

Afar Region and Shinille Zone under heavy rains but pockets of vulnerability remain

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1 Introduction and background

Both Afar Region and Shinille Zone in the Somali Region have got recently heavy rains after 3 to 5 years of low precipitations. Nevertheless, rains remain erratic in some locations, especially in the northern part of Shinille Zone: Shinille, Aiysha, and Dembal Woredas, and in some parts of Zone 2 of Afar Region, especially Barhale and Dallol Woredas. Elsewhere, browsing conditions are fully regenerated and both camels and goats in Afar and Shinille Zone are in good physical condition. However, pasture availability remains the main concern for pastoralists worried about overgrazing. Last year drought and overgrazing at early stage of regrowth led to pasture depletion, particularly around Gewane and in some pocket areas of Shinille Zone. In Gewane, most of the wet grazing land has been infested with *Prosopis juliflora*, an acacia-like non-palatable bush. In those areas, cattle remain emaciated and affected by various diseases. Near Gewane, cattle are dying of Contagious Bovine Pleural Pneumonia (CBPP), blackleg and suspected cases of



Recent cattle carcasses lying close to Amassa Bure temporary settlement in Gewane Woreda, August 2003 (Photo by F. Piguet UN OCHA Ethiopia)

endemic animal tuberculosis. International NGO Farm Africa has collected post mortem tissue samples to get laboratory confirmation with histopathology analysis. Cattle carcasses are actually visible in settlements around Gewane. A UN OCHA Ethiopia assessment counted 50 cattle carcasses, most of them close to Old Gewane and the Amassa Bure Agricultural Training Centre located south of Gewane.

of epidemic threat from these carcasses.

Sanitation action needs to be taken in order to avoid any kind

Shinille Zone is part of Somali Region and borders Djibouti and Somaliland in the north and east respectively; Jijiga Zone in the southeast, and Oromiya and Afar Regions in the south and west respectively. The zone is part of the arid and semi-arid lowlands north of the Hararghe highlands. A few mountains and shrubs can be seen along the mid-highland

areas of Oromiya Region. The dominant clan group in the zone is the nomadic Issa Somalis. Gurgura, Gedabursi and Hawiya Somali clan groups are also the agropastoral residents in the zone (Sewonet, 2002).

The six woredas of the Shinille Zone are very dry and the rainfall pattern is highly erratic. For five years the zone has experienced way below average rainfall (Ahmed, Eggenberger, 2000). Most livestock has moved away, some of them already one year ago. Signs of grazing recovery would facilitate pastoralists' decision to bring those animals back, mostly from Somaliland, Fafen valley in the Somali Region, some parts of Oromiya (Babile, East Hararghe, Anchar and Assabot – Mieso and West Hararghe). Any return movements might bring changes in the locations of the Issa “*xeer*” or pastoral groups and sub clans within the zone, as Issa pastoralists movements and land rights do not force them to return to a specific location. Large number of livestock is moving westwards to the Afar Region due to recent rains. Issa camels and small livestock are now grazing almost permanently west of the Awash-Gewane road between Adaitou and Endufo.



Flowers in the desert near Adaitou, Afar Region, August 2003
(Photo by F. Piguet UN OCHA Ethiopia)

Despite of the rain, regeneration of grass is poor and hence a priority concern for the Issa pastoralists. Water is another major problem all over Shinille Zone, particularly in Aiysha and north Shinille. Shortage of water is mostly a consequence of neglected water point maintenance, particularly for boreholes with motor pumps. There is a plan to implements a number of new water

harvesting and conservation projects. Recent rains contribute to the replenishment of shallow wells (Sewonet, 2002; Ahmed & Rāmi, 2002).

Afar Region has 5 zones and 29 woredas and is located in the northeastern part of Ethiopia, sharing international borders with Eritrea and Djibouti. Afar land, about 150,000 km², is stretching from the Allideghi plain of the Awash Middle Valley in the south to the coastal depression of the Red Sea in the north (Woldemariam; 1993: p.1). The Afar people, circa one million¹, originally Cushitic, like their Oromo and Somali neighbours, are nomadic and the majority is still practicing “transhuman pastoralism” for subsistence. The northern part of Afar Region around the lower Danakil Plain is predominantly a semi-desert with thorny species of shrubs and acacias, further south in the Awash valley, steppic vegetation is dominant. Both ecological stages are facing bush encroachment with *prosopis juliflora*, which drive out more nutritive browsing vegetation (Piguet, 2001).

Despite recent *karma* rains, some areas remain highly vulnerable such as Zone 2 where rains have been erratic and Gewane area that is affected by the ongoing Afar – Issa tribal conflict and Awash River flooding. The Awash River flooded most of the marshes around Gewane. Afar pastoralists have been forced to move out of that swampy area where they are used to live and graze their animals. Those who moved to the east, along the Awash-Mile road are presently squeezed into a 5 km wide stretch of land between the swamps and the hills. Issa pastoralists live just behind the first line of hills. Cattle are dying of various

¹ The official figures from the 2000 Afar Region Census are the following: total regional population estimateegion 1,176,148 (zone 1: 326,146; zone 2: 234,645; zone 3: 129,464; zone 4: 142,352; zone 5: 343,541)

diseases and carcasses are actually visible around settlements and along the riverbanks. Remaining animals have moved south to Billen hot spring (Amibara Woreda) and to Allideghi plain, increasing risk of clashes with Issa, who are controlling the northern part of that important grazing area.

2 Mission findings

2.1 Security issues

Since a couple of weeks, tension between Afar and Issa is again high and might lead to new clashes between the two tribes because Afar pastoralists who temporarily settled along the road between Gewane and Buromodaitu, do not have enough space and feed for their animals. Water points located close to disputed grazing land are potentially warfare locations and need to be secured urgently. Near Buromodaitu Woreda offices in Galalu, the water point located on the foothill east of the highway needs to be secured. Afar pastoralists are deploying scouts to allow women to fetch water. Galalu still remains a hotspot since March 2002 when violent fights opposed Afar and Issa tribes. This conflict has been the worst confrontation in the last decade. .

Besides the Afar-Issa conflict frightening truck drivers and disrupting traffic and communications on the Awash-Mile Road between Adaitu and Gadamaitu, there are several other conflict-related and criminal incidents and clashes. Shinille Zone also faces security problems. Early August 15 men looted a Save the Children USA (SC-US) food aid truck near Qrabele distribution point in Dembal Woreda.

In addition, cattle raiders exacerbate territorial conflict. One Afar leader has been killed in July between Adaitu and Oboko when Issa took 600 cattle from Afar pastoralists. Since, the number of incidents along the road considerably increased. More towards the south, near Galalu (Buromodaitu Woreda), Afar pastoralists also fear Issa cattle raiders. One Afar man has been killed early August near Mataka and Galalu water point in the buffer zone controlled by the federal security forces.

2.2 Rain and flooding in Afar Region

In Afar Region “*karma*” rains have been particularly erratic in Zone 2 where 6 of 12 kebeles in Barhale Woreda did not receive any rain. In Dallol Woreda the situation is similar. Part of zone 5, Dalifage and Fursi Woredas did not receive sufficient rain. In Zone 1, the 4 northern kebeles of Dubti Woreda (Guyah, Kori, Gululbleh Af and Musle) did not receive sufficient rain. Meanwhile, it has been raining around Bure at the Eritrean border along Mile-Assab road. The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB) in Assaita estimates that the overall situation in Afar Region has improved compared to last year. Some Afar pastoralists interviewed along the road admitted not having witnessed such amount of rain since six years.

Around Gewane, people have been forced to leave their locations in the marsh due to flooding of the Awash River. Members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) count some 300 families who have been surrounded by water in Bidah kebele (Gewane Woreda). Many other households have established temporary shelters near Amassa Bure and Mataka. Their main needs are shelter materials, food and medicine for human and animals.

Flooding usually occurs also in the lower Awash Valley where the Awash River is supplied with additional water from tributaries such as Kesseme, Logia and Mile Rivers. Logia River, which is not a perennial river, caused recent floods in Det Bahir, Hanakis and Magenta, where weak animals have been trapped by water. The veterinary team of Action Contre la Faim (ACF) estimated that 300 to 400 animals died and that floods directly affect about 300 households. Pastoralists anticipated the flooding of the Awash River in these lower sections and moved with their animals to zone 4 and to Chiffra. Even though the situation is under control, the UN OCHA mission crossed the dyke that leads to Afambo where most of the area that usually gets flooded, is still dry. Flooding bears higher risks of water born diseases and higher malaria incidence.. In Afambo most of the pastoralists left riverside rangelands with their animals.

Following recent floods, Afar Region authorities estimated that some 20,000 animals must have died and some 16,000 people must be affected. According to NGOs active in the area, such figures are grossly overestimated because flooding is a regular and periodic event along the Awash River and most people are prepared for flooding during this time of the year. Hence, they usually leave the flooding areas with their animals on time and in anticipation of flooding.

In Melka Werer (Amibara), Awash Basin Water Resources Administration Agency (ABWRAA) specialists have assured the UN OCHA mission that Koka dam is not completely full and there is no immediate need of water discharge. Actually, Koka dam electric power station needs a 30m³/second water flow to assure normal conditions for

Flooded areas along Assaita road, Afar Region, August 2003 (Photo by F. Piguet UN OCHA Ethiopia)



electricity production. Around Amibara, the danger of flooding comes from three Awash River tributaries: Arba, Kesseme and Kabana Rivers. Around Amibara the amount of silt carried by rivers is often blocking the irrigation systems of commercial farms. In August the Awash Basin Water Resources Administration Agency (ABWRAA) has been forced to temporarily break a section of the dyke for irrigation purposes. In general, the heavy silting of the Awash River and of many irrigation canals in

Amibara, Gewane, Dubti and Assaita are the major cause of flooding and crop damage when the highly elevated dykes break and the river water flows uncontrolled into commercial plantations and eventually leaves villages and settlements cut off from regular supplies.

2.3 Grazing availability

Rangeland regeneration remains a major problem everywhere, despite good rains. Rangeland regeneration is particularly problematic in Amibara and Gewane Woredas, where years of drought induced overgrazing and hence led to important land degradation. Infestation with *prosopis juliflora* has a strong negative impact on grazing availability in

both Amibara and Gewane Woredas of Afar Region and in Afdem Woreda of Shinille Zone, Somali Region.

Prosopis juliflora infestation is so dominant that almost all other plants are suppressed and do not grow anymore. In other parts of Afar Region the same kind of paradox can be observed: camels and goats have now recovered due to excellent browsing conditions, but due to years overgrazing and hence land degradation, pasture for cattle remains scarce and even problematic for the survival of some herds. Farm Africa active in Gewane and other areas of Afar Region, currently runs development and emergency programmes focused on livestock in Afar Zones 3 and 5. The NGO recommends diversifying animal herds by increasing the proportion of camels and goats while reducing the number of cattle.

Both Afar and Issa people express their fear that former rain patterns may have changed for good.

2.4 Animal movements

In Shinille Zone, Issa livestock moved west to Gadamaïtou, to the rich pasture plain of Allideghi in Amibara, as well as to Endufo, Adaitou and up to Mesalo, towards the northern part of Zone 5 and Chiffra, another rich pasture area. Only part of those animals and pastoralists will return back in October and November.

Early 2003, Shinille herders moved to neighbouring parts of Oromiya Region. Afdem livestock is actually grazing on the Oromiya side of Mieso Woreda (West Hararghe Zone), around Assabot Mountain, in Bone kebele, and southwest up to Anchar Woreda (West Hararghe Zone). In September, only 50% of the livestock returned back to Mulu (Mieso Woreda), the last accessible location along Afdem road. In Mieso, the little grass available shared for all is still increasing tensions. Animals of Northeast Shinille Zone moved south through Dire Dawa to Babile and Gobebe Valley in Eastern Hararghe Zone and also to Fafen Valley in Jijiga Zone (Somali Region) and near Zeilah and Boroma across the Ethiopian border in Somaliland. Those animals should later return to their original place, but pastoralists postponed such movements due to lack of pasture and water.

In the Afar Region, even if the rains have been good, movements south of Gewane are restricted due to conflict between Afar and Issa. Some good grazing lands are actually within the buffer zone established by the army to step down the conflict. A similar situation affects livestock movements along the Talalak River located on the left side of the Awash in Zone 5. Issa pastoralists have brought camels and cattle up to Mesalo.

In other parts of Afar, movements are mostly traditional transhumance between the Awash riverbanks, Zone 4 and Chiffra plain with the best grazing opportunities besides those pastures along the Awash river used during the dry season. These pastures are called “*kalu*”² and are presently partly flooded and therefore potentially dangerous in terms of animal and human diseases.

2.5 Livestock condition and animal health issues

² There are currently three main grazing reserves areas or “*Kalu*” in the Afar Region: The Awsa Kalo along the Awash riverbanks, the Ba’di Kalo in the marshes of Gewane and the Terru Kalo (north of Zone 4).

Animal health constitutes another concern despite preventive efforts made through vaccination and specific measures to control internal and external parasites affecting livestock. In August, animals are supposed to be in their best physical condition. If they do not improve now, they might not be able to survive the forthcoming dry season.

FARM AFRICA IN AFAR REGION

The Afar Pastoralist Emergency Project currently initiated by the International NGO 'Farm Africa' covers four Woredas: Amibara and Gewane in Zone 3 and Dawe and Talalak in Zone 5.

Project activities include the following components:

1) **Destocking:** Farm Africa is purchasing cattle for slaughtering and for feeding priority food beneficiaries. Each emaciated cattle is purchased for 200 ETB and slaughtered after a veterinary check. If the meat appears to be safe for human consumption, this complementary food distribution will target in priority women and children with 2 kg of fresh meat per family. Further dry meat distributions will depend on availability. This destocking project is being implemented at 5 sites in Gewane Woreda, 6 sites in Amibara Woreda (Zone 3) and since March 2003 has been extended to Dawe Woreda in Zone 5. Each site has a slaughtering capacity of 12 to 20 animals per day over a project target of 2880 animals to be slaughtered.

2) **Livestock feeding:** The NGO targeted 4,000 lactating cows to be fed, 1,000 animals in each woreda. In order to fulfill the objective, 16 target communities have been selected within 4 kebeles per woreda. Animals are receiving 3kg hay and 0.5kg concentrate food complement per day for a period of 90 days. Despite the fact that feeding animals constitutes an appropriate answer to pastoralists' needs in drought, transport costs for the hay are high for the 60,000 balls of hay that have to be transported.

3) **Animal health:** This component is mostly the continuation of a vaccination campaign that depends on animal condition. Due to poor animal health condition and diseases in Gewane particularly, veterinary services are mostly distributing antibiotics and multi-vitamins. Community animal health workers (CAHW) together with government technicians, the Zonal Veterinarian and Farm Africa experts are running this programme.

4) **Supplementary crop production:** This component is strongly related to standard Farm Africa development activities. Any support to small-scale irrigation requests pumps in order to grow early maturing maize improved seed and vegetables like onions and tomatoes in Bidah area, near Mataka (Gewane Woreda) and Hallidebi in Amibara Woreda. At this stage, Farm Africa has provided farm tools, ploughing oxen and seed for 8 community groups.

In the six woredas of Shinille zone, animal health is mostly supported by Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS) and Handicap International (HI) interventions. Due to the recent emergency, HCS proceeded to free vaccination and distribution of medicine. Lack of pasture and various diseases affect animals, primarily in Afdem Woreda, followed by Dembal, where, according to the representative of the Shinille Zone Pastoral and Rural Development Coordinating Office, ticks affect most of the animals. HCS veterinary teams have vaccinated 145,976 heads against anthrax, black leg and pasteurellosis. They treated 95,426 heads against opportunistic diseases, mostly internal/external parasites and infectious diseases. However, HI will take over the animal health activities in Erer Woreda. At this stage, veterinary authorities are reporting shortages of animal drugs in Shinille Zone.

Pastoralists in all surveyed areas are confused concerning changing animal health services practices during emergencies when medication is free and "normal times" when these services function under a cost recovery system. Like in other regions, a livestock vaccination and medical cost recovery system might not function properly

because many pastoralists may not be able to pay and therefore are avoiding animal disease prevention measures. After the present crisis this question should be properly addressed in order to avoid further animal condition deterioration due to endemic diseases.

In Afar Region, DPPB is focusing on animal health in Zones 2 and 3. In Gewane Woreda, shortage of pasture and recent temperature changes affect animals and are causing numerous deaths among cattle. Animals died in July, a week before the rain started and over the rainy season. According



to Farm Africa, there are numerous cases of CBPP and animal TB forms' suspicion are under laboratory analysis. Farm Africa together with OXFAM are running veterinary services and a feeding centre in Zone 5.

According to the Veterinary Services of the Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Bureau (formerly the Agricultural Bureau) in Assaita, lump skin, a disease called "*agara*" in Afargna and caused by ticks, is affecting animals in Arabati, Magale and Koneba woredas (Zone 2). So far, the zonal authorities did not report. NGOs reported similar diseases in Ab Ala, Barhale and Dallol, three adjacent woredas. With the rains, livestock might be less affected with external parasites. Veterinary Services also mentioned shortages of acaricides (an animal medicine for external use similar to an insecticide), drugs and vaccines.

2.6 *Market and economic conditions hampered by livestock losses and tied down contraband*

Both Afar and Issa are involved in cattle husbandry, which is the best stock for marketing. They market both animals and animal products, which actually are slowly recovering.

In Shinille Zone, milk is currently commercialised in Dire Dawa urban area. Since about 3 years, camel milk used for social exchange is now regularly available in town. Lactating camels are regularly kept around Dire Dawa to supply the market. Camel meat is also exported to Djibouti and Somaliland. In Somaliland Issa are selling milk as well. In UN OCHA Ethiopia assessed locations, camel milk production is still low and there are only very few lactating cattle. Further, local ghee is currently not available.

Despite animal losses currently evaluated to some 40% of cattle herds, animal products have diminished and alternative trading products are mostly fuel wood and charcoal sold at low prices. For example, petty camel transport such as fuel wood from rural areas to Dire Dawa town generates 12 ETB. In Aiysha, Shinille Zone, a bag of charcoal generates 6 ETB. Consequently, people are more and more tied to relief food.

Since October 2002, Ethiopian authorities have decided to take action against contraband along Djibouti and Somaliland borders. In Dire Dawa, such "grey trade" has been cut down by 50% and therefore additional cash income decreased drastically for a lot of pastoralists in Shinille zone. Smuggling has been cut down particularly from Djibouti, even if some channels are still open for Afar Region and Shinille Zone through Zeilah and Berbera harbours. In locations actively involved in such traffic like Bike (Afdem Woreda), Gadamaitu, and Shinille, cash availability has decreased affecting most of the people. People from Afambo and Assaita Woredas in Afar Region are also complaining about a decrease in alternative ("traditional" local contraband) income generating activities. Lack of cash in the zone might create bottlenecks for water and animal health programmes and projects based on cost recovery. Local informants are commenting that "climatic conditions are better but economic conditions are worse", as alternative income generating opportunities beside livestock trade decreased.

2.7 *Lack of water point maintenance keeps water availability short*

Six woredas of Shinille Zone face shortage of water and the situation is particularly acute in Aiysha. In several kebeles of Shinille Woreda (Hore, Hariso, Hadkali kebeles) and in Dembal Woreda (Dulhat, Gejeji, Gelisa, Lowalay kebeles) water points lack maintenance

and spare parts. An Issa clan leader from Afdem observed that after 3 years of little rain, even shallow wells dried up. Recent heavy rains cut off roads and temporarily isolated villages.

Water supply for Aiysha and eight surrounding settlements (about 3250 people) is unsteady because the borehole lacks maintenance due to financial problems. HCS drilled the borehole 12 years ago. It is located 7 km out of Aiysha town and is using a 20 KW pump engine and gravitation. Actually the urban population is supposed to pay 20 cents for a 20 litre water jerry can. The is now facing difficulties because and estimated 25% of the urban population does not pay and gets water for free. Furthermore, the 'Aiysha Water Committee' runs the borehole without any accountability and financial management. Not surprisingly the committee is facing maintenance difficulties because the money generated only allows purchasing 20 to 25 litres of diesel fuel to satisfy daily consumption.

Water harvesting and water conservation projects are proposed to increase water availability in Shinille Zone. Despite of the rains, some locations near Assabot (Mieso Woreda in Oromiya) are still reporting shortages of water.

In Zone 3 of Afar Region, OXFAM runs sanitation, water maintenance and development

Water sanitation problems linked with actual difficulties to run the water system in Aiysha town, August 2003 (Photo by F. Piguet UN OCHA Ethiopia)



activities. OXFAM water teams have already rehabilitated 8 boreholes in Debel (Buremodaitu Woreda), Old Gewane and Gewane town, Leas (Gewane Woreda), Endido, Udulah Keremsa, and Kurkura in Amibara Woreda and in Dodo in Awash Fentale Woreda. Today, OXFAM has handed over the borehole programme to the Ethiopian authorities and activities are more focused on hand dug shallow wells. OXFAM will rehabilitate one additional borehole in Hallidebe (Amibara Woreda).

OXFAM recently received a letter from Gewane Woreda Authorities requesting to deal with rotting animal carcasses. OXFAM is willing to pay for logistics. Urgent action is needed to bury the numerous carcasses to prevent. But local bureaucracy is delaying action and insufficient hygiene knowledge and education among the local population exposes the people to health and sanitation hazards.

2.8 Malaria to peak and probable disease outbreaks due to lack of proper sanitation

In the coming weeks, malaria is expected to peak in Shinille Zone. Decentralised health posts are not functioning in Arabi (Dembal Woreda), Adigala (Shinille Woreda) and in Asbuli (Erer Woreda), mostly due to lack of medicine and other essential supplies.

Also in Afar Region malaria is a major threat, despite DDT spraying near Mataka (Gewane Woreda) and reed fires near Billen in Amibara Woreda. Malaria is mostly feared in Gewane Woreda, already affected by high numbers of cattle deaths. Luckily, up to now no outbreak of any transmittable diseases have been reported. But, as the head of the Gewane health centre commented, if there is an outbreak of one of the transmittable diseases, the situation might get quickly out of hand. In the Gewane health centre the number of children treated daily presenting coughing and diarrhoea rose from three to eight children.

The African Medical and Research Foundation³ (AMREF) representative, mentioned that the organisation could not yet implement planned sanitation activities, because a programme implementation agreement with the Afar Regional Health Bureau in Assaita is still pending. AMREF planned to start implementing its Pastoralist Health Programme in September. The programme is based on assessments conducted in 2000 that have recently been updated and targets 25,000 pastoralists and semi-settled people who are affected by malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhoea due to polluted water. AMREF planned to support the Gewane health centre and to implement water and sanitation activities with the Gewane health centre and in three kebeles (Rafita Bidah, Galiladura, Old Gewane). The NGO also plans to develop a family health programme with malaria intervention, training of traditional birth attendants (TBA), vaccination training and refreshment courses for the health centre and the medical staff of health posts.

2.9 Relief food

The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Department (DPPD) and SC-US are in charge of food aid distribution in Shinille Zone. Recently, floods, technical and logistical problems as well as budget constraints delayed food aid distributions. In August a truck loaded with 140 cartons of oil was been looted near Dembal. Due to the increasing economical difficulties people are facing in the area, people are more and more dependent on food aid and at distribution centres tensions among beneficiaries are high. SC-US did an assessment in Shinille that did not show much improvement in the overall crisis situation. In the northern part of Aiysha Woreda, rangelands remain dry. Obviously, there are pocket areas where communities have only a minimum of essential resources at hand.

In Afar Region, food aid and shelter material is not adequate for those people who are affected by flood. From Bidah kebele in Gewane Woreda, about 1000 people have temporarily been resettled in 3 locations (Dugaburis, Bira and Abasso) and many others moved away from the marshes.

Due to logistic constraints in Gewane Woreda some communities paid themselves for local transport of relief food. And still, food aid distributions take about one month to be completed from the day of reception at the DPPC warehouse to the final consumer in the woreda. When food arrives in Gewane, the pastoralist leaders are informed and relief food is distributed nearby the Gewane warehouse for nearby kebeles around Gewane town. Out of Gewane's 49,000 people, 8,970 are eligible for food aid. The Gewane woreda authorities also registered those additional people who are affected by the floods in the marshes nearby Gewane town. The UN OCHA Ethiopia mission heard complaints about the quality of the sorghum distributed in Mataka. Obviously, part of the relief consignment

³ AMREF has recently been assigned to support the health sector in Gewane Woreda of Afar Region.

germinated after rain in Galalu, where relief food is piled up outside without any protection, exposed to rain, wind, insects and rats.

For Afambo, Assaita and Dubti Woredas, World Vision International (WVI) in charge of relief food distributions, planned to distribute food rations in September. Ration in September is to be 15kg of grain, 4.5 kg of pulses and 0.5 kg of oil per beneficiary.



WVI is currently drafting a five year

Food distribution in Mataka, Gewane Woreda, September 2003 (Photo by F. Piguet UN OCHA Ethiopia)

development programme and wants to shift from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and development in Afar Region. Components of the programme include water, agriculture and livestock interventions, off-farm activities, HIV and environmental issues. The programme focuses on the principle that communities should realise and use their own potentials. The Regional Government has already agreed to the WVI support model whereby farmers with on-farm trials are being assisted with improved crop varieties that have been developed at agricultural research centres in order to strengthen existing crop types. For livestock improvement, WVI intends to work with crossbreed animals and new forage crop varieties. Planned off-farm activities tend to benefit women in petty trade and income diversification through saving and credit schemes, milk processing and marketing, and the introduction and improvement of handicrafts. Food, forage and shade tree seedlings will be provided to benefit people and the hampered eco-system.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

More livestock support is essential. So far crisis support for pastoralists in Afar and Shinille Zone is far from assuring sustainable livelihoods for pastoralists. Both in Afar and Issa communities, resources and assets are scarce and people are becoming more food aid dependant every year. This clearly is not a viable alternative as this situation generates more conflict and crisis potential with more migratory movements and increased competition on the scarce natural resources.

Significant migratory movements have already taken place that changed local political balance among pastoralists and between pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and farmers. Tensions between Issa and Afar tribes are likely to rise once more in the coming weeks resulting in armed conflict. Preventive mediation efforts should be undertaken with traditional leaders of the worrying parties. For negotiations between clan elders representing migrant pastoralists and local population, traditional leaders can certainly contribute to stabilise the situation. Past experiences – particularly between Karayu and Arsi - have showed that success of a peace building process is often attached to negotiation coming from a traditional leadership initiative.

Because of the conflict potential at locations where there is heavy competition for resources, pasture in particular, federal and regional authorities and security forces should urgently contribute to facilitate exchange of information among rival groups and to guarantee accesses to disputed grazing and water points.

The emergency slaughter strategy can be continued on conditions that animals under risk are not substantially weak with very low live weight. Eventually, stock exchange with grain in collaboration with DPPC at federal, regional and zonal levels might be feasible.

Livestock vaccinations campaigns must be stepped up in order to avoid massive outbreaks of opportunistic diseases that prey on weakened animals. Mobile veterinary units should be dispatched to all main locations where people migrate with their livestock. For NGOs like Farm Africa animal health interventions are vital in pastoral areas, and hence a close link between public and para-veterinary practitioners should be strengthened. Animal health cost recovery system should be carefully explained to the pastoralists and linked with market initiatives to support pastoral economy.

Livestock, particularly cattle, are the first victims of drought, and thus apart from supplementary feed distribution, any restocking strategy should consider drought tolerant species – mostly camels and goats – in order to contribute to change composition of the herds. However, camel and goat meat and milk markets should be supported by specific initiatives, otherwise the shift to more drought resistant species will not be accepted by pastoralists.

Some could say that the fight against contraband comes at an inopportune time as alternative cash income opportunities are lacking. Substitute local transports by pack animals and other market initiative might support livestock and livestock products commercialisation.

On a short-term basis, support to the health sector in terms of malaria prevention, mosquito nets and drug distribution should be a priority as malaria is one of the killers among endemic pathologies in Ethiopia. At this stage, discussions about the necessity of a cost recovery system might slow down the process. Issues on that point should be clearly explained to the people and taking into account the present depressed economic situation.

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Annex

Abbreviations

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANRS	Afar National Regional State
APDA	Afar Pastoralist Development Association
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation
APEP	Afar Pastoralists Emergency Project
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CARE	Cooperatives for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBPP	Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonie (in Afargna: GUBLO)
CCPP	Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonie
CIRAD	Centre International de Recherches sur l'Agriculture et le Développement
CSB	Corn Soya Blend
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, white chlorinated hydrocarbon used as insecticide
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (Federal Government level)
DPPB	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (Regional level)
DPPD	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Department (Zonal level)
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
HCS	Hararghe Catholic Secretariat
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MT	Metric Ton
NGO	Non-Governmental-Organisation
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PA	Peasant association
SC-USA	Save the Children USA
SF	Supplementary Feeding
SNRS	Somali National Regional State
TB	Tuberculosis
TBA	Traditional birth attendants
TF	Therapeutic Feeding
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-EUE	United Nations Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Aid for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WV	World Vision

Glossary

dega	Expression for one of the altitudinal agroecological belts in Ethiopia. In Tigray between 2500 to > 3400 m a.s.l.
kebele	Smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia
kolla	Expression for one of the altitudinal agroecological belts in Ethiopia. In Tigray between ~1400 to ~1800 m a.s.l.
woreda	Local administrative unit
weyna dega	Expression for one of the altitudinal agroecological belts in Ethiopia. In Tigray between ~1800 to ~2400 m a.s.l.

Glossary of important meteorological and seasonal terms used for Ethiopian highland areas

Meteorological Drought Defined

Drought is a period of insufficient water initiated by reduced precipitation. The impacts of drought on crops and society are critical but not easily quantified. The result is that "drought" does not have a universal definition. "Meteorological drought" is defined as a sustained period of deficient precipitation with a low frequency of occurrence. While crops may be damaged by lack of precipitation and high temperatures in just a few days, such short periods are not considered to be meteorological droughts. A three-month period is defined by the American Meteorological Society to be the shortest period that can be defined as a drought. (Source: *The American Meteorological Society*)

Ethiopia's 'Keremt' or 'Meher' Rains Defined

Since Ethiopia and Eritrea are in the tropics, physical conditions and variations in altitude have resulted in a great diversity of climate, soil, and vegetation. Rainfall is seasonal, varying in amount, space, and time. There is a long and heavy summer rain, normally called the big rain or *keremt*, which falls from June-September. It is followed by the *baga* hot, dry period from October through February (see below for definition). In some areas there are short and moderate spring rains in March and April known as the little rains or *belg*. These rainy periods correspond to Ethiopia's primary and secondary agricultural seasons, known as the *meher* and *belg*. (Source: *FEWS*)

Ethiopia's 'Belg' Rains Defined

In spring, a strong cyclonic centre develops over Ethiopia and Sudan. Winds from the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean highs are drawn towards this centre and blow across central and southern Ethiopia. These moist, easterly and south-easterly winds produce the main rain in south-eastern Ethiopia and the little spring rains to the east central part of the north-western highlands. The little rains of the highlands are known as *belg* rains, referring to the second most important sowing season of the region. (Source: *FEWS*)

Ethiopia's 'Baga' Season Defined

Since Ethiopia is in the tropics, physical conditions and variations in altitude have resulted in a great diversity of climate, soil, and vegetation. Rainfall is seasonal, varying in amount, space, and time. There is a long and heavy summer rain, normally called the big rain or *keremt*, which falls from June-September. It is followed by the *baga* hot, dry period from October through February. In some areas there are short and moderate spring rains in March and April known as the little rains or *belg*. These rainy periods correspond to Ethiopia's primary and secondary agricultural seasons, known as the *meher* and *belg*. (Source: *FEWS*)

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Itinerary & places visited of UN OCHA Ethiopia field mission to Afar Region and Shinille Zone in Somali Region

Travel Dates	Programme	Overnight locations
19 August	Liaison Addis – Dire Dawa Meeting with ICRC Awash	Dire Dawa
20 August	Meeting with Shinille zone authorities, DPPD, WFP and HCS Field visit to HCS CAHW training workshop in Shinille	Dire Dawa
21 August	Field visit to Aiysha together with HCS team Water projects	Dire Dawa
22 August	Meeting with HCS, SCF US Liaison Dire Dawa - Awash Meeting with ICRC	Awash
23 August	Field trip to Afdem. EUE team reached Mulu and went back, road to Afdem still cut off.	Awash
24 August	Awash – Logia Meeting with ACF in Dubti	Mile
25 August	Mile – Assaita Meeting with regional DPPB, Pastoral and Agro-pastoral bureau and APDA Field visit to a distribution site in Afambo	Mile
26 August	Stop over in Gewane Meeting with Farm Africa and local authorities Field visit affected kebeles along the main road	Awash
27 August	Visit to Amibara, Meeting with zonal DPPD in Melka Sedi and Awash Basin Water Resources Administration Agency in Melka Werer Awash – Addis Ababa	
31 August	Addis Ababa - Mile via Kombolcha Stop over good grazing conditions between Elwiha and Mile.	Mile
1 September	Assaita ACF presentation on EWS FEZ in zone 1 & 4 Meetings with WVI, DPPB and Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Bureau	Mile
2 September	Visit to Gewane, Meeting with woreda DPPC, Farm Africa. Visit to a distribution site in Mataka Visit to Galalu, Buremodaitu woreda administration focused on water issues	Awash
3 September	Meeting with Oxfam Awash Awash – Addis Ababa	

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