

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>

18,228,966

Confirmed cases of
Covid-19 in the
Americas



Countries



Highest number of
cases in the
Americas:

USA (7,895,758)
BRA (5,113,628)
COL (924,098)
ARG (917,035)

Analysis and scenarios

The latest from the IICA Blog:

[Is the consumption of locally produced food viable or sustainable?](#)

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge the fact that Latin America and the Caribbean is a region characterized by contrasts. **Net importing countries**, such as Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and Haiti, which import more than USD 30 of food for every USD 1 they export, coexist with large **net exporters** such as Argentina, Brazil and Chile, whose surpluses amount to USD 10 in exports for every USD 1 of agricultural and food imports.

****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.*

Consequently, agricultural and food value chains **play different roles** depending on whether the country is a net importer or exporter, which, in turn, determines whether or not it is feasible **for a country to source all or part of its food locally**.

First, it is important to recognize the fact that **local production alone cannot meet the demand for food**, especially under current production methods and food preferences.

A recent study published by [Nature Food](#) concludes that sourcing food locally - especially in developing countries - **is generally not a viable option**. The study estimates that, at present, **less than a third of the world's population** would be able to meet its demand for locally produced food (within a radius of 100 km). Only **27 percent of the world's population** is able to obtain cereals from temperate climates, such as wheat, barley, and rye, within a radius of less than 100 km; in the case of rice, the figure is 28 percent. These percentages are even lower in the case of cereals, roots, beans and corn from tropical climates, which are staple foods in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Sustainability

Evidence suggests that **local food is not necessarily synonymous with sustainability**, given the multiple factors that must be taken into account in this analysis. When assessing the sustainability of product consumption, it is important to consider more than just transportation; how these products are produced (whether locally or abroad) should also be taken into account. In other words, where food is produced becomes less relevant.

Contribution of the bioeconomy

The bioeconomy provides different ways to take greater advantage of biological resources to produce food, energy, fibers and other bioproducts in the chemical, cosmetic and medicine industries. Through the use of new sciences and technologies, the **bioeconomy seeks to fully capitalize on the primary and residual biomass** generated by agricultural, livestock, forestry, and marine activities, among others.

Faced with the dilemma of consuming food that is produced locally or fostering more open, transparent and integrated international trade, it is clear that countries should aim to **strike a balance between both strategies**. To this end, they must take into account the multiple **economic, social and environmental factors** that determine whether the consumption of food that is produced locally or internationally will make agricultural and food systems in Latin America and the Caribbean more resilient, efficient and sustainable.

Find out all the details in this week's post by *Joaquín Arias*, International Technical Specialist at IICA's Center of Strategic Analysis for Agriculture (CAESPA), *Kelly Witkowski*, Manager of IICA's Climate Change and Natural Resources Program, and *Hugo Chavarría*, Manager of IICA's Bioeconomy and Production Development Program. <https://bit.ly/2H5GP7j>

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: Ministry of Agriculture expects grain harvest to reach 200 million tons</p> <p>According to La Nación, the Ministry of Agriculture launched an initiative entitled “200 million tons of cereals, oilseeds and legumes”. However, it did not specify the measures and policies that would be implemented to achieve that objective.</p> <p>Under this initiative, the sector would increase its exports by 60%, in order to sell USD \$57 billion within 5 to 10 years.</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3iVGrpb</p>	<p>Brazil: updated value of this year’s agricultural production set at R\$806.6 billion</p> <p>According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, the value of agricultural production will reach R\$806.6 billion in 2020, representing an increase of 11.5% compared to 2019.</p> <p>Based on the updated figures for September, crop and livestock farming reached R\$543 billion and R\$263.6 billion respectively, thanks to positive results achieved for soybeans, cattle, corn and coffee.</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3ds6e71</p>
<p>Colombia: value of the coffee harvest will reach USD 2.3 million in 2020</p> <p>According to Reuters, the Ministry of Finance expects the value of the 2020 coffee harvest to reach 9.4 billion <i>pesos</i> (around 2.3 million USD), a record for the country. This value would represent an increase of 23.2% compared to the 2019 coffee harvest, which reached 7.3 billion <i>pesos</i>.</p> <p>According to the National Federation of Coffee Farmers, the coffee sector has benefited from this year’s international prices.</p> <p>https://reut.rs/3nTiBhx</p>	<p>Costa Rica: economic activity contracts by 7.7% in August</p> <p>According to the IMAE indicator (Monthly Index of Economic Activity) of the Central Bank of Costa Rica (BCCR), economic activity contracted by 7.7% in August (on an interannual basis) in the trend cycle series.</p> <p>According to the BCCR, although lower levels of production have persisted as a result of the pandemic, the rate of decline has been gradually improving since May. Compared to last year, production levels have decreased in the five main aggregates of economic activities under which production is categorized. Agriculture in particular contracted by 1.7% (due to decreased production of pineapple). https://bit.ly/31afKXM</p>

Ecuador: Ministry of Agriculture launches process to regularize the status of banana plantations

The Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) has launched a one-year process to regularize unregistered banana plantations.

According to MAG, the purpose of this process is to regularize the sector with a view to improving its marketing structure and expanding producers' access to specialized credit opportunities and other benefits such as the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification.

Smaller associations will obtain free services such as pesticide, soil and water analyses, prior to becoming certified.

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

United States: USDA foresees a decline in Florida orange production

The initial estimate regarding orange production in Florida for the 2020-2021 season was 57 million boxes, which is lower than the 67 million boxes produced in the 2019-2020 season.

According to Portal Frutícola, the Florida citrus industry generates USD 8.6 billion dollars and employs 51,000 people.

<https://bit.ly/2IsBck5> and <https://bit.ly/33W3bB6>

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: dulce de leche caramel sauce prompts a winning partnership amidst the crisis

In the current business climate, it is extremely important that companies seek partners to devise a way to work together to optimize resources and strengthen business. Partnerships in times of crisis are an option for small and medium-sized businesses that are seeking to adapt their businesses to the new reality. To this end, two Argentinian small and medium-sized businesses in the dairy sector combined efforts to significantly boost the sale of caramel sauce. Currently, they are considering entering into the production of other lines of products and strengthening their trade promotion actions.

<https://bit.ly/3jXGp9c>

The poultry sector remains stable amidst the pandemic

One of the effects of the pandemic has been the imposition of greater export and import restrictions for agrifood products, although many countries have also facilitated trade.

Although the poultry sector has played a leading role in the economy in recent months, it has also been affected by the trade measures imposed by certain countries to access their markets. Therefore, IICA has been working with the Latin American Poultry Association (ALA) to identify and systematize international trade regulations in relation to this sector.

<https://bit.ly/317Qlhh>

Panama: MICI strengthens capacities in food safety and security during the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has compelled companies and governments to adopt measures to guarantee the safety of products, particularly food. For this reason, the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Panama (MICI) is undertaking training to provide production sectors with various tools focusing on safety trends in food chains, safe importation, the application of good manufacturing practices, as well as management of regulations in the food and export business sector. Capacity strengthening with a view to producing a safe and secure food supply is a fundamental aspect of international trade and food security, as it contributes to human health and avoids costs and economic crises.

<https://bit.ly/3dzm28k>

Peru: Ayacucho quinoa sales to Spain increased during the Covid-19 crisis

The Commission for Promotion of Export and Tourism (PROMPERU), has reported that Ayacucho quinoa exports to Spain grew from 1 to 20 tons between December 2019 and October 2020, valuing \$40,000. Of that amount, 12 tons contained traditional quinoa and 8 tons were certified organic quinoa, which attests to the growing preference of consumers for products of high nutritional value, produced in keeping with environmental and biological standards. The shipment, was undertaken by the Association of Organic Agroindustrial Producers of Peru (ASPAGRO), with the support of the Ruta Exportadora Program, which provided technical assistance and training in quality management, sustainable trade, export management, export facilitation and trade promotion.

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

From our IICA Specialists

Gabriela Quiroga

International Technical Specialist. Bioeconomy and Production Development Program

“The bioeconomy is an opportunity to spur sustainable production transformation, based on the creation and use of knowledge about biological resources, processes and principles that has been generated over decades”.

Forum: Opportunities and Challenges for the Bioeconomy in Latin America.

During a virtual event organized by the Brazilian **Center for Management and Strategic Studies (CGEE)**, IICA delivered a presentation on “IICA’s position on the importance of creating a science, technology and innovation strategy for the bioeconomy in Latin America”.

The event sought to demonstrate the potential of **science, innovation and technology in a bioeconomy strategy for the region** (Latin America and the Caribbean). Continued investment in R+D+I, in strategic partnerships and in the participation of youth (either those who live in the countryside or those who are conducting agricultural research as young professionals), is key to making the bioeconomy a real opportunity to transition towards sustainable production systems, based on the creation and use of knowledge about biological resources, processes and principles, which many countries have been generating for decades.

The technical cooperation delivered by IICA, in addition to being of the highest quality and adding value, aims to spur **significant transformation**, through shared and collaborative responsibilities with strategic allies, some of which were also represented at the webinar (for example, the CGEE, IDB, ECLAC and various Ministries of Agriculture of the region).

The complete webinar is available at: <https://bit.ly/3nR702q>