



Iraq COVID-19 Food Security Monitor

Weekly Update - Issue 13

14 July 2020

Government of Iraq (GoI) Announcements

Date	Government Decision
July 10, 2020	High Committee for Health and National Safety approved measures to allow Iraqis to travel outside the country if they submit to a COVID-19 test upon their return and quarantine at home for 14 days. If the test is positive or an individual presents symptoms of COVID-19, they will be referred to a hospital. ⁸

I. Key Messages

- **State-run food processing plants will open in Kurdistan in an effort to stabilize horticultural prices, particularly to-matoes.**
- **The nationwide poverty rate is anticipated to increase to roughly 31% according to a joint report by the Ministry of Planning, the World Bank, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative that simulated the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, an increase from the 20% poverty rate in 2018.¹**
- **On July 8th, the Ministry of Trade and WFP launched an app for the Public Distribution System (PDS) called *Tamwini* ("My Ration Card") that will allow users to update their information and life events, in addition to receiving electronic cash transfers if applicable.**
- **According to WFP mVAM, Ninewa and Al Muthanna Governorates have a moderately high prevalence of insufficient food consumption (between 20-30%).**

II. Overview

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continued to spread in the country. As of July 14, 2020, the World Health Organization reported 77,506 cases in Iraq, with 3,150 deaths. The government continues to enforce lockdown and curfew measures in an attempt to curtail transmission. Oil prices also continued to be monitored closely; prices remained relatively stable this week compared to the first week of July.

In cooperation with the World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), the Ministry of Planning (MoP) released a report analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on poverty and vulnerable populations. MoP ran simulation models and found that the poverty rate is set to increase to 31.7% nationwide, an increase from 20% in 2018.¹

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Devel-

opment (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. After this week, the report will shift to bi-weekly editions for the foreseeable future.

III. Food Supply: Production (primarily on farm)

Production. As of July 8th, Ministry of Trade's (MoT) General Company for Grain Trade stated approximately 4.4 million tons of wheat had been received at the government collection centers in the current marketing year. Wheat marketing will end on July 9th and 10th at sites in Kirkuk Governorate and selected centers in Salah Al-Din. Purchasing does continue in Ninewa, Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Dohuk Governorates, in addition to sites in eastern Salah Al Din Governorate.²

As the summer agriculture season progressed, farmers reported high crop and poultry production to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). In Wasit Governorate, farmers produced 935 tons of melon, watermelon, okra, cucumbers, eggplants, tomatoes, green beans, and mung beans during first six months of 2020. The Sayyid Al Shuhada Directorate of Agriculture, an area north of Wasit, announced the cultivation of more than 504 ha and produced 2,980 tons of potatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, beans, okra, zucchini, green peppers and tomatoes in accordance with the MoA's 2020 agriculture plan.³ In Karbala Governorate, poultry produced more than 94 million eggs during the first half of 2020.⁴ In 2018 and 2019, Karbala Governorate reported an annual production of 128 million eggs and 146 million eggs respectively.⁵

The Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoAWR) of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced that state-run tomato and other canning plants would reopen to accept locally produced goods. For example, the Harir tomato paste factory, which the government announced would reopen last week, will receive 20-25 tons of tomatoes on a daily basis for a short timeframe. In coordination with the MoAWR and MoA, the government will market the tomato pastes outside the region.^{6,7} The Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF) also

¹ Ministry of Planning. July 8, 2020. Accessed on July 12, 2020. https://mop.gov.iq/activities_minister/view/details?id=1216.

² Ministry of Trade. July 7, 2020. Accessed on July 12, 2020. <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/pages/category/Government-Organization>

³ Al Mirbad. July 7, 2020. Accessed on July 13, 2020. <https://www.almirbad.com/detail/56654>, <https://www.almirbad.com/detail/56955>

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture. July 5, 2020. Accessed on July 13, 2020. <http://zeraa.gov.iq/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8502>

⁵ Central Statistics Office. Poultry Report from 201

⁶ Economy News. July 9, 2020. Accessed on July 13, 2020. <http://economy-news.net/content.php?id=20966>

⁷ Rudaw. July 7, 2020. Accessed on July 13, 2020. <https://www.rudaw.net/english/business/07072020>

⁸ General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers. July 10, 2020. Accessed on July 10, 2020. <https://cabinet.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=9664>

responded to the tomato glut last week, accepting roughly 30 tons of tomatoes on daily basis from farmers in Dohuk. In one week, they received approximately 230 tons. These tomatoes will be distributed to vulnerable households.⁹

The KRG will also issue a license to establish a sugar processing plant in the region, which will contract 8,000 farmers to grow sugar beets. MoAWR will also grant licenses to 170 agricultural investment projects in 2020 in an effort to bolster the sector. MoAWR met with the Agriculture Committee of the Kurdistan Regional Parliament to discuss local production and corresponding plans and projects to support local producers.⁶

Other Challenges. The Plant Protection Directorate (PPD) nationwide campaigns against Al Humara (Lesser Date Moth) and dust mites, both date palm pests, ceased this week as the lifecycle of the pest has concluded, plus the control campaigns had a positive result. Red Palm Weevil control campaigns are continuing in Safwan sub-district, located in Basrah Governorate. Additionally, the control campaigns against Dubas bug, Rot Disease Palm Pollens (RDPP) and Rachis Blight will occur this autumn.

Control campaigns against seasonal horticultural pests were ongoing this week. Operations against Tomato Leafminers continued nationwide, while Peach and Jasmine fly control campaigns in peach and citrus orchards continued in Wassit, Diyala, Baghdad, Najaf, Salah Al Din, Babel and Karbala. Rodent control operations were also ongoing in Diwaniyah and Najaf Governorates.

IV. Food Demand (markets to consumers)

Prices. Although the national average for basic food commodity prices remained relatively stable compared to the first week of July, specific governorates and commodities witnessed price change. In Sulaimaniyah, vegetable oil prices increased 20% (IQD 1,800 to 1,500 per liter), while in Maysan the price decreased 17% (IQD 1,500 to 1,250 per liter). In Sulaimaniyah and Kirkuk, the price of sugar increased around 10%.

The decline vegetable prices, particularly for tomatoes, potatoes and onion, continued into the second week of July with increasing domestic production. As reported last week, local tomato producers in Erbil governorate could not transport their goods to other governorates due to movement re-

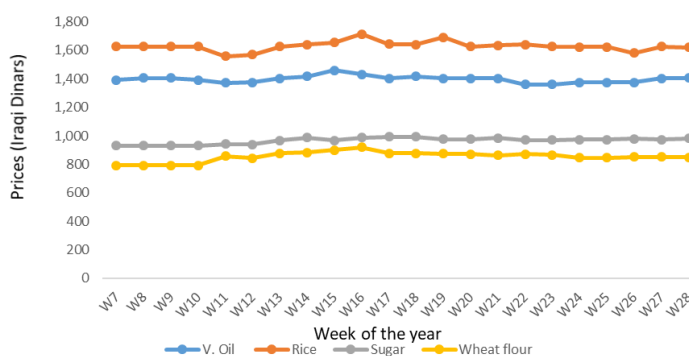


Figure 1. Weekly food prices (national averages) for four staple commodities during the COVID-19 crisis (Source: WFP).

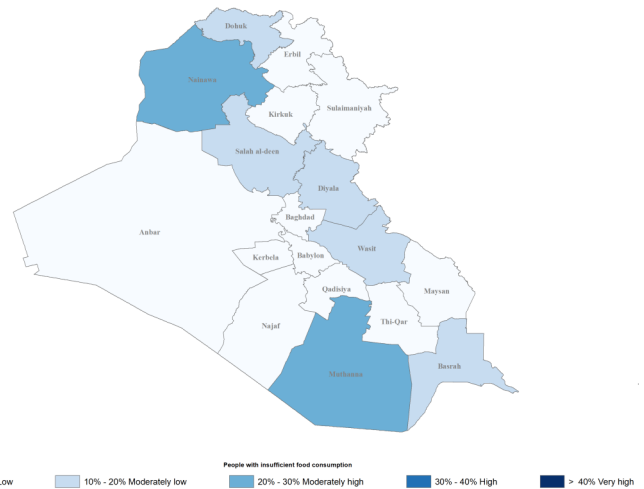


Figure 2. Distribution of people with insufficient food consumption. Where insufficient consumption refers to those with poor and borderline food consumption according to Food Consumption Score (FCS) using a seven-day recall (Source: WFP).

strictions. Thus, the price of tomatoes in Erbil dropped to IQD 250 per kg.

Consumption Patterns. On July 6th, WFP mVAM data indicated that approximately 3.5 million people in Iraq have insufficient food consumption, an increase of roughly 300,000 people compared to the first week of July. Out of 18 governorates, only Ninewa and Al Muthanna have moderately high prevalence of insufficient food consumption (between 20-30%). Additionally, the data revealed that 5.7 million people adopted negative food-based coping strategies, which is calculated based on a severity score (rCSI). 31.6% of respondents reported that they relied on less expensive food, making it the most common coping strategy. These estimates were based on a statistically significant sample of households; WFP mVAM interviewed 1,620 households via the telephone on a monthly basis.

Households who reported barriers to accessing markets reached 33.9%, with 72% of those households (roughly 1.2 million people) reporting that movement restrictions was the primary issue. Households facing difficulties accessing health facilities also increased slightly, from 32.1% to 33.9%.

V. Food Supply Chain for Vulnerable Populations

In the beginning of July, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) announced that it had distributed food and hygiene baskets to 10,072 IDP families in and out of camps in Anbar, Diyala, Baghdad and Salah Al Din Governorates.

As part of a partnership between the MoT and WFP to digitalize the Public Distribution System (PDS), a new mobile app called *Tamwini* was launched. The app will allow families to update their personal information and life events and receive electronic cash transfer without having to travel to PDS service centers and reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. MoT and WFP will pilot the app in Baghdad Governorate and, based on the results, will expand to other governorates.¹⁰

⁹ Kurdistan News. July 7, 2020. Accessed on July 13, 2020. <https://www.kurdistan24.net/so/news/d99aedf6-7462-4b2a-bfac-e90c498f9ac1>

¹⁰ WFP Facebook Page. Accessed on July 13, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/wfpiniraq/>