

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>

4,103,324

Confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the Americas



Countries



Highest number of cases in the Americas:

- USA (2,173,804)
- BRA (955,377)
- PER (240,908)
- CHL (220,628)
- MEX (159,793)

Covid-19 in the world



Source: Johns Hopkins University, available at <https://bit.ly/3dJ1CZX>. Data as at 18 June 2020 (12:00 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:

[AgTech innovations: an opportunity to overcome the Covid-19 crisis in Latin America](#)

The current context affords a valuable opportunity for growth in the Latin American region, specifically through innovations in agricultural production processes, as well as the implementation of state-of-the-art technologies within the agriculture sector (which is referred to as **Agricultural Technology** or "AgTech").

It has become crucial to prioritize investments in **science, technology, research and development**, which would enable countries to reduce their dependence on imports of agricultural products or bio-inputs for production. Digital agriculture; Agriculture 5.0 or artificial intelligence; Internet of Things (IoT); Blockchain; vertical, urban and indoor farms; regenerative agriculture and the bioeconomy **are a few of the technologies available** to optimize agro-industrial processes in the sector, address sustainability and climate change issues, as well as overcome the impact of COVID-19.

Find out the details this week in the blog post by *Verónica Delgado Hernández, who holds a Ph.D. and is a member of AllBiotech, a Latin American network of leaders in the field of biotechnology.*

<https://bit.ly/2YcO57b>

[Covid-19 and agrifood systems in relation to climate change, innovation and the bioeconomy](#)

Despite having undertaken a **commitment**, within the framework of the Paris Agreement, to limit the increase in global average temperature to 1.5 °C and, in turn, prevent the impact of more catastrophic climate events, **an increase of 3°C** is still expected. It is estimated that GHG emissions will drop by about 3 to 5%; however, this would occur as a result of the global economic slowdown triggered by the pandemic, rather than **structural changes within our socio-economic system**.

The crisis has underscored the need for change and provides an impetus for innovation. In other words, there is an opportunity to make changes at various levels of our innovation systems or ecosystems. Despite the pandemic's grave impact on the entire socio-productive structure, it is possible to **"take advantage"** of the current circumstances to **re-envision** the sector **and implement profound changes**.

The bioeconomy, in turn, affords numerous opportunities to recover from the effects of Covid-19 and climate change, to avoid further compromising the sustainability of future generations.

Find out the details this week in the blog post by *Maria Beatriz "Pilu" Giraudo and Kelly Witkowski, of the Climate Change and Natural Resources Program; Viviana Palmieri, of the Innovation and Technology cross-cutting issue; and Gabriela Quiroga, of the Bioeconomy and Production Development Program.*

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

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: farmers object to government’s proposal to link sovereign bonds to food exports</p> <p>The government has proposed tying the interest rate of bonds issued in the country’s debt restructuring to the country’s agricultural exports. According to Reuters, creditors, with whom the government negotiates, saw the warrants as an unsatisfactory perk.</p> <p>Farmers, for their part, worry that the warrants would be an incentive for the government to keep agricultural export taxes unchanged at current levels. https://reut.rs/3fA4UPu</p>	<p>Bolivia: government launches plan to reactivate agriculture sector</p> <p>The plan is aimed at guaranteeing the country's food security, bolstering production and trade, as well as supporting family farming, medium-scale farming and industrial agriculture for export.</p> <p>The agricultural products that form part of the basic food basket will be the first sectors to receive assistance.</p> <p>The plan seeks to facilitate trade, supply and distribution, as well as increase the demand for products geared towards foreign and domestic markets. https://bit.ly/30YSht9</p>
<p>Brazil: 2020/21 Safra Plan credit increases by 6%</p> <p>The government announced that the budget for the Safra Plan will reach R\$236.3 billion, a 6% increase compared to the previous season.</p> <p>Out of the total budget, R\$179.38 billion will be allocated to funding and marketing and R\$56.92 billion to investment in infrastructure. This year, the plan includes the Pronaf-Bio credit line, which is geared towards supporting bioeconomy production chains. Additionally, the Rural Insurance premium subsidy was increased by 30%. https://bit.ly/2zJaPT7</p>	<p>Costa Rica: Ministry of Health closes 9 agricultural companies in the northern region</p> <p>The measure was adopted following a spike in Covid-19 cases among workers of agricultural companies in the northern region (the current epicenter of the pandemic in the country). The companies that were closed down were operating without the necessary health permits.</p> <p>Other companies received sanitary orders related to non-compliance with safety protocols. These companies were given 5 days to correct the issues. https://bit.ly/3hIKxkQ and https://bit.ly/2YQfn2i</p>

Ecuador: National Risk and Emergency Management Service raises alert level to yellow, due to ashfall from Sangay volcano

The yellow alert applies to the province of Chimborazo, where ashfall has become more frequent and exposure to eruptions of the Sangay volcano has intensified.

<https://bit.ly/3dcweld> and <https://bit.ly/37O7Pl2>

Uruguay: economy enters recession

According to the quarterly report on national accounts, presented by the Central Bank for the first quarter of 2020, the Uruguayan economy has entered its second recession period, with the GDP falling 1.4% on an interannual basis and 1.6% compared to the previous quarter (seasonally adjusted). The pandemic had a partial impact on the first quarter; however, the greatest impact will be felt during the second quarter of the year.

The agriculture sector experienced a 7.7% inter-annual variation, due to decreased production of soybean and beef.

<https://bit.ly/3eiWOWk> and <https://bit.ly/2N8XQx1>

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.

United States: coronavirus continues to spread on farms and in packing plants

Recently, there has been a proliferation of Covid-19 cases on fruit and vegetable farms in the United States and in packing plants throughout the country, which could make manual labor more expensive and disrupt food production, impacting trade in some products such as meat, fruit and vegetables.

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

Chile: Chilean and Paraguayan agribusinesses are organizing business meetings to tackle the pandemic

The Regional Office of ProChile and the Chilean Trade Office in Paraguay have been organizing a series of online business sessions between Paraguayan and Chilean companies to bolster their operations amidst the pandemic. Among them is the “E-Rueda de negocios Agroalimentos Paraguay”, in which close to 60 Paraguayan food importers and 50 Chilean exporters are participating.

This activity is a follow-up to the first round of meetings on 8 and 9 June, which saw retail agreements being finalized for products such as fresh and dried fruit, a superfoods-based bioenergy drink, as well as a gourmet dressing produced using organic products.

<https://bit.ly/37QT5Sx>

Chile: post-Covid improvement plan for the Bio Bio Region

Despite the 8.1% decline in shipments in the opening months of the year, in comparison to the same period in 2019, the Bio Bio Region is Chile’s main export zone, with its ports accounting for 19% of national shipments. Nonetheless, it is working to bridge the gaps in external trade to boost economic recovery post Covid-19. Trade volume is also expected to rebound, given that market activity in Asia is regaining a certain level of normality.

Improvements in Bio Bio are part of the Regional Platform for External Trade strategy and include extensive work in the production sectors to identify logistical bottlenecks in various production sectors, such as in the forestry, fishing, food and fruit industries.

<https://bit.ly/37CLw1A>

Paraguay: introduction of trade incentives for local border trade

As part of an integrated strategy to tackle the pandemic, the country approved the ecommerce protocol governing the delivery of merchandise on its border with Brazil, minimizing the risks of exposure to Covid-19, thereby providing an incentive for Paraguayan border trade.

Under this protocol, businesses on the border will be able to strengthen the production chain, by partnering with providers of goods and services and other interested partners.

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

Argentina and El Salvador: experience decreased export volumes

One of the outcomes of the Coronavirus pandemic has been the inevitable slide in the volume of exports and the consequent fall-off in international trade.

Argentina's National Statistical Institute has reported that the value of the country's exports in the first four months of 2020 was \$US 17.5 billion, which is 10.1% less than the equivalent period last year.

El Salvador is poised to gradually reopen production activities, which is an encouraging development for businesses in the country and in Guatemala.

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

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

Costa Rica and El Salvador: seek to strengthen ferry transportation to boost regional trade

One of the greatest trade-related challenges amidst Covid-19 is the need to strengthen regional economic integration, in order to guarantee food supplies and to strengthen intraregional trade to enable deeper integration and the building of bridges between international organizations and existing partners.

For example, one valuable initiative, the proposed ferry service between Costa Rica and El Salvador, which stands to boost regional trade by 10%.

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

Supply

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

More than 20 Latin American and Caribbean artistes will pay tribute to agricultural workers

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and Brazil's Canal Rural, with the support of the Canal Rural in Argentina, AgrotendenciaTV and Costa Rica's Canal UCR are hereby announcing the broadcast of the program "Alimento para Todos" (Food for All), a platform to turn the spotlight on food and nutritional security, while seeking to educate and promote safety for rural producers and food industry professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With the structure and production of a live mega event, the first edition of the program will showcase 20 artistes from all regions of the Americas, who will present exclusive musical performances.

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

Grain market is a reflection of improvements in the global economy

Current global economic growth indicators for 2021 are extremely promising. Both the International Monetary Fund and the United States Department of Agriculture are projecting strong GDP growth for all countries and increased demand and consumption of agricultural products.

It would be extremely difficult to make precise product by product projections for increases in food requirements. We are still in the midst of an unprecedented situation at the global level, where we are seeing major changes in consumption habits, not only for food, but for tradable goods and services. <https://bit.ly/3fBvk3h>

Uruguay is studying changes in China's food control measures

Uruguay has introduced various measures to reassure its exporters and to determine all the details regarding protocols to be applied by Chinese Customs authorities, as a means of implementing sanitary controls for food imported into its ports. The new outbreak of the disease started in Xinfandi, the capital city's largest wholesale market, in Southern Beijing. It has been linked to contaminated salmon from Norway, but the country's government has decided to control all food imports.

<https://bit.ly/37IUQkh>

eBay to invest 80 million pesos to support Chilean micro, small and medium-sized businesses

EBay has launched "My Business 24/7 on eBay" – an acceleration program that will enable Chilean businesses to open an eBay store free of cost and to enjoy unique benefits to export their products to different parts of the world.

The program aims to support local businesses in tackling the Coronavirus pandemic and to give them access to free training until 31 July.

<https://bit.ly/2N9kANp>

Institutional actions guarantee Mexican food supplies

Under the guidance of the Secretariat of Health (SSA), and in collaboration with other government departments and agencies, the agriculture sector is implementing sanitary measures, in relation to transportation, as well water and electricity supplies, all of which are essential for the effective undertaking of activities by producers, peasant farmers, *ejidatarios* and communal land owners.

NB: *ejidatarios* are individuals who are given the right to farm on Government land, either collectively or on individual plots.

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