

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>

21,058,719

Confirmed cases of
Covid-19 in the
Americas



Countries



Highest number of

IICA (2020)

Analysis and scenarios

The latest from the IICA Blog:

[IICA and Canadian organization launch online course to strengthen capacities for exporting agrifood products](#)

In partnership with the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT), a Canadian organization specializing in international business training, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has launched the course “**Preparing to Export Agrifood Products**”, which is now available online.

**** 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. The views expressed herein are not necessarily the opinion of the Institute, but a reflection of developments worldwide.*

The objective of the course, available in Spanish and [English](#), is to strengthen participants' **capacity to export agrifood products** and to raise awareness of the importance of being prepared to successfully capitalize on the opportunities afforded by trade agreements and regional integration processes.

The course is geared towards **people who work in companies and producer organizations in the agrifood sector**, as well as officers from relevant institutions that are interested in learning more about **the aspects that should be taken into account and defined prior to exporting, in order to facilitate successful negotiations and reduce export risks.**

The course is based on the AgFITT notebooks, which are training materials on international business with a special focus on the agrifood sector. Developed by FITT, these materials have been updated and adapted by IICA to fit the reality of its member countries.

The course **consists of 6 modules:** preparing to export, business plan for exporting, assessing export opportunities, how to adapt your product to the destination market, payment methods and how to finalize a business deal.

Caroline Tompkins, President and CEO of FITT, considers that a talented team is one of the most important advantages a company can have to succeed in global markets. The course **contributes to developing this talent by providing participants with a full picture of the agricultural export cycle to support international growth.**

According to Daniel Rodriguez Sáenz, Manager of IICA's International Trade and Regional Integration Program, international trade in agrifood products plays a **strategic role in the region's food security.**

"Latin America and the Caribbean have performed remarkably well during the pandemic in terms of supplying food and agricultural products at the local and global levels. In order to capitalize on international trade opportunities, companies and producer organizations, especially small and medium scale entities, must be well prepared", he remarked.

More information: <https://bit.ly/2SO4wDO>

The banner features an orange background with a dark blue header. The title 'Getting ready to export Agrifood products' is in large white font. Below it, a list of 6 modules is shown in white text. To the right is a photo of a man in a plaid shirt looking at a tablet in a greenhouse. At the bottom, a white box contains the text '25% discount on its first edition' and the IICA and FITT logos.

Online course

Getting ready to export Agrifood products

6 modules:

- 1- Preparing to export
- 2- The export business plan
- 3- Evaluating export opportunities
- 4- How to adapt your product for the target market
- 5- Forms of payments
- 6- How to close the business deal

25% discount on its first edition

IICA FITT

Relevant issues for the agrifood sector

Production

*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).

Brazil: unemployment rate rises to 14.4%

According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the unemployment rate reached a record high of 14.4% for the three-month period ending in August, rising by 1.6 percentage points compared to the three-month period ending in May. The number of unemployed persons reached 13.8 million—an increase of 8.5% compared to the previous three-month period. On the other hand, the number of employed persons decreased by 5% compared to the three-month period ending in May, totaling 81.7 million. Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture was the only sector that saw an increase in the number of employed people, which grew by 2.9% during the three-month period; a total of 228 thousand more people now work in the sector. <https://bit.ly/3kTp4XL>

Chile: economic activity contracts by 5.3% in September

According to the Monthly Economic Activity Indicator (IMACEC) prepared by the Central Bank of Chile, economic activity contracted by 5.3% in September 2020 compared to the same month last year. The seasonally adjusted indicator increased by 5.1% compared to the previous month and decreased by 6.5% over the past twelve months.

The mining IMACEC decreased by 1.9%, while the non-mining IMACEC decreased by 5.7%. Construction as well as education, transportation, restaurant and hotel services are the activities that have been most affected.

This result was partially offset by growth in trade, manufacturing and, to a lesser extent, business services. <https://bit.ly/3epfKbE>

Colombia: government will provide potato farmers with an incentive of \$30 billion pesos

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has announced that it will provide an incentive in the amount of \$30 billion pesos to advance the Program to Support the Commercialization of Fresh Potatoes. Small-scale potato farmers will be provided with direct economic compensation, as a way to support the sector, which has been greatly impacted by the pandemic and prices.

The incentive is expected to benefit 25,000 producers and contribute to the commercialization of 200,000 tons of potato. <https://bit.ly/3k6sXaN> and <https://bit.ly/38fULab>

Costa Rica: Central Bank predicts that agriculture will be the sector lagging furthest behind in economic recovery in 2021

According to estimates by the Central Bank of Costa Rica (BCCR), the economy will improve slightly in 2021, growing at a rate of 2.6%. The BCCR predicts that all sectors of the economy, except for agriculture, will improve.

In 2020, the agriculture sector has been primarily affected by the contraction in both internal and external demand.

<https://bit.ly/2TTu6Yl> and <https://bit.ly/38aPbWx>

Mexico: Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development foresees 8% hike in grain production

According to data presented in the Second Report of the Government, the pandemic has not held back rural activity in Mexico. There have been no overall shortages and unlike other sectors, agriculture has enjoyed 2.7% cumulative growth since the start of this year up to the third quarter (compared to a 9.8% decline in the overall economy) and there has been a 31% annual increase in the agrifood trade surplus.

The EFEAgro agency has reported that SADER anticipates that the production of grains, such as corn, wheat, beans and rice, will increase by 8%, up to 34 million tons.

<https://bit.ly/3kYYo84> and <https://bit.ly/32ey1DB>

Uruguay: farmers are anxious about the drought on the northern coast

The drought has mainly hit areas on the northern coast where farmers are preparing for the wheat and barley harvest. Some models forecast that no rain will fall during the first fortnight of November.

El Observador has revealed that authorities in the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries are considering issuing an agricultural state of emergency for the region, where it has been reported that farmers have been affected and winter crops are now threatened.

<https://bit.ly/364ag2j> and <https://bit.ly/3oZFXCH>

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.

Mexico-Netherlands horticultural mission strengthens technological and commercial exchange

A virtual horticultural mission with agricultural authorities, production entities and agribusinesses from Mexico and the Netherlands emphasized the importance of commercial and technological exchange, given their production potential and advances in protected agriculture innovation in both countries, meaning agriculture in conditions that allow farmers control over some factors of the production environment, minimizing climate impact on crops.

Horticultural production and exports in Mexico have gained ground during the pandemic and this presents an excellent opportunity for innovation. Between January and July 2020, the sector of vegetables, plants, as well as edible roots and tubers increased 7.7% over the same period last year (data from the Trade Data Monitor).

<https://bit.ly/2HXFZKG>

Brazil diversifies – 100 new markets for agricultural and agroindustrial products

Since January 2019, various Brazilian government entities have been working on opening up multiple markets for traditional products, as well as dried fruit, tea, fruits, fish, dairy products and plants, which is also diversifying the Brazilian export basket.

Most of the markets (45) are in Latin America: Argentina, Canada and Guatemala. On the other hand, according to data from the Secretariat of Trade and International Relations of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, the country gained access to 40 markets in Asia, in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Indonesia; 14 in Africa and one in Oceania (Australia). Brazil is one of the major global producers and exporters that has come out winning amidst the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and part of this success may be due to its strategy to diversify its markets and its agricultural basket.

<https://bit.ly/32e16z1>

The United States gives a boost to the Dominican agriculture sector

The North American country is pushing capacity building initiatives to enable Dominican production sectors to fulfill the requirements to gain entry into international markets. Sanitary and phytosanitary aspects are critical for trade facilitation.

Coordination between the Ministries of Agriculture, Trade and the Economy of the countries, in collaboration with the private sector and international organizations, such as IICA, will foster improved technical capacities needed to enter into export markets. <https://bit.ly/34V8e55>

Panama to activate agricultural safeguard for Costa Rican dairy products

Panama issued a document to advise Costa Rica about the possibility of introducing a tariff or import tax on Costa Rican milk, by way of an agricultural safeguard mechanism (no further details were provided).

The document did not specify the amount of the tariff. However, the intention was made very clear: "A special agricultural safeguard mechanism to be introduced for certain dairy products. The safeguard mechanism will be in the form of an import tax".

<https://bit.ly/2HZqFg6>

From our IICA specialists

Adriana Campos

Trade Specialist. International Trade and Regional Integration Program.

“This was an opportunity for IICA to publicize its efforts at the multilateral level regarding the technical support provided to countries of the Americas during the pandemic”.

Activity: Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture

At the last meeting of the Committee on Agriculture, IICA made a presentation to member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO), focusing on **technical cooperation actions** that it has undertaken in 2020 to support countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in decision-making in response to the pandemic.

This meeting provided an opportunity to publicize IICA’s **hemispheric, regional and national actions** to assess and monitor Covid-19 response measures in the agriculture sector.

Some of activities that were highlighted included the formation of an Advisory Council for Food Security in the Americas and the launch of the Food Security Monitor for the Americas (a tool that pinpoints trends and includes information; provides analysis and figures and decisions taken by ministries of agriculture in the region, as well as relevant details on production, logistics, trade and food supply, *inter alia*).

The member countries engaged in a rousing discussion about agricultural policies during the meeting, specifically those related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The policies discussed were in relation to the three pillars of the Agreement on Agriculture: market access, domestic support and export competition.

As such, the agenda of the meeting included a specific session entitled “Covid-19 and agriculture”, in which member countries posed various questions about market access and trade facilitation.