Coronavirus

Food Supply Chain Under Strain
What to do?

Maximo Torero Cullen
Chief Economist
24 March 2020

Food Systems Transformation
What we know
Food Supply chain is a complex web of interactions and of actors: producers, inputs, transportation, processing plants, shipping, etc.

As the virus spreads and cases mount, and block downs increase there are seemingly countless ways the food system will be tested and strained in the coming weeks and months.

Today, no supply shock in sense of availability but there is starting to be a supply shock in terms of logistics of movement of food.

Upstream staple supply chain less vulnerable because is capital intensive than high value supply chain
Supply side

- Less production likely, but not yet noticeable
- Lower freight rates, lower capacity use
- Food supply chains to be disrupted as of April/May
- Developing countries/Africa: reduction in labour force, affecting labour intensive forms of production (agriculture)
- No current noticeable impact on crop production; global cereal prospects for 2020 are overall favourable
- More perceptible impact on livestock sector; reports of reduced access to animal feed and diminished capacity of slaughterhouses (due to logistical constraints and labour shortages) in China
- Transport restrictions and quarantine measures likely to impede farmers’ access to input and output markets, curbing productive capacities and denying a point of sale for produce; potential to raise PHL
- Shortages of labour could disrupt production and processing of food, notably for labour-intensive crops
- Food supply chains disrupted; blockages to transport routes particularly obstructive for fresh food supply chains and may also result in increased levels of food loss and waste
Demand side

- At beginning of diffusion of disease significant increase in demand
- Food demand is generally inelastic and effect on overall consumption likely limited, although dietary patterns may alter
- Possible disproportionately larger decline in meat consumption (implication from its zoonotic origins) and other higher-valued products (likely to cause price slumps)
- Food demand in poorer countries more income elastic, and loss of income-earning opportunities could cause consumption to contract
- Aversion behaviour (fear of contagion) could exacerbate effect on food consumption, through reduced visits to food markets
- Expect shift in purchasing modalities: lower restaurant traffic, increased e-commerce deliveries (as evidenced in China), and rise in consumption at home
- Big problem for import dependent countries
Big problem with exchange rates – good for exporters, bad for importers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMIS Countries</th>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Mar 2020 Average</th>
<th>Monthly Change</th>
<th>Weekly Change</th>
<th>Annual Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Prices (1/4)

Wheat futures Jan 2018 - Mar 2020

Wheat futures Jan - Mar 2020
What we know

Prices (2/4)

Maize futures Jan 2018 - Mar 2020

Maize futures Jan - Mar 2020

Food Systems Transformation
Prices (3/4)

Soybean futures Jan 2018 - Mar 2020

Soybean futures Jan - Mar 2020

Food Systems Transformation
Prices (4/4)

Export prices of higher quality Indica rice in selected Asian suppliers

FAO All Rice Price Index

*Two weeks only
What to do?
**Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations:** Emergency Food Assistance, nutrition interventions and safety nets enhanced and made more accessible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote school feeding</th>
<th>Ensure that emergency food needs are fully met</th>
<th>Protect basic consumption needs of vulnerable populations</th>
<th>Scale up nutritional support</th>
<th>Support management and prevention of undernutrition</th>
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<td>Adjust social protection programmes for food prices</td>
<td>Allow free and predictable flow of food assistance</td>
<td>Ensure that local purchases of food and food components for humanitarian purposes are exempt from restrictions</td>
<td>Explore the establishment of efficient and effective humanitarian food reserves</td>
<td>Reach all households with pertinent public information on food assistance, nutrition and hardship alleviation programmes</td>
</tr>
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</table>
School Feeding Programs

- Closure of schools means millions of children no longer accessing the food and nutrition they rely on schools to provide.
- In cases where they may stay open, here are also risks in maintaining these services open regarding compliance with social distancing and hygiene guidance.

- Options:
  - Civil society push to mobilize to provide food to children in need via food banks and local community groups.
  - Some HICs are switching to delivery of food baskets (uncooked goods) or grab and go meals mechanisms,
  - Some LMICs are maintaining canteens open or setting up for parents to collect food baskets. Some are depending on volunteers/teachers to distribute and private sector is also getting involved in delivery in a few countries
  - Recent international recommendations so far point to increasing cash transfers for families with children recipients of meals, redirection of food banks, involvement of NGOs, exoneration of taxes, among others.
Social Protection Programs (1/12)

- Potential disruptions can be expected in the delivery of social benefits and services, due to confinement measures, while the COVID-19 presents new challenges and risks for the population.
- Social protection systems which are not risk-informed and do not have contingency operating procedures may face serious difficulties (including delays, coverage, operational and financial capacities...).
- Cash and in-kind transfers:
  - The actual delivery of cash and goods, when not done through electronic vouchers or cards requires gatherings and physical contact, which is therefore not advisable during the epidemic.
  - The efficiency of cash transfers/evouchers highly depends on the market characteristics, while COVID-19 may largely disrupt functioning of food systems.
  - For cash transfers tied to conditional ties, the impossibility to access health and education services could trigger a lifting of conditionalities.
  - Cash for work schemes will not be able to implement work components and remove access to essential income.
1.a Vertical expansion of Top-Up: Expand transfer amount to existing social assistance participants, through a one-off payment (prior to full blown impact of the crisis as early action to mitigate impact) or multiple payments over to meeting basic needs and avoid negative coping mechanisms and after the crisis to support time for recovery. (e.g. SNAP in US, one-off 600e payment in Italy to households with children under 12, debt cancellations etc.)

1.b. Horizontal expansion of the social assistance programmes (cash or in-kind) to non-beneficiaries/participants of the existing programmes vulnerable to the impacts of the crises considering the impacts on the countries directly affected by the COVID19 and their economic spillovers effects in other countries (case of the seasonal migrant workers);
Social Protection Programs (3/12)

- **2.** Provide a complementary entitlement (using contingency funding) to off set loss of income (focused on small scale producers, for example. Eg, Peru specific transfer for vulnerable families in addition to national cash transfer)

- **3.** If food insecurity becomes extremely severe due to massive layoffs, fall in remittances etc., explore the use of food banks could be an option – through not only direct provision of food by government, but also donations from individuals, solidarity networks, non-governmental organizations, etc.
Social Protection Programs (4/12)

Recommendations based on measures applied in previous crises (Ebola, Food crises, and specific natural risk disaster):

- https://www.unicef.org/media/63846/file

Ensure that emergency food needs are fully met
Protect basic consumption needs of vulnerable populations
Scale up nutritional support
Support management and prevention of undernutrition
Promote school feeding
Adjust social protection programmes for food prices
Allow free and predictable flow of food assistance
Ensure that local purchases of food and food components for humanitarian purposes are exempt from restrictions
Explore the establishment of efficient and effective humanitarian food reserves
Reach all households with pertinent public information on food assistance, nutrition and hardship alleviation programmes
Social Protection Programs (5/12)

Here some country examples of social protection programs:

- **Peru** - senior citizens’ 65+ social assistance program has advanced its bimonthly payments and is transferring now four months’ worth of benefits together. The Ministry of Social Inclusion is pulling out 30 million soles to ensure the preferential assistance to the most vulnerable populations and the Central Bank is planning to provide pensioners part of the social insurance and contributory scheme to have their payments received at home.

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Social Protection Programs (6/12)

• **Italy** - several measures have been in place from tax exemptions to independent workers’ and caregiver support transfers of maximum 600 euros. These are outlined in the recently released decree “Cura Italia” consisting of a 25 billion euro package.¹

• **New Zealand** - The Government has unveiled a $12.1 billion support package for the economy, with almost half of the cash to be spent on a wage subsidy package. This is just the first tranche of the Government spending response – the rest will be unveiled in the coming weeks. It is important to note, that this is already "the most significant peace-time economic plan in modern New Zealand history".²

• **Portugal** - providing maximum 1.097 euros and at least €438 for 3 to maximum 12 months to self-employed workers.³

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Social Protection Programs (7/12)

- **Indonesia** - 4.56 trillion rupiah will be given to about 15.2 million of the poorest households, with each getting 50,000 rupiah more (value increased in 33%) each month in non-cash food aid, bringing the total to 200,000 rupiah. It will be given for six months, starting in March 2020.

- **Malaysia** - The Bantuan Sara Hidup (BSH) social protection program payment has been re-scheduled. The May 2020 transfers of has been moved forward to March and there are many other measures to incentivize and compensate public servants and adversely affected segments of the labor force by the virus.

- **Hong Kong** - one-off “universal basic income” to 7 million adults.

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4https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-case-for-a-big-coronavirus-stimulus-11583448500
Social Protection Programs (8/12)

• **Japan** - since Feb 27 the government is rolling-out a caregiver transfer of $80 a day to stay home from work and take care of their kids as part of the COVID-19 response.¹ Now a Premium voucher project has been introduced. “Premium voucher will be sold for the purpose of mitigating the impact of the national and local consumption tax hike to 10% on consumption by persons exempt from inhabitant tax and families with babies or infants while encouraging and supporting consumption in the region”²

• **Australia** - is considering the implementation of cash transfers as part of an economic stimulus package in the face of the virus.³ Now the government has announced that “About one in every four Australians will secure a $750 cash handout in their bank accounts. It will cost the budget $4.8 billion” This includes parents who earn less than $130,000, senior citizens, veterans as well as particularly vulnerable individuals.⁴

²https://www.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/hofuku/premium/premiumvoucher_e.html
³https://www.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/hofuku/premium/premiumvoucher_e.html
⁴https://www.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/hofuku/premium/premiumvoucher_e.html
Social Protection Programs (9/12)

- **France** – Caregiving incentives are being provided in response to the outbreak and is offering sick leave to people directly affected by the virus who have to self-quarantine.¹

- **Thailand** - The government approved 400 billion baht economic package to reduce the impact of the outbreak. The package will cover all sectors and is designed to benefit 14.6 million low-income earners who account for 22% of the Thai population – a total of 50,000 village funds nationwide, 7.2 million farming households and 3 million small-to-medium-sized enterprises (99% of all business enterprises).²

- **UK and Northern Ireland** - has envisaged a Statutory sick pay for "all those who are advised to self-isolate" even if they have not displayed symptoms and providing £500m "hardship fund" to be given to local authorities to help vulnerable people in their areas among other measures.³

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¹https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A13890
Social Protection Programs (10/12)

- **China** - is accelerating payments of unemployment insurance benefits and expanding social safety nets and is allowing for a temporary suspension of social security contributions for firms.\(^1\)
  
The national Di bao social protection program has been planned to be scaled and increase its value, reaching families affected by the economic down-turn (need more documentation on this). The measure has been announced as part of the central government injection of 1.2 trillion yuan to the economy.\(^2\)

- **Taiwan** (Province of China) - has enacted a relief plan worth US$2 billion to help cushion the impact of the new coronavirus on its export-reliant economy, consisting of 18 measures that include paid leave for caregivers and the sick and arguably, the provision of food vouchers until June 2020.\(^3,4\)

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Social Protection Programs (11/12)

- **Singapore** - announced around $4.5 billion in financial packages to help contain the coronavirus outbreak. The economic measures include support for businesses to manage wage bills, corporate tax rebates, schemes to help firms in the hard-hit tourism and aviation sectors and cash payouts for households to manage expenses.1, 2

Singapore has now established a universal support scheme for all citizens aged 21 and older will receive a one-off cash payout of between $100 and $300 to help with their household expenses amid the economic slowdown and the coronavirus outbreak. Parents with at least one Singaporean child aged 20 and younger this year will each receive an additional $100 in cash.3

- **United States of America** - Coronavirus plan: economic stimulus plan and health care guarantees

> Inventory of all schemes will be made available on March, 20 on [gogentilini.net](http://gogentilini.net)

Social Protection Programs (12/12)

- 4. Delivery: Enable mobile payment systems to prevent disruptions in delivery of cash entitlements due to restrictions on movement.

- 5. Encourage the delivery of secured and protected in-kind food assistance and protection kits, when cash is not an option, to the most vulnerable to COVID19 (elderly, persons with chronic diseases, poor...), combined with, whenever feasible and safe.

- 6. Conditionalities: Remove or put on hold conditionalities, particularly those that are linked to education and health (given limitations in movement and closing of schools).

6. 7. Targeting: Similarly, around targeting—moving to geographical or categorical type targeting (which work better in times of crises).
Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations: Urgent increases in food availability from smallholder farmer food production

- Provide productivity-enhancing safety nets
- Reduce post-harvest crop losses and improve food stocks along the value chain
- Remove artificial constraints to domestic trade throughout the food chain in order to link smallholder farmers to markets
- Address basic energy needs of smallholders and rural households
Smallholders

- **Road closures/blockages and checks** preventing small holder farmers to sell products or buy inputs, resulting in loss of income, loss of produce and affecting next season cultivation. Reported losses in China, with emphasis on fresh vegetables, livestock and poultry (Breeding period exceeded). Road closures/blockages slowing down, agricultural services, access to inputs, delivery of goods, and marketing, leading to income decline, accumulation of produce at farms.

- **Change on consumption patterns and consumer behaviour**: Market witnessed an increase in both staple food and ready-to-eat food that can be stored and also strong increase on e-commerce. In Italy, demand for flour increased by 80%, canned meat by 60%, canned beans by 55%, and tomato sauce by 22%. These trends lead to difficulties to sell produce, loss of perishable produce and loss of income. Also, it witnessed an increase in e-commerce up to five times fold. Closure of farmers’ markets, preventing smallholder farmers to direct sell to consumers, leading to loss of income, loss of perishable produce and accumulation of non-perishable produce.

- Smallholder farmers that supply school meal schemes are affected by **schools closure**;

- **Restriction on the movement of people** may disrupt production: migrant seasonal workers constitute 27% of the agricultural working hours.
Smallholders - China

• Introduction of a series of "vegetable basket" policies to stabilize production and supply, combining conventional channels and emergency channels, combining traditional circulation and new business formats, and working to reduce the impact of the epidemic on the purchase and sale of agricultural products to small farmers.

• Coordination of nine provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities to establish a collaborative mechanism platform for joint guarantee supply in Hubei province.

• Implementation of measures to improve the interconnection of farmers and merchants and improving the agricultural supply chain system.

• Inclusion of grains, oils, vegetables, meat, eggs, milk, and aquatic products in the scope of daily necessities during the epidemic prevention and control period.

• Measures to improve transportation (rapid temperature checks, etc).
Smallholders - China

• Funding for agricultural distribution companies in Hubei.

• Implementation of measures to expand rural employment and farmer’s income: promotion rural employment; promotion f the resumption of production in rural small, medium and micro enterprises; rural innovation.

• In some places, the local government has unified purchases, centralized slaughtering, and cold-chain storage of the county cooperatives and enterprises raising mackerels that are over 100 days old and running out of stock, and fully subsidize the storage costs such as electricity charges during freezing during the purchasing, and afford 30% of the sales risk.

• E-commerce companies have implemented many new initiatives to facilitate trading of accumulated produce and increase agricultural products commerce, for example, special subsidy for smallholders, increasing the centralized procurement of agricultural products from core producing areas, investment in green logistics dedicated lines for agricultural products.

• Big data platform to obtain and monitor detailed information about slow-moving agricultural products across the country, and then quickly re-links the major elements in the agricultural product supply chain system to improve the anti-risk capability of traditional agricultural product supply chains and increase circulation efficiency.
Smallholders - Italy

• March 17th 2020 a new decree, namely “Cura Italia” to allocate funds and provide incentives for agriculture, among other sectors. The decree allocates 100 million euro to support agricultural enterprises related to farming, fishery and aquaculture to cover the interests of loans and mortgages.

• A contribution of 50 million euro will be provided to support food distribution for poor and vulnerable people.

• Farmers will be able to request an advanced payment of 70% for the annual non-repayable contributions, instead of 50% under the Common Agriculture Policy

• A compensation of 600 euros will be transferred to the agricultural workers with short-term contracts for the month of March.
What to do?

**Smallholders - Italy**

- National policies are in place to ensure access to agricultural services, including the supply of seeds, plant protection and fertilizers. Still, reality places new challenges on the operationalization of these policies. There is the need for security measures in place to minimize the risk of people being contaminated when at work.

- Measures might be needed to mitigate the impact on spring growing season.

- Preference is given to local products. In Italy, about 82% of consumers agree on the importance of buying local products to safeguard the national food industry. This objective is also supported by the Codiretti’s campaign #MangiaItaliano, which saw the participation of famous personalities to promote the “Made in Italy”
What to do?

Smallholders – Potential other practices

Rural finance:

• A number of countries are implementing stimulus packages but without clear incentives to small holder farmers. Below are some rural finance potential measures:
  For what concerns farmers with outstanding loans, having banks wave fees, extending payment due dates, or offer alternative repayment accommodations can ease the pressure on farmers that cannot work or sell their produce due to the pandemic;

• An injection of funds in the agricultural sector, for example through a grant facility, can help agri-MSMEs, casual laborers, and salaried staff that cannot work to stay afloat, temporarily, while all business stops. What they are doing now in the SME sector in several developed countries is providing short-term loans with minimal interest to face the disruptions, but expecting loan repayments from small agricultural actors in developing contexts might probably be too optimistic, given the present scenario;

• In contexts where the transition to digital is already on the way, waving public taxes on digital payment transactions and other digital financial transactions can encourage shifting from cash to digital, although this will have a beneficial impact only on agricultural sectors that are already quite developed from a digital standpoint. Grants for working capital to re-start the production cycle following the crisis avoiding distribution of seeds and other inputs that can be very distortive and drive local actors out of the market
Smallholders – Potential other practices

- **Procurement:**
  Government procurement schemes that purchase agricultural commodities from small farmers to increase (or establish) buffer stocks. This would work for non-perishable commodities.

  Considering importance of school meals for farmers income and students nutrition alternative school meals home delivery could be considered

- **Grants to most vulnerable:**
  Some countries are considering grants to most vulnerable, and grants to poor farmers that lost their income should be considered alongside with grants to re-start production

- **Global funding facility to support most vulnerable countries:**
  Considering that the impact on small holder farmers on countries with very limited fiscal capacity maybe devastating, some international funding facility to support smallholder farmers could be considered, taking into account the experiences of funding mechanisms created in the aftermath of the prices volatility crisis in 2007/2008, such as GAFSP.
Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations: Issues on trade and tax policies

Adjustments to trade and tax policies

- Encourage better functioning food markets through improved regional political and economic integration and better functioning for trade in food
- Immediately review trade and taxation policy options and their likely impacts
- Avoid generalized subsidies for food consumers
- Reduce restrictions on use of stocks
- Improve efficiency of trade facilitation
- Use limited strategic grain reserves
- Minimize use of export restrictions
- Reduce import tariffs and other restrictions
- Temporarily reduce VAT and other taxes
Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations: Issues on trade

- Following the outbreak of coronavirus, countries around the world started to implement a number of policy measures aimed at avoiding the further spread of the disease.

- However, such measures might affect agricultural production and trade. For instance, many countries are implementing higher controls on cargo vessels, with the risk of jeopardizing shipping activities.

- Similarly, measures affecting the free movement of people, such as seasonal workers, might have an impact on agricultural production, thus affecting market prices globally.

- Likewise, measures to guarantee acceptable health standards in food factories, may slow down production. In that regard, a number of countries, including China, the United States, and the European Union have implemented or announced a set of policy measures aimed at addressing such problems.
Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations: Issues on trade and tax policies

Disruption of production during previous disease outbreaks:
- https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202002/24/WS5e53af6fa310128217279e6d.html

Supply disruption because of shortage of labor:
- https://www.ft.com/content/cafb828e-6423-11ea-b3f3-fe4680ea68b5

Support to agriculture:
- https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202002/24/WS5e53af6fa310128217279e6d.html
Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations: Issues on trade and tax policies

Tariff cuts to ensure supply of food:

Problems related to shipment:
Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations: Management of macroeconomic implications

- Hold down core inflation and inflation expectations
- Assess the impact on the balance of payments and feasibility/sustainability of a reserve drawdown
- Mobilize external support to finance additional food imports
- Ensure adequate levels of foreign exchange reserves
- Assess and comprehensively cost all fiscal measures taken in response to the rise in food prices
THANK YOU

Food Systems Transformation