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Press Release:

Title

Kenya Maize Prospects and Food Situation

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Introduction

An assessment of the current maize crop performance and Food Situation was carried out by Tegemeo Institute in the month of September 2016. This assessment was carried out in the following Counties that are key to maize production in the country:

Uasin Gishu	Keiyo-Markwet
Trans-Nzoia	Kakamega
Nakuru	Bungoma
Nandi	Migori – Border Inflows
Narok	Busia – Inflows

Maize is a major food staple and source of income for a majority of households. Any shortage of maize supply is usually construed to mean food deficit. There is, however, no clear institutionalized way of assessing the status of maize (or other crops) stocks in the country with different agents relying on their own methods. The assessment carried out in this exercise is based on Expert Observation and Key Informants interviews.

The assessment provides information and data on the current maize situation and projections for the next 6-9 months.

Objectives of the Assessment:

1. Assess maize crop prospects and performance in 2016
2. Estimate the current Food Situation (Maize availability) and implications on food security
3. To inform policy makers and other stakeholders on Policy Options towards enhancement of food security

Key Messages

1. Maize production for 2016 is estimated to be lower than demand
2. EAC & COMESA neighbors are experiencing maize shortages
3. La Niña phenomenon is likely to occur in late 2016, impacting negatively on crops that are being planted – SR
4. Maize consumption in May, June and July might need to be covered through imports i.e. **some 9 million** bags
5. There is an import duty of 50% (CET) as prescribed by EAC
6. A Ban on GMO foods in Kenya has been on since 2012

Policy recommendations

1. There is need to prepare early for a possible maize shortage. Taking into account the lag-time in procurement is important to:
 - i. manage potential deficit
 - ii. Contain food prices
 - iii. Undertake a Multi-Stakeholder Approach
2. An early consideration of potential sources of such imports is critical given drought in the region
3. Export bans in surplus countries e.g.
 - Limited availability of GMO free maize
 - Note that there is a GMO Ban in Kenya
4. An evaluation/review of the 50% Common External Tarrif for potential imports outside EAC or COMESA.
 - The need to review and harmonize food situation monitoring and assessment methodology
 - National and county governments
 - Requires multi-stakeholder and consultative process
 - Overall, an establishment and institutionalization of a more efficient monitoring and forecasting system is important
 - more responsive to agents/institutions with better market and weather information and intelligence
 - Reconsider GMO Ban in Kenya
 - Within the broader global context and practice
 - At minimum a clear decision and direction is key
 - The need to promote Food Diversification

For further assistance, more information or if you would like to conduct interviews with any of the authors, presenters or Tegemeo Institute staff, please contact: Judy Kimani, 0720 96 33 48, jkimani@tegemeo.org. www.tegemeo.org