

# Seasonality and High Food Prices: a Double Challenge





# Seasonality: father of all famine

1. Seasonal hunger is predictable, can be understood and there are tested solutions
2. What happens during seasonal hunger and what happens in famine differs only in severity
  - Sequencing of coping remains largely the same
3. Moreover the link between them is causal: a chain of shocks leads to the erosion of resilience of a whole community, turning the “normal” seasonal hunger into a major catastrophe
  - Production failures
  - Reduction of off-farm employment opportunities
  - Hazards
  - Action or inaction in the corridors of power
  - ...

**=> Famine can not be stopped unless  
seasonal hunger is stopped**

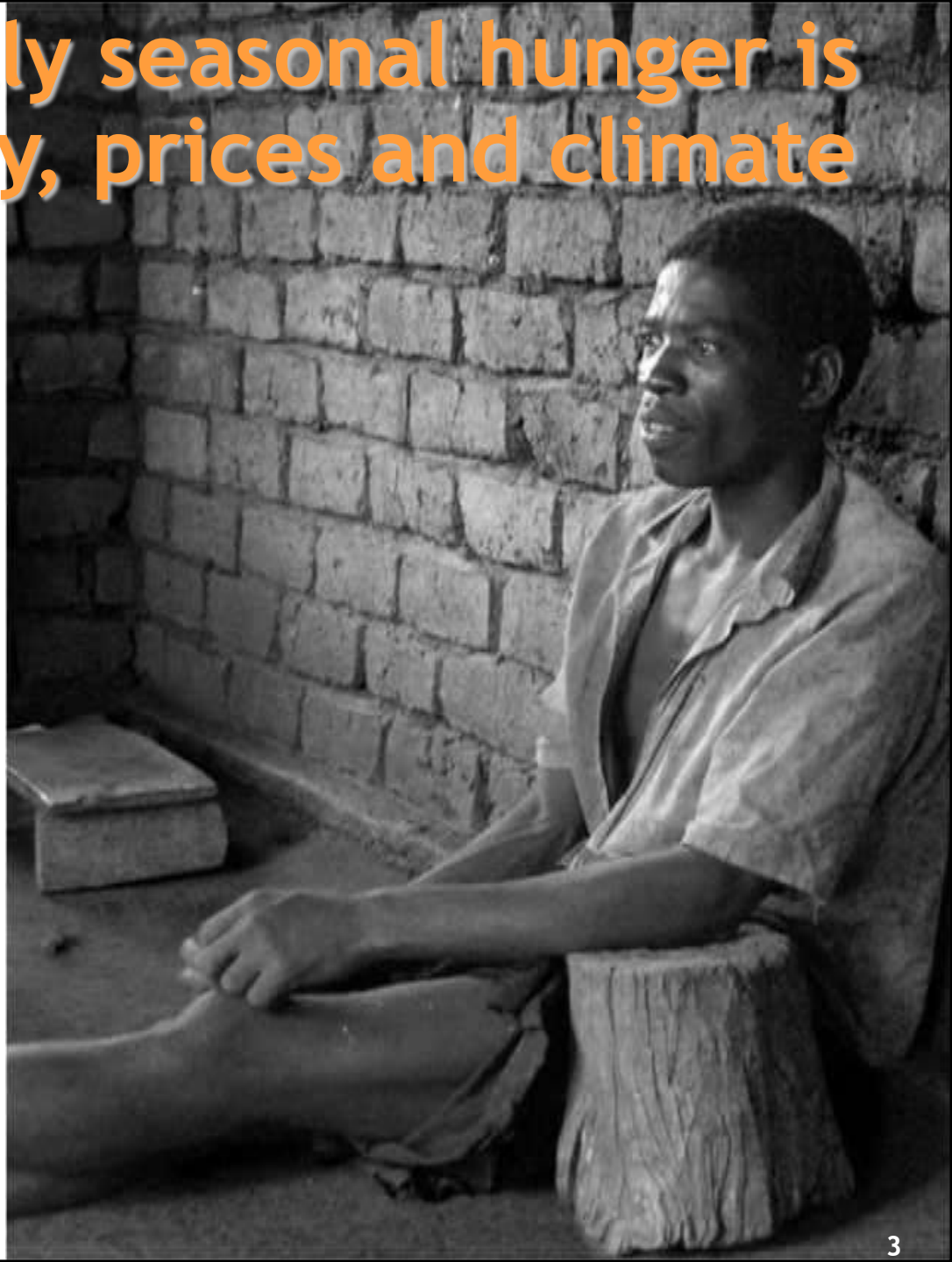


# Fundamentally seasonal hunger is about poverty, prices and climate



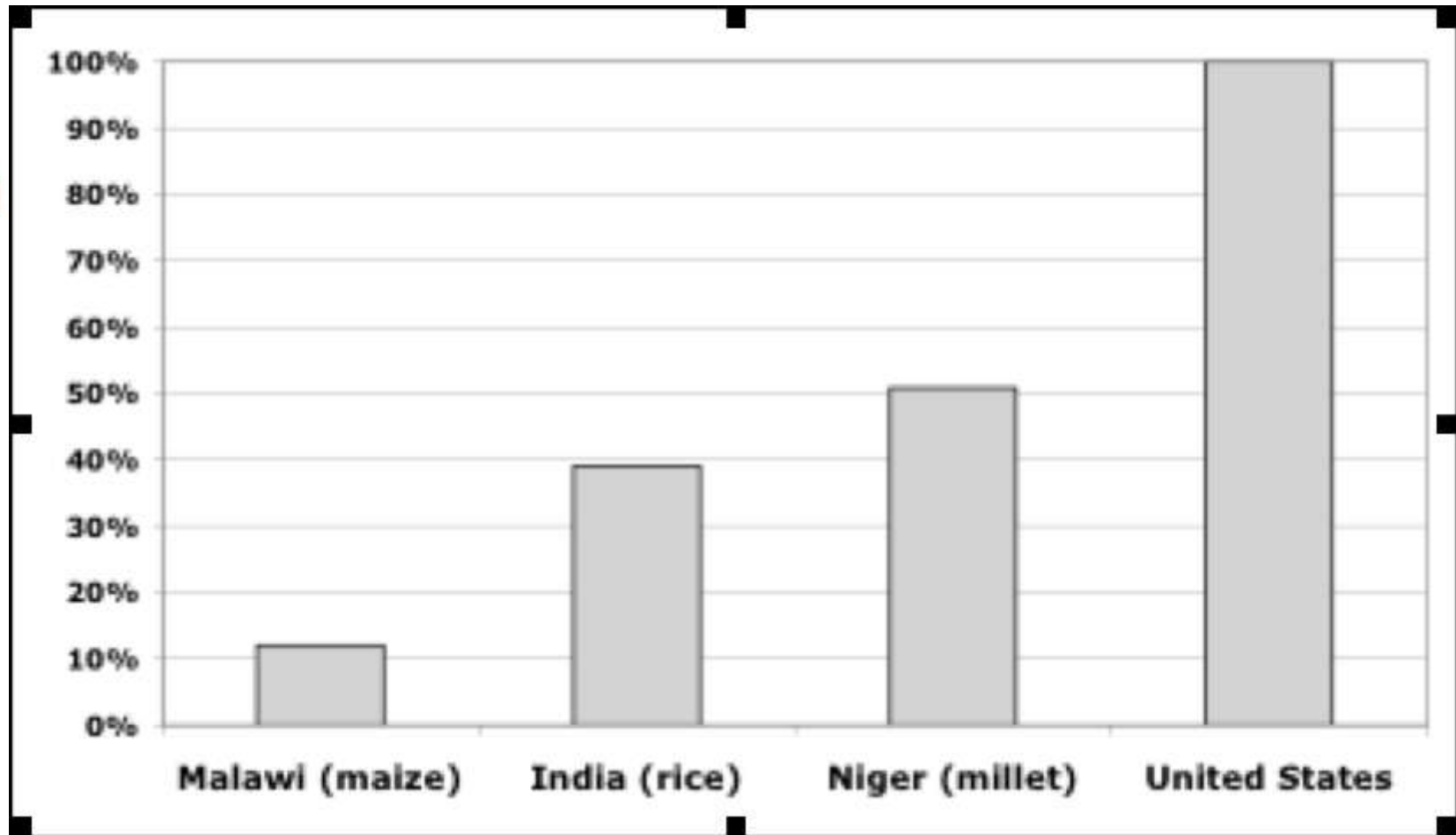
- Rainfall permits only one harvest
- Irrigation is accessible only to few
- Plot sizes are small
- Soils of poor condition
- Poor & insufficient farm inputs
- ...

=> Resulting in yields far below the potential of what is possible





# Average yield of staple crops



Average yield of staple crops in Malawi, India, and Niger, as percentage of US average yield for each of these crops.

Source: FAOSTAT (2008).





# Storage

- Rapid consumption
- Quick selling (price scissors)
- Choice of crops



=> Storage constraints have a wide ranging impact on livelihood system



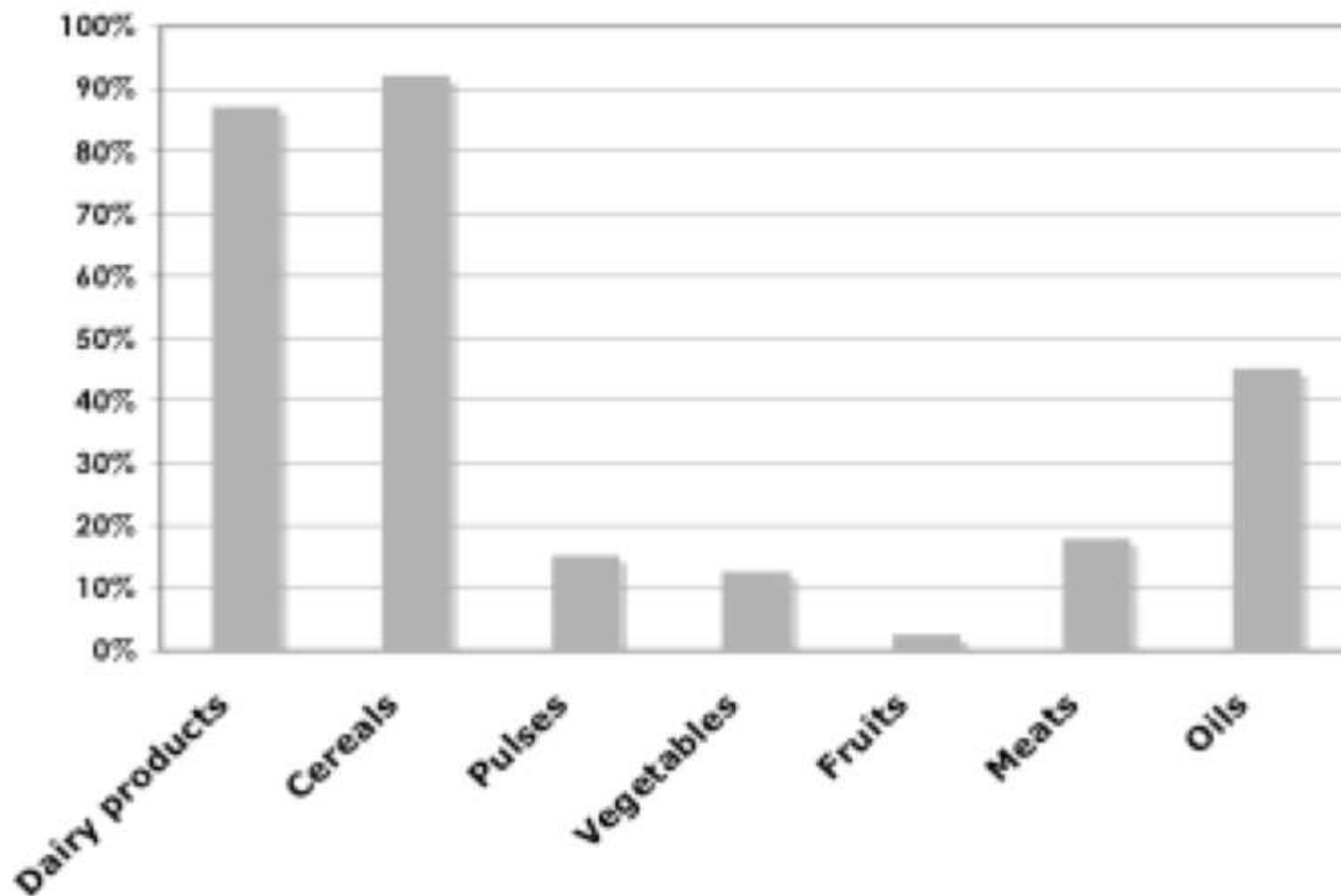
# Farm for consumption?



“My farm is small - more like a garden. It gives us no more than two months worth of millet - in a good year for my family. We are farmers but what we grow is not enough. We are laborers but what we earn does not buy us all the meals.” (Zara Guidan Koura)



# Dietary diversity



Food groups consumed by children aged 6-24 months in the 24 hours preceding survey, conducted February 2008.

Source: Government of Niger/WFP/FAO/UNICEF/FEWSNET (2008).



# The cost of off-farm work

- Labor on wealthier farms
- Firewood collection
- Cattle folder
- Processing food
- Migration

**At the cost:**

- => Degradation of environment
- => Erosion of resilient

**=> Child care practices**

**=> Long-term impact on mother and child health**







# Choices between today or tomorrow

- High labor demand
- Need for immediate cash
- Child care
- Attending health and nutritional services

=> Missing the valuable first rains,  
diminishing next years harvests





# Social costs



**“Hunger drives you insane and in isolation: first you hide the little you have from your neighbors, then from your friends, then from your sister and finally you see own father passing and you hide it from him.” (Hadijata, Guidan Koura)**





**“We can afford it, they can’t!”**

Donor Representative