



Consumption of self-grown crops in Timor-Leste

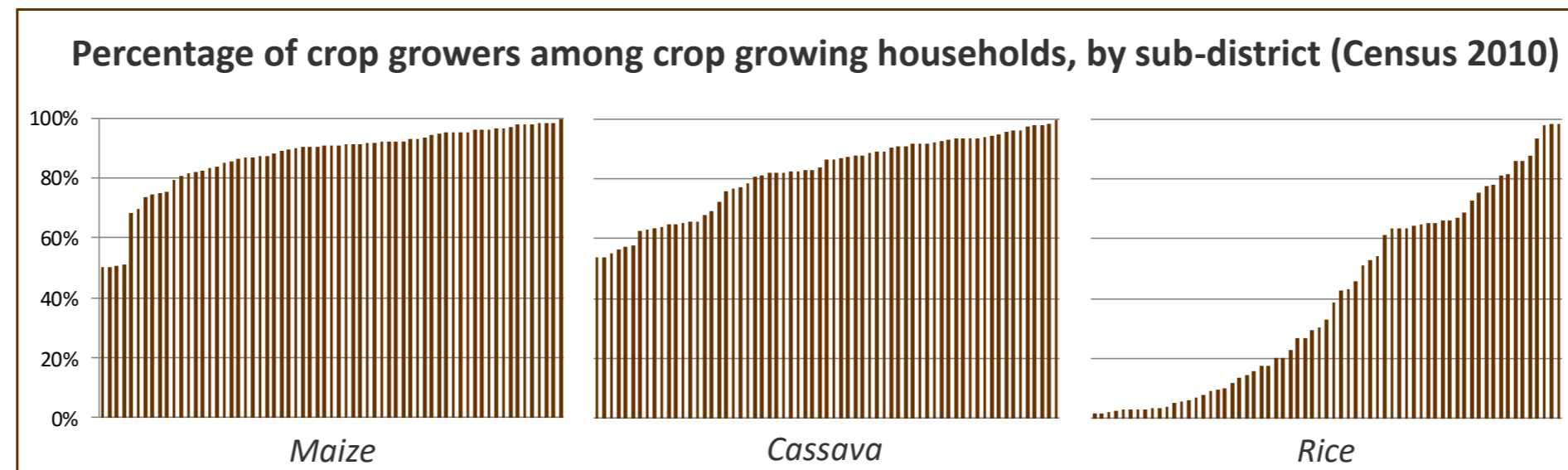
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Background

Maize, cassava, sweet potato, rice and peanut are five food crops that are grown by many farmers in Timor-Leste. In 2010, 63% of all households in Timor-Leste were growing one or more crops (NSD 2011).

Very few farmers grow enough of these crops to meet their food demand for a whole year. Many experience a period of lack of food (“hungry season”) of several months, usually between November and February.

To meet their food demand, farmers have to use various coping strategies to have enough food.



Percentage of crop growers in Timor-Leste growing the crop

Food crop	2010	2013	2014
Maize	88%	95%	99%
Cassava	81%	86%	91%
Sweet potato		60%	76%
Rice	39%	37%	31%
Peanut		29%	35%

Source: 2010: Population and housing census
2013: Mid-term survey, Seeds of Life
2014: Adoption survey, Seeds of Life

Method of assessment

In two country-wide surveys with approximately 700 households, conducted in June-July 2013 and August-September 2014, farmers were asked several food-related questions:

- Had they experienced one or more “hungry seasons” in the past 12 months?
- If yes, during which months?
- For each of the five food crops they were growing, how long they had been able to eat them?
- How did they cope when there was no food?

Question on consumption of self-grown food in the 2013 survey

In the last 12 months (June 2012-May 2013), in which months was food available from the following crops that were grown by this household?

Mark with “X” all the months when you have food.	2012						2013					
	Jun 6	Jul 7	Aug 8	Sep 9	Oct 10	Nov 11	Dec 12	Jan 1	Feb 2	Mar 3	Apr 4	May 5
1. Maize												
2. Rice												
3. Peanut												
4. Cassava												
5. Sweet potato												

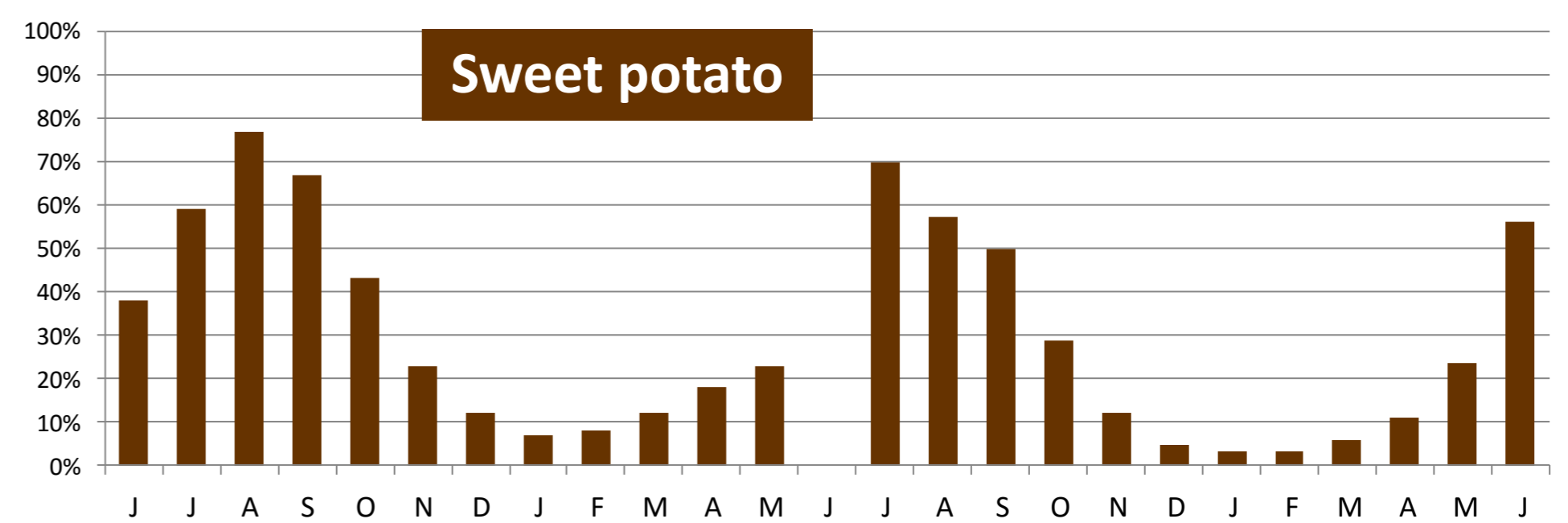
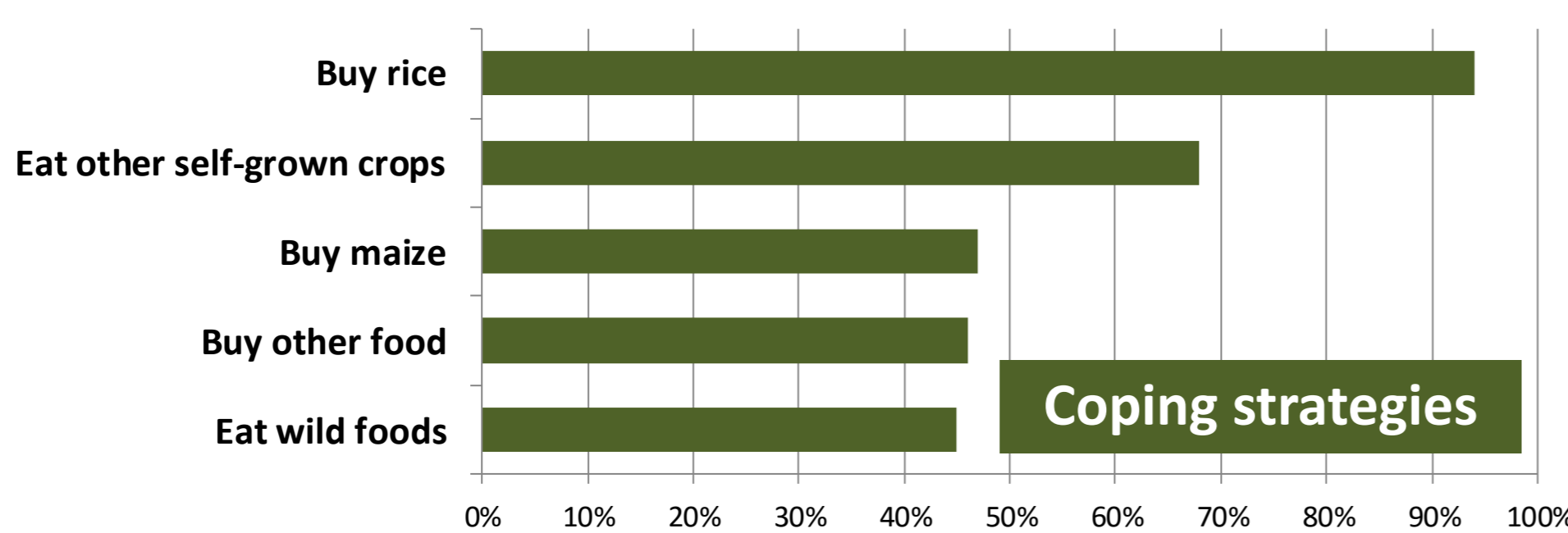
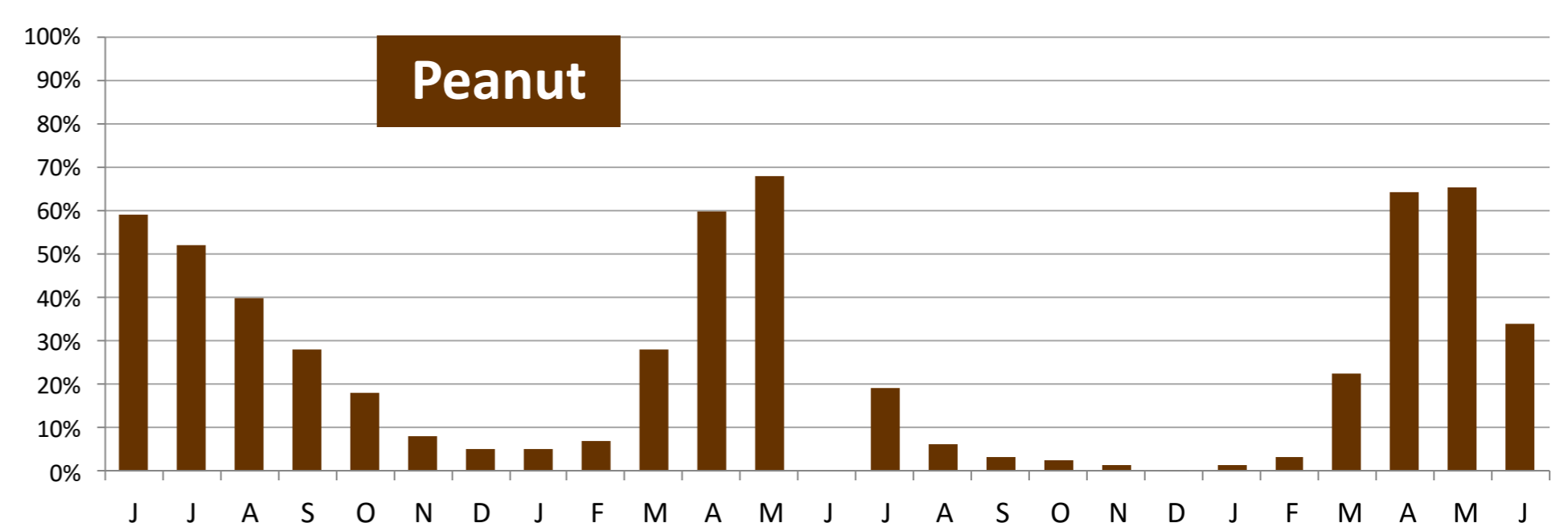
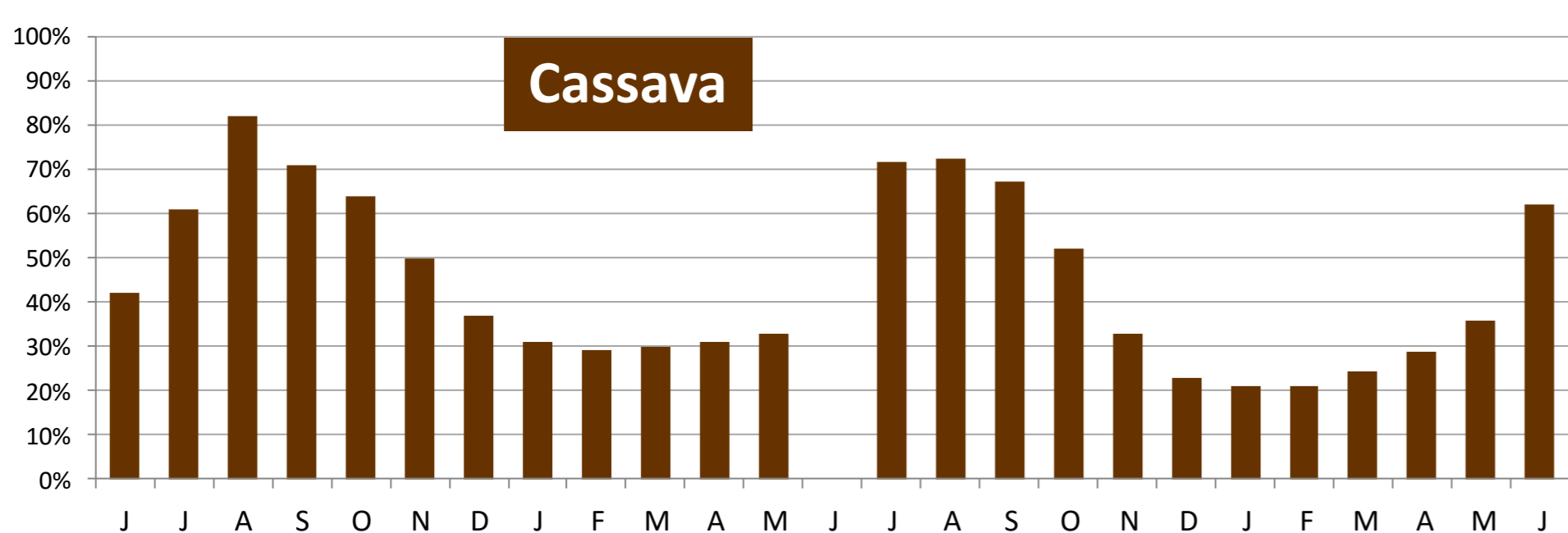
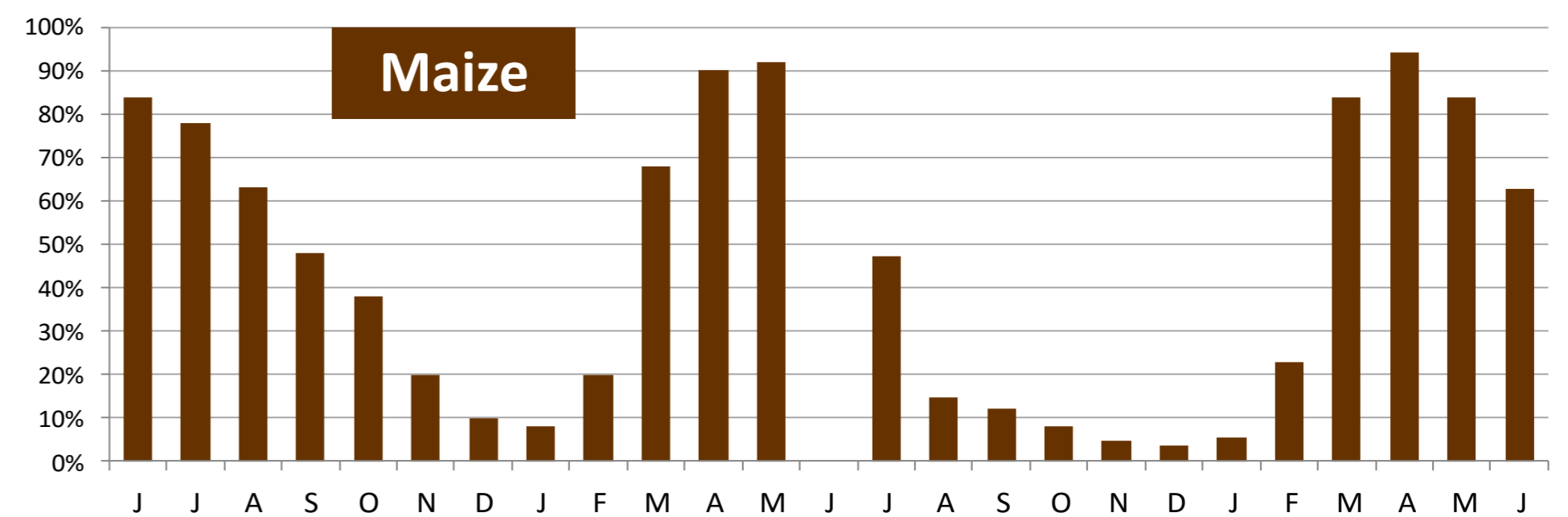
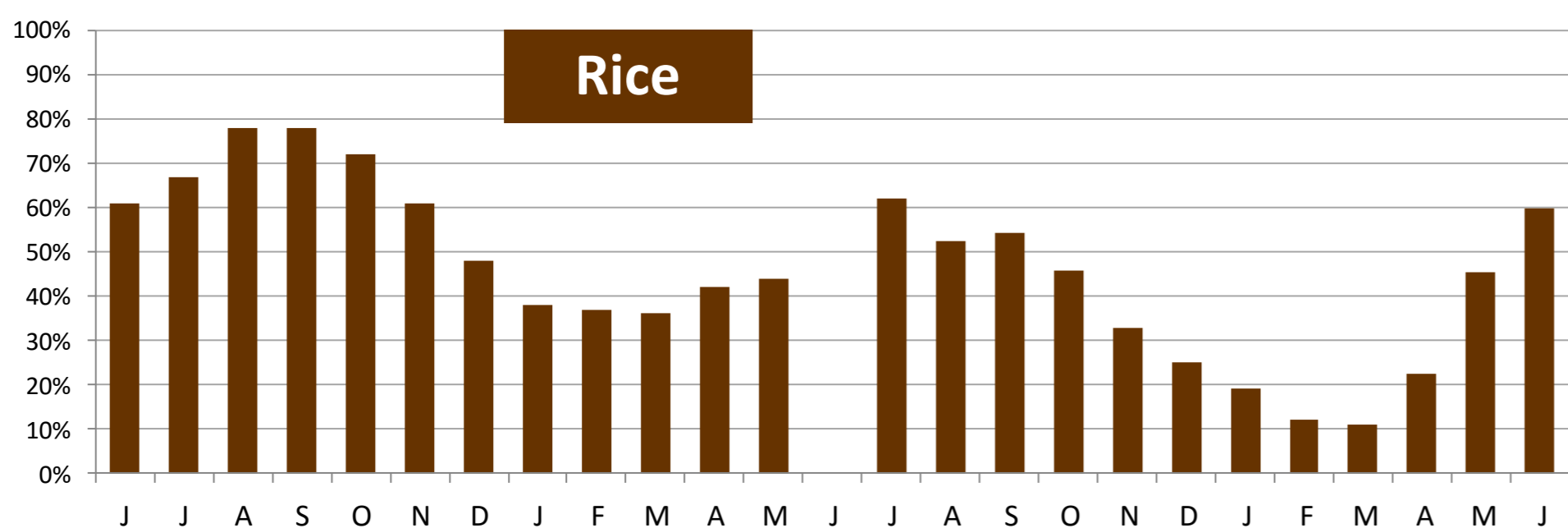
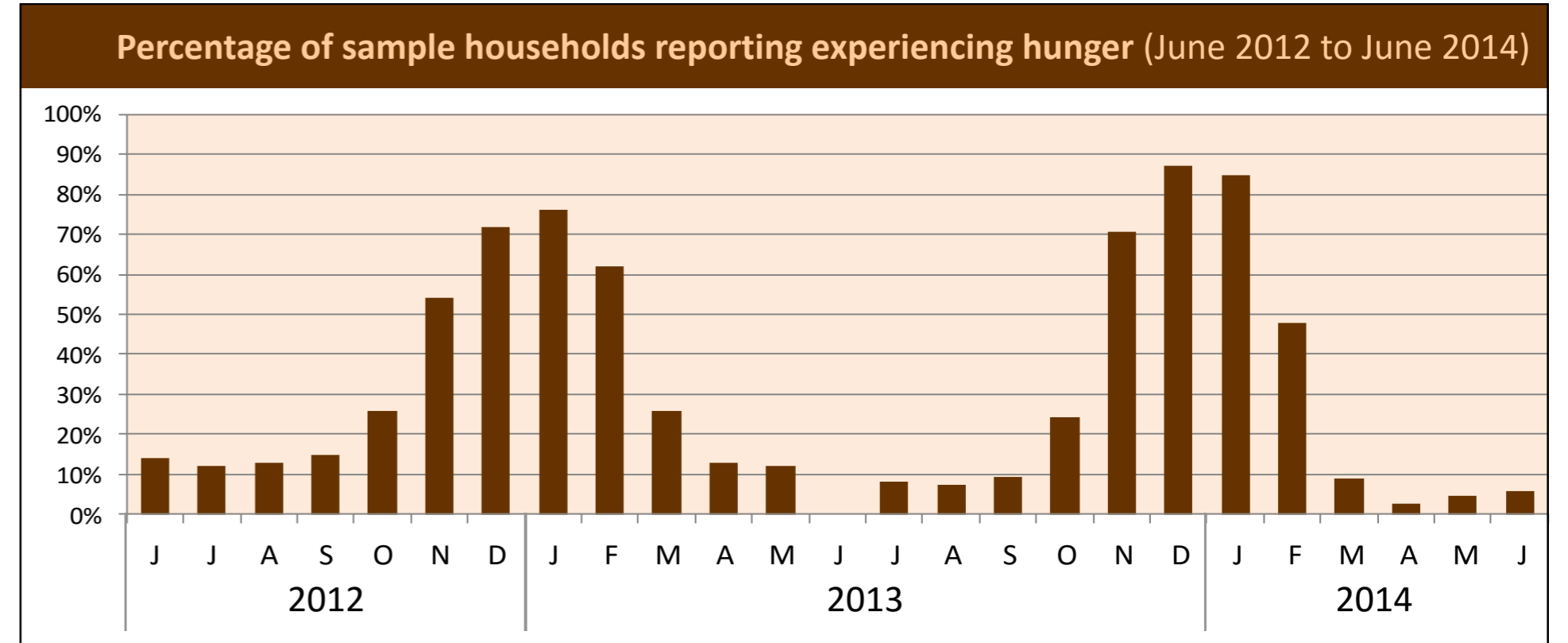


Results

The graph on the right shows the percentage of households in the two surveys who reported experiencing hunger in certain months. The period from November to February is the peak of the “hungry season”.

The five crop graphs — for maize, rice, peanut, cassava and sweet potato — show in which months the households growing these crops were able to consume them over the period June 2012 to June 2014.

When they lack food, most households buy rice rather than maize to meet the shortfall in self-grown food. Other coping strategies are: consuming other self-grown crops, buying other food, and foraging for wild foods.



References

- NSD (National Statistics Directorate) 2011. Population and housing census of Timor-Leste, 2010, Volume 4: Suco report, National Statistics Directorate and United Nations Population Fund, Dili.
- Seeds of Life 2013. Mid-Term Survey, Seeds of Life program, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dili, Timor-Leste.
- Seeds of Life 2014. Adoption Survey 2014, Seeds of Life program, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dili, Timor-Leste.