

A publication of the Market Information Service (MIS) - Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
"Linking the market and Primary producers"

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Meanwhile, as we are still in the post-pandemic phase, lots of people have grown their own vegetables (crops) and have livestock of their own. It has helped them learn a lot about farming and how to take care of an animal. Pandemic's restrictions have helped our people learn how to do new things like farming as it is for their own good and also to be prepared for future disasters or lockdowns.

Post-pandemic and Agriculture



Around the world, nations were scrambling to respond to the outbreak of the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) or at best are preparing for the virus to arrive in their country.

Coronavirus was just the latest string of misfortunes that have kept the farm economy down for several years: weather disasters, a trade war and, even before that, commodity prices have been below the cost of production. The impacts differ across farming systems and make some countries more exposed than others.

[Impacts on Crops](#)

Impacts of COVID-19 on the food sector were among its most visible and important economic consequences. Globally, the effects were driven by a sudden shift to food at home due to social distancing measures, as well as by risks of food shortage resulting from outbreaks at packing houses and among farm workers as well as restrictions on cross border travel and trade.

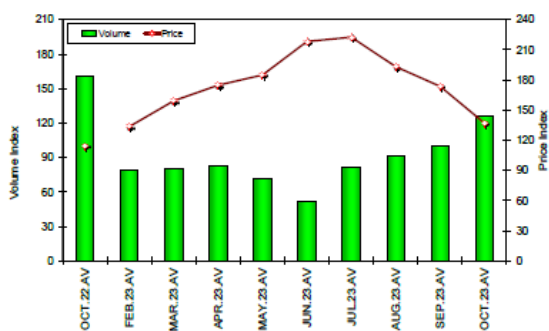
Commercial farming was most affected, particularly where production relies on a great variety and large amounts of intermediate inputs, such as seeds, feeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Subsistence farmers were affected. While they rely more on their own farm-based inputs, many have to purchase their inputs on local or regional markets, including their seeds and feeds. Their input supply chains are typically more fragile and more susceptible to disruptions. Importantly, they use more manual labor and, where the disease takes a direct toll on their health or their movement, this can impede not only their ability to produce for others, but also undermines their own food security. A lack or a delay of supply of these

products affects people in the informal sector of urban areas who rely on produce from rural areas for their livelihood.

After the pandemic, the majority of the people had grown their own crops as a hobby and also as a fresh source of food for their families. The price of the crops were also high as farmers had spent most of their time growing the vegetable and other crops they sell at the market or on the side of the street. Some tends to re-sell the crops they bought from other farmers for their own benefit.

The Local Market Survey in October 2023 showed an overall volume increased by 25 percent while the average price declined by 21 percent when compared to September 2023. The decline in the overall price level is caused by the increase in the overall supply of most agricultural produce.

Figure 1: Supply and Price Index Oct 22 –Oct 23



Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics-Local Market (October 2023)

Figure 1 shows an increase in the overall supply of agricultural produce which decreased the price index to 21 percent compared to last month. When compared to the month of October 2022, the current overall price was increased to 20 percent.

¹The supply of vegetable produce to the Local markets in the month of October under review experienced significant decreases in most of the vegetable supplies except for pumpkin and tomatoes which has an increase in supply.

Impacts on Livestock

For the main agricultural commodities, sharply lower demand for livestock products has outpaced any constraints on supply, leading to steep prices. Globally, physical distancing and requirements for additional personal protective equipment are reducing the efficiency of industrial feed enterprises. Movement restrictions and illness are resulting in labor shortages and reduced supply of raw materials or other ingredients.

Closure of live animal markets in many countries means small-scale producers cannot sell their goods. The disruption of the logistical channel and drop in demand are reducing sales and lowering prices. As a result of limited access to markets and slaughterhouses/processing plants, farmers have to keep their stock longer or dump milk, leaving them with higher production costs or important losses.

When the pandemic was over and the world went back to their normal everyday-lives activities, most of the farmers locally had at least one or two livestock to raise. ² In 2021, the MAF has declared that such eligible cattle farmers were able to purchase livestock at a reduced rate of the market price with assistance from the Governments Stimulus Package (SP2). Hence, this has helped support food security, improved commercial

¹ Local Market October 2023

² Cattle Farmers Benefit from Purchase of Livestock Subsidy Scheme

development and sustainable agricultural production while our country continues to recover from the loss faced during the pandemic.

Impacts on Fisheries

Fish and other aquatic foods are also a key part of our global food systems and a highly nutritious food group of major social, cultural and economic significance. At a global level, supply chains for fish and aquatic foods are already happening due to disruptions in transportation, trade, and labor. Falling production from reduced fishing efforts and delayed stocking of aquaculture systems will lead to lower supplies, access, and consumption of these foods. Decreased consumer demand and increased transaction costs will have a knock-on effect that will push the price of fish and aquatic foods up and make them less affordable for poor consumers. Many people employed in these supply chains, such as fish vendors, processors, suppliers or transport workers will lose their jobs.

³The pandemic shutdown presents specific overfishing dangers. Large fishing boats that can process and freeze fish are staying out at sea. Meanwhile, the patrols that monitor them have been reduced. The commercial fishing industry has hit rough seas. Hence many people tend to go fishing or collecting other aquatic food for food.

Meanwhile, after all the restrictions and lockdowns, local fish sellers and fisherman's best are back in business. There is also an increasing number of fishermen and fish sellers locally, hence we see people sell fish and other

³<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/fish-stop-covid-19-180974623/>

seafood such as octopus and others, every day. This indicates an increase in the number of fisheries and aquaculture in Samoa, as it helps our economy grow and recover from its loss.

Supply chain

⁴The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the food supply chain, from field to consumers which represents an important sector in any country. The farmers and fishermen faced some challenges due to the restrictions of the pandemic.

Food supply chain also plays a role in our country's economy due to the goods being imported and exported. Many of the farmers use their crops like Taro and banana for export, but during the pandemic everything freezes, such as transportation and the company dealing with measuring and packing such goods.

Meanwhile, our economy has recovered and also our food supply chain. For instance, MAF Samoa shared its giant clams with the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in American Samoa. Also many farmers and fishermen not only sell their harvest goods and fish in the market but also alongside the road every day.

⁴ Meta-analysis of food supply chain: pre, during and post COVID-19 pandemic

Average Prices at the Fugalei Market

Commodities (SAT\$/kg)	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Lowest Price for 2023 to date	Highest Price for 2023 to date
Taro	5.64	5.04	3.74	6.20
Banana	2.16	1.98	1.31	2.50
Ta'amu	14.22	6.81	5.04	22.83
Coconut	1.08	1.05	0.80	1.12
Breadfruit	2.65	2.39	1.06	5.98
Yam	6.71	6.13	5.37	7.35
Head Cabbage	9.18	8.11	8.11	17.02
Tomato	17.51	15.72	15.72	31.07
Chinese Cabbage	6.85	6.88	6.85	11.56
Cucumber	6.59	5.88	6.38	8.72
Pumpkin	5.91	4.55	3.91	7.95

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics-Local market survey

Foreign Currency per Tala (SAT\$)

Nov-Dec 2023	USD\$	NZD\$	AUD\$	YEN\$	FJD\$	EURO
1 Samoan Tala SAT\$=	0.3557	0.5757	0.5423	52.1500	0.7851	0.3241

Source: Bank of South Pacific

Market Link Newsletter

This newsletter is published bi-monthly and it seeks to assist stakeholders (farmers, consumers, wholesalers, policymakers) make informed market and marketing decisions based on credible, relevant price and supply information. Help us help you by providing constructive feedback on market information issues that will improve the service which will lead to growing a healthy and wealthy Samoa. For more information, contact the Policy, Planning and Communication Division and ask for Fereni Tofilau.

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