

Emergency shipments can reverse the famine disaster in Africa

by Carol Cleary

Food available per person in Africa has declined in each of the last 10 years, until, with the onset of the recent three-year drought, starvation and malnutrition have reached catastrophic proportions. The appeals for aid by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization have grossly understated the tonnages of emergency food aid required, yet even these have not been met.

The calculations below were based on the estimates of food supplies available per person in disaster regions in Africa in 1983. The Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF) staff analyzed the per-capita availability of cereals and protein foods in the four regions involving 23 African nations most afflicted with drought and economic and social crisis. As compared with the 8 to 10 bushels of grain a year per person required to provide merely a cereals-based or vegetable-equivalent diet, in these disaster regions of Africa there are only 2 to 4 bushels, or even less. As of 1980, before the recent drought years, only six bushels a year per person were produced continent-wide. The average lifespan in most African nations is only 30 or 40 years. For a nutritious diet, sustaining a lifespan into the 70s, a person requires 24 bushels of grain a year, accounting for the grain fed to the animals which supply that person's meat, milk, and poultry needs.

The FEF analyzed the amount of grain deficit in each African region, based on providing at least 8 to 10 bushels per capita a year. And in addition, in order to supply needed proteins, minimum amounts of milk-powder and dried-bean tonnages were calculated for each region. Enough milk-powder tonnage was estimated for each region to supply each person with two cups of cow's milk a day—or soy or corn milk for those who cannot digest lactose. And enough dried-bean tonnages were estimated for each region to supply one cup of dried beans a day.

West Africa

Some rains have fallen in the parched areas, but the emergency continues. In February of this year, Vice-President Dabo of Gambia described the situation: "The extent of destruction caused to food crops by the 1983 drought has no equal in living memory and our people in the rural areas as well as our livestock industry are exposed, as each day goes by, to increasing hardship and real danger requiring urgent

WEST AFRICA

Country	Million people	Per cap. Bu. of cereal	Cereal Prod'n 1,000 t.	Addit'l Cereals needed (mn. bu)
1. Mali	6.9	5.5	950	31.1
2. Mauritania	1.6	0.25	10	15.5
3. Senegal	5.9	2.7	400	43.1
4. Gambia	0.6	5.7	85	2.6
5. Guinea	5.6	2.1	300	44.2
6. Cape Verde	—	—	—	—
Subtotals	20.6		1,745	136.5 (3.4 mn MT)

Requirements: 3.4 million tons of cereals
0.37 million tons of milk powder
0.74 million tons of dried beans

7. Ghana	11.8	1.6	480	99.0
8. Togo	2.7	4.0	270	97.0
9. Benin	3.6	—	—	—
10. Sao Tome	—	—	—	—
Subtotals	18.1		750	196.0 (4.9 mn MT)

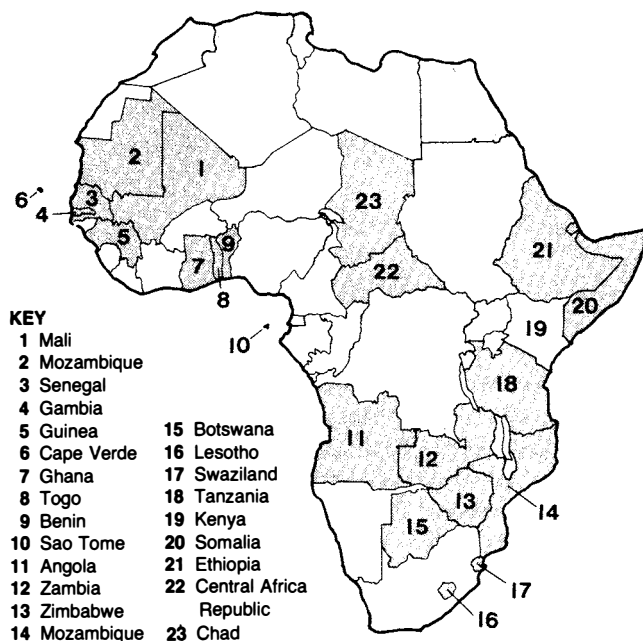
Requirements: 4.9 million tons of cereals
0.33 million tons of milk powder
0.65 million tons of dried beans

Refugees: 14,200

assistance. . . . Due to the drought there has been a fall of 50% in food production in 1983-84 over the previous year. Although the effect of the drought has not been evenly felt throughout the country, no single part of the rural areas can claim immunity from it, so that the majority of the rural population of 550,000 is now exposed to a serious risk of famine."

In Ghana, food shortages are severe after drought and raging brushfires last season. Refugees have returned from Nigeria. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have imposed ever more stringent measures to prevent government food subsidies or price control. Food costs have reached astronomical levels; one large yam, sufficient for

The African food emergency countries, by region



one family meal, can cost two weeks of a laborer's wages. The price of Ghana's main export crop, cocoa, fell to 70 cents a pound last year, from a peak of \$2.60 in 1977.

Southern Africa

The drought has intensified over the past three years. In Mozambique, the food situation is approaching catastrophe; the capital city of Maputo had only three days' supply of food left as of July 23 press reports, and the supply of flour for bread in August depends solely on the good will of South Africa to provide the flour and financing. Cereal stocks in the whole country fell to 7,000 tons in May, and to *nothing* in June. Hunger seriously affects 2.5 million out of Mozambique's 13 million inhabitants. Relief officers report that 170,000 people have starved to death since the drought began. People are wandering back and forth across the border with Zimbabwe, where 46,000 refugees remain.

Zimbabwe used to produce 2 million tons of corn a year. In 1982, it was down to 1.7 million tons. In 1983, it was down to 620,000 tons. This year it will be 500,000 tons, far less than half the annual consumption needs.

South Africa—the largest corn producer and usually a major exporter—had its worst harvest in more than 20 years, and imported an unprecedented 2.4 million tons of corn in 1983-84.

In Botswana, food production will be about 10,000 tons in contrast with as much as 70,000 tons in normal years. The President of Botswana, Quett K. J. Masire, came to Wash-

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Country	Million people	Per cap. Bu. of cereal	Cereal Prod'n 1,000 t.	Addit'l Cereals needed (mn. bu)
11. Angola	7.8	1.8	350	69.0
12. Zambia	5.8	7.3	1,058	15.7
Subtotals	13.6		1,408	79.7
				(2.0 mn MT)

Requirements: 2 million tons of cereals
0.245 million tons of milk powder
0.49 million tons of dried beans

13. Zimbabwe	7.2	7.7	1,385	16.6
14. Mozambique	12.5	1.1	330	111.3
Subtotals	19.7		1,715	127.9
				(3.2 mn MT)

Requirements: 3.2 million tons of cereals
0.355 million tons of milk powder
0.709 million tons of dried beans

15. Botswana	0.9	0.6	14	8.5
16. Lesotho	1.4	1.5	52	11.9
17. Swaziland	0.6	3.0	45	4.2
Subtotals	2.9		111	24.6
				(0.6 mn MT)

Requirements: 0.6 million tons of cereals
0.052 million tons of milk powder
0.104 million tons of dried beans

Refugees: 228,900

EAST AFRICA

Country	Million people	Per cap. Bu. of cereal	Cereal Prod'n 1,000 t.	Addit'l Cereals needed (mn. bu)
18. Tanzania	19.1	2.3	1,450	134.0
19. Kenya	17.4	4.2	1,840	101.0
Subtotals	36.5		3,290	235.0
				(5.9 mn MT)

Requirements: 5.9 million tons of cereals
0.66 million tons of milk powder
1.31 million tons of dried beans

20. Somalia	4.4	2.7	300	12.0
21. Ethiopia	32.0	7.25	5,800	88.0
Subtotals	36.4		6,100	100.0
				(2.5 mn MT)

Requirements: 2.5 million tons of cereals
0.66 million tons of milk powder
1.3 million tons of dried beans

Refugees: 1,938,500

ington, D.C. in May to appeal for help, pointing out that the price of Botswana's main export, minerals, had fallen significantly.

East Africa

The corn crop in Kenya is down by at least 40% this year due to drought. Pestilence is spreading. Plague has killed 19 people in northern Tanzania. Plant and animal diseases are growing. A corn predator, the greater corn borer beetle, is spreading in Kenya and Tanzania, where it first showed up from Central America in 1981. Experts fear the pest will probably spread throughout the subcontinent very quickly. The cattle disease rinderpest is spreading widely throughout Africa again, having recently been nearly eradicated, then spreading again out of Ethiopia. This further undermines the limited protein supply.

Central Africa

Some rains have fallen, but the dislocation from the Chad war and impact of the drought make the situation critical. The poor harvests of recent years reduced the seed supplies for the 1984 planting season. Many places are totally without seeds. According to the Club du Sahel, in February of this

CENTRAL AFRICA

Country	Million people	Per cap. Bu. of cereal	Cereal Prod'n 1,000 t.	Addit'l Cereals needed (mn. bu)
23. Chad	4.5	4.4	490	25.0
24. Central African Rep.	2.4	1.6	95	20.0
Subtotals	6.9		585	45.0
				(1.1 mn MT)

Requirements: 1.1 million tons of cereals
0.12 million tons of milk powder
0.25 million tons of dried beans

Refugees: 308,600

year member states had a cereal shortfall of 1.6 million tons, double the 1973 drought year deficit.

Thousands of people in sub-Saharan Africa are afflicted with primary liver cancer, a disease almost unknown in advanced sector nations. The deadly AIDS virus has been traced to its origins in sub-equatorial Africa, where it is spreading under conditions of nutritional and sanitary collapse.

An explosion of refugees

There are close to 5 million refugees throughout Africa today—people displaced by famine and social collapse. The figures below document 2,683,750 people, based on information received from governments over the past year, and taken in part from the *Report on UNHCR Assistance Activities in 1982-83 and Proposed Voluntary Funds Programs and Budget for 1984*. More recent information indicates another 2,200,000 people have become refugees.

West Africa: 14,200 refugees

5,200 from Guinea-Bissau in Senegal
5,500 from Chad and elsewhere in Nigeria
3,500 from Chad in the United Republic of Cameroon

Southern Africa: 254,900 refugees

96,200 in Angola (70,000 from Namibia; 6,200 from South Africa; 20,000 from Zaire)
5,000 in Botswana (4,300 from Zimbabwe)
11,500 in Lesotho from South Africa
7,000 in Swaziland from South Africa
89,000 in Zambia (71,000 from Angola, 9,000 from Zaire, 4,900 from Namibia, 2,800 from South Africa)

46,200 in Zimbabwe (46,000 from Mozambique, 200 from South Africa)

East Africa: 1,938,500 refugees

35,000 in Djibouti from Ethiopia
11,000 in Ethiopia (10,800 from Sudan)
5,500 in Kenya (1,600 from Ethiopia, 2,000 Uganda, 1,400 from Rwanda)
700,000 in Somalia from Ethiopia
159,000 in Tanzania (148,000 from Burundi, 9,500 from Zaire)
116,000 in Uganda (48,000 from Rwanda, 32,000 from Zaire, and 35,000 others)
214,000 in Burundi, from Rwanda and Zaire
49,000 in Rwanda (18,000 from Burundi, 31,000 seeking asylum from Uganda)
649,000 in Sudan (460,000 from Ethiopia, 184,000 from Uganda, 5,000 from Zaire)

South Central Africa: 308,000 refugees

7,400 in the Central African Republic from Chad
301,200 in Zaire (215,000 from Angola, 57,000 from Uganda)

North Africa: 167,550 refugees

167,000 in Algeria
5,500 in Egypt