

Friday 29 May 2020



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>

2,696,206

Confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the Americas



Countries



Highest number of cases in the Americas:

- USA (1,721,926)
- BRA (438,238)
- PER (141,779)
- CAN (89,976)
- CHL (86,943)

Covid-19 in the world



Source: Johns Hopkins University, available at <https://bit.ly/3dJ1CZX>. Data as at 29 May 2020 (8:00 am 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:

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has launched a series of webinars entitled, “**Reflections on the World and Food Security in Latin America and the Caribbean post-Covid-19**”. The initiative is designed to **anticipate possible solutions and the requisite policies to contribute to food security, economic reactivation and trade in the aftermath of the pandemic.**

There will be **6 webinars** in total. Please see below the **presentations for the fifth webinar**: “Supply, family farming and short circuits in LAC post-Covid-19”.

[Presentation by Graciela Fernández, President of Cooperatives of the Americas](#)



“**This sector can offer many contributions**, for example, **inter-cooperation among savings and loan cooperatives** that provide financing to farmers’ cooperatives and to individual small farmers **to get ahead and to stay afloat in this complex climate**. Consumer cooperatives can also assist farming cooperatives to place their products in the market”.

We invite you to share your comments, questions and doubts on the #IICABlog, where you can find the complete presentation: <https://bit.ly/3dgKpGM>

[Presentation by Álvaro Ramos, former Minister of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs of Uruguay.](#)



“**The major challenges I foresee for the future** will be the need to establish differentiated public policies, **given that needs differ according to region and country**, as well as to **provide the producer** with technical assistance, rural extension services, financing and **access** to sanitary and phytosanitary information. We will also need **protocols and inputs to guarantee safe food for the consumer**”.

We invite you to share your comments, questions and doubts on the #IICABlog, where you can find the complete presentation: <https://bit.ly/2XdCG6W>

Relevant issues for the agrifood sector

Markets

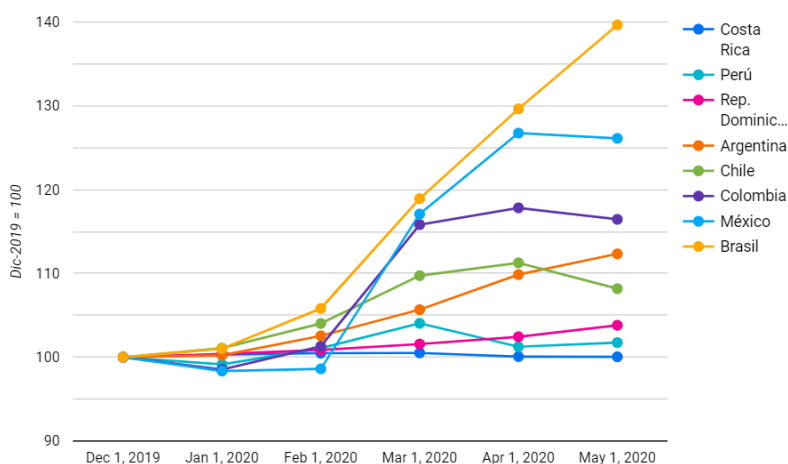
*Report from the MIOA, a cooperation network comprising the Agricultural Market Information Systems (AMIS) of the 33 countries in the hemisphere. Information is compiled on a per country basis.

This week's graph

Monitoring Exchange rates and their effect on the sector during Covid-19: **Devaluation of Latin American currencies vis-à-vis the USD**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the currencies that have declined most in value up to the month of May, in comparison to December 2019, are the Brazilian real (39.7%), the Mexican peso (26.11%), the Colombian peso (16.15%) and the Chilean peso (12.33%). While the devaluation of the local currencies is beneficial to agroexport chains, it negatively impacts consumers and producers serving the domestic market, by making imports of food, inputs and raw material more expensive.

The significant currency devaluations vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar are partially due to portfolio outflows from emerging markets, which the IMF estimates were USD 100 billion between February to March, that is, more than three times larger than for the same period during the 2008 global financial crisis.



Fuente: IICA con datos de University of British Columbia y datos oficiales de Bancos Centrales según país.

More details in the [#IICABlog](https://bit.ly/2M2a3TQ) post: <https://bit.ly/2M2a3TQ>

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).

Argentina: OJF estimates that the economy plummeted 19.2% in April

According to the General Activity Index of the Orlando J. Ferreres y Asociados Center for Economic Studies (OFJ), the Argentine economy had an interannual decline of 19.2% during April, with an accumulated decline of 9.2% over the first four months of the year.

The agriculture and livestock sector was one of the least affected, experiencing a 8.3% decline in the period. However, the report stressed that this contrasts with the record production achieved by the sector last year. <https://bit.ly/2TMv2OL>

Brazil: unemployment climbs to 12.6%

The Coronavirus crisis has negatively impacted the labor market, pushing overall employment to 12.6% in the three months leading into April. Trade and construction were the hardest hit sectors. On the other hand, 157 thousand jobs were lost in agriculture, livestock, forestry production, fisheries and aquaculture. Compared to last year's labor force, agriculture has lost 233 thousand workers.

<https://glo.bo/3cghGQV> and <https://bit.ly/3gA3sOa>

Brazil: USDA estimates 15% increase in Brazilian coffee production

A USDA reports estimates that the 2020/21 Brazilian coffee harvest will increase by 15%, achieving record production of 67.9 million 60kg bags. This will be due to improving climate conditions in most production regions. Forecasts suggest that Brazil's 2020/21 exports will be in the range of 41 million bags.

<https://glo.bo/3dcsNMf>

Colombia: Acosemillas assures that there will be a steady supply of seeds

Figures from producer association, Acosemillas, estimate that there will be approximately 40,000 tons of certified seeds produced in 2019, with these seeds being a basic agricultural production input, primarily for rice, corn, cotton, soybean, sorghum, potato and bean.

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

Costa Rica: ICAFÉ projects 20% upswing in coffee production in the latter half of the year

Coffee harvest projections for the latter half of the year indicate a 20%, with output peaking in August and September.

The Institute is working on measures that will permit the harvest to be produced as safely as possible. It is also preparing a database to provide information on labor needs in various coffee regions.

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

Dominican Republic: government earmarks 3 billion pesos to increase Banco Agrícola credit

The additional budget is intended to address the "increased demand for credit as a result of the impact of the Coronavirus".

Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture, advised that the President had also authorized a grant of more than 400 million pesos for close to 70 small farmer associations, which is in addition to an investment to rehabilitate close to 300 pumping systems operated by the Dominican Agricultural Institute. (IAD).

<https://bit.ly/3euHaM9>

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.

Argentina: falling water levels in Paraná will affect Argentina's exports until September

In making this observation, experts have warned that companies in the agricultural port should continue to load ships at lower levels than normal until September.

Eighty percent of Argentina's agricultural and agroindustrial shipments leave the country from the port zone of Rosario and now is the time when the country's trade in soybean and maize is at its peak.

<https://reut.rs/3ccHoGe>

Argentina: meat exports increased 17% during the first four months of the year.

The 17% increase in comparison to the same period last year amounted to more than 249 thousand tons of meat (beef, chicken and pork), meaning that the country exported 32,132 tons more, despite the pandemic.

The main destination markets for beef and chicken were China and Chile, whereas China and Russia were the largest markets for pork.

<https://bit.ly/3c8LQ8Z>

Central America: Honduras and Guatemala bar entry of Costa Rican goods

Honduras and Guatemala have barred the entry of Costa Rican goods, as a "reciprocity" measure, in response to the measures imposed by Costa Rica. According to Costa Rica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (COMEX), the country's number one priority is to reopen its border with Nicaragua. Additionally, in response to the suggestions of Costa Rican transport operators, the country has relaxed three measures of the pilot plan.

<https://bit.ly/3di359i> and <https://bit.ly/2yI2D55>

Andean Community: approves measure to facilitate external trade

The countries of the Andean Community, CAN (Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru) have approved a measure to expedite procedures involving the exchange of digital certificates of origin among these countries.

They will streamline the Andean System of Authorized Signatures, in order to standardize the platforms of all the countries, thereby enabling interoperability.

<https://bit.ly/3gte55H>

Guatemala: exports grow 8.1% during first quarter

Guatemala's exports grew 8.1% during the first quarter vis-à-vis the same period last year. Cardamom, banana and coffee were three of the leading exports. The Bank of Guatemala forecasts an 8% contraction in Guatemalan exports this year. <https://bit.ly/2yMytxC>

Uruguay: meat sales to China and Israel and sales of live cattle to Turkey have resumed

The Head of Livestock advised that meat sales have resumed, particularly to China, and the possibility of trade with countries in South-East Asia is being explored.

<https://bit.ly/2XeHN6R>

Supply

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

Cooperatives and associations: vital in strengthening family farming's contribution to the food supply

Driving cooperativism and associative enterprises will be essential in the aftermath of COVID-19 to strengthen the role of family farming in supplying food to the people of the Americas.

President of Cooperatives of the Americas, Graciela Fernández, and former Minister of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, Álvaro Ramos, both agreed that these elements, coupled with differentiated public policies, digitalization and connectivity for training, technical assistance and access to health information, will strengthen the short circuits that rely on family farmers for their food supplies.

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

IICA and Food Banks of Mexico distribute supplies in Cancún

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the food banks of Mexico, Red de Bancos de Alimentos de México (BAMx), distributed food to vulnerable communities in Cancún, Quintana Roo, as part of strategic measures adopted in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Under an agreement between BAMx and IICA, the first consignment of 13 tons of rice and 11 tons of beans was handed over to the Quintana Roo food bank, under the COVID-19 Emergency Plan, for distribution to families experiencing food insecurity.

<https://bit.ly/2yFFH6j>

Demand and price of Chilean blueberries spike

Chilean blueberries increased in value in the first four months of 2020, rising almost 5%, with a sales volume of USD 442 million.

This upward trend can be observed throughout the market, as demonstrated by prices obtained for blueberries from Huelva, Spain and from the Balkan region countries, which have managed to slow the natural decline in the price curve that is typical at this time, obtaining much higher prices than previous in previous years. <https://bit.ly/3gvvMBg>

Bean prices continue to rise due to price speculation in El Salvador

Bean prices continue to rise, and in the last month alone, there was a 10% increase in the average price of a quintal of red beans, according to the agricultural statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG).

El Salvador's Chamber of Small and Medium-scale Producers (CAMPO) assures that there is no reason for the rise in the price of basic grains, given that there is no shortage of supplies. Thus, the spike can be attributed to market speculation.

<https://bit.ly/2TQ4QT8>

Request for agriculture in Mexico to be declared a strategic activity

To prevent the health crisis from mushrooming into a food crisis, the Federal Government should establish agriculture and food distribution as strategic activities.

<https://bit.ly/3ewH8n8>