



Iraq COVID-19 Food Security Monitor

Weekly Update - Issue 11

30 June 2020

Government of Iraq (GoI) Announcements

Date	Government Decision
June 15, 2020	Council of Ministers approved a draft law to become a signatory of the 1972 Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matters. ⁸
June 27, 2020	Iraqi Congress approved the Ministry of Finance's plan to pay government employee salaries by borrowing internally. ¹³

I. Key Messages

- **As of June 28th, government silos received approximately four million tons of wheat nationwide, of which 90% was first grade quality.**
- **The Veterinary Directorate announced free vaccination campaigns against foot and mouth disease, sheep pox and lumpy skin disease focused on areas with recently reported cases; this campaign already started in Ninewa, Wasit and Diyala.**
- **Seasonal vegetable prices continued to fluctuate across the governorates.**

II. Overview

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continued to spread. As of June 28, 2020, the World Health Organization reported 43,262 cases in Iraq, with 1,660 deaths. Developments in global oil prices were also tracked due to their implications on the state revenue; 90% of state revenue derives from oil and the 2020 government budget was prepared assuming that a barrel of crude oil would cost USD 56. Basrah heavy oil prices remained relatively stable at USD 44.73 per barrel on June 19th to USD 44.58 on June 26th. Over the course of the month, the price increased roughly 7% (USD 37.44 per barrel on June 1st). Basrah light oil prices decreased from USD 46.09 to USD 44.18 per barrel in the same time period; however, over the course of the month, the price increased 3% (USD 41.19 per barrel on June 1st).¹

The Ministry of Planning (MoP) announced that the GDP decreased by 13.3% in the first quarter compared to the same period last year. MoP attributes the economic contraction primarily to developments on the global oil market and a slow-down in construction activities due to limited investments.²

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank continue to track the impact of this crisis on food security, with a focus on food availability, access, utilization and stability.

III. Food Supply: Production (primarily on farm)

Production. The Ministry of Trade (MoT) announced that, as of June 28th, government silos received approximately four million tons of wheat nationwide, of which 90% was first grade quality.³ Wheat marketing was still underway in some governorates, including Ninewa. The General Company for Grain Trade for Import and Marketing anticipates that a total of 1.2 million tons of wheat will be received at the Ninewa government silos. In governorates where harvesting began in May, marketing of wheat will conclude shortly; in Diyala and Anbar, marketing will conclude by mid-July and in Salah Al Din by early July. MoT reported that as of June 27, Salah al-Din collection centers received 550,474 tons, Diyala 152,197 tons and Anbar 223,606 ton.⁴ The MoT also began accepting wheat from farmers outside the agricultural plan at the same, subsidized prices. For example, the Nasiriyah silo in Thi Qar opened for five days to accept wheat from farmers outside the agriculture plan and received 163,540 tons of wheat in that time period.⁵

In coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the state Oil Products Distribution Company provided 25 million liters of subsidized diesel to wheat and barley farmers in Ninewa governorate. This diesel was sold at IQD 400 per liter, in alignment with the official government prices. The Ministry of Oil shared that they remain committed to providing oil and its derivatives to the agriculture sector in the future.⁶

During June, the Baghdad Agriculture Directorate/Rusafah Division reported that 2.6 million laying hens 40.5 million eggs that were available on the local market, 11,000 tons of red meat were marketed, 200 tons of fish reached the markets and 690 tons of chicken meat were produced.⁷

The Veterinary Directorate announced a free vaccination campaign against foot and mouth disease, sheep pox and lumpy skin disease. Due to a lack of funding at the present time, the vaccination campaigns will be limited to the provinces that have reported cases of the aforementioned disease.

¹ Oil Price Charts. June 28, 2020. Accessed on June 29, 2020. <https://oilprice.com/oil-price-charts>

² Face Iraq. June 28, 2020. Accessed on June 28, 2020. <https://www.faceiraq.org/inews.php?id=7762641>

³ Face Iraq. June 28, 2020. Accessed on June 29, 2020. <https://www.faceiraq.org/inews.php?id=7763893>

⁴ Ministry of Trade. June 28, 2020. Accessed on June 28, 2020. <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/groups/192159384631293/permalink/912680802579144/>

⁵ Ministry of Trade. June 24, 2020. Accessed on June 27, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Government-Organization/>

⁶ Face Iraq. June 28, 2020. Accessed on June 28, 2020. <https://www.faceiraq.org/inews.php?id=77626916>

⁷ Face Iraq. June 27, 2020. Accessed on June 28, 2020. <https://www.faceiraq.org/inews.php?id=7761127>

⁸ Cabinet of Ministers. June 15, 2020. Accessed on June 28, 2020. <http://www.cabinet.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=9638>

The campaign had already started in Wasit, Diyala and Ninewa governorates.⁹

Other Challenges. Rodent populations were larger than usual, and continued to be a problem in Najaf and Diwania; thus, the Plant Protection Directorate provided additional pesticides to farmers. Control campaigns against Peach and Jasmine White flies, regular pests that attack peach and citrus trees, resumed in Karbala, Najaf, Babel, Baghdad, Diyala, Salah Al Din and Wasit. Additionally, treatments against Tomato Leafminers, an activity that is regularly undertaken across Iraq, also continued as normal. Finally, nationwide control campaigns resumed against several date palm pests, including Al Humara (Lesser Date Moth), Red Palm Weevil and dust mites.

IV. Food Supply: Markets (farm gate to markets)

Given sufficient domestic production to covers its food and feed needs, Iraq might start exporting some quantities of barley in the near future.¹⁰

V. Food Demand (markets to consumers)

Prices. In the last week of June, there were no major changes in the price of basic food commodities. In general, the national average for vegetable oil, sugar and wheat flour prices remained stable compared to the previous week; however, rice prices decreased by 3%. The slight decrease in national rice prices was more noticeable in certain governorates; in Erbil rice prices dropped by 33% (IQD 1,500 to 1,000) and in Thi Qar by 14% (IQD 1,750 to 1,500). On the other hand, sugar and wheat prices flour increased marginally in Dohuk, an increase of 9% and 10% respectively.

Seasonal vegetable prices continued to fluctuate across the governorates. Tomato prices witnessed an 100% increase in Wasit (IQD 500 to 1,000), Diyala and Maysan (both IQD 250 to 500) and by 50% in Sulaimaniyah (IQD 1,000 to 1,500). On the other hand, tomato prices decreased 50% in Dohuk (IQD 1,000 to 500 IQD), Baghdad, Ninewa, and Qadissiyah (all from IQD 500 to 250).

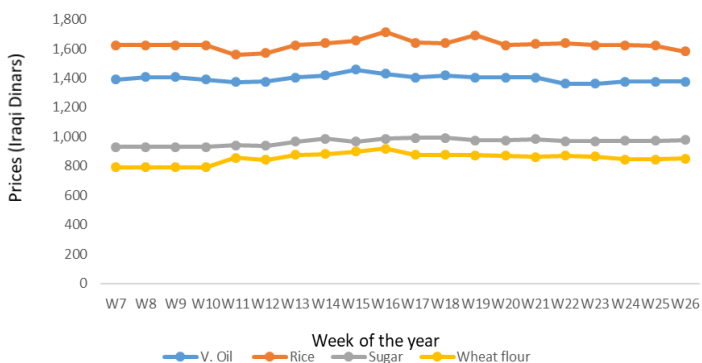


Figure 1. Weekly food prices (national averages) for four staple commodities during the COVID-19 crisis (Source: WFP).

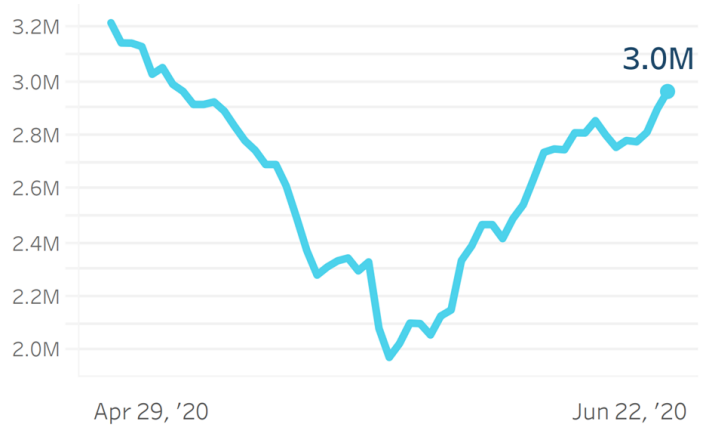


Figure 2. Number of people with insufficient food consumption, where insufficient consumption refers to those with poor and borderline food consumption according to Food Consumption Score (FCS) using a seven day recall (Source: WFP).

Consumption Patterns. On the 22nd of June, WFP mVAM data revealed that around 7.8% respondents, which represents approximately three million people, do not have sufficient food consumption. Compared to last week, this is an increase of 500,000 people. These estimates were based on a statistically significant sample —on a monthly basis, 1,620 households were interviewed via the telephone on a monthly basis. The data also revealed that 13.7% of people were using negative food-based coping strategies. Of that subset, 31% of people reported that they primarily “relied on less expensive food”.

VI. Food Supply Chain for Vulnerable Populations

The MoT confirmed that Vietnamese rice shipment, bound for the Public Distribution System, arrived in-country and was in the process of being delivered to all governorates, including KRI, despite the COVID-19 movement restrictions. MoT has also announced that it has stepped up inspections and quality control laboratory testing for wheat flour distributed in PDS after receiving several complaints from recipients.¹¹

Following a decision by the Iraqi Congress, the Ministry of Finance announced a plan to pay government employee salaries by borrowing internally.¹²

UN/NGO Response. Based on information provided to the Food Security Cluster, local and international partners have responded to possible COVID-19 cases in Laylan camp in Kirkuk governorate. 38 individuals from 11 families have been quarantined. In response, WFP and Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF) have provided those individuals with food assistance.

FSC partners continue to provide food assistance to vulnerable households. For example, since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, BCF has provided a food basket to a cumulative total of 54,394 households as of this report.¹³

⁹ Ministry of Agriculture. June 25, 2020. Accessed on June 27, 2020. <http://zeraa.gov.iq/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8499>.

¹⁰ Face Iraq. June 27, 2020. Accessed on June 27, 2020. <https://www.faceiraq.org/inews.php?id=7761181>.

¹¹ Ministry of Trade. June 27, 2020. Accessed on June 28, 2020. <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/pages/category/Government-Organization/>

¹² Iraqi Jobs. June 27, 2020. Accessed on June 30, 2020. <https://www.irajobs24.com/>

¹³ Barzani Charity Foundation. Accessed on June 30, 2020. <http://www.bcf.krd/english/coronavirus/>