

SUMMARY

LIVELIHOOD IMPACT ANALYSIS AND SEASONALITY

Growing evidence suggests that disaster occurrences have undermined progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. It is well recognized that a failure to address inter-annual disaster risks can undermine years of investment in poverty reduction measures. What is less well recognized is that a similar failure to take into account intra-annual – or seasonal – variability can also erode efforts to protect lives and livelihoods. The challenge is to develop tools and procedures that regularly bring these seasonal patterns to light, and allow us to link them, in an effective way, to development and emergency planning processes. The Livelihood Impact Analysis Spreadsheet (LIAS), developed by FEG within the context of the Ethiopian early warning system's Livelihood Integration Unit, begins to address this challenge. The functions of the LIAS enable analysts to:

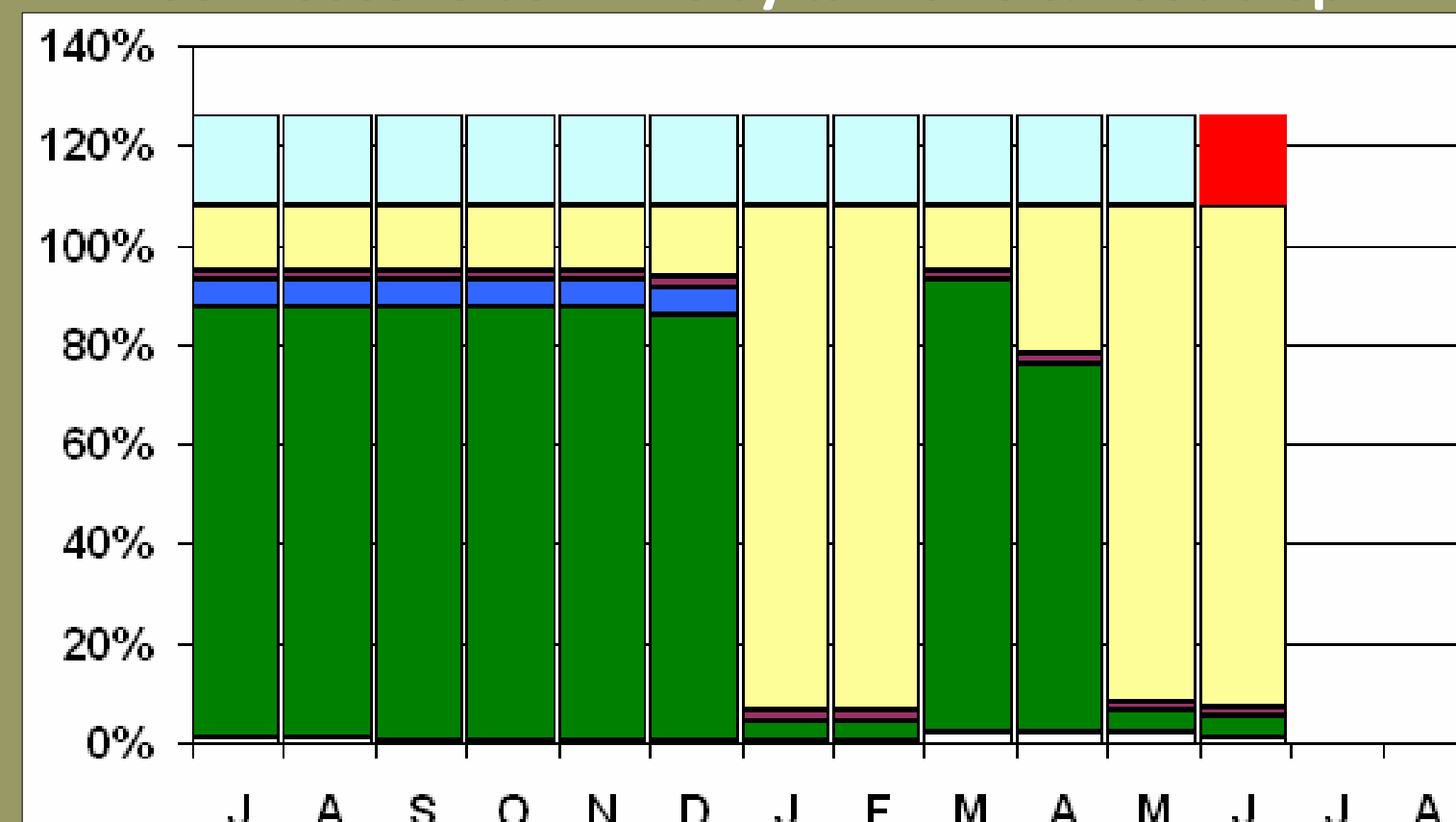
- improve the accuracy and timing of emergency assistance
- customise monitoring indicators and schedules
- Identify creative leverage points for development support

IMPROVED ACCURACY AND TIMING OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The LIAS was used to help explain the severe food crisis experienced in parts of SNNPR in 2008 due to the failed *belg* rains, resulting in rapid declines in nutritional status between January and June, with very little warning.

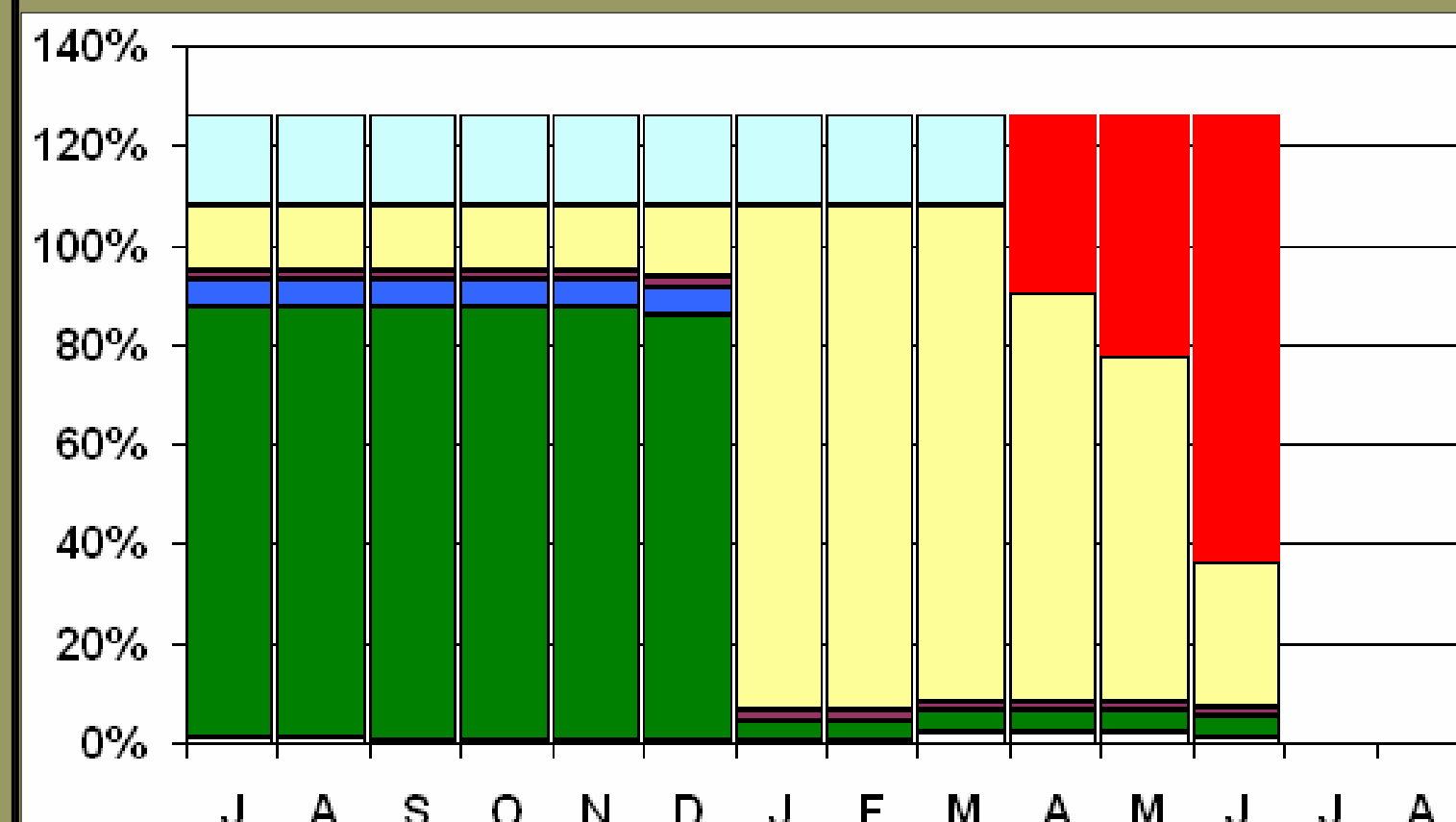


Seasonal Consumption Pattern in the Reference Year for Poor households in Wolayita Maize & Root Crop LZ



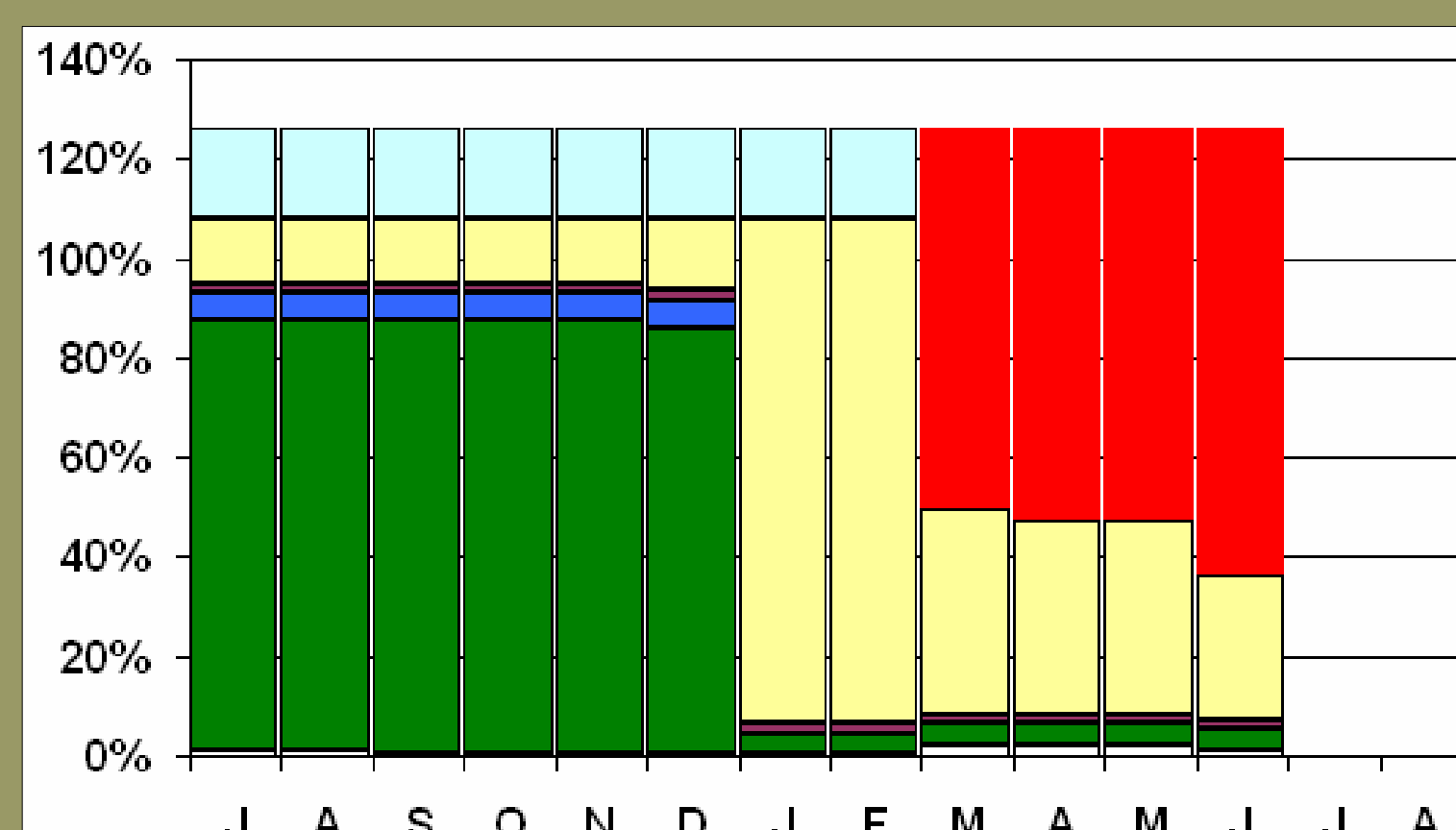
The graphs show seasonal patterns of *consumption*, compared to two thresholds – the survival threshold and the livelihood protection threshold. Sources of food are shown by month (crops in green, purchase in yellow, etc.). Expenditure on livelihoods protection is shown in light blue.

1) The Effect of Belg Season Sweet Potato Failure



Planted at the end of the *meher* season in October, *belg* season sweet potatoes mature during the *belg* rains and provide an important stopgap between March and May. A failure of this crop is by itself enough to create deficits from April-June.

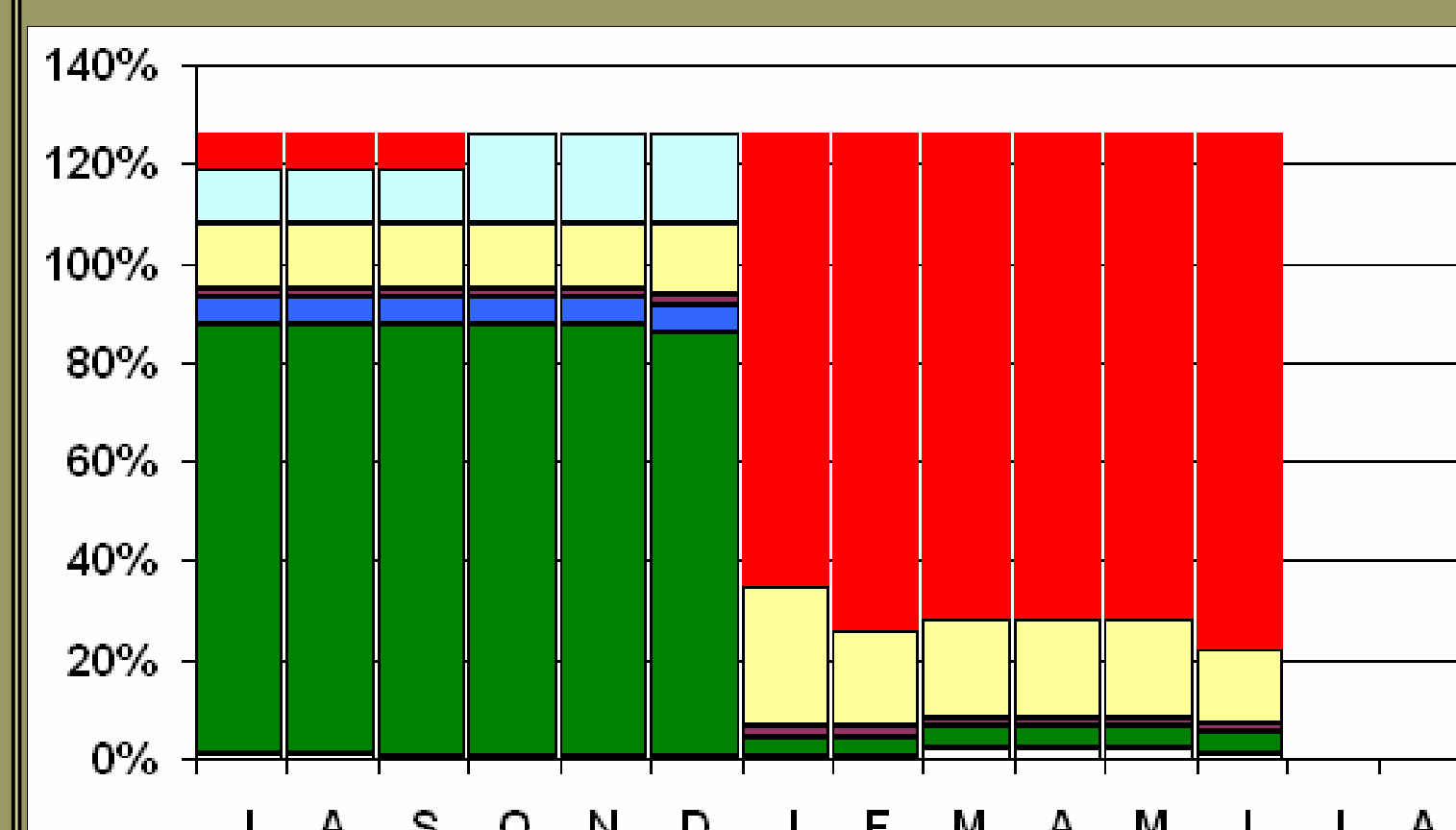
2) ...Plus a Reduction in the Availability of Belg Season Agricultural Labour



Agricultural labour is the single most important source of cash income from January onwards. If the *belg* rains fail, there is less labour available, and the deficit gets larger.

Source: Mark Lawrence, FEG

3) ...Plus a Doubling of Maize Prices



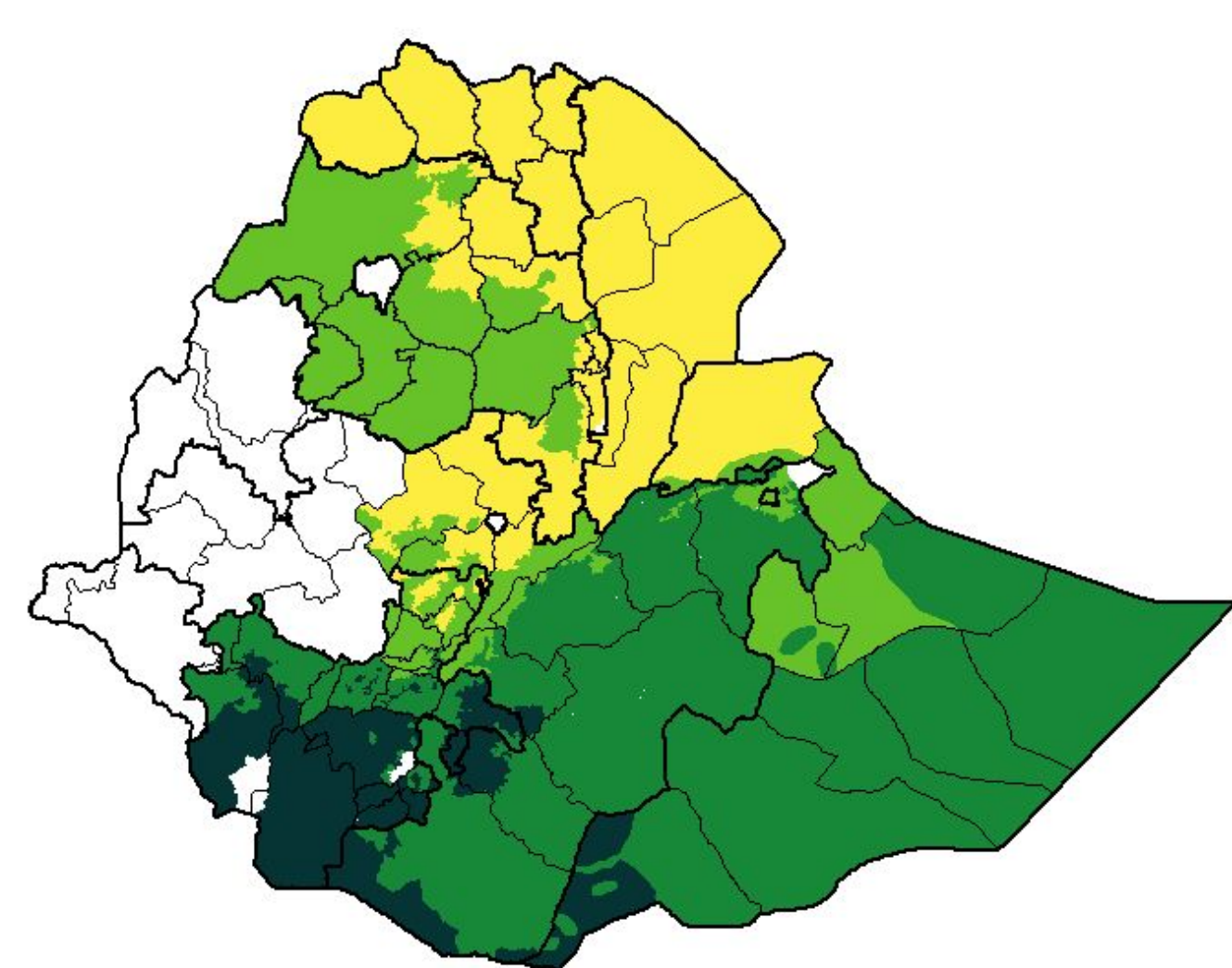
Once the *belg* season sweet potatoes have failed, purchase becomes the most important source of food. As prices rise, so less food can be purchased, and the bigger the deficit becomes.

CUSTOMISED MONITORING INDICATORS AND SCHEDULES

Seasonal assessments in Ethiopia are carried out twice a year: in June/July and in November. These provide the critical evidence for annual needs projections. Their accuracy depends in part on appropriate timing. Too early an assessment will fail to provide confident updates of rain-dependent production; too late an assessment will reduce the time for planning a response. These maps, which are based on an analysis using livelihood zone boundaries combined with long term meteorological data, show that there may be cause to revisit the current bi-annual June/July and November schedule.

Refining the Timing of Assessments using Livelihood Zones and Meteorological Data

Meher/Deyr/Hagaya Assessment

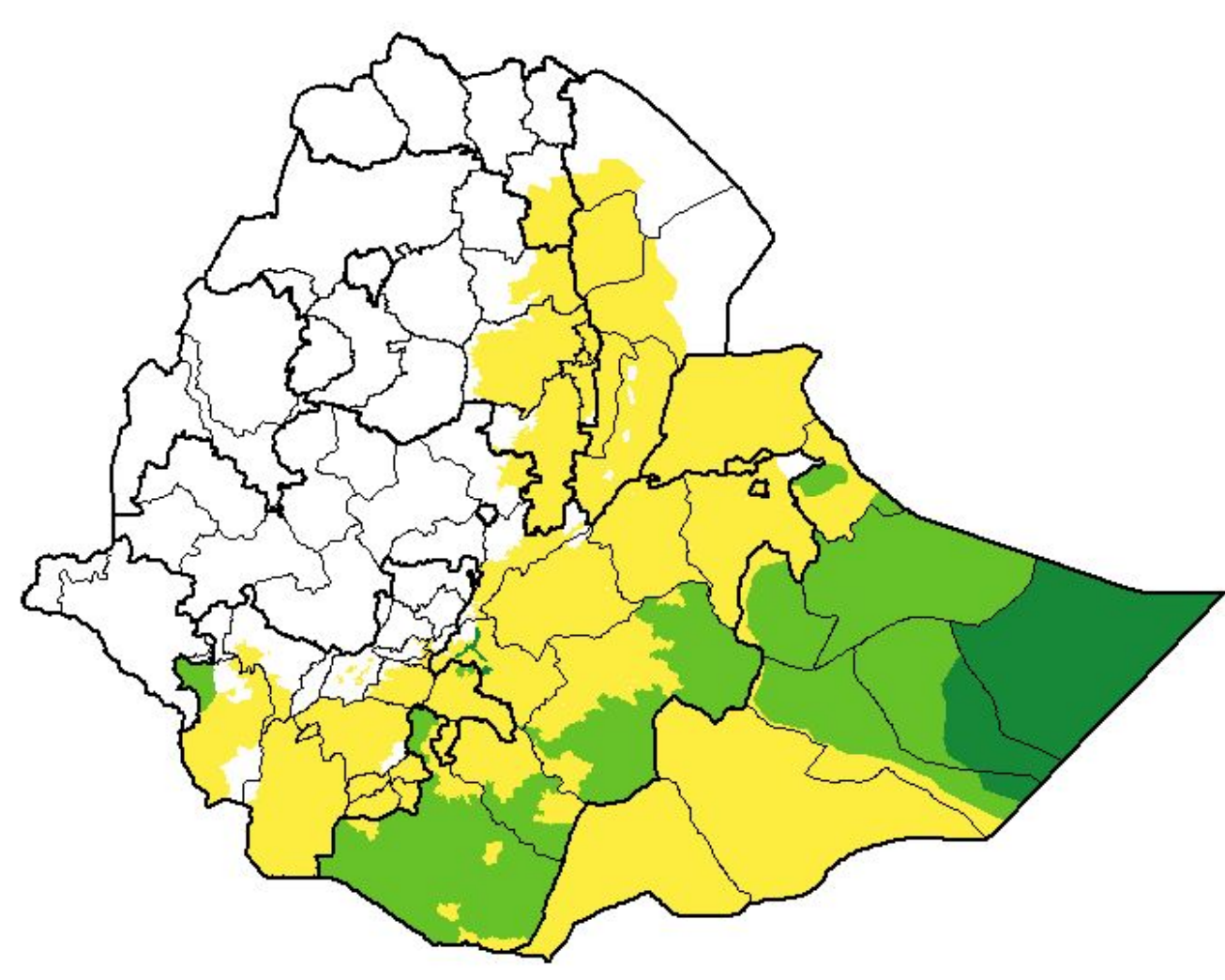


Begin assessment

10 th Oct
10 th Nov
10 th Dec
10 th Jan
no data

Source: Mark Lawrence, LIU, 2009

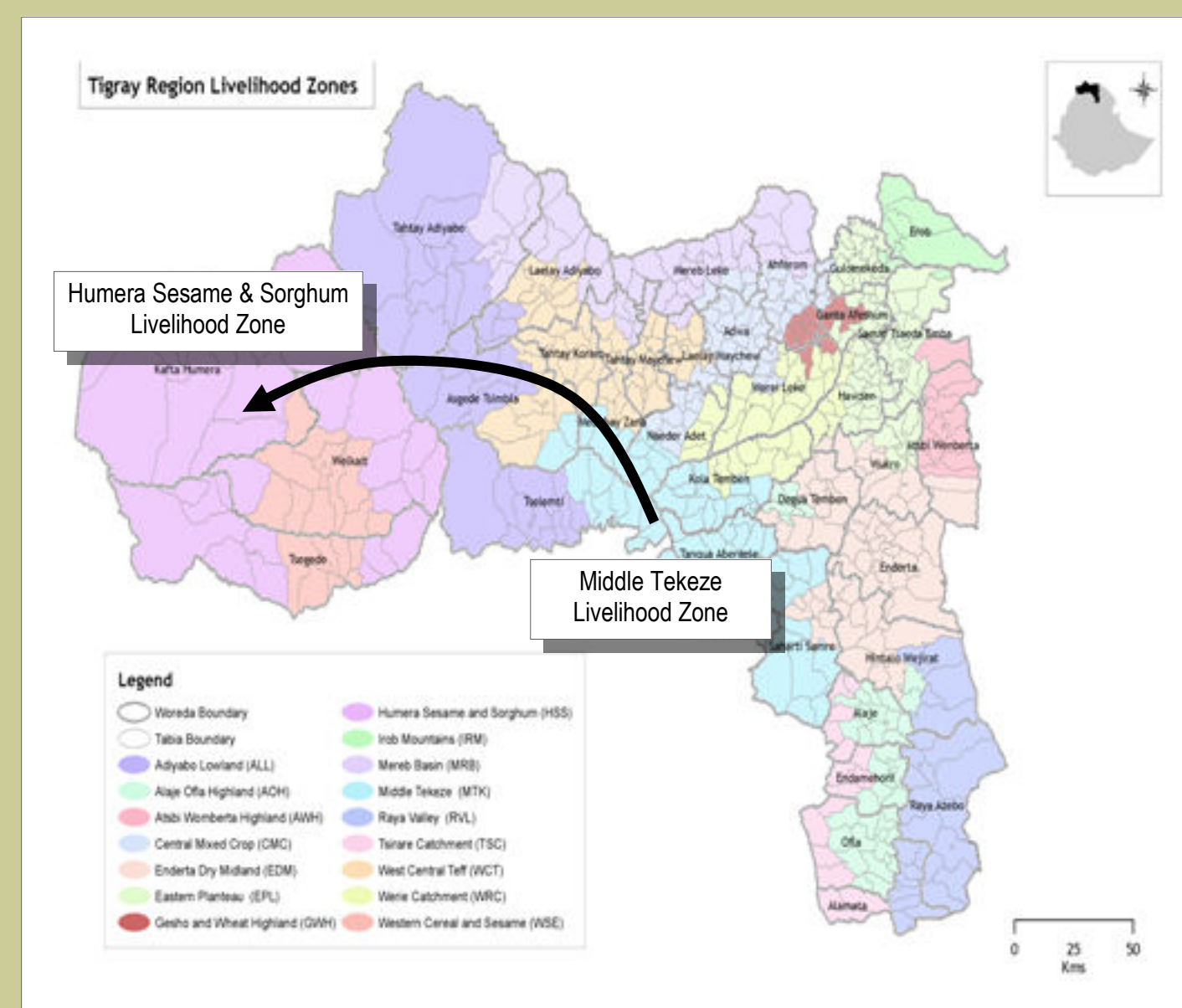
Belg/Gu/Gana Assessment



Begin Assessment

10 th June
10 th July
10 th August
no data

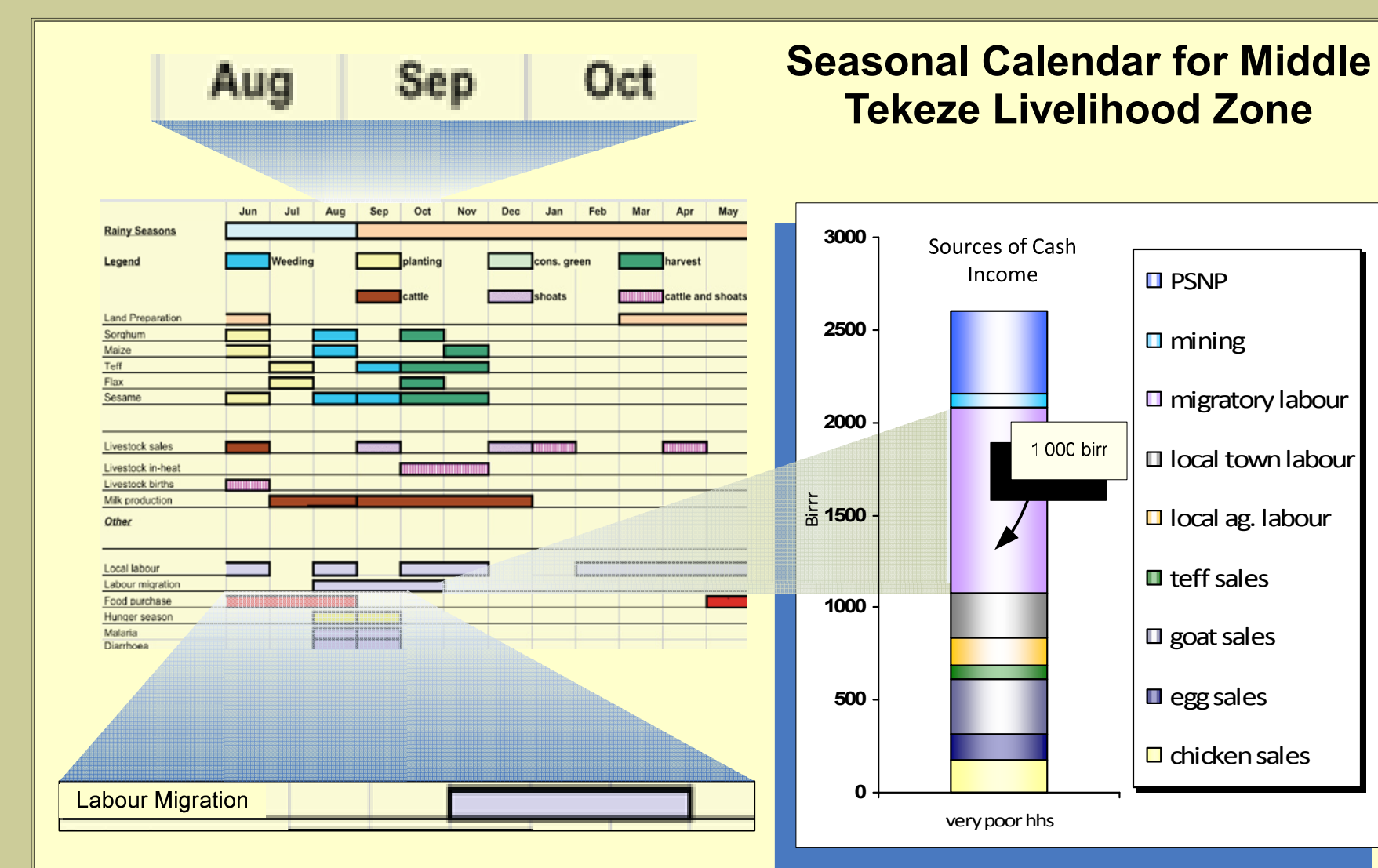
CREATIVE LEVERAGE POINTS FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE



Households from Middle Tekeze Livelihood Zone migrate to Humera Sesame and Sorghum Livelihood Zone from August to October of each year, where the risk of malaria and HIV/AIDS are higher.

Cash generated in these three months makes up almost half of their annual income.

But the net gain is far less, because transportation to and from the labour areas consumes 5–10% of this. And malaria, endemic in the lowlands, takes its toll as well, translating into lost days of work and clinic costs.



Are there ways to provide extra assistance to these poor households during these months? Could health clinic budgets receive a seasonal boost to cover the health needs of an influx of upwards of 200,000 people? Should HIV/AIDS outreach be targeted to these areas at these times of year? Could transportation to and from the sesame areas be subsidised during these crucial months? Is there a need to establish institutions aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of migrant workers?

A majority of the world's rural dwellers continue to depend on rain-fed agriculture to fuel (either directly or indirectly) their livelihoods. In this context, the norm is one of continual change. Natural hazards, such as drought, floods, and cyclones; and man-made hazards, like war, market disruption, and policy change combine with the vulnerability of particular livelihood systems and households, resulting in either disasters or windfalls. The vulnerability of these livelihood systems is determined in part by intra-annual, or seasonal, cycles. Thus, seasonality, and the timing of hazards in relation to normal cycles, is a key factor in determining disaster outcomes. Given that disasters have been responsible, in part, for undermining progress towards the Millennium Goals, it follows that we need to develop tools and procedures for systematically incorporating seasonality into ongoing analyses if we hope to achieve those goals.