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Ethiopia

Post: Addis Ababa

Ethiopia's Oilseed Production Forecast to Increase Despite Drought

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Report Highlights:

In contrast to the huge drought-related losses in grain production, Ethiopia's production of major oilseeds – sesame, Niger seed and soybeans – is expected to increase to nearly 790,000 metric tons in MY15/16 (Oct-Sep). Sesame exports – one of the Ethiopia's biggest sources of foreign exchange – are forecast at 318,000 metric tons, just shy of the current record. Oilseed production and consumption, especially for soybeans, is expected to keep growing as demand increases for cooking oil and livestock feed ingredients.

Background on Ethiopia’s Oilseed Production Situation

Ethiopia’s oilseed sector, which is rapidly growing to meet both local and foreign demand, plays a vitally important economic role in generating foreign exchange earnings and income for the country. In fact, approximately one-fifth of Ethiopia’s total export earnings are generated from oilseed exports, with sesame being the second largest export-revenue generator after coffee. Last year, sesame exports were valued at little more than \$480 million, while Niger seed added just 14 million. In addition, the oilseed sector provides income to millions of growers and others involved in processing and trading.

In contrast to grain production, the impact of the drought on oilseed production was minimal. In fact, the production of major oilseeds – sesame, Niger seed and soybeans – is forecast to increase by 28,000 metric tons to 788,000 metric tons in MY15/16 (Oct-Sep). This increase is attributed to anticipated production gains of sesame and Niger seed, which require relatively less moisture compared to other crops. As for soybeans, production fell slightly because of insufficient moisture. Looking further ahead, production of oilseeds is likely to increase to meet the growing demand for cooking oil and livestock ingredients, most notably soybean meal for poultry production.

Table 1: Annual Production Volume of Major Oilseed Crops

Crop/Year	2014/15	2015/16	Year-to-Year Variation	% Change
Sesame	464,000	487,000	23,000	5%
Niger seed	224,000	235,000	11,000	5%
Soybean	72,000	66,000	(6,000)	-8%
Total	760,000	788,000	28,000	4%

Sesame Seed

Production

Post expects that sesame production will reach approximately 487,000 metric tons in MY15/16, up by 5 percent or 23,000 metric tons compared to previous year's production volume. This anticipated increase is based on favorable weather conditions and an expansion in area planted. The limited amount of rainfall resulting from the drought did not adversely impact national sesame production since sesame requires relatively less moisture compared to other crops. Having said this, there were pockets where sesame production was damaged or completely destroyed because the rains started too late and were followed by unexpected heavy rains during the harvest. These losses, though, were more than offset by production gains in other growing areas.

MY16/17 production is likely to contract slightly to somewhere around 450,000 metric tons since farmers are likely to switch to other crops, such as sorghum, cotton, and soybeans, in response to the weakening of domestic and international sesame prices with China cutting back on consumption. See table 2 for production numbers and figure 3 for price trends.

Looking further into the future, production is likely to expand as more land is cultivated in sesame. In fact, according to National Sesame Sector Development Strategy, the climate and geographies in some locations in the eastern half and southern parts of the country in Afar, Somali, and SNNP regions are conducive to growing sesame. See figures 1 and 2 for sesame growing areas. Commercial and small-scale production in these areas has already started. The question of how much production will increase as these new areas come on line will depend on a large extent on international sesame prices and the trade-off with other crops. In addition to more acreage opening up in the future, the utilization of new technologies, modern farming practices, and improved inputs, like seeds, would also have a tremendous boost to annual sesame production. According to industry sources, these modifications could increase yields by more than double their current level of 0.76 metric tons per hectare.

Sesame is one of the high-value, export crops that is of paramount importance to the wellbeing of Ethiopia's national economy. It is the single most widely produced oilseed crop in the country, representing more than one-third of Ethiopia's total oilseed production. Ethiopia is fourth largest producer of sesame seed in the world behind India, China and Sudan.

Sesame is produced mainly in the northern and northwestern lowlands of Ethiopia adjacent to the borders with Sudan and Eritrea. Some of the major producing areas are found in and around the locations of Humera, Metema, Benshungul Gumuz, Wollo and Wellega. The two most widely known sesame varieties – Humera and Wollega – derive their names from the areas where they are planted. Planting is done in late June and early July and harvesting is done from early October to mid-November. About two-thirds of production comes from smallholder farmers on holdings less than five hectares with the remainder coming from medium to large-scale commercial farms.

Table 2: Trend of Ethiopia's Sesame Production, Acreage, & Yield

Crop Year	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Yield (MT/Ha)
2009/10	487,000	459,000	0.94
2010/11	638,000	623,000	0.98
2011/12	542,000	402,000	0.74
2012/13	367,000	279,000	0.76
2013/14	576,000	440,000	0.76
2014/15*	610,000	464,000	0.76
Average	537,000	444,000	0.82
2015/16*	641,000	487,000	0.76

Source: National Sesame Sector Development Strategy & Own Estimation for 2014/15 & 2015/16

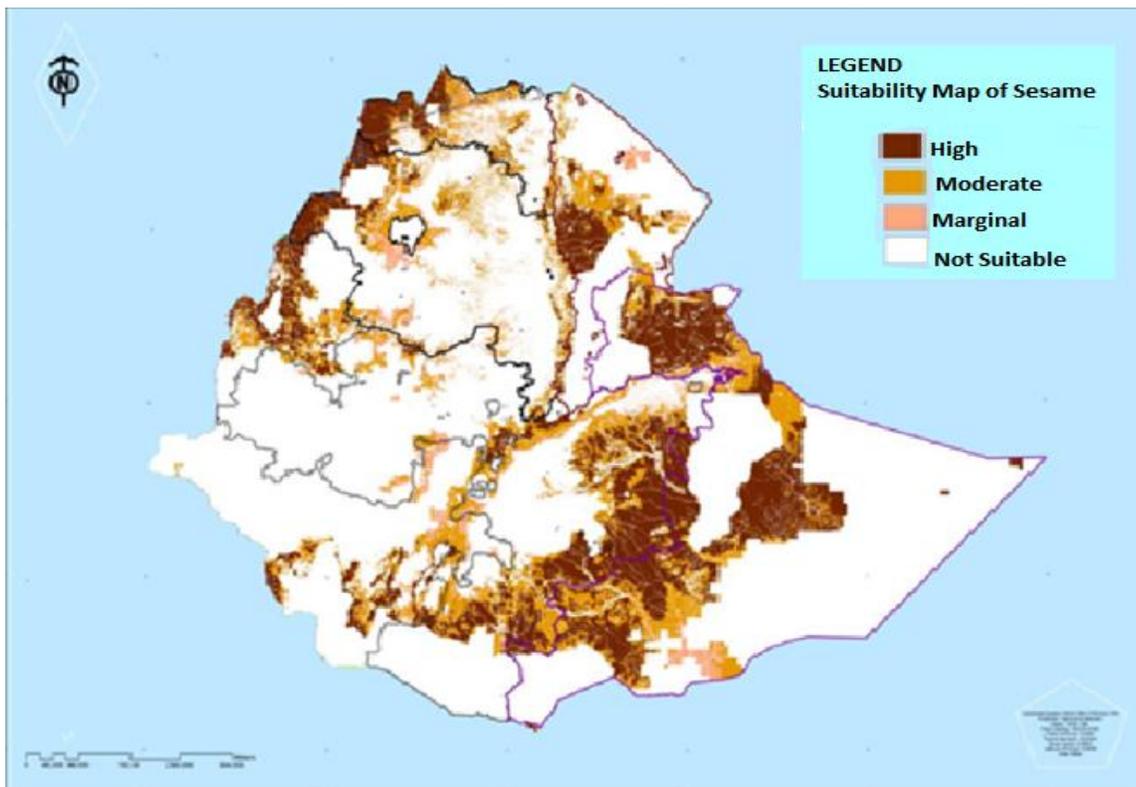
*FAS Addis Ababa Forecast

Figure 1: Major Production Areas of Sesame in Ethiopia.



Source: Alemu and Menjerink, 2010

Figure 2: Suitable Areas for Sesame Cultivation in Ethiopia



Source: National Sesame Sector Development Strategy (2015-2019)

Consumption

MY15/16 consumption is forecast to remain relatively unchanged from last year at 184,000 metric tons. This figure is expected to show modest gains in the future as food processors use more sesame in value-added products such as locally-produced tehani and halva.¹ Some of these value-added products will likely also go for export.

Unlike other international sesame producers, Ethiopia's sesame is mainly produced for the international market, with close to 75 percent going for export. The sesame that is not exported is mostly used for seed, oil crushing, and baked products.

Ethiopian sesame, specifically the Humera/Gonder variety, is well known for its uniformity, white color, large size, aroma and sweet taste. These characteristics make it suitable for use in local and international baked products, such as hamburger and sandwich buns. The major competitive advantage of the Wellega type is its high oil content.

Trade

¹ Tahini is a paste made of roasted hulled sesame seeds that is used in dressing, hummus, sauces and traditional foods of Middle East.

Sesame exports are forecast to reach 318,000 metric tons in MY15/16, just shy of the current record and up nearly 25,000 metric tons from the preceding year. This increase is attributed to larger production volumes. MY14/15 exports hit slightly more than 270,000 metric tons, valued at \$483 million. China alone accounted for nearly 58 percent of Ethiopia’s sesame exports, with Israel and Turkey – the second and third largest destinations – taking 18 and 4 percent, respectively. The heavy reliance on China suggests a greater need for export market diversification in order to better weather downturns in Chinese demand.

Sesame is Ethiopia’s single largest exported oilseed and, as was previously mentioned, is an important generator of foreign exchange. About 95 percent of exports are in the form of unprocessed seeds, leaving opportunity for value-addition prior to export. Ethiopia is the second largest sesame exporter after India.

Local and international sesame prices, which are closely linked to one another, are trending downward because of increased global production levels and softening demand in China. The price of Humera/Gondar sesame – the reference price for international markets – being traded on the [Ethiopia Commodity Exchange \(ECX\)](#) has dropped from about \$1,360 per metric ton in January 2015 to nearly \$860 per metric in January 2016. See figure 3 for price trends. Local traders are complaining that prices have dropped below “acceptable levels”. Meanwhile, the drop in prices is pinching farmers who are facing difficulties paying off loans. Lower prices are also expected to push farmers to plant alternative cash crops until sesame prices rebound. (Note: Since this report was prepared, the price of sesame has slightly rebounded, but is still below previous year’s levels.)

While prices are down, the volume of sesame traded at the ECX trading floor is at record levels as traders scramble to sell before prices drop further. The total traded volume for the month of January 2016 hit a record high of nearly 72,000 metric tons, surpassing the same period last year by 47 percent or 23,000 metric tons. See figure 5 for ECX monthly trade volumes.

With the creation of ECX in 2009, sesame trading was required to be conducted through this exchange. Farmers’ cooperative unions and commercial farmers are exempt from this requirement and can sell directly to international buyers. For sesame exported to China, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) requires the Letter of Credit to be done by the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE). Other Ethiopian private banks see this as a discriminatory practice. Meantime, local processors using sesame for value-added activities, such as crushing or roasting, can buy directly from designated primary market centers without going through ECX.

Table 2: Annual Trend of Ethiopia’s Sesame Exports

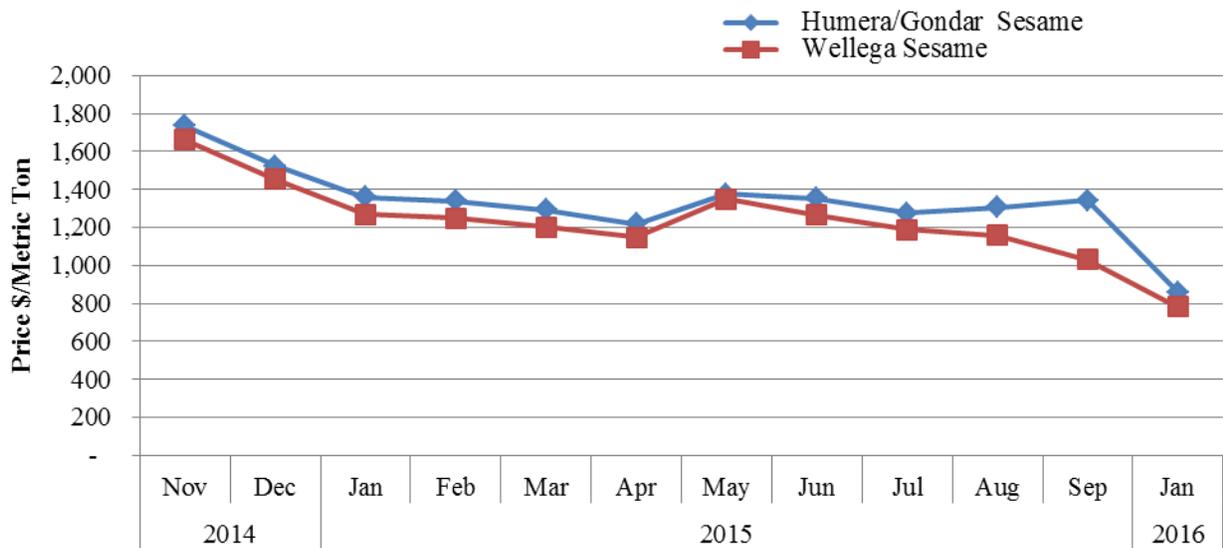
Year	Volume (MT)	FOB Value ('000 USD)	% Growth	
			Volume	Value

2007/08	124,291	185,058	-	-
2008/09	238,804	314,997	92%	70%
2009/10	238,832	320,983	0%	2%
2010/11	218,105	300,656	-9%	-6%
2011/12	331,187	436,754	52%	45%
2012/13	222,705	390,625	-33%	-11%
2013/14	270,234	619,033	21%	58%
2014/15	292,298	482,812	8%	-22%
Average	242,057	381,365	19%	19%
2015/16*	318,000			

Source: MoT and EPOSPEA

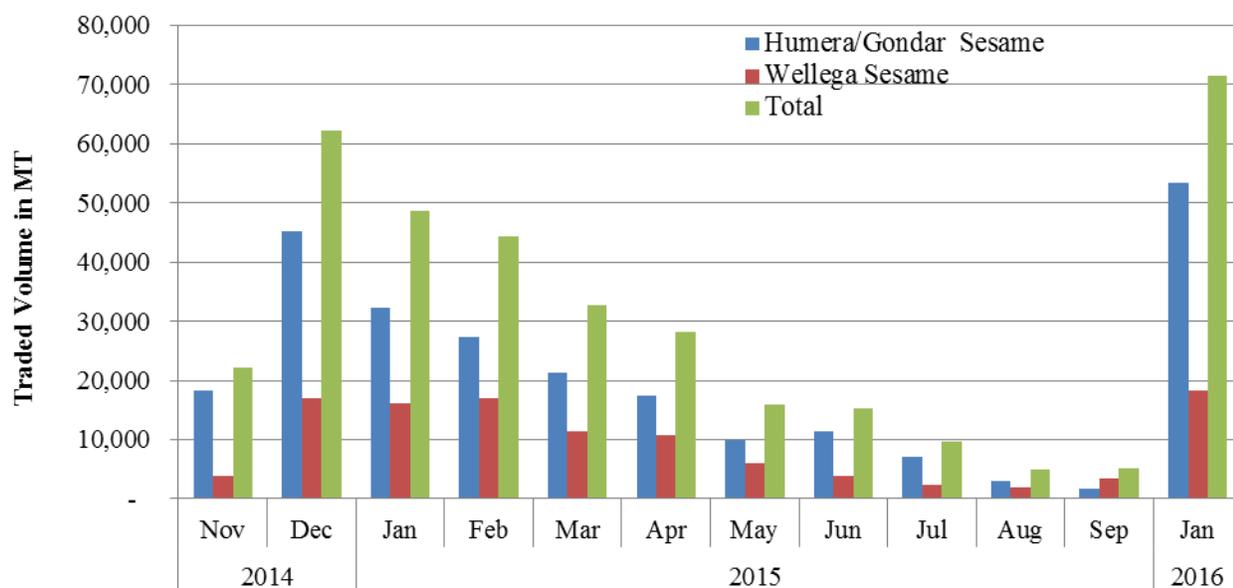
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Figure 3: Trend of Ethiopia's Sesame Market Price at ECX Trading Floor



Source: Own graph, data from ECX. (Price is converted to US \$ based on established exchange rate.)

Figure 4: Monthly Trend of Sesame Trade Volume at ECX Trading Floor



Source: Own graph, data from ECX

Production, Supply, and Demand, PSD (1000 HA, 1000 MT)

Oilseed, Sesame seed	2014/15	2015/16
Market Year Begins	Oct 2014	Oct 2015
Ethiopia	New Post	New Post
Area Harvested	611	641
Beginning Stocks	58	52
Production	464	487
MY Imports	0	0
MY Imports from US	0	0
Total Supply	522	539
MY Exports	292	318
Crush	0	0
Food Use Dom. Cons.	47	49
Feed Waste Dom. Cons.	131	134
Total Dom. Cons.	177	184
Ending Stocks	52	38
Total Distribution	522	539

Niger Seed

Production

The late rains and uneven rainfall in the Niger seed-producing areas reportedly did not impact MY15/16 production. In fact, production for this period is projected to increase to 235,000 metric tons, an increase of 5 percent, or 11,000 metric tons, compared to the previous year. Yields are estimated at 0.98MT/HA, while total area harvested is projected at 240,000 hectares.

Over the last several years, Niger seed production has shown steady growth, most of which is attributed to increased yields. Production has increased about 50 percent since MY09/10 when production figures stood at nearly 158,000 metric tons. See table 3 for historical production data. Most of this recent growth in production was spurred by increased demand for locally-produced cooking oil.

Niger seed, which is also known as noug, is the second most widely-produced oilseed crop in Ethiopia, accounting for a little more than a quarter of total oilseed production and accounting for 28 percent of area planted to oilseeds. More than 95 percent of production is concentrated in the highlands of Oromia and Amhara regions. Horogudru, East Wellega and West Wellega zones are the main surplus-producing areas in the Oromia region, while East Gojjam, West Gojjam, North Gondar, and South Gondar zones are the top surplus-producing areas in the Amhara region. Figure 5 shows the major Niger seed producing areas in the country.

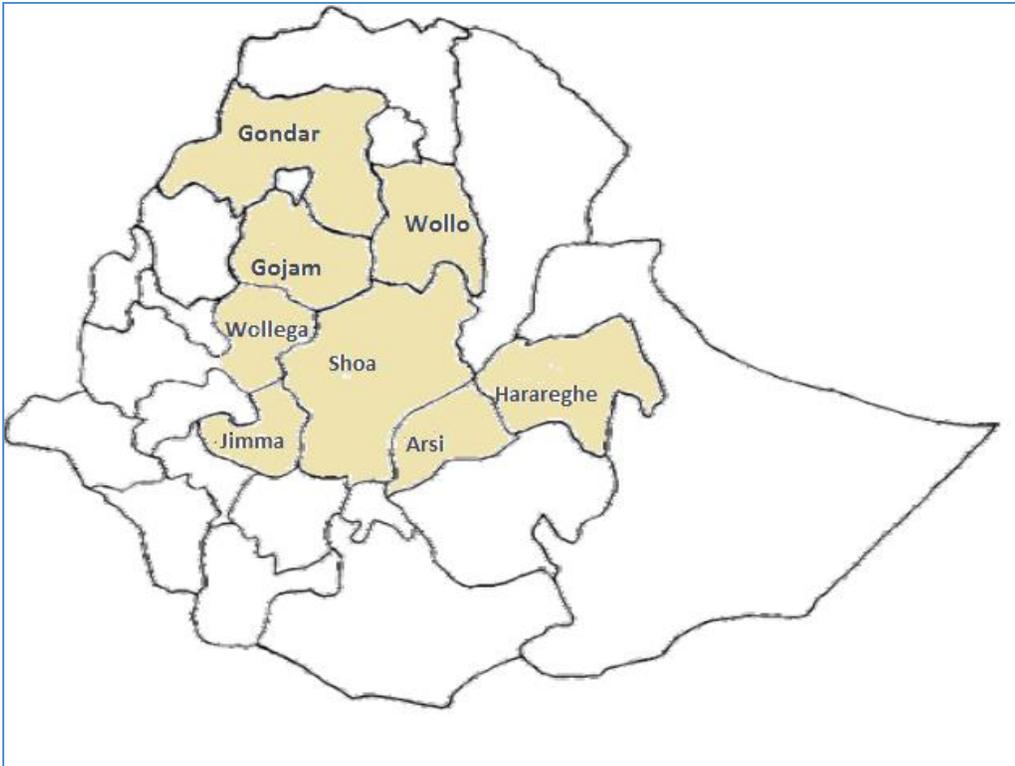
Table 3: Niger Seed Production, Acreage, & Yield

Crop Year	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Yield (MT/Ha)
2009/10	256,794	157,847	0.61
2010/11	247,329	144,847	0.59
2011/12	308,286	186,321	0.60
2012/13	301,488	212,416	0.70
2013/14	285,303	220,211	0.77
2014/15	252,584	224,463	0.89
Average	275,297	191,018	0.69
2015/16*	240,000	235,000	0.95

Source: CSA and Own Estimation for 2015/16.

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Figure 5: Niger Seed Production Distribution in Ethiopia



Source: Analysis of Genetic Diversity of Guizotia, Yohannes Petros.

Consumption

Consumption is projected to climb to 160,000 metric tons in MY15/16, up roughly 12,000 metric tons from the preceding year due to increased demand for cooking oil. Consumption is expected to keep growing in the coming years as demand for oil and livestock feed continue to expand.

The oil from Niger seeds makes up about 44 percent total edible oil consumption in the country. The noug cake, which is the by-product from Niger seed oil extraction process, is used for livestock feed, especially in animal fattening and dairy rations. In a recent ILRI study, Noug cake was cited as the primary source of aflatoxin detections in samples taken from the commercial milk supply of Addis Ababa.

Trade

With growing local demand for edible oil, MY15/16 Niger seed exports are forecast to continue their recent downward slide, falling to 14,000 metric tons. In MY14/15, Ethiopia exported about 15,400 metric tons of Niger seed, valued at \$14.4 million. Historically, Ethiopia has exported about 10 percent of production.

The United States is the top destination for Ethiopian Niger seed, accounting for about 80 percent of total exports, while the second largest market, the European Union, accounts for roughly 15 percent of exports. Niger seed exports to the United States require heat treatment in accordance with USDA

requirements. At present, there is only one eligible company, which USDA inspects annually, which treats the seeds prior to shipment, while shipments from all other suppliers are required to undergo heat treatment upon arrival in the United States.

Table 4: Annual Trend of Ethiopia's Niger seed Export

Year	Volume (MT)	FOB Value ('000 USD)	% Growth	
			Volume	Value
2007/08	26,642	33,173		
2008/09	44,654	37,921	68%	14%
2009/10	49,614	31,656	11%	-17%
2010/11	25,552	16,773	-48%	-47%
2011/12	15,183	11,716	-41%	-30%
2012/13	29,782	23,640	96%	102%
2013/14	16,630	12,510	-44%	-47%
2014/15	15,402	14,352	-7%	15%
Average	27,932	22,718	5%	-1%
2015/16*	14,400			

Source: EPOSPEA and Own estimation for MY 2015/16

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Table 5: Volume and Value of Niger seed Exports in MY 2014/15

S/N	Destination Country	MY 2014/15		
		Volume	Value	Market Share (Value)
1	USA	12,206	11,411	79.5%
2	UK	1,591	1,403	9.8%
3	Germany	229	213	4.3%
4	Italy	172	154	1.5%
5	Belgium	658	611	1.1%
6	Singapore	117	132	0.9%
7	Netherlands	95	82	0.6%
8	Israel	46	42	0.3%
9	Turkey	39	30	0.2%
	Others	250	274	1.9%
	Grand Total	15,402	14,352	100.0%

Source: Ministry of Trade (MoT)

Production, Supply, and Demand, PSD (1000 HA, 1000 MT)

Oilseed, Niger seed	2014/15	2015/16

Market Year Begins	Oct 2014	Oct 2015
Ethiopia	New Post	New Post
Area Harvested	253	240
Beginning Stocks	10	16
Production	224	235
MY Imports	0	0
MY Imports from US	0	0
Total Supply	234	251
MY Exports	15	14
Crush	55	60
Food Use Dom. Cons.	85	93
Feed Waste Dom. Cons.	63	67
Total Dom. Cons.	148	160
Ending Stocks	16	17
Total Distribution	234	251

Soybeans

Production

Owing to the late rains and uneven rainfall distribution in some of the main soybean-producing areas, production for MY 2015/16 is forecast downward to 66,000 metric tons, a drop of 6,000 metric tons from previous year. Going forward, production is expected to rebound and continue its upward climb in order to meet some of the increasing local demand for edible oil and soybean meal for livestock feed, most notably soybean meal for poultry production. The government plans to ramp up poultry production as part of its Livestock Master Plan (See [ET1524](#) for details.) These anticipated increases in production will come with improved yields and expanded acreage planted in soybeans, some of which will be done on commercial farms.

Over the last several years, soybean production has doubled from 35,000 metric tons in MY11/12 to 72,000 metric tons in MY14/15. Most of this growth in production was due to an increase in the area planted and to a lesser extent improved yields. The expansion in area planted was largely attributed to the increasing, but still small number of large-scale commercial farms producing soybeans, which account for about half of total production. For example, in one of the leading-production areas, the Metekel zone in Benshangul Gumuz region, there are more than 150 commercial farms, with an average size of 50 hectares that are producing soybeans. In addition, there are several large scale soybean farming operations, run by Saudi Star Plc, Ethio Agri-CEFT Plc, and Ruchi Agro-Industry. Soybeans are also being used as a rotational crop on some of the government-owned sugarcane plantations.

Soybeans contribute nearly 9 percent to the country's total oilseed production and account for only 4 percent of area planted to oilseeds. The main soybean-producing areas are in the western part of the country in the Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz, and to a lesser extent the Amhara region. In these regions, the top-producing zones are Illubabor, Horogudru Wellega, East and West Wellega, Metekel, Assosa, Kemashi, Awi and West Gojjam. See figure 6.

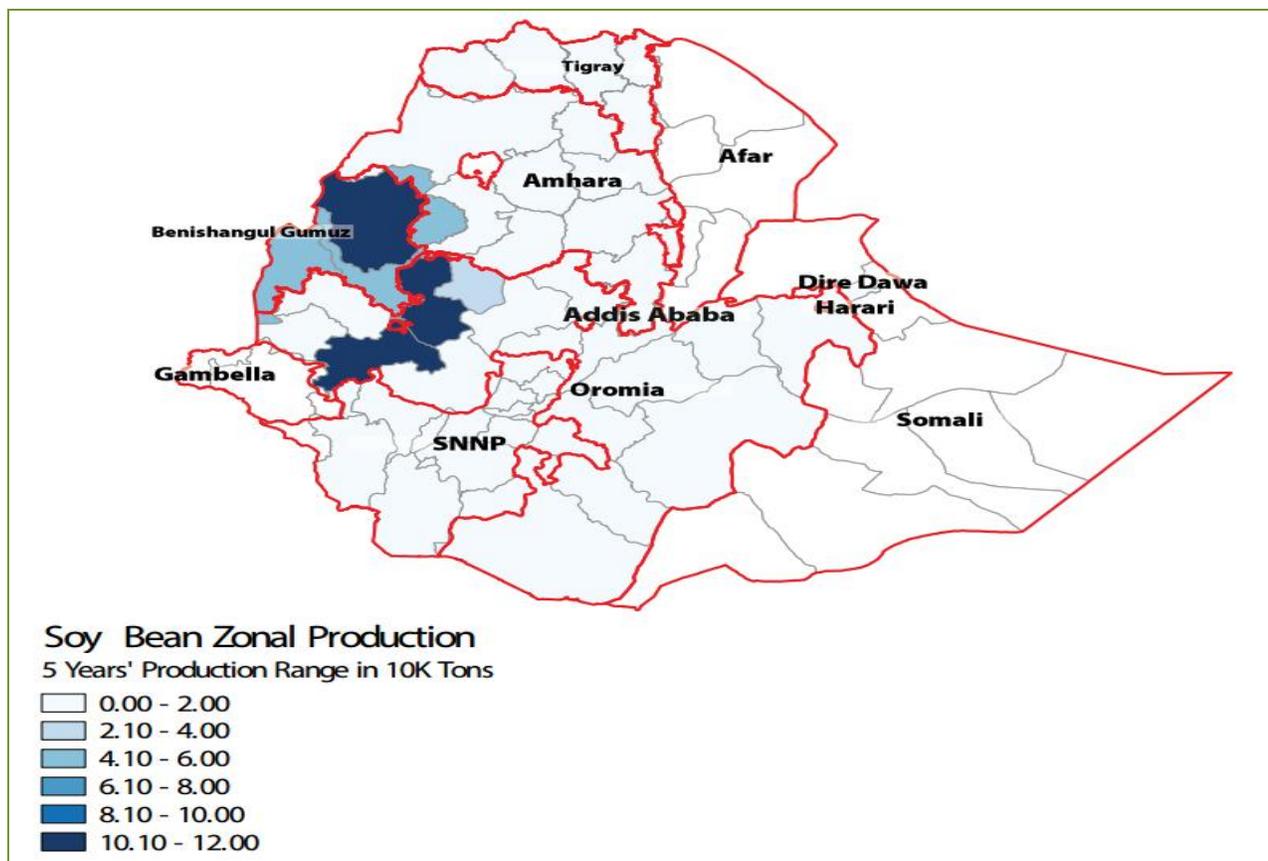
Table 6: Trend of Soybean Production, Acreage, & Yield in Ethiopia

Crop Year	Area (Ha)	Production (MT)	Yield (MT/Ha)
2009/10	5,679	7,205	1.27
2010/11	11,261	15,824	1.41
2011/12	19,397	35,880	1.85
2012/13	31,855	63,653	2.00
2013/14	30,517	61,025	2.00
2014/15	35,260	72,184	2.05
Average	22,328	42,629	1.76
2015/16*	38,000	66,000	1.74

Source: CSA and Own Estimate for 2015/16

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Figure 6: Distribution of Soybean Production in Ethiopia



Source: Sopov, M. et al., 2015

Consumption

Soybean consumption, which continues to grow, is forecast to reach 41,000 metric tons in MY15/16. Consumption is expected to continue its upward climb as consumers demand more soy-based edible oil and as the poultry sector demands more soybean meal. In addition to oil, soybeans are used to make a variety of local foods, such as bread, chappati, porridge, soy milk, yoghurt as well as the traditional Ethiopian stew, *shero wot*. Soybeans are also used to make corn-soy blend (CSB) for emergency food assistance programs run by international organizations and the Ethiopian government.

Trade

With growing local demand and lower production this year, soybean exports are expected to contract to 21,000 metric tons. Main export destinations include Sudan, Indonesia, Kenya, Netherlands and Vietnam. Considering the growing demand for soybeans, post expects that exports will fall to near zero in the near future. Furthermore, Ethiopia may begin to import soybeans since local demand will likely outstrip production capacity.

In MY 2014/15, exports reached nearly 28,000 metric tons, valued at \$13.3 million. Nearly one-third of production was exported during this period.

Table 7: Soybean Export Data

MY	Volume (MT)	FOB Value ('000 USD)	Weighted Avg. Price /MT	% Growth		
				Volume	Value	Price
2007/08	4,838	2,203	455	-	-	-
2008/09	214	119	556	-96%	-95%	22%
2009/10	148	73	493	-31%	-39%	-11%
2010/11	1,380	656	475	832%	799%	-4%
2011/12	40	34	850	-97%	-95%	79%
2012/13	34,211	19,183	561	85428%	56321%	-34%
2013/14	35,606	19,988	561	4%	4%	0%
2014/15	27,475	13,296	484	-23%	-33%	-14%
Average	12,989	6,944	555	123	81	5%
2015/16*	21,000					

Source: EPOSPEA Annual Bulletin, November 2015

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Production, Supply, and Demand, PSD (1000 HA, 1000 MT)

Oilseed, Soybean	2014/15	2015/16
Market Year Begins	Oct 2014	Oct 2015
Ethiopia	New Post	New Post
Area Harvested	35	38
Beginning Stocks	4	4
Production	72	66
MY Imports	0	0
MY Imports from US	0	0
Total Supply	76	71
MY Exports	27	21
Crush	4	5
Food Use Dom. Cons.	27	28
Feed Waste Dom. Cons.	12	13
Total Dom. Cons.	40	41
Ending Stocks	4	4
Total Distribution	76	71

Oils

Production

Local production of edible oil in calendar year (CY) 2016 is projected to reach 137,500 metric tons, up by 10 percent from the previous year. Three oils - Niger, cotton, and linseed - account for approximately 44, 23, and 22 percent, respectively, of oil production. The remaining 11 percent is made up of sunflower, soybean and ground nuts.

The local production of edible oil has tremendous growth potential and is expected to rapidly expand in the coming years as the population grows and as consumer income rises. In fact, there are a number of local companies investing in setting up soybean crushing operations. At the same time, there is interest in large-scale sesame oil production, mainly for export. However, investment in the sesame processing sector has largely been hampered because of difficulties tracing the origin of the sesame, quality consistency, and the volatility in international prices.

Consumption

Total vegetable oil consumption in CY16 is projected at 687,500 metric tons, of which 80 percent is imported. Most of the oil consumed is imported palm oil, followed by locally-produced Niger seed oil. Small amounts of linseed, ground nut, cotton, and soy oils are also consumed. With increasing demand, limited domestic production and the country's heavy reliance on imported oil, there are frequent supply shortages especially in urban areas. In addition, as some consumers become increasingly diet conscious, they are looking for healthier alternatives to palm oil. Local consumers consider Niger seed and soybean oil to be healthier.

Trade

Imports of edible oil have been rapidly increasing over the last five years, with annual growth during this period almost reaching 20 percent. Post expects this upward trajectory to continue with imports reaching 550,000 metric tons in CY16. Most of this imported oil will be palm because of its price competitiveness.

In CY15, Ethiopia imported 479,000 metric tons of cooking oil, valued at nearly \$474 million dollars. Of this imported oil, more than 90 percent by volume was palm oil, most of which comes from Indonesia and Malaysia. The remainder of imported oil is made up of sunflower, soybean and olive oils. The leading supplier of soybean oil is Egypt, while Turkey is the largest supplier of sunflower oil. See tables 8, 9 and 10 below for breakdown of oil imports value/volume and origin.

Policy

In response to chronic cooking oil shortages and inflation in 2011, the government started intervening in the marketplace to regulate the supply, distribution, and price of palm oil. The government also restricted the private sector from importing and distributing palm oil, and capped wholesale and retail

prices. In August 2015, these restrictions on private sector involvement were lifted, but the price cap remains in effect. At present, six companies and three government-affiliated enterprises are eligible to import and distribute palm in the local marketplace. The wholesale and retail prices of palm oil are currently set at Birr 22.23 per liter and Birr 23.75 per liter, which is about \$1 USD per liter at the current exchange rate.

Table 8: Edible Oil Import Volume (MT)

Imports	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Palm Oil	212,686	228,209	292,797	139,899	373,763	442,536
Sunflower Oil	1,135	2,228	1,453	2,198	2,450	9,704
Soy Oil	713	6,755	654	2,001	656	6,746
Vegetable Fats & Oils	11,912	11,263	17,041	13,487	11,316	16,954
Olive Oil	86	166	174	253	308	758
Sesame Oil	5	390	14	5	16	13
Other Edible Oils	780	3,548	85	194	577	1,877
Total	227,316	252,559	312,217	158,038	389,086	478,588

Source: ERCA

Table 9: Edible Oil Import Value ('000 USD)

Imports	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Palm Oil	216,763	322,786	382,278	145,832	403,198	419,636
Sunflower Oil	1,458	3,909	2,438	4,055	4,309	15,692
Soy Oil	1,009	11,956	1,203	3,109	1,083	8,787
Vegetable Fats & Oils	18,099	19,564	28,453	16,935	18,355	25,220
Olive Oil	209	529	510	660	1,066	1,840
Sesame Oil	7	430	30	26	47	71
Other Edible Oils	1,013	5,779	196	312	973	2,582
Total	238,557	364,952	415,109	170,929	429,031	473,806

Source: ERCA

Table 10: Edible Oil Imports by Country of Origin in 2015 (Jan-Dec)

1. Palm Oil				
Exporting Country	Volume (MT)	Value (USD)	Market Share	
			Volume	Value
Indonesia	296,505	269,130,850	67%	64%
Malaysia	124,675	123,044,353	28%	29%
UAE	20,211	25,872,769	5%	6%
Others	1,145	1,589,010	0%	0%
Total	442,536	419,636,982	100%	100%
2. Sunflower Oil				
Turkey	5,591	9,290,707	58%	59%
Egypt	2,372	3,700,407	24%	24%
Spain	637	853,657	7%	5%
Others	1,104	1,822,377	11%	12%
Total	9,704	15,667,148	100%	100%
3. Soy Oil				
Egypt	6,207.82	8,024,812	92%	91%
India	176	282,620	3%	3%
Belgium	117	132,948	2%	2%
Others	245	347,326	4%	4%
Total	6,746	8,787,706	100%	100%

Source: ERCA

Figure 8: Weighted Avg. Price of Major Edible Oil Imports

