

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF)
Marketing, Economics and Statistics Division (FAAHM)

Food security situation

Cereal is the most important item in Afghan diet. Afghanistan is deficit in cereal production even in a good agricultural year. About 60-80% of the cereal deficit in the country is covered through commercial import and the rest is either food aid or uncovered deficit. However, good agricultural situation is a key to food security in predominantly rural Afghanistan. A good agricultural year ensures easier access and more affordable price of cereals to the populace. Due to unfavourable weather condition this year, the domestic production of cereal is estimated at 4.8 million tonnes, which is 11% lower than last year's cereal availability (production plus food aid) of 5.4 million tonnes. As Afghanistan would require 6 million tonnes of cereals for various utilizations in 2006, a short-fall over 1.2 million tonnes of cereals is expected. This shortfall has to be met through import and food aid to decrease uncovered deficit.

The 2006 Cereal Balance Sheet (‘000 tonnes)					
	Wheat	Rice	Maize	Barley	Total
A. Domestic availability	3,826	360	350	370	4,906
Food Aid	115	--	--	--	115
Domestic production	3,711	360	350	370	4,791
B. Utilization	4,820	453	350	370	5,993
Food use	3,857	410	48	24	4,339
Seed provision	306	18	16	28	368
Feed	--	--	233	262	495
Losses	557	25	53	56	691
Year ending stock	100	--	--	--	100
Commercial import (B-A)	994	93	--	--	1,087

The MAAHF assessment provides the estimated amount of wheat production/deficit/surplus by province, the jumping off point for the implementation treatments that include commercial import and food aid, in that order of importance. The final estimates of the cereal production in 2006 will be made available in November 2006, when the harvest of the 2006 paddy will have been completed in all areas.

MAAHF approach to food security is growth-oriented. It favours public and private investment to help farmers help themselves. For this year MAAHF recommended supply of improved seed to adversely affected farmers. It also expressed concerned over the possible negative effect of this year's weather condition on livestock. It asked for outside help in feed, fodder and fodder seed supply. In June 2006 MAAHF had recommended that, out of 1.2 million tonnes of cereal deficit for the year, 320,000 tonnes be met through food aid. In 2005 – which was one of the best good agriculture years - Afghanistan received 110,000 tonnes of cereals in food aid. Last year's commercial cereal import is estimated at 450,000 tonnes. For 2006 the total confirmed commitment of food aid includes 115,000 tonnes of cereals. Some concrete action is required to increase this amount.

Vision of MAAHF

A sustainable-growth in agriculture is a must to food security. About 5-7% growth per annum is needed in legal agriculture to improve and sustain food security. The five year Master plan of agriculture, which is expected to provide 6 percent annual growth in the agriculture sector, lays special emphasis on food security. Over UD\$360 million of the total investment in Master Plan is earmarked for bringing improvement in food security. As regards this the plan lays special emphasis on perennial agriculture, animal health and production, and establishment of Food Security Reserve of 100,000 tonnes.