



GIEWS Country Brief Sri Lanka

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Main season 2018 paddy crop expected to partially recover from 2017 drought-reduced output
- Cereal output in 2017 decreased significantly due to severe drought
- Cereal import requirements forecast to remain high in 2018
- Prices of rice decreased in February, while those of wheat stable

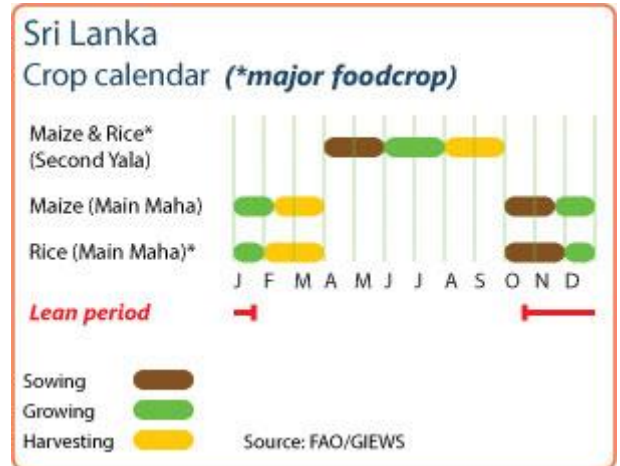
Main season 2018 paddy crop expected to partially recover from 2017 drought-reduced output

Harvesting of the 2018 main *maha* paddy crop, accounting for about 65 percent of the annual production, began in mid-January and is expected to continue until the end of March. Below-average rains throughout October 2017, coupled with low water levels in major reservoirs, constrained sowing operations. Rains improved from mid-January, benefitting the development of the crops already on the ground. Official information from January 2017 indicates that, while the planting progress for the 2018 main paddy crop surpassed last year's drought-reduced level, it lagged behind normal years. As a result, the 2018 main season paddy output is expected to partially recover from last year's severely reduced level but still be below average.

Aggregate cereal output in 2017 decreased significantly due to severe drought

Latest official estimates put the 2017 aggregate rice output at 2.5 million tonnes (1.7 million tonnes, milled basis), 43 percent less than the output in 2016 and 41 percent lower than the average of the previous five years. The decrease is the result of a severe drought at the end of 2016 and early 2017, which compromised water availabilities for irrigation for the 2017 main *maha* and secondary *yala* season crops, resulting in a considerable decrease in plantings, widespread crop losses and reduced yields.

Other cereals, including maize, various pulses, chillies and onions, mainly grown under rainfed conditions, were also heavily damaged by the dry weather.



Sri Lanka
Cereal production

	2012-2016 average	2016	2017 estimate	change 2017/2016
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	4,217	4,420	2,499	-43
Maize	242	291	190	-35
Millet	7	7	7	0
Others	0	0	0	0
Total	4,466	4,718	2,696	-43

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Cereal import requirements in 2018 forecast to remain at high level

The cereal import requirements in 2018 are forecast at about 1.6 million tonnes, 13 percent below last year's high level, but well above the five-year average. It comprises about 1 million tonnes of wheat and 100 000 tonnes of maize. For rice, the import requirements in 2018 are preliminarily forecast at about 500 000 tonnes, 33 percent below last year's exceptionally high level, but still well above the five-year average, given the expectations of the continuing supply tightness following last year's sharply reduced output.

Prices of rice decreased in February, while those of wheat stable

In February, domestic prices of rice decreased with the onset of the 2018 main *maha* harvest. Overall, prices were below their year earlier levels. Wheat prices remained overall stable in recent months and, in February, were close to the same period last year reflecting adequate imports.

Large numbers of people affected by severe weather conditions in 2017

According to the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission report, released in June 2017, the prolonged drought in the first part of 2017 has impacted the food consumption scores of the households in the affected areas, with approximately 900 000 people estimated to face food insecurity, mostly concentrated in the districts of Kurunegala, Moneragale, Vavuniya, Mannar and Jaffna. In addition, over 630 000 people were affected by floods in May 2017 mostly in the districts of Kalutara, Matara and Galle and Ratnapura.

A below-average 2018 main season paddy output is expected to affect food security conditions of large numbers of people, due to loss of income and reduced purchasing power resulting from the reduced production of paddy for sale and poor agricultural labour opportunities.

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