

Tuesday, 28 April 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>

1,235,631

Confirmed cases of
Covid-19 in the
Americas



Countries



Highest number of
cases in the
Americas:

USA (1,004,908)
BRA (68,289)
CAN (50,708)
PER (28,699)
ECU (24,258)

Covid-19 in the world



Source: Johns Hopkins University, available at <https://bit.ly/3dJ1CZX>. Data as at 28 April 2020 (14:00 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:

[Pandemic fosters new appreciation for those who feed the world](#)

By Tom Vilsack, CEO of the US Dairy Association and former United States Secretary of Agriculture.



There has been no other time in recent memory where the critical role **farmers and food manufacturers** play has been as prominent.

For the majority of Americans, **we have lost our collective connection to agriculture** and many of us take for granted the incredible effort it takes to grow our food or care for a herd of animals, produce a finished food

product, move that product to market and all of the steps in between.

Even in the midst of a global pandemic, **our food and agriculture producers are working to overcome incredible supply chain stressors** to ensure that we have access to the food we need.

I have had the immense privilege of working in agriculture and **witnessing first-hand the remarkable resiliency of our farmers**, as well as the **innovation** displayed by food producers, especially in recent years.

At the U.S. Dairy Export Council ([USDEC](#)), we have never lost sight of the significance of **the food and agricultural industry in meeting our nation's nutritional needs** and in driving the U.S. economy. **This industry directly or indirectly provides employment to 43 million people** or 28% of the entire American workforce. The economic benefits generated by these industries power 20% of the largest economy in the world.

Complete text is available at: <https://bit.ly/3aPjRKw>

**Tom Vilsack is the current President and Executive Director of the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC).*

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>Chile: 80% of agricultural workers are continuing to undertake their daily work</p> <p>According to a report to the Senate Committee on Agriculture on measures adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, 80% of workers involved in agriculture are continuing their daily activities. Up to 23 April, only 13% of those diagnosed with Covid-19 live in rural areas.</p> <p>Some of the initiatives are the closing of 105 protected areas administered by CONAF, the preparation of a manual of good practices for outdoor markets and protocols for harvesting, packing and meat processing.</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3bNJdd4</p>	<p>Colombia: anti-Covid-19 measures will increase coffee harvesting costs by 20%</p> <p>According to the President of the Antioquia Committee of FEDECAFÉ, measures to allow work to continue amidst this health crisis will increase coffee harvesting costs by 20%, in comparison to last year, as the protocol includes a series of basic regulations, ranging from the use of masks, daily fumigation of farms and areas where coffee pickers operate, to the installation of hand wash basins or tents to isolate anyone who may be suspected of contracting the virus.</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3aN4d2z</p>
<p>El Salvador: farmers forecast an increase in the grain harvest</p> <p>According to projections by the El Salvador Chamber of Medium- and Small-scale Farmers (CAMPO), total production of basic grains (corn, beans, sorghum and rice) will amount to 27.6 million quintals, that is 3 million more than the previous harvest.</p> <p>The association, along with other representatives in the non-agroindustrial agricultural sector asked the government to take their situation into account in devising and implementing measures to reactivate the economy in response to the virus.</p> <p>https://bit.ly/35fDyKl</p>	<p>Peru: Adex voices its concern about the situation in the cocoa sector</p> <p>According to ADEX, more than 100,000 cocoa producing families (cooperatives and family farmers) in 16 regions in the country are suffering financial losses as a result of losing up to 40% of their crops, due to the COVID-19 fall-out.</p> <p>The sector is also facing restrictions in movement (which has led to the over-ripening of the crop) and a decline in prices on the New York Exchange since the start of the year. https://bit.ly/2VNtVQi</p>

Venezuela: fuel shortages are compounding the country's food security problem

Severe fuel shortages are forcing farmers to leave crops to rot in the fields or to feed them to their livestock, as they are unable to transport them to markets. Industry leaders estimate that approximately 50,000 tons of plantain, a staple of the Venezuelan diet, are at risk.

In Grita, a vegetable production center, almost 5,000 tons of food per week have had to be left to waste, given the inability to transport the products. <https://reut.rs/3bMPQMY>

MERCOSUR: producers ask Argentina to reconsider its decision

The Federation of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR—a group of rural entities in the MERCOSUR countries—has asked the Government of Argentina to reconsider its decision to not participate in the ongoing external negotiations of the trade bloc.

The Federation believes that agricultural activities will enable these countries to weather the effects of the pandemic and thus, in the future the bloc will have to remain united in order to open up markets for their products. <https://bit.ly/2VKGnjx>

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.

Brazilian firm, Marfrig Global Foods, resumes U.S. beef sales

Since February, the United States has given the go-ahead to resume sales, having lifted a ban placed on the firm since 2017.

The first shipments will take place during this month amidst the upheavals in the U.S. beef market stemming from Covid-19.

According to Reuters, Brazilian beef exports increased 5% during the first quarter of the year, whereas Marfrig overseas meat sales soared by 24%, driven by the high demand in China. <https://reut.rs/2VJMGUp>

Chile regains avian influenza-free sanitary status, SAG announces

The Ministry of Agriculture of Chile announced that the country has regained its avian influenza-free sanitary status after meeting the requirements established by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to overcome the outbreak that affected the country in September of last year.

Given the fact that the outbreak involved a low pathogenic avian influenza (H7N6), markets such as those in China, Colombia, Mexico, the United States and Africa did not adopt any measures to suspend imports. On the other hand, countries that did suspend imports, such as Japan, Peru, Costa Rica and El Salvador, are beginning to lift their measures. The market in Canada is expected to reopen in the coming days.

<https://bit.ly/3aKo4PK>

Costa Rica: container with 24 thousand kilos of pork arrives in China

The first shipment of Costa Rican pork set sail from the country on 14 February and other shipments have since followed, totalling 480 metric tons of meat. Currently, the country has 7 authorized pork farms, as well as two processing and one exporting facility.

Costa Rica is the first Central American country to have entered China's meat market and the fifth Latin American country to have done so (following Mexico, Chile, Brazil and Argentina). <https://bit.ly/3cZcBxw>

Ecuador: public port of Guayaquil is operating normally

The Port Authority of Guayaquil (APG) has reported that import and export activities in the Libertador Simón Bolívar public port are operating as usual in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The products passing through Ecuador's main port are being moved through six logistical corridors that have been set up.

Each corridor includes disinfection areas, a service station and supply centers managed by the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTO), the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), provincial and municipal autonomous governments, the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INIAP), and the Plant and Animal Health Regulation and Control Agency. <https://bit.ly/2VJQzJO>

<p>Mexico, the United States and Canada: a new chapter for North American trade</p> <p>The United States, Mexico and Canada Agreement (USMCA) will enter into force on July 1, following the United States' notification that that it had completed its internal procedures to implement the agreement.</p> <p>The United States was the last country to issue this notification. Canada informed its trade partners that it was ready to implement the agreement on April 2, while Mexico issued its notification on April 3. https://bit.ly/3aPC5LX</p>	<p>Mexico: agricultural and fisheries exports grow by 22.3% in March</p> <p>Despite a drop in the export of goods in March (-1.6%), agricultural and fisheries exports reported a 22.3% annual variation, totaling USD 2.13 billion.</p> <p>The most significant increases in exports have been reported for avocado (56.2%), tomato (34.7%), edible fruits and nuts (24.3%), pepper (19.6%) and fresh vegetables (10.7%). By contrast, banana and fresh strawberry exports have dropped by 15% and 3.6%, respectively. https://bit.ly/3cWScsJ</p>
<p>Mercosur: tensions rise within the trade bloc</p> <p>Argentina has withdrawn from the trade bloc's negotiations for free-trade deals with South Korea, Singapore, Canada and India.</p> <p>Should the other member countries move forward with signing the agreements, the trade bloc could rupture, generating negative consequences with respect to trade integration. This week, legal teams are holding meetings to analyze the legal issues that could result from a trade bloc rupture. https://bit.ly/2Yb8Vo5</p>	<p>Vietnam will resume rice exports in May</p> <p>Vietnam's Prime Minister announced that the country will resume rice exports starting on May 1.</p> <p>Vietnam, the world's third-largest rice exporter, temporarily banned rice exports in March and limited shipments for April to 500,000 tons to ensure the country has sufficient food during the Covid-19 pandemic. https://reut.rs/2YlbFz4</p>
<p>Trade measures in the context of the pandemic (WTO and ITC)</p> <p>Below is a list of trade measures related to agrifood products notified during the past week (23 to 28 April):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argentina: Measures concerning phytosanitary certificates aimed at facilitating trade in light of issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. (SPS). • Tajikistan: temporary prohibition of exports of grains, beans, flour, rice, eggs, potatoes and meat. • Switzerland: relaxation of labeling requirements for food products for a limited period of six months. The derogation will allow food producers to source alternative ingredients or packaging materials to substitute ingredients or materials in short supply without having to amend the packaging information. (SPS and TBT). <p>WTO: https://bit.ly/3dOh5YJ ITC: https://bit.ly/2YdwEnB</p>	

Supply

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

Food bank will be set up in Costa Rica and replicated in the region

The European Union (EU), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) have strengthened their partnership to increase food security in the communities of Turrialba and Vázquez de Coronado, in Costa Rica, by creating a food bank.

During the first phase of the initiative, the food bank will include white corn, beans, cassava, sweet potato, plantain, pumpkin, banana and highly nutritional fruits like soursop, citrus fruits and guava; as well as some minor species such as poultry and tilapia.

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

Caribbean countries mobilize to strengthen food security

Caribbean countries are working to develop projects aimed at strengthening food security and risk management in the agriculture sector. The projects include the renovation of an abattoir in Grenada, the sowing of drought-resistant forage for livestock in Antigua and Barbuda, and the provision of training in the use of drones for agricultural disaster risk management in Suriname. <https://bit.ly/2yT8DYc>

2 million chickens will be euthanized at a single plant while there is a meat shortage

A poultry-processing plant in Delaware has made the decision to kill 2 million chickens as worker shortages push the US meat supply chain toward a breaking point. <https://bit.ly/2WaFdNe>

5 actions to bolster the agriculture sector and guarantee food supply

The agroindustry sector in Mexico has been facing numerous difficulties, including budget cuts, droughts, the current exchange rate and insecurity in the transportation of products from the countryside to consumption centers.

Possible solutions include guaranteeing the adequate operation of the supply chain, facilitating trade with the help of technology, safeguarding the movement of products, accelerating comprehensive programs and providing soft financing in a timely manner.

<https://bit.ly/2KTJ7Fj>

Free trade is key for food supply

Mexico must ensure that food chains remain active and that food is available in all corners of the country, both during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Agroindustry specialists and federal authorities agree that, to this end, it is crucial to provide food chains with greater support in international trade.

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

Three criteria that Argentinian fruit must meet to compete in markets

The primary requirement that fruit and vegetable production must meet is demonstrating food safety, both in the production process on farms and afterwards, during food handling and industrialization. Social responsibility must also be demonstrated; this includes ensuring that employees are formally registered, providing adequate wages and guaranteeing employee safety in production processes.

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