



RAPID ASSESSMENT: STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL AMONG HERDERS & FARMERS IN MONGOLIA DURING COVID-19

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly at global and national levels. While the health implications are at the centre of efforts, the crisis unfolds with additional ramifications for stakeholders in the food and agricultural sectors. While several assessments have been launched in Mongolia to assess the socioeconomic situation of households (HH), the current survey looked specifically into rural herder and farmer HHs with emphasis on food security, nutrition food prices and livelihoods. The indicative preliminary results aim at contributing to the crisis response and will be the basis for a larger in-depth study to assess the state of food and agriculture in Mongolia. Overall, 200 rural herder and farmer HHs were randomly selected from 11 aimags of Mongolia including Bayan-Ulgii, Khovd, Dornod, Khentii, Darkhan-Uul, Selenge, Tuv, Bulgan, Khuvsgul, Dornogovi and Dundgovi. Interviews were undertaken by phone and took place in April 2020.

KEY MESSAGES

- 58% of respondents reported that COVID-19 had impacts on their HHs.
- Urgent needs include mainly cash or loans followed by food supply & agricultural inputs.
- Households are generally food secure although moderate food insecurity levels were observed.
- Sales of animal wool and cashmere are the most critical income sources for herders in the coming month.
- Many farmers urgently need seeds for the current cropping season.
- HHs are willing to follow government interventions in support of domestic agricultural production.

Reported COVID-19 Impacts on HHs





Food Security was assessed using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). Results indicate that many HHs compromised on food quality (72%), are worried about not having enough food (47%) or have reduced their food quantity (34%). The major reasons for disruption in food consumption seem to originate from a lack of economic and to a lesser extent from physical and social access to food.

Food Consumption decreased considerably for certain food types including rice (62% of HHs), vegetables such as onion (59% HHs) or potato (54% HHs) as well as meat (58% HHs) and dairy products (44% HHs). Minor changes were observed for convenience food and alcoholic beverages. One in three HHs (31%) indicated to have relatives in urban areas that rely on their meat and dairy products, which suggests an existing rural-urban linkage in food supply.

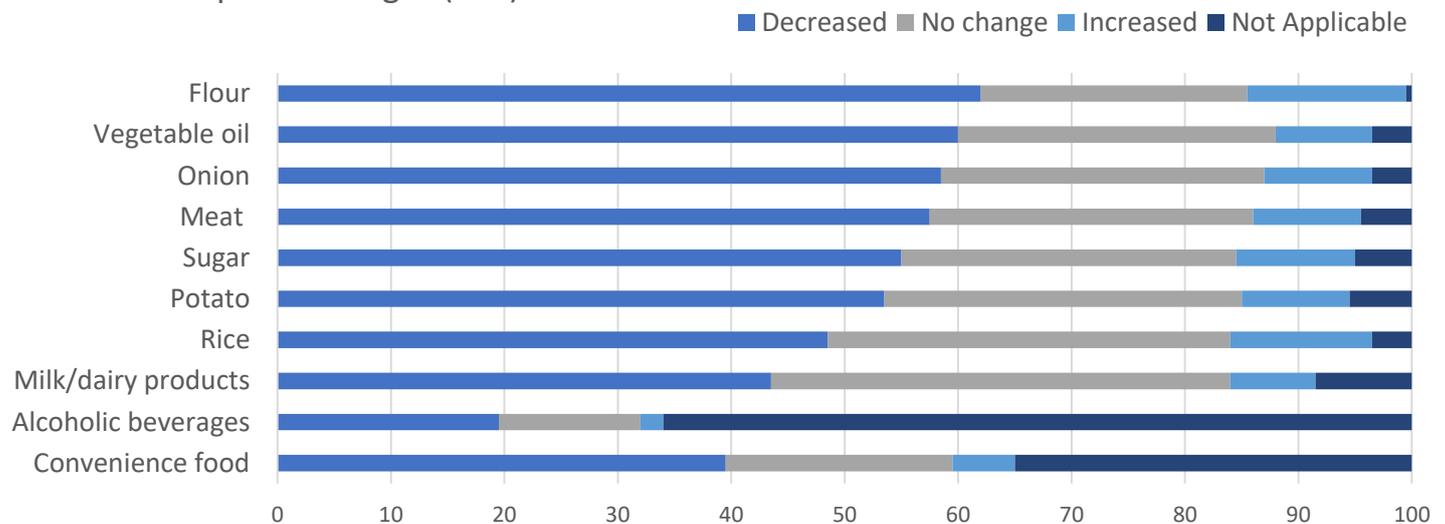


Food prices were assessed through selected food types as references representing domestic (potato) and imported (rice) value chains. Price levels align with nationally gathered data and do not suggest any price gauging.

DID YOU KNOW?

Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Food Consumption Changes (in %)

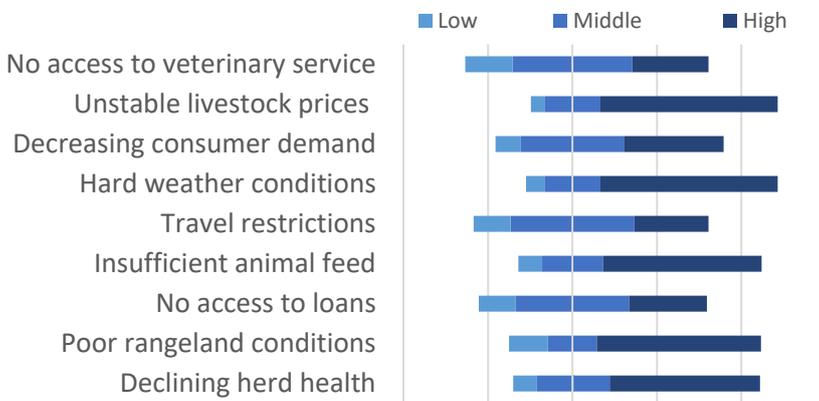




Income & Livelihood

Most herder HHs (62%) indicated a decrease of their HH income of about 45% as compared to the same time last year. In comparison, only 25% of farmers reported an income decrease. Related risks to their income are shown below. Moreover, some herders plan to stay longer at their current camp site or move to entirely new locations for better pastures, which may pose a risk for overgrazing and social conflict respectively.

Perceived risks for livestock income



When being asked what to buy from an additional loan, most herders indicated primarily livestock, fodder & food amongst other things as illustrated in the word cloud below (font size corresponds to the number each item was selected).



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FAO Representation in Mongolia
UN House, United Nations Street-14
Ulaanbaatar 14201, Mongolia
Tel: (976-11) 310248
Email: FAO-MN@fao.org