

Food Security Monitor for the Americas

Full Report on the Agrifood Sector in the Americas during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Previous editions available at: <https://iica.int/en/monitor>

1,535,442

Confirmed cases of
Covid-19 in the
Americas



Countries



Highest number of
cases in the
Americas:

USA (1,194,442)
BRA (110,156)
CAN (62,910)
PER (51,189)
ECU (31,881)

Covid-19 in the world



Source: Johns Hopkins University, available at <https://bit.ly/3dJ1CZX>. Data as at 05 May 2020 (14:00 CST).

*** This monitor is a dynamic, constantly updated tool created by IICA to analyze and forecast the impact of the world health crisis on food security in the Americas.*

Analysis and scenarios

The latest from the IICA Blog:

[Crisis in agrifood production: perspectives from one region in Ecuador](#)

Despite current circumstances, **farming activities have not ceased**. The first case of Covid-19 in Cayambe was confirmed on April 6. Since then, the number of cases has risen to 5, and 1 person has completed the isolation period. Communities and neighborhoods in this rural area have proposed **setting up checkpoints in each community**, which would play a crucial role in slowing or even **halting the spread of the disease**.

The methods used to **transport agrifood products** to urban areas in Cayambe have facilitated the spread of the disease in the agro-productive sector of the Andean Paramo, due to the fact that most small-scale producers do not own **personal vehicles** to travel to the city.

More on this topic in this week's blog post by *Erika Chururuchumbi Rojas*, Natural Resource Biotechnology Engineer of the Cariacu-Pueblo Kayambi community in the Cayambe canton of Ecuador. <https://bit.ly/3diDr3v>

[Food security during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

In the context of Covid-19, **issues** related to food access are not so much as a result of insufficient food supplies (in fact, there is an abundant overall food supply) as they are due to an abrupt, **catastrophic decrease in income** and employment. This is the case for many developing countries, but the situation is also being observed in more developed countries.

Covid-19 has had a **systemic, global impact** on food security. However, its impact at the local level should also be considered. The paradox of food security is that the **poorer and more vulnerable** a population is, the greater the necessity to meet its **food needs at the local level**. The interaction between food security and markets is weak and erratic. This must be considered when undertaking actions and making decisions regarding how and where to channel different types of support.

More on this topic in this week's blog post by *Cassio Luiselli* of the University Program for Development Studies (PUED) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Mr. Luiselli is a member of IICA's Advisory Council for Food Security in the Americas. <https://bit.ly/3dltDpK>

Relevant issues for the agrifood sector

<h2>Production</h2> <p>* Measures related to the agrifood production sector, and information on impact channels and areas affected in the countries of the Americas (products grown or harvested during this time of year).</p>	
<p>Argentina: BCBA estimates record wheat production</p> <p>According to the Buenos Aires Grain Exchange (BCBA), Argentina’s wheat production during the 2020-21 season will reach a record 21 million tons, compared to the 18.8 million tons collected in the previous season.</p> <p>The 2020-21 harvest benefited from favorable weather conditions early in the season, as well as from promising economic outlooks for the crop. https://reut.rs/2z9fnBE</p>	<p>Brazil: 2020-21 sugar production will increase by 18.5%</p> <p>Brazil is expected to produce 35.3 million tons of sugar, as mills allocate more cane to make sugar and less to produce biofuel ethanol.</p> <p>Ethanol production was estimated at 32 billion liters, 10.3% lower than usual levels. https://reut.rs/2L5cYdH</p>
<p>Canada: Prime Minister announces C\$252 million for agrifood sector</p> <p>Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the investment will be aimed at supporting farmers and the agrifood sector, which have been affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>The funding includes C\$77 million for food processors to improve safety for workers and to expand processing capacity; C\$125 million for the beef sector; and C\$50 million for the purchase of surplus food, given that food demand has decreased due to restaurant closures. This food will be distributed among aid organizations. https://bit.ly/3c9o11k</p>	<p>El Salvador: measures during the pandemic</p> <p>The Legislative Assembly approved an additional US\$1 billion acquisition of debt (in addition to the US\$2 billion that had been approved in March) to deal with the coronavirus.</p> <p>The Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES) estimates that, with the additional debt, the fiscal deficit will be greater than 16% and public debt will represent more than 91% of the GDP.</p> <p>According to FUSADES, the government will utilize this amount to fund various measures, including US\$600 million for subsidized loans and wage subsidies, and US\$300 million for food packages for 1.7 million households.</p> <p>The government is also drafting a bill which would allocate US\$500 million to reconstruct the agriculture sector. https://bit.ly/3dnwLkX</p>

<p>United States: biggest pork processor reopens</p> <p>Smithfield Foods Inc, the world’s biggest pork processor, is gradually resuming operations this week, with 250 of its 3,700 employees, having closed 3 weeks ago because of the pandemic.</p> <p>State and union officials are urging employees to be tested to make sure they are COVID negative before returning to work. https://reut.rs/3c5dsg0</p>	<p>United States: “Murder hornets” on the country’s east coast pose a concern for agriculture officials</p> <p>Hundreds of Asian giant hornets have appeared in Washington State, close to the Canadian border, posing a threat to humans and to honeybees (which are essential for agriculture). The hornets were first seen towards the end of 2019.</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture in Washington state is attempting to eradicate the species before they can wipe out the bees, thereby affecting pollination and agriculture. https://reut.rs/35zqOOV</p>
<p>Panama: MIDA is overseeing a US\$7 million incentive payment for rice producers</p> <p>The Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) is processing an upcoming incentive payment of \$7.5 per quintal of rice, which will amount to some USD 7 million in total for the 2020-2021 agricultural period.</p> <p>The subsidy was established by previous administrations, but the government will continue to honour it.</p> <p>Incentive payments will also be provided to cow’s milk, grain and corn producers. https://bit.ly/3c8rrlc</p>	<p>Dominican Republic: MAG outlines ways in which it is supporting producers</p> <p>The Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) has advised that the government is working with producers affected by the pandemic and areas experiencing drought. The Ministry has activated its Drought Mitigation Committee, which is handing over 10,000 bags of corn fodder to feed cattle and is sending trucks of water to the affected areas.</p> <p>The government is instituting various measures, including purchasing chicken and milk, and organizing agricultural markets to support producers. https://bit.ly/3b5w3Hr</p>

Trade

*Trade-related measures taken by the countries, description of the impact on products usually exported during this time of year, problems in trade logistics and global supply chains.

Colombia: cargo movement at ports declines by 3.8% during the first quarter

During the first three months of the year, 44.8 million tons of cargo were transported through Colombia's ports, representing a decline of 1.7 million tons. The port zones of Buenaventura and Cartagena recorded a fall-off in cargo volumes, with Buenaventura receiving lower levels of corn, sugar and chemical products and Cartagena experiencing a reduction in hydrocarbon shipments.

<https://bit.ly/35A4Afl>

Uruguay: 22.7% interannual fall in exports during the month of April

The reduction in exports during April was due mainly to the drop in sales of meat and cellulose.

Products experiencing the greatest reduction in exports were meat by-products (-49.8%) and beef (-41.8%), primarily due to the close to 30% fall in sales to China and the 77% contraction in sales to the European Union, these being the two main markets for these products.

Rice was the best performing product.

<https://bit.ly/3cjCUy8>

United States and the United Kingdom begin post-Brexit trade talks

Trade talks with the United Kingdom began on Tuesday and agriculture is expected to be one of the thorniest issues to negotiate, given Britain's firm opposition to genetically modified crops from the United States and anti-bacterial treatments for poultry. The United Kingdom is the seventh largest trade partner of the United States, after South Korea.

<https://reut.rs/2W6YyjO>

Mexico: Legislature must approve package of projects needed for the USMCA

The projects must be approved prior to 1 July, when the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will enter into force.

One of the initiatives in the package to be approved is the Federal Law on Plant Varieties.

<https://bit.ly/3c9YNQz>

Panama: fruit exporters lose US\$8.8 million

Preliminary figures from the Panamanian Association of Agroexporters of Non-Traditional Products indicate losses of approximately USD 8.8 million in exports of watermelon, cantaloupe and pineapple during the 2019-2020 agricultural season. Reduced consumption and the closure of some trade distribution channels, due to the pandemic, has affected exports and many fruits rotted in the fields following the cancellation of orders. <https://bit.ly/2WyVdZT>

Paraguay: beef exports climb during the first 4 months of the year

Beef exports have experienced a 1.5% interannual increase, climbing to 73,586 tons during the first four months of the year.

There was a 10.4% increase in the export value of the product up to April of this year. Chile was the main export market (accounting for 34%), followed by Russia (23%) and Israel (13%). <https://bit.ly/2yvmswh>

Trade measures in the context of the pandemic (WTO and ITC)

Below is a list of trade measures related to agrifood products notified during the past week (30 April to 5 May):

- **Chinese Taipei:** Temporary Alternative Measures for the Submission of Certificates for Food Safety and Sanitation Purposes amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic (SPS).
- **Thailand:** terminates the temporary prohibition of chicken eggs exports. (There was no extension of the ban imposed on 26 March).

WTO: <https://bit.ly/3dOh5YJ>

ITC: <https://bit.ly/2YdwEnB>

Supply

*Measures taken by Ministries of Agriculture in different countries regarding food security.

Central American coffee growers benefit from advisory services during the pandemic

The online training offered to coffee farmers included guidance on sampling for chemical soil analysis and recommendations on coffee plant tissue management.

The recommendations have been circulated using WhatsApp distribution lists, a tool to which at least 80% of the families that work directly with PROCAGICA have access. This has enabled constant interaction among technical officers and producers who are members of 191 organizations.

<https://bit.ly/35z5KrX>

Once again, agriculture will be key to keeping the world afloat

International food demand will create opportunities in the sector and agrifood chains will play a critical role in sustaining employment.

Despite the difficulties in the current situation, agricultural activity in Argentina has not stopped and forecasts indicate that cultivation levels will be comparable to last year. <https://bit.ly/3b8Zk3M>

Can Mexico guarantee its food supply during the health emergency?

What is happening to vulnerable groups and those people who are living from day to day? How will our consumption patterns change after the pandemic? Although we have a guaranteed production supply at this moment, the Mexican Meat Council has noted various factors that have affected the demand for meat in the country, such as the purchasing power of consumers. <https://bit.ly/2A2Wvoh>

In April, the Brazilian agriculture sector recorded its greatest trade surplus in 3 years

The \$6.7 billion trade surplus in April is the highest recorded for that month since 2017 (+7 billion), with exports remaining relatively stable, despite the Coronavirus epidemic, partially due to an increase in Asian demand. <https://bit.ly/2SGFWVs>

Brazilian soybean exports achieved record levels in April, surpassing 14 million tons

According to data from the maritime agency, accumulated exports from January through April from Brazil, the world's largest oilseed exporter, amounted to 35.76 million tons, with 26.5 million tons going to China. <https://bit.ly/2YyNpdb>

Agriculture is not immune: it needs attention and monitoring

Although the Uruguayan economy has been stopped in its tracks by the Coronavirus, levels of activity in rural areas have remained high, despite some problems such as the strike in the meat packing industry and the need to change work protocols to avoid the spread of the pandemic, which has complicated certain tasks.

Agriculture has fared better than other sectors and will be particularly important in spurring the overall economy to become fully operational again in the future. <https://bit.ly/2yvoRqL>