

Special Brief: Haiti Earthquake

January 2010

Key Messages

- The earthquake which struck Haiti on the 12th of January has caused a dramatic humanitarian crisis and has severely affected the food security situation.
- Food security is particularly affected by the widespread displacement of people in the country and rising food prices.
- The earthquake has led to disruption of trade and agricultural activities.
- The government has appealed for US\$ 700,000,000 to implement a special programme to support agriculture and food supply.

Background

The total population in Haiti was 9.7 million in 2008. OCHA estimated that 3,725,615 people were living in the areas affected by the powerful earthquake of 7.0 magnitude (USGS) on the Richter Scale. Even before the earthquake, Haiti was one of the poorest countries in American hemisphere with over half of the population living with less than 1USD per day and suffering from very high rates of undernutrition. The country has also been affected by protracted political instability and the UN peacekeeping force (MINUSTAH) has been operating in the country for several years.

Economic Indicators

Total Population - 2008 (WB)	9780064
Population growth rate - 2008 (WB)	1%
GNI per capita, \$ PPP - 2008 (WB)	1180
Population earning below 1\$ PPP per day - 2001 (MDGI)	54%
Rural population - 2007 (WB)	55%
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP) - 2003 (WB)	27%

Food Consumption

Undernourished Population - 2005 (FAO)	58%
Cereal share in total dietary energy consumption - 2005 (FAO)	49%
Meat share in total dietary energy consumption - 2005 (FAO)	4%

Top Five Crop Productions - (metric tonnes)

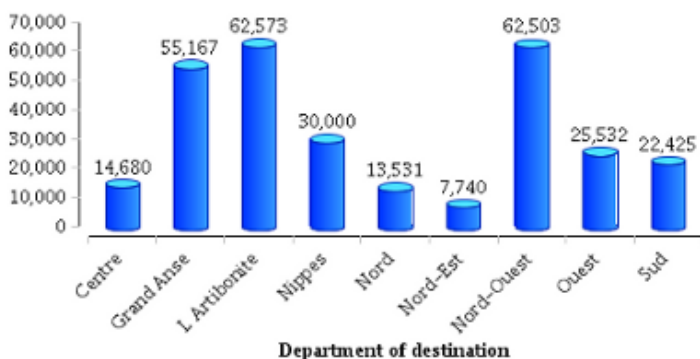
Crops	2004	2005	2006	2007
Sugar Cane	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,075,000	1,340,000
Cassava	340,000	400,000	400,000	450,000
Bananas	300,000	300,000	280,000	295,000
Maize	198,000	200,500	205,000	270,000

Emergency Situation

The most affected cities are Port au Prince, Carrefour and Grossier (of which 40-50% have been destroyed), Jacmel (50-60%) and Leogane (80-90%). Major damage had been reported to buildings, infrastructure, hospitals and schools. Communications are difficult: roads and bridges have been considerably damaged, as well as roads connecting rural areas to cities. The port of Port au Prince needs to be rehabilitated. All this is constraining the movement of food aid and internal trade of food. Immediate priorities are medical services, sanitation, food and water but also emergency shelter.

According to OCHA **196,595 people were injured and 112,405 were killed. Moreover 2,000,000 are in need of food aid and 1,100,000 are in acute need of emergency shelter.** IOM is working to finalize the first organized settlement for some 3,500 displaced persons in the Port-au-Prince neighbourhood of Tabarre. A massive number of people have moved mainly towards the Artbonite, North West, Nippes and Grand Anse regions of Haiti, while an unregistered number have entered the Dominican Republic.

Population movement out of Port-au-prince after earthquake (29-01-2009)

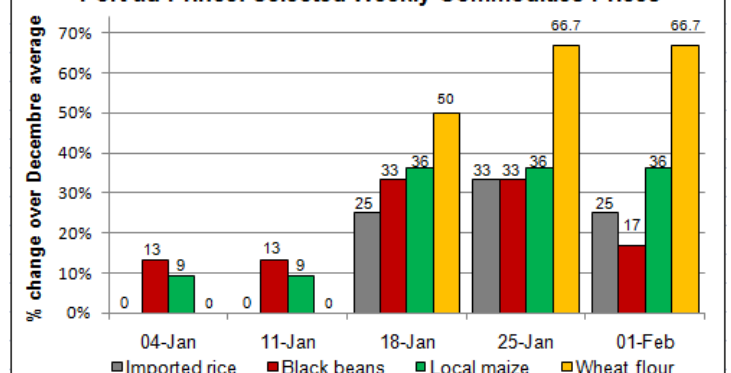


Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Food Situation

The destruction of productive assets and infrastructure has affected income earning activities and has led to widespread unemployment. This resulted in the loss of income and purchasing power. FAO and WFP jointly approved an emergency operation (EMOP) to support two million people with food aid for 6 months. Although the main crops will be harvested shortly, transportation and infrastructural constraints are expected to limit internal trade and have a negative impact on prices. Food prices have significantly increased after the earthquake with serious impacts on the food security of people who no longer have enough income to purchase adequate food. As the graph below shows, prices of selected commodities dramatically rose immediately after the earthquake. Compared to average December prices, a sharp increase of nearly 70% was registered to wheat flour. Also, local maize and black beans, which are the main commodities produced locally, have registered an increase of about 30-35%. Imported rice prices rose by 20-30% from the December average. It should be noted that the country is heavily dependent on food imports which account for 60% of the national consumption requirements.

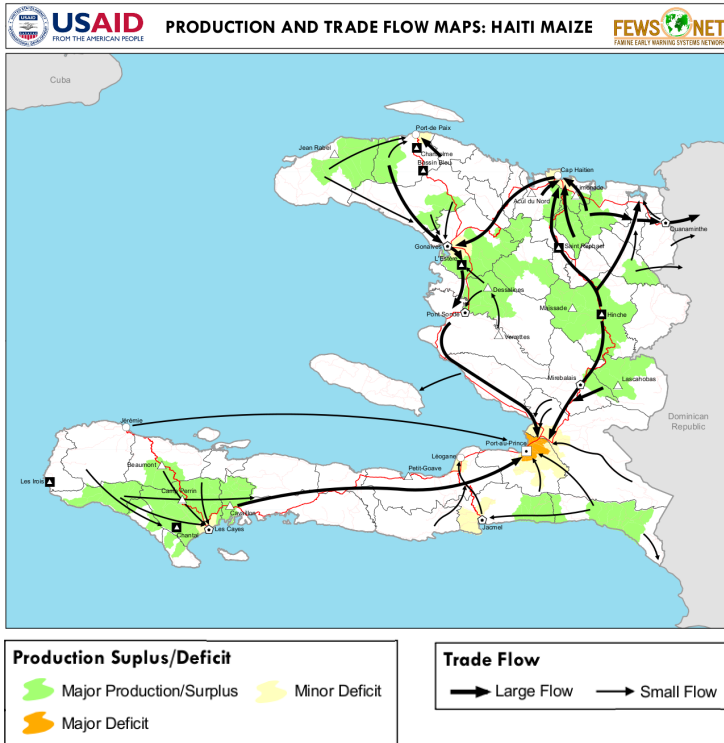
Port-au-Prince: Selected Weekly Commodities Prices



Source: Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA)

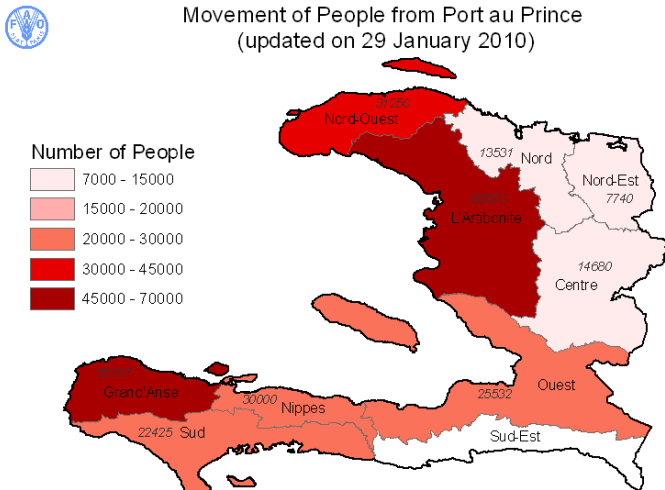
Trade Flow and Movement of Displaced People

A key priority is to ensure that internal trade continues smoothly in order to guarantee food supply to the population living in earthquake affected areas. Below is the map of maize flows from major productive areas. It is thus important to rehabilitate infrastructure on key routes.



Source: FEWSNET/USGS

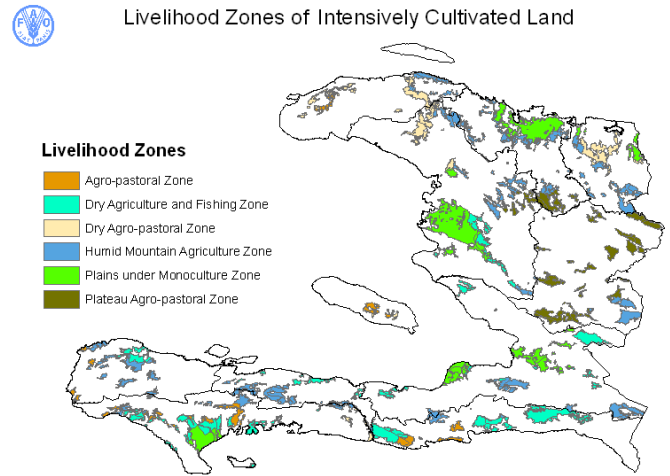
Another major problem following the earthquake is the overwhelming movement of people to the countryside where the degraded soil and natural resources are at high risk of further depletion (see map). On the other hand, these people can be a valuable workforce in rural areas. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of agricultural assets and infrastructure is therefore central to increasing production and supporting the productive employment of the displaced people.



Source: Derived from OCHA

Agriculture and FAO response

More than half of Haitians live in rural areas thus agriculture is one of the major sources of income. Crops harvests are underway and are expected to be relatively good. The next planting season for maize and rice begins in March in the lowlands, while planting in cooler and wetter highlands will start as early as February. The average planted area with cereals is 459,000 hectares. Therefore FAO's primary priorities include monitoring the situation on the ground to get a clearer picture of the immediate impact on food production; supporting ongoing food production activities in areas not directly affected by the disaster; and boosting food production in the next planting season through input distribution and technical support to farmers.



Source: CNSA/FEWSNET

Crop Calendar by Livelihood Zones

MAIZE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Agro-pastoral Zone			First Season					Second Season				
Dry Agriculture and Fishing Zone			First Season					Second Season				
Dry Agro-pastoral Zone			First Season					Second Season				
Humid Mountain Agriculture Zone												
Plains under Monoculture Zone												
Plateau Agro-pastoral Zone					First Season					Second Season		

Legend: Sowing (Orange), Growing (Green), Harvesting (Yellow)

Source: CNSA/FEWSNET

Government Policies

The government seeks to implement a special programme to support agricultural production in order to respond to the crisis caused by the earthquake and address food insecurity. The budget required is US\$ 700,000,000, of which 695,500,000 have to be funded by financial partnerships and external donors. The goal of the programme is to improve food supply by supporting production through input distribution policies and the rehabilitation of infrastructure while increasing the flow of money in the country. The main elements of the programme will be: the integration of local products in food aid programmes; input distribution; rehabilitation of productive assets; agricultural mechanization; protection of natural resources; support livestock farming and markets infrastructure, transport and farmers' access to markets.

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