

Tuesday, 23 June 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>

4,532,084

Confirmed cases of
Covid-19 in the
Americas



Countries



Highest number of
cases in the
Americas:

USA (2,329,637)
BRA (1,106,470)
PER (257,447)
CHL (250,767)
MEX (185,122)

Covid-19 in the world



Source: Johns Hopkins University, available at <https://bit.ly/3dJ1CZX>. Data as at 23 June 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:

[Argentina and Chile implement electronic phytosanitary certification, ePhyto for trade of plant commodities](#)

The challenges arising from the pandemic **prompted** Chile and Argentina to **accelerate the necessary testing and adjustments** that allowed them to **fully implement the ePhyto system**.

This information exchange system has enabled them to carry out **all plant trade-related processes**, regulated by both countries, through electronic phytosanitary certification, becoming the first countries to do so internationally.

Find out all the details in this week's blog post by **Rodrigo Astete Rocha**, Head of the Agricultural and Forestry Protection Division of Chile's Secretariat of Agriculture (SAG), **Diego Quiroga**, Director of the National Plant Protection Division (DNPV) of Argentina's National Service of Agrifood Health and Quality (SENASA); **Guillermo Rossi**, DNPV Professional at SENASA Argentina and **María de Lourdes Fonalleras**, International Specialist in IICA's AHFS Program. <https://bit.ly/2zWvtiA>

[Food in Latin America in the era of the pandemic: realism without magic](#)

During a virtual forum organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), some speakers spoke in depth about Latin America's role during the pandemic:

-At the global level, the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region plays a pivotal role in food security (as the largest net food exporting region) and **environmental sustainability** (its forests have made it a major carbon sink; it is a key actor in global oxygen and water cycles; and it is the region with the greatest biodiversity). Thus, the actions pursued by the region in these two areas will affect not only its own countries, but the entire world.

-Secondly, LAC is the developing region with the highest levels of inequality.

-Thirdly, although malnutrition has dropped significantly (close to 7% of the population), **levels of obesity and overweight are the highest in the world** (surpassing 50%).

-Fourthly, it has a high level of urbanization (approximately 80%), but its cities are among the most violent in the world (excluding cities that are actively at war, 42 of the 50 cities with the highest homicide rates are in LAC).

-In the fifth place, close to half of those who are employed are engaged in informal activities.

-In the sixth place, decreasing prices in the raw material cycle over the last decade have triggered economic stagnation, affecting the vitality of our democracies, which should be strengthened.

Find out all the details in this week's blog post by **Eugenio Díaz-Bonilla**, Head of the IFPRI Latin American and Caribbean Program and **Florencia Paz**, Research Analyst, IFPRI. <https://bit.ly/3hTnJiD>

Relevant issues for the agrifood sector

Production	
<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: the locust invasion is spreading</p> <p>A locust plague is posing a threat to farmers in the Corrientes region, who are introducing measures to prevent major losses of their citrus, vegetable, <i>yerba mate</i> and tea crops. The locusts have affected oat and wheat production in Santa Fe. However, according to a report by La Nación, the true impact of the plague has not been assessed.</p> <p>The plague could move towards Argentina and Brazil, as climate conditions evolve. https://bit.ly/2Z17DuB</p>	<p>Colombia: land zoning strategy will allow country to maintain food and mouth disease-free status</p> <p>The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has established four zones, to monitor preventive measures to mitigate the risk of possible outbreaks of this disease.</p> <p>The strategy will allow the country to maintain its health status at the national level, even in the event of an outbreak of the disease in any of the zones. https://bit.ly/381IW6v</p>
<p>United States: COVID-19 puts hit on milk production</p> <p>According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, milk production was down 1.1% in May (compared to 2019), amounting to 18.8 billion pounds.</p> <p>Milk sector specialists reported that per cow production dropped 31 pounds, equivalent to a 1.5% interannual decline. They estimated that there will be a record increase in the price of Class III milk, with the price climbing to \$20. https://bit.ly/2Z11tgr</p>	<p>Mexico: farm work program to Canada resumes</p> <p>Having reached an agreement with the Government of Canada, which has pledged to ensure safety and sanitary conditions for foreign workers on Canadian farms, the Government of Mexico has resumed sending workers to Canada, under the Temporary Agricultural Workers Program.</p> <p>Reuters has reported that Canadian farmers rely on 60,000 foreign workers, primarily from Latin America and the Caribbean, to plant and reap their crops. https://reut.rs/316TVck</p>

Peru: The Arranca Perú program is aiming to generate 150,000 jobs in agriculture

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, rural families will benefit from a new S/373 million investment under the Arranca Perú program, which will immediately generate 75,000 jobs.

This new sum, in addition to the S/1000 million that the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) has earmarked for investment in irrigation projects, will facilitate job creation for families in rural areas that have been affected by the pandemic.

<https://bit.ly/2BDjd71>

Uruguay: MGAP continues to streamline processes and reduce the costs of sanitary slaughter

El Observador newspaper reports that the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) is working to resolve problems linked to sanitary slaughtering (processing of animals with tuberculosis or brucellosis), as well as to reduce the current per animal costs, which can amount to \$100. The issue was discussed with different actors in the chain, with a view to speedily resolving the problem.

In three months, there have been more than 3,000 positive diagnoses for brucellosis or tuberculosis.

<https://bit.ly/3eFkYQ5>

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.

WTO: Trade expansion for 2021 will be less than anticipated

There will be an 18.5% interannual fall-off in trade during the 2nd quarter of 2020, compared to the 3% drop from January to March. However, the situation could have been much worse, given that the WTO had painted a hypothetically pessimistic scenario, forecasting that global trade would contract 32%.

Nonetheless, it is evident that previous projections would far exceed actual trade expansion in 2021. A second wave of outbreaks is also contributing to the decline in trade and economic growth will be weaker than anticipated.

Policy decisions will continue to influence the pace of economic recovery. <https://bit.ly/2CCYxNj>

Chinese companies are asking exporters to provide “Covid-19-free” declarations

China is introducing the necessary measures to guarantee food security in the country. Following a new outbreak of Covid-19 in Beijing, authorities analyzed 30,000 samples of meat, seafood, vegetables and fruit, all of which tested negative. Moreover, various importers have requested that meat companies in Europe, Canada and the United States sign a declaration confirming that their products are free of the Coronavirus.

On the declaration, the exporter will have to agree to abide by Chinese laws, as well as by the guidelines of the FAO and WHO to ensure that their products are not contaminated with SARS-CoV2. Up to this time, China’s customs authorities have not addressed the matter and the regulations have not been published in the official media. <https://bit.ly/2Np6GXq>

China will increase and accelerate agricultural imports from the United States

China is expecting to ramp up the purchase of agricultural goods from the United States, in accordance with the first phase of a trade agreement that will put an end to its dispute with the United States.

Although delays due to the Coronavirus have only allowed it to meet 13% of targets agreed on with the United States, it intends to increase purchases of various products, including soybean, corn and ethanol. According to data from the USDA, China has increased soybean purchases and has imported 2.2 million metric tons of oilseeds in the two-week period ending on 11 June.

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

Argentina: digital transformation and value adding for growth

The “Chubut Sin Tacc” app for mobile phones is an initiative of the 4.0 Digital Transformation Program of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Industry and Trade of Chubut. The Ministry organized a hackathon, receiving hundreds of viable proposals for the post-pandemic scenario.

The tool will prove useful for those who suffer from coeliac disease, enabling them to locate companies within close proximity that produce, process, prepare, manufacture, sell and re-package gluten-free products (also known as BROW—or TACC in Spanish—products, meaning that they are free of barley, rye, oats and wheat). The Ministry is also making presentations on 4.0 digital transformation for SMEs. <https://bit.ly/37WuknJ>

Chile: exports of fresh and dried fruit decline

Fruit exports from Chile experienced a decline in value and volume. According to data published by the Office of Agricultural Studies and Policies (ODEPA), the value of fresh fruit and dried fruit sales decreased by 17% and 35%, respectively.

During the first five months of 2020, table grapes, cherries and blueberries were the top export products, representing 74% of fresh fruit exported to the United States, China and the Netherlands in particular.

The export volume of dried fruit dropped by 44%, although the export value of nuts in the shell and shelled hazelnuts to Morocco and Italy, respectively, did increase.

<https://bit.ly/3eseFz5>

Mexico: Amidst the pandemic, beef, chicken and pork exports rise

From January to May 2020, Mexican meat exports grew 32% in volume and 28.5% in value compared to the same period in 2019, reaching 237,863 tons representing close to USD 1.13 billion.

The United States, Japan, China, South Korea and Canada were the main destinations of these exports, although South Korea's purchases decreased by more than 20%.

Between January and May, the United States increased its purchases of live cattle by 1.2%, which is still 13% lower than the same period in 2019.

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

Brazilian coffee leads market despite the pandemic

The Brazilian Coffee Exporters Council (Cecafé) noted that the sector is investing in communication and training for employees.

A number of initiatives have been carried out, including the development of cards, applications and other information tools to guarantee the safety of employees and guide other professionals around the world. Efforts are also being undertaken to uphold quality standards and strengthen the agribusiness sector by investing in research and technology to meet demands as well as comply with sustainability criteria and international standards.

Thanks to these measures and other efforts aimed at strengthening businesses, Brazil continues to lead the coffee market despite the coronavirus pandemic. Although this year's exports have fallen by 2.8% compared to the January-May 2019 period, Brazil is still the world's leading coffee producer and exporter, with a 40% share of the global coffee market. China, Germany, Switzerland and Colombia follow the country in the list of top coffee exporters.

<https://bit.ly/3fSayg8>

Supply

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

Precision Agriculture for Development (PAD) and IICA join forces to drive the digitalization of agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean

Precision Agriculture for Development (PAD) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) have announced that they will partner to drive the digitalization of agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean, primarily to benefit rural smallholder farmers. PAD is a non-profit organization, co-founded by 2019 Nobel Prize winner for Economics, Michael Kremer.

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

IICA and PROCAGICA distribute seeds and inputs to bolster food security in Nicaragua

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Central American Program for Integrated Coffee Rust Management (PROCAGICA) collaborated to distribute seeds and inputs to coffee farmers in several districts in Nicaragua, as part of strategic actions to assist in reducing rural vulnerability triggered by Covid-19.

The objective is to reduce vulnerability in two ways: by supporting the production of food with short cycle crops and offering farmers the opportunity to earn income by selling crop surpluses. The technological package donation will benefit 1,119 coffee farmers who are members of PROCAGICA.

<https://bit.ly/2YuG269>

Argentina achieves record-breaking exports of wheat and corn during first four months of the year

According to the Córdoba Grain Exchange (BCCBA), Argentina exported record-breaking volumes of wheat and corn during the first four months of the year. Corn exports totaled 11.3 million tons, which is 13% greater than the volume exported during the same period last year.

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

Pacific Alliance: what strategies are the member countries developing to resume activities?

The decline in exports due to lower external demand for products and reduced prices has affected the member countries of the alliance. In April, as a result of domestic economic slowdowns and a weakening global economy, exports dropped by 52.3% in Colombia, 46.3% in Peru, 6.3% in Chile and 0.3% in Mexico. <https://bit.ly/2NpcEYt>

Bolivia presents national response plan to reactivate the agriculture sector

The Ministry of Rural Development and Lands (MDRYT) of Bolivia presented the National Response Plan for the Reactivation of the Agriculture Sector, which outlines the actions to be implemented to overcome the adverse effects of Covid-19 on agriculture in the country. MDRYT led the development of the plan, with technical and financial support from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

<https://bit.ly/3hWW7sM>