulnerability.

Chart 3.3 – Reduction in food consumption as coping mechanisms, by vulnerability quintile



There were some significant differences in use of coping mechanisms between the regions. Most notably were in the North where households are likely experiencing food shortages for the first year. In Central and Southern regions, households employ coping mechanisms less frequently or perhaps don't recognize their behaviours as 'coping' but rather as normal responses to this current crisis.

Table 3.2 – Use of coping mechanisms by region

	North	Central	South	Significant
Rely on less preferred foods	60%	38%	44%	NC < 0.05
Borrow food	25%	11%	23%	CS < 0.01
Purchase food on credit	37%	5%	13%	NC, NS < 0.001
Get food from friends or relatives outside the house	35%	17%	38%	NC < 0.05, CS < 0.001
Regularly reduce amount of food eaten at mealtimes	91%	71%	83%	NC < 0.01, CS < 0.05
Regularly reduce the number of meals eaten per day	91%	69%	76%	NC < 0.01
Skip whole days without eating	70%	43%	48%	NC < 0.001, NS < 0.05
Rely on consumption of wild foods more than normal during this time of year	30%	10%	14%	NC < 0.001, NS < 0.01
Spend less on health care	42%	1%	14%	NC, NS < 0.001; CS < 0.001
Spend less on education	26%	1%	8%	NC, NS < 0.001, CS < 0.05
Spend less on household items	56%	30%	44%	NC < 0.001, CS < 0.05
Spend less on alcohol and tobacco	19%	7%	4%	NC, NS < 0.001
Sell poultry	12%	3%	5%	NC < 0.05
Sell goats	2%	1%	4%	-
Sell household assets for food	5%	2%	6%	-
Temporary migration	7%	2%	2%	-

F. GENDER AND SOCIAL GROUP ISSUES

Female headed households - It was reported by communities that 28% of households were headed by women with 26% in the North, 21% in the Central and 34% in the South while the household survey sample found 18% of households in the North, 25% in the Central and 38% in the South were headed by women.

From the VAC study, 45% of the most vulnerable households were headed by women, which was significantly higher ($p < 0.001$) than the 19% in the least vulnerable and 30% in the overall sample. In addition, women over 60 years of age headed 13% of households in the most vulnerable quintile, which was also significantly higher than the 3% in the least vulnerable.

Household size and composition - The average household size in the sample was 6 persons with the most vulnerable households being the largest. More than 50% of the most vulnerable households had 7 or more members. This is significantly higher than 17% in the least vulnerable quintile.

The gender ratio in the most vulnerable quintile is 146 females to 100 males, which compares to 133:100 for the total sample and 118:100 for the least vulnerable quintile. The dependency ratio in the most vulnerable quintile is 1.7 dependents per earner and decreases over each quintile to 1.3 in the least vulnerable households.

Migration - Members of the VAC assessment team explained that it is fairly common for males in Malawi to migrate to work in estates (tobacco and tea) or else to travel as traders to Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa but the survey did not determine if the women were widowed or not. According to a study conducted by the University of Maryland (2002), Malawian men historically have travelled around for work while women tended to the farming in the village.

Orphans - From the VAC survey, all communities (n=81) reported having orphans in their village with 17% of households in the North and Central each supporting orphans, increasing to 38% of households in the Southern region villages. Half of the communities in North and Central regions and 68% in the South reported having at least one child-headed household in the village. However, only 5-9% of households were actually headed by children.

G. VULNERABILITY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC TARGETING

In order not to miss out those who are vulnerable, there is need to define characteristics of the households who will be eligible to benefit from food aid. In a current situation the most vulnerable groups can be described as follows in general terms:

- **Casual labor dependency.** The most vulnerable households rely on casual labor for food and income. For most vulnerable households, 39% of their food comes from casual labor exchange and nearly half of the most vulnerable households receive 10-140kgs of maize from labor or gifts. More than 66% of the most vulnerable households rely on labor for their income and this reliance decreases significantly with decreased vulnerability.
- **Reliance on food purchases.** Vulnerable households rely heavily on food purchases - 45% of their food is derived from purchases. Most have consumed all of their cereal harvest from the 2001-02 agricultural season. Households in the South derive more than 50% of their food purchase which was significantly higher than Central (41%) and North (22%)-leaving them highly vulnerable to market prices. Vulnerable households in the North are more likely to consume food from their own cereal production when compared to the other regions.
- **Limited food production.** Only 10% of the most vulnerable household's food is derived from own cereal production. Most vulnerable households seriously lack cereal seed for the upcoming season while 38% have seed for their legume crops. They also lack access to fertilizer as indicated by their lack of intention to use it in the coming season.
- **Small cultivated areas.** 40% of the most vulnerable population cultivate less than an acre. They are less likely to cultivate cassava or sweet potatoes, rarely cultivate winter cereals, but sometimes have cash crops. Vulnerable households in the North own significantly larger plots of agricultural land than in the South and Centre.
- **Low livestock holdings.** Livestock ownership is low amongst the most vulnerable households, with less than 20% of vulnerable households owning less than 3 animals. This should not be a limiting criteria in the North, however, as about 42% of vulnerable households in the North own poultry as compared to 25% in the Central and 19% in the South, 11% of vulnerable households in the North own pigs.
- **Few household assets.** Household asset ownership is low, with most owning no more than an axe, hoe and/or sickle. However, asset ownership is significantly higher in vulnerable households in the North as compared to the other regions. Perhaps those in the North are "newly vulnerable"-not having suffered 2 consecutive years of poor harvest.
- **Women headed households and large dependency ratio.** The most vulnerable households tend to be large (6 or more members), are headed by women - especially older women, and have more females than males and a high dependency ratio. Significantly more female-headed households are found in the South (52%) as compared to the other regions. The female to male ratio is much larger in the households in the South than in the other regions.
- **Low food diversity.** The most vulnerable households tend to consume fewer meals per day and have low dietary diversity, consuming on average foods from only 3 different groups in a weeks time
- **Prevalence of consumption coping strategies.** Their main coping strategies are related to consumption – eating less preferred foods (maize bran etc.), smaller portions, fewer meals, skipping meals, borrowing food, reducing expenditures. Even less vulnerable households are reducing consumption earlier than normal in order to try and make their food reserves last as long as possible.

IV. CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Meal frequency has already been mentioned as an indicator of vulnerability. Regional differences in meal frequency are outlined in Table 3.3 below. Households in the Southern region are more likely to consume 2 meals per day when compared to the other regions. Differences in meal frequency in the North indicate that certain areas appear to be reducing meal frequency in response to the food crisis while others are not suffering. There are only small differences in meal frequency between adults and children in all regions.

Table 3.3 – Meal frequency by region and group

	North		Central		South		Total	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
One meal	18%	14%	19%	14.4%	13%	10%	16%	12%
Two meals	58%	55%	58%	59%	66%	64%	62%	60%
Three meals	24%	31%	22%	27%	20%	26%	22%	27%

The survey also included a section on food frequency which helped to capture not only the number of days in a week that different foods were consumed but also was useful in analysing dietary diversity in the population. Low dietary diversity was considered as 1-3 different food types in the past week – medium was 4-6 types and high was 7 to 11 different food types. Thirty-six percent of households in the North had high dietary diversity as compared to only 24% in the Central region – a statistically significant difference. In addition, significantly more households in the Central region reported low dietary diversity (28%) when compared to Southern region (20%).

Another outcome of analysing consumption in the population is the ability to link low diversity or complete lack of important nutrients in the diet to vulnerability for geographic and social targeting. This also provides evidence to advocate for a food aid response that addresses these needs.

CHART 3.4 – LACK OF FAT/OIL AND BEAN CONSUMPTION BY VULNERABILITY QUINTILE

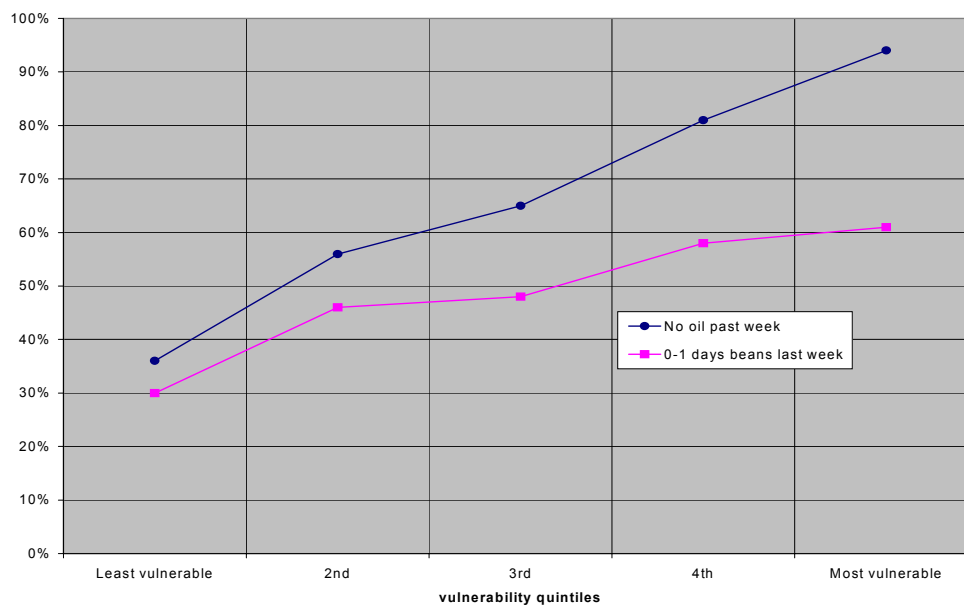
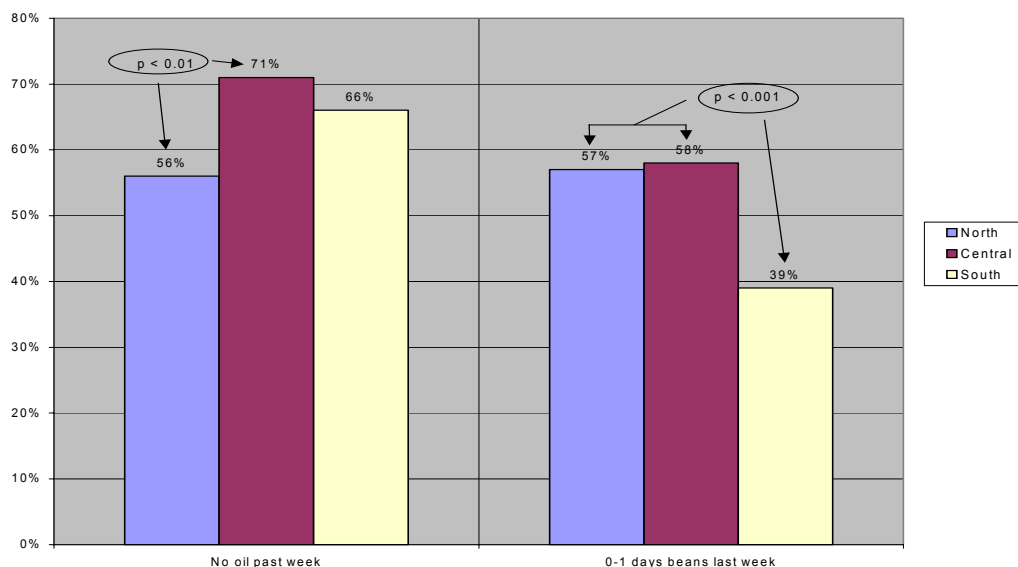


Chart 3.4 shows the linkage between vulnerability and lack of fats/oils and pulses in the diet. Nearly all of the most vulnerable households had consumed no fat or oil in the past seven days while over 80% of the 2nd most vulnerable households also lacked fats and oils in their diet. The analysis also looked at consumption of beans/legumes in the previous week. Overall, about 35% of the sample had not eaten beans in the previous week while another 15% had eaten them only once. Lack of pulses in the diet increases with vulnerability, with the chart showing about 60% of the most vulnerable lacking legumes in their diet.

Chart 3.5 – Lack of fats/oils and pulses in diet by region



There are significant differences in consumption of oil and pulses by region with households in Central region consuming significantly less oils than North while Southern households consume legumes significantly more often than those in the Northern and Central regions which is logical since household production of pulses is highest in the South.

A. REGIONAL SUMMARIES

The data analysis was conducted at district and regional levels. Traditionally, sub-national information in Malawi is presented by region (North, Central and South) or by ADD, of which there are eight. Table 3.4 compares the percentage of population in need, number of beneficiaries and percentage of total beneficiaries by region and time period. About half of the population in need live in the Central region with only about 10% in the North.

Table 3.4 – Regional comparison of population in need by time period

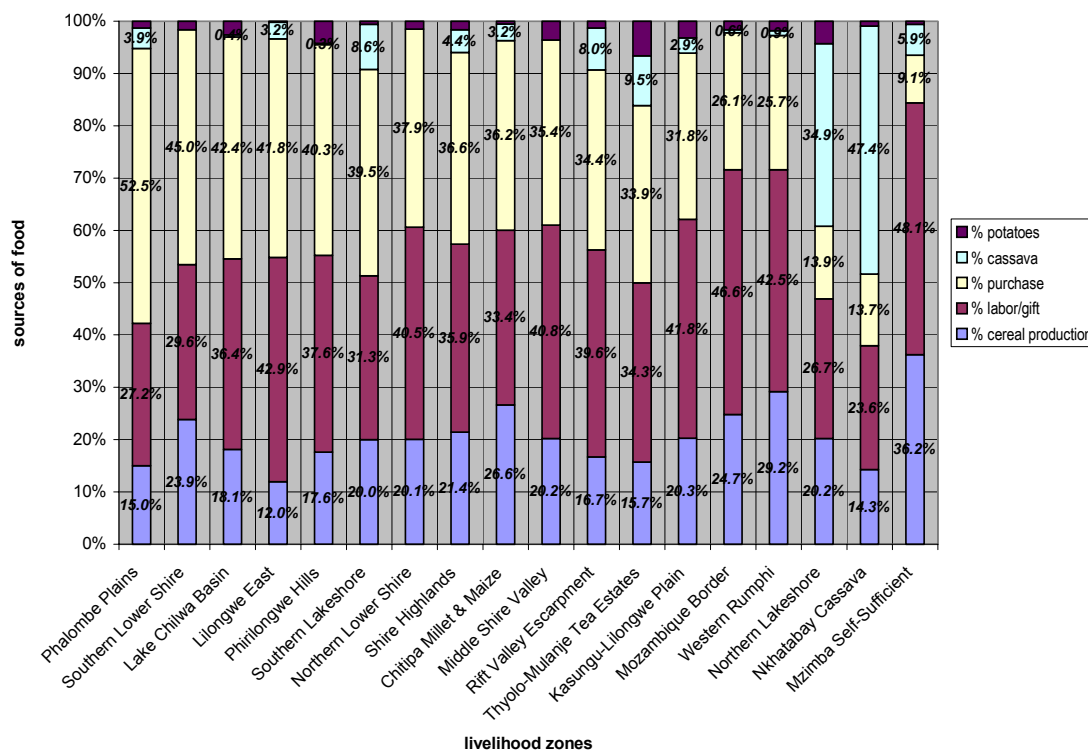
	% Need	Beneficiaries	% total beneficiaries
<i>September – November 2002</i>			
Northern	16%	211,200	9.6%
Central	26%	1,089,000	49.5%
Southern	19%	899,800	40.9%
<i>December – March</i>			
Northern	27%	354,200	10.9%
Central	38%	1,579,500	48.6%
Southern	28%	1,316,200	40.5%

LIVELIHOOD ZONES

There are 21 livelihood zones in Malawi and data were collected from 19 of those zones. However, for one zone, the number of households interviewed was too small to be presented alone in the analysis.

Chart 3.6 (below) compares the sources of food for consumption by livelihood zone. Of note is Phalombe Plains zone where more than 50% of the household food for consumption comes from purchases. Southern Lower Shire and Lake Chilwa Basin also rely heavily on purchases but also on casual labour, with some production. These areas should be monitored carefully to assess impacts of price increases on household food security. Mzimba Self-sufficient, Nkhatabay Cassava and Northern Lakeshore have either high maize or cassava production and have very low reliance on food purchases.

Chart 3.6 – Sources of food by Livelihood zone



V. CORE NUMERIC RESULTS

According to the July-August VAC assessment, districts with the highest percentage of vulnerable people (Sept-Nov) are Salima (38% - Central), Mchinji (37% - Central), Kasungu (32% - Central), Thyolo (30% - South), and Dedza (28% - Central).

The districts with the highest numbers of vulnerable people are Lilongwe (300,000 - Central), Kasungu (177,000 - Central), Thyolo (158,600 - South), Dedza (157,000 - Central), and Mangochi (154,600 - South).

Each survey team was asked to name the place they assessed which appeared to be worst – Chulu EPA – Kasungu; Chipoka EPA – Salima; Bazale EPA – Balaka; Kasenga EPA – Phalombe; and Milonde EPA – Mulanje.

Table 3.5 – Core numeric results regarding emergency food aid

District	2002 Population estimates+	September – November 2002			December 2002 – March 2003		
		Population in need	Beneficiaries	MT required	Population in need	Beneficiaries	MT required
Balaka	291,472	16%	46,600	1,679	30%	88,000	4,285
Blantyre	932,114	8%	77,400	2,787	15%	138,000	6,627
Chikwawa	410,761	24%	98,600	3,549	35%	144,200	6,920
Chiradzulu	271,839	10%	27,200	979	24%	65,500	3,145
Chitipa*	146,024	12%	17,500	631	35%	50,500	2,425
Dedza	560,471	28%	157,000	5,650	39%	218,000	10,465
Dowa	473,760	20%	94,700	3,411	40%	189,500	9,096
Karonga	224,072	10%	22,400	807	15%	33,600	1,613
Kasungu*	553,535	32%	177,100	6,377	50%	276,700	13,285
Likoma	9,298	0	0	0	0	0	0

District	2002 Population estimates ⁺	September – November 2002			December 2002 – March 2003		
		Population in need	Beneficiaries	MT required	Population in need	Beneficiaries	MT required
Lilongwe	1,550,490	19%	300,000	10,794	28%	434,200	20,842
Machinga	425,653	18%	76,600	2,758	27%	116,200	5,578
Mangochi	702,761	22%	154,600	5,566	27%	193,300	9,276
Mchinji	374,207	37%	138,500	4,984	44%	166,700	7,975
Mulanje	493,262	16%	79,000	2,841	24%	119,800	5,753
Mwanza	158,940	18%	28,600	1,030	27%	43,400	2,083
Mzimba	703,630	20%	141,800	5,106	33%	229,400	11,011
Nkhatabay	189,741	5%	9,500	342	6%	10,600	510
Nkhotakota	264,250	15%	39,600	1,427	23%	61,600	2,955
Nsanje	224,478	18%	40,400	1,455	23%	51,000	2,446
Ntcheu	426,970	13%	55,500	1,998	31%	133,600	6,415
Ntchisi	193,333	14%	27,000	974	21%	40,000	1,921
Phalombe	267,163	19%	50,800	1,827	24%	63,300	3,039
Rumphi	147,821	21%	31,000	1,118	27%	40,400	19,37
Salima	285,847	38%	108,600	3,910	49%	140,000	6,723
Thyolo	528,564	30%	158,600	5,708	33%	176,000	8,449
Zomba	629,543	11%	67,600	2,435	21%	134,100	6,438

⁺Source: National Statistics Office

^{*}Dec-Mar figures subject to revision in next assessment

Table 3.5 presents, by district, the population, percentage in need of assistance, number of potential beneficiaries and MT required by time period – September through November and December through March 2003.

J. CHANGES SINCE JUNE 2002

Both the SC-UK HEA study and the CFSAM assessment also predicted that more than 3 million Malawians would be in need of food assistance before the next harvest in March-April 2003. SC-UK HEA cited poor production in repeated years, crop and livestock theft, consumption of 'green maize' and reduced income from casual labour as problems.

CFSAM also indicated reduced national maize stocks, increased prices of maize (both from lack of availability and importing costs), lack of household purchasing power and lack of timely access to seed and fertilizer as problematic.

The other two assessments found that there were higher degrees of vulnerability in the Southern region, followed by the Central, with small pockets in the North. The VAC assessment concluded that the need for food assistance was higher in the Central region and that vulnerability to food insecurity was also slowly moving into some of the Northern areas.

Most vulnerable districts from the SC-UK study included: Mangochi, Phalombe, Nsanje, Chikwawa, and Zomba in the Southern Region and Salima in the Central. While the CFSAM found: Salima, Lilongwe, Nkhotakota, and Ntcheu in Central region and Mangochi, Blantyre and Zomba in the South to be the most vulnerable districts.

Specific differences included SC-UK HEA finding that Phalombe district was one of the most vulnerable in the country while CFSAM and VAC assessments found more nominal need. In addition, both the SC-UK HEA and CFSAM found that Zomba district in the South had a large population in need of food assistance while the VAC found a lower percentage of population.

Although the methods used to calculate the population in need were quite different, the overall need estimates were similar. CFSAM approaches rely heavily on macro-level information such as national crop production estimates, market prices and access and other measures of food availability. Qualitative information on household access and purchasing power were used to provide the district level estimates.

The VAC approach used a more systematic in data collection method and utilized more rigorous analytical tools to project national and district needs based on the current situation. In addition, there were some discrepancies between CFSAM and VAC population estimates by district with the VAC estimates being verified by the National VAC and SC-UK.

Lastly, the VAC beneficiary estimates exclude the city populations (National Statistics Office, 2000) of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu (Mzimba District) and Zomba from the district populations when calculating the number of beneficiaries in need. Overall, only 14% of the population of Malawi is considered urban (1998 National Census of Malawi) and most of that population is found in those four cities.

VI. EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO DATE

The Government, in conjunction with its cooperating partners is implementing a Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme (JEFAP) to provide assistance to affected populations. At the national level, the government has the responsibility of overseeing the JEFAP through the National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee.

The Humanitarian Response Sub-Committee (HRSC) is as sub-committee of the JEFAP with membership from Government, UN and NGOs, and is responsible for:

- Coordinating the implementation of the JEFAP
- Deciding food allocations to Districts, with guidance from the VAC sub-working group.
- Providing guidance on sub-district level targeting (with VAC and NGO input)
- Deciding rations and standard operation procedures for targeting, distribution, monitoring and reporting.

At the District level, the Government, through the District Commissioner, has the responsibility of coordinating the program with WFP and NGOs facilitating the process of selecting beneficiaries, food aid deliveries and distributions. WFP has the responsibility for:

- The overall implementation of the JEFAP and accountability to donors
- Resourcing and transportation of food commodities into the country to main warehouses
- Main warehouse management
- Providing secondary transportation to Food Delivery Points

The NGOs are responsible for:

- Implementing the JEFAP at district level
- Coordinating with District Authorities to establish coordination structures
- Assisting Civil Protection Committees in the selection of beneficiaries
- Where possible, providing the transportation of commodities for distribution from Extended Delivery Points to Food Delivery Points
- Supervising and monitoring Civil Protection Committees in the actual distribution of food.

A. NGO RESPONSE

The NGO Consortium is chaired by CARE International and is a member of the HRSC. There are 12 NGOs with MOUs as implementing partners for the emergency. There have been challenges in developing the capacity to scale up to the current level of distribution, but overall, the majority are managing to rise to the challenge of scaling up to meet the needs of the population. Table 4.1 outlines the overall food allocation and dispatch tonnage by implementing NGO as of August 31, 2002.

Table 4.1 - WFP-Malawi – EMOP 10201 (Sept. 2, 2002)

NGO	Total Allocated (MT)	Total Dispatched (MT*)	Maize Dispatched (MT)
CARE (CADECOM)	3,757	2,222	2,115
SC-UK	1,963	918	873
SC-US	1,667	1,363	1,300
CRS	1,755	1,096	1,042
WVI	3,371	1,227	1,154
Emmanuel	790	733	701
Concern Universal (CPAR)	1,107	523	523
AFRICARE	2,098	692	647
SALAR	528	121	121
GOAL Malawi	1,730	861	828
Malawi Red Cross	1,124	690	655
TOTAL	19,890	10,435	9,961

*Note: No beans until August and no CSB to date in Pipeline

The Consortium is compiling stories from the field so NGOs can learn from each other as well as Best Practices and Lessons Learned will be put on a website and in the Newsletter. In addition, there is discussion about rotating teams regionally so they better understand the various issues involved in distribution throughout the country.

Pipeline: To date, there is only one Pipeline in Malawi, through WFP. According to the WFP Emergency Coordinator, there are some private distribution activities being conducted by Asian business people and religious groups but they are not systematic nor officially recognized as a separate pipeline. The EU is assisting with purchases of food for supplementary feeding through the Nutrition Rehabilitation Units.

Food basket – There are some differences in the food basket than what was outlined in the EMOP. For the general distribution, families are receiving a 50 kg bag of maize. In addition, the food basket contains 5 kgs of pulses instead of 12 kgs and only 5 kgs of CSB instead of 10 kgs as outlined in the EMOP.

Table 4.2 summarizes the planned and dispatched distributions thus far by month, district and NGO. The NGOs who will have primary responsibility for the September scale-up are bolded for that particular district. All 26 Districts are now covered by an NGO that is responsible for all food distributions from now to March 2003.

Table 4.2 – District level planning figures by NGO and month (all commodities)

District	NGO	June		July		August		September
		Planned	Dispatched	Planned	Dispatched	Planned	Dispatched	Planned
Balaka	SC-US	-	-	132.30	214.40	-	211.25	397.50
Blantyre	MRCS	-	-	-	46.50	-	-	-
	WVI	-	-	-	12.00	-	-	-
	GOAL	-	-	-	-	437.43	-	1303.20
Chikwawa	WVI	-	-	175.25	175.25	192.81	185.80	429.54
Chiradzulu	GOAL	-	-	-	-	-	-	240.00
Chitipa	MRCS	-	-	-	-	-	-	62.70
Dedza	CARE	-	-	-	10.00	-	-	-
	MRCS	-	-	-	30.30	-	-	-
	SC-UK	-	-	-	27.00	-	30.00	-
	Concern	-	-	254.49	268.70	254.47	254.45	564.12
Dowa	CARE	136.05	152.65	216.85	176.85	238.56	169.70	274.26
	MRCS	-	-	-	32.00	-	6.10	-
Karonga	MRCS	-	-	-	-	-	-	200.40
Kasungu	CRS	-	-	291.30	331.20	320.46	95.40	337.50

	MRCS	-	-	-	16.30	-	6.10	-
District	NGO	June		July		August		September
		Planned	Dispatched	Planned	Dispatched	Planned	Dispatched	Planned
Lilongwe	CARE	435.60	436.85	437.75	476.35	776.17	789.15	1445.76
	MRCS	-	-	-	-	-	25.70	-
	SC-UK	-	-	-	27.55	-	-	-
	SC-US	-	-	-	91.35	-	94.45	-
Machinga	Emmanuel	192.20	192.15	192.20	192.05	211.43	348.65	380.40
	SC-US	-	-	-	12.70	-	13.95	-
Mangochi	AFRICARE	-	-	-	8.05	-	-	-
	CRS	-	-	-	12.00	-	-	-
	GOAL	-	-	-	32.90	-	-	-
	SC-US	-	-	319.00	79.10	-	89.20	1058.04
Mchinji	SC-UK	189.90	189.90	189.90	189.90	208.94	208.90	225.12
Mulanje	WVI	-	-	210.45	-	231.50	45.60	-
	Oxfam	-	-	-	-	-	-	513.60
Mwanza	WVI	-	-	67.80	67.80	74.58	74.60	312.00
Mzimba	AFRICARE	-	-	180.10	138.15	330.23	123.74	511.32
	CRS	-	-	-	11.00	-	-	-
Nkhatabay	AFRICARE	-	-	-	-	-	-	103.20
Nkhotakota	MRCS	-	-	150.70	104.10	165.78	148.45	393.60
Nsanje	WVI	-	-	95.80	66.55	105.38	105.45	870.19
Ntcheu	AFRICARE	-	-	182.20	160.30	200.43	208.75	523.20
	SC-US	-	-	-	8.00	-	-	-
Ntchisi	MRCS	-	-	21.65	21.65	156.02	126.10	216.00
Phalombe	GOAL	-	101.30	-	-	-	-	-
	WVI	-	20.00	-	-	-	-	-
	SALAR	121.27	-	121.30	121.30	133.43	-	295.56
Rumphi	AFRICARE	-	-	-	41.95	-	4.20	-
	CRS	-	-	-	-	-	2.50	-
	MRCS	-	-	125.45	125.45	138.01	10.10	150.54
Salima	SC-UK	-	-	290.15	235.60	319.20	454.00	246.97
	SC-US	-	-	-	31.30	-	71.90	-
Thyolo	WVI	-	-	225.50	225.50	248.06	247.95	377.28
Zomba	CRS	-	-	313.75	308.90	345.14	335.00	915.48

B. TRANSPORT

Apparently there is a 3-month supply of commodities bound for Malawi stalled in the Nakala line port in Mozambique. There are 60 trucks coming in to the country to the country (IFRC/MRC – Norwegian Government) to help with transporting food around the country, with additional assistance from Oxfam. The main roads in Malawi are in fairly good condition but secondary roads will be challenging during the upcoming rainy season. Currently, WFP is doing an assessment of road conditions throughout the country.

C. GENETICALLY MODIFIED MAIZE ISSUES

The Government recently decided to follow others in the region to question the decision to accept GM maize and want to take appropriate measures to ensure that no GM maize will be planted. The Government prefers to have it milled before distribution. However, there is not enough capacity to mill all maize coming into the country.

The Ministry of Agriculture has commented that local varieties of maize are already polluted and that there is really no true Malawian maize seed. In addition the starter packs being distributed by the government have hybrid maize seed in them.

VII. NON-FOOD REQUIREMENTS

A. AVAILABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

SEED AND FERTILIZER

At the community level, on average, 30% of households had access to seed while only 15% were reported to have access to fertilizer – most were identified as the wealthy in the community.

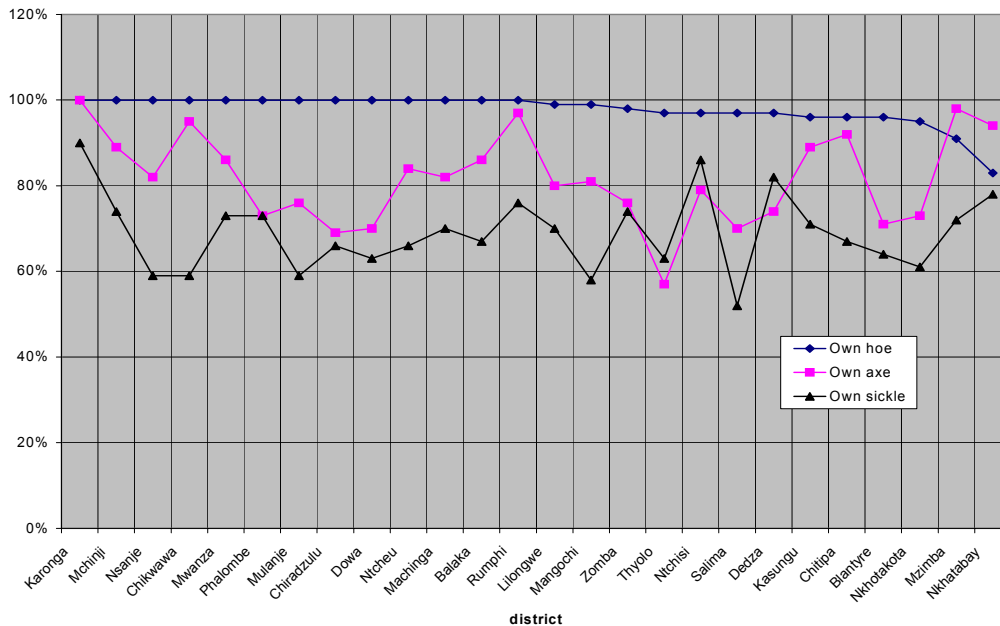
At the household level only 34% of households reported having seed for their main cereal crop, 51% for their main legume crop (56% in Southern region), and 36% for their cash crops with few differences between regions.

Forty-three percent of households indicated they planned to use fertilizer for the forthcoming season but 38% in Central region and 26% in Southern didn't know where they would get it. For those planning on using fertilizer, 72% in the North would use for food crops as compared to 88% in Central and 97% in the South.

IMPLEMENTS

Chart 5.1 highlights the need for farm implements by district. Nearly all households reported owning a hoe with the fewest being in Nkhatabay and Mzimba districts. Ownership of an axe was highest in Karonga, Rumphu and Mzimba in the North. Households in the Central and South were less likely to own a sickle, especially in Salima, Mangochi, Mulanje, Nsanje, and Chikwawa.

Chart 5.1 – Percentage of households owning farm implements by district



B. WATER AND SANITATION

From the MDHS survey sources of drinking water – 23% piped in dwelling (includes urban), 67% from a well, and 11% use surface water. Regarding sanitation, 80% use pit latrines, 2% use flush toilet, and 18% have no facilities.

From the VAC community survey, 63% of communities got their water from safe sources – 54% in the North, 50% in the Central and 76% in the South. Around 25% of the communities felt they do not have enough water currently while 50% predict there will be a problem accessing water before the next rains.

VIII. MONITORING INDICATORS

The current food crisis can be characterised as a slow on-set emergency that is dynamic and will change over time due to a number of factors. There is a need, therefore, to monitor particular indicators that impact the food security situation, including the availability of food in the country and markets, the ability of households to access food, as well as the availability and distribution of food aid to vulnerable populations. The indicators to be monitored include:

Food Availability

- Cereal commercial imports
- SGR stock levels
- Availability of cereals in markets
- Food aid pipeline

Food Access: own production, other direct sources of food (gifts, casual labor for food, food aid, etc), and purchases

- Winter and main season crop production situation
- Rainfall
- Input prices and availability
- *Ganyu* labor opportunities and casual labor rates
- Food aid distributions and targeting
- Grain prices in markets
- Livestock prices in local markets

Food Utilization:

- Disease incidence, i.e. diarrhea,
- Access and availability to water
- Sentinel site nutrition surveillance

There is a need also to directly monitor the livelihoods of the vulnerable population to ensure that populations are not left behind in the emergency food need efforts. The VAC, in collaboration with other partners has developed a Food Security Rapid Monitoring and Response System (RMRS) to monitor the frequency and severity of coping strategies of households with short-term insufficiency of food. Six general categories of coping are measured, with individual strategies defined for each district livelihood zone and wealth group. The chosen indicators will be used as alert flags signaling a deteriorating food insecurity situation of a population.

Six categories of coping strategies to monitor:

- Dietary changes (e.g. no diversity in food consumption, eating less preferred foods, etc.)
- Increasing short-term food access (e.g. reliance on wild foods, grinding maize cobs to make flour, consuming seed stocks)
- Decreasing numbers of people (e.g. short-term migration, deaths)
- Rationing strategies (e.g. skipping meals for whole days, mothers prioritizing children/men, etc.)
- Asset depletion (e.g. selling livestock at throw-away prices, selling household assets, etc.)
- Stress related insecurity (e.g. increasing frequency of theft of assets & livestock, increases in frequency and severity of conflicts over resources, etc).

IX. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The food security situation in Malawi has been deteriorating over the past 2 years, especially in the Central and Southern Regions. Poverty is strongly linked to household vulnerability where the poor have lost their ability to cope with consecutive years of poor harvests and high maize prices. Assets have been sold, and crops have failed due to poor rains, timely lack of seed, lack of fertilizer. In addition, there is heavy reliance on labour for food and income.

Overall, the numbers of Malawians who are in need of food assistance from September through November have remained at just over 2 million as estimated by SC-UK Household Economy Assessment and the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission – both in April-May 2002 and the Malawi VAC Assessment of July-August 2002. Those in need will increase to approximately 3.2 million Malawians by December of this year.

About 50% of the vulnerable population is located in the Central region with 40% in South and 10% in the North. To reinforce this, the 2000 Malawi DHS found that 56% of the children in Central region were chronically malnourished as compared to 45% in the South and 39% in the North. These vulnerable populations will rely heavily on ganyu (casual labour), food purchases and food assistance to meet their food needs over the next 7 months. Much care should be taken to provide this assistance in a timely manner, to the most needy in order to carry them through to March 2003. Provision of food assistance through to the next harvest will also limit the consumption of green maize, leaving more for post-harvest consumption.

In addition, non-food inputs should be provided to assist these families in preparing their fields and planting maize, legumes and other crops in a timely fashion to maximize their chances of achieving a good harvest in the coming year.

Those households not requiring assistance are generally capable of meeting their food needs through production and purchase and often are engaged not only in cereal production but also in raising cassava and/or sweet potatoes. However, they will be vulnerable to price fluctuations in the maize market, if they reach the same peaks as Feb-March 2002.

It is imperative that the food security situation in Malawi be monitored closely over the next several months and that the VAC carries out a second assessment in November in order to determine the depth and breadth of changes in national food security. This is most important as the critical 'lean season' approaches for a population who has already lived through two years of 'lean season' with little respite.

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