



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Myanmar

Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) brief

Results and recommendations
January 2022

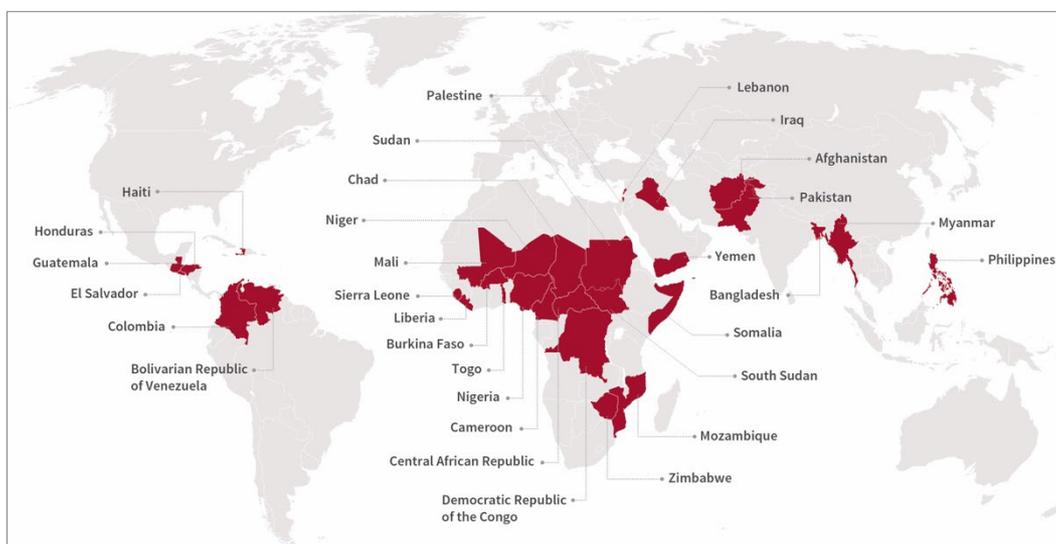
Data collection 9 August to 8 September 2021

Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) launched a household survey on 9 August 2021 to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security in Myanmar. The random sample of 2 708 households was representative at the admin 1 level for nine of Myanmar's states and regions. The survey targeted Mon, Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Kayah, Rakhine, Shan (excluding the south), Ayeyarwady and Yangon, and was complemented by interviews with agricultural input dealers and food traders.

The data presented are from the second round of data collection in Myanmar in August and September 2021. The previous round in July and August 2020 already suggested a decrease in incomes following the first wave of COVID-19 infections and government containment measures.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring System



Source of map: United Nations. 2020. *Map of the World*. [online]. [Cited 6 December 2021]. www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO has established the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks and livelihoods in countries prone to multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to inform decision making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks are affecting the livelihoods and food security of agricultural populations.

> Learn more at <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring>

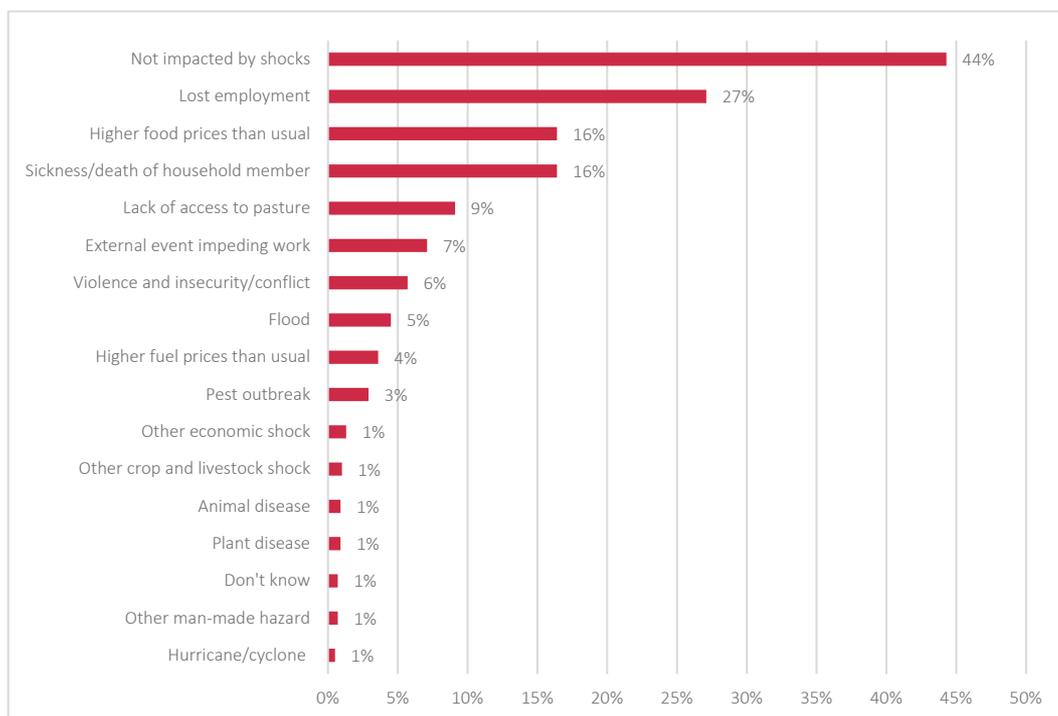
Income and shocks

Since early 2020, measures aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel restrictions, border closures and bans on public gatherings have been enforced in Myanmar. The military takeover of 1 February 2021 further upended lives across the country, exacerbated Myanmar's numerous conflicts and sent the economy into freefall. Amid ongoing armed clashes and insecurity, COVID-19 cases began increasing again in early June 2021.

Among all respondents, 55 percent were affected by shocks in three months preceding the survey (Figure 2). Most of these shocks were economic, including the loss of employment (cited by 27 percent of households), high food prices (16 percent) and business closures (8 percent). Incomes appeared to decrease, with 18 percent of households reporting no income at all. Of those reporting an income, 66 percent cited a decrease in the last three months compared to the same time in a typical year. This decrease was most pronounced in the informal sector and for self-employed workers (affecting 78 percent).

Net consumers were particularly affected by deteriorating income and soaring food prices, resulting in asset depletion and food consumption gaps. Access to markets was noticeably hindered in Chin state, with 22 percent of respondents there reporting limited access. But market-access challenges were also reported by more than 10 percent of households in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Shan.

Figure 2. Most-reported shocks by survey respondents (percentage)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Myanmar: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

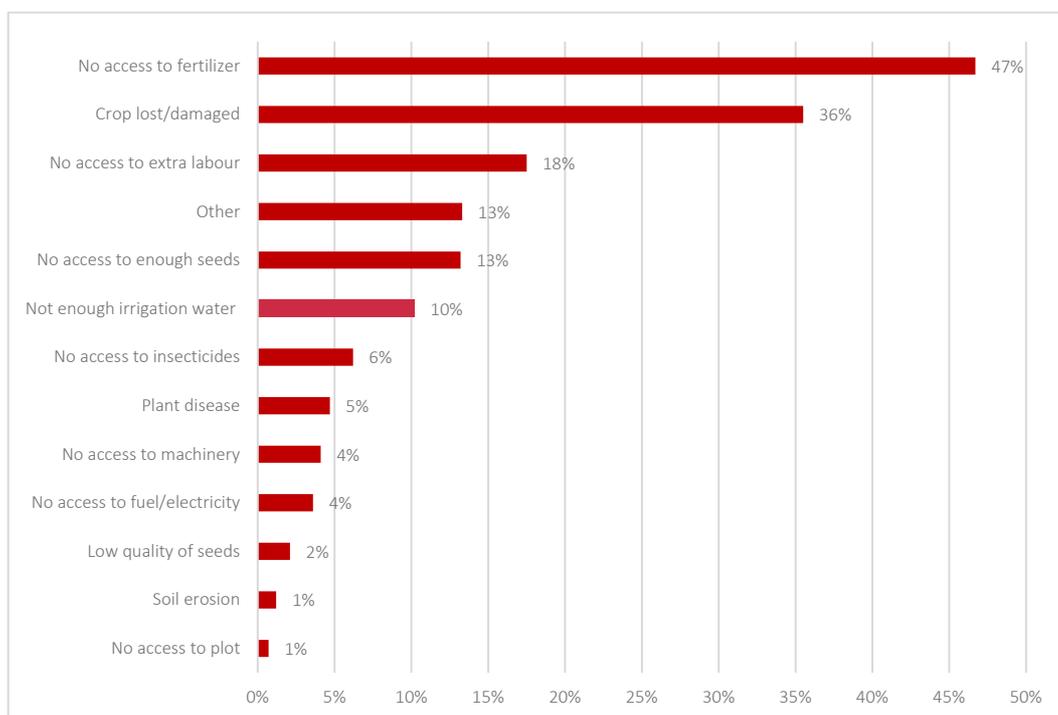
Crops

Net food producers were affected by challenges in accessing agricultural inputs and a subsequent decrease in agricultural production (Figure 3). Compared to the same period in a typical year, 24 percent of crop producers reduced their area planted. In addition, 44 percent of farmers' yields were reduced, with 18 percent experiencing a reduction of 50 percent or more (mainly in Kayah and Rakhine states). The association between reduced planted area and decreased crop production was statistically significant.

Nearly half of crop producers who reduced their area planted reported that this was due to the inaccessibility to fertilizer. Interviews with agricultural input dealers confirmed the challenges faced in supplying inputs to farmers: half of could not meet customers' needs, particularly for fertilizer. They faced major constraints in satisfying customer demand given the disruption in the supply chain and civil unrest. Almost all input dealers confirmed that the price of fertilizer was significantly higher than usual.

The results suggest that markets in Myanmar are not working as usual, resulting in lower prices for farmers' produce and decreased income, as suggested by the marketing difficulties reported by 89 percent of crop producers.

Figure 3. Crop-production difficulties (percentage of respondent crop producers)



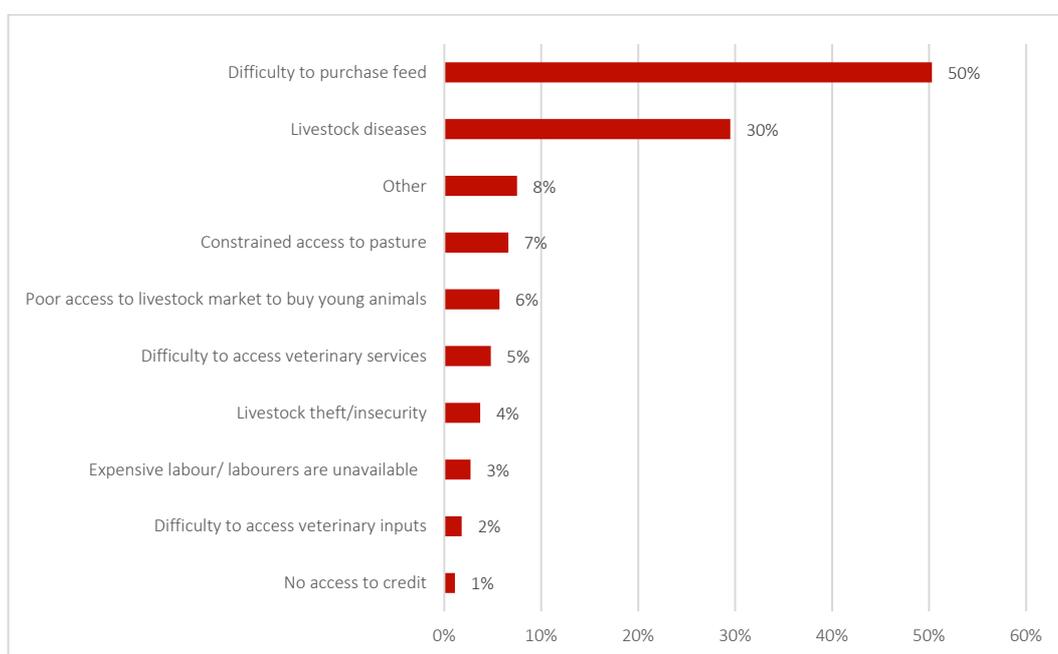
Source of data: FAO. 2021. Myanmar: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

Livestock

Similar to crop farmers, livestock producers faced challenges in purchasing inputs, including feed (Figure 4). Approximately one third of livestock producers faced production difficulties, with animal diseases also frequently mentioned. In addition, nearly one quarter of livestock producers faced difficulties in selling their products. Major marketing difficulties included very low prices and no access to the usual traders. Low sale prices were frequently cited by cattle farmers.

Just as for crops, farm-gate prices decreased for livestock products, possibly due to lower demand, inaccessibility of markets and the devaluation of the Myanmar kyat.

Figure 4. Livestock-production difficulties (percentage of respondent livestock producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Myanmar: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

Food security

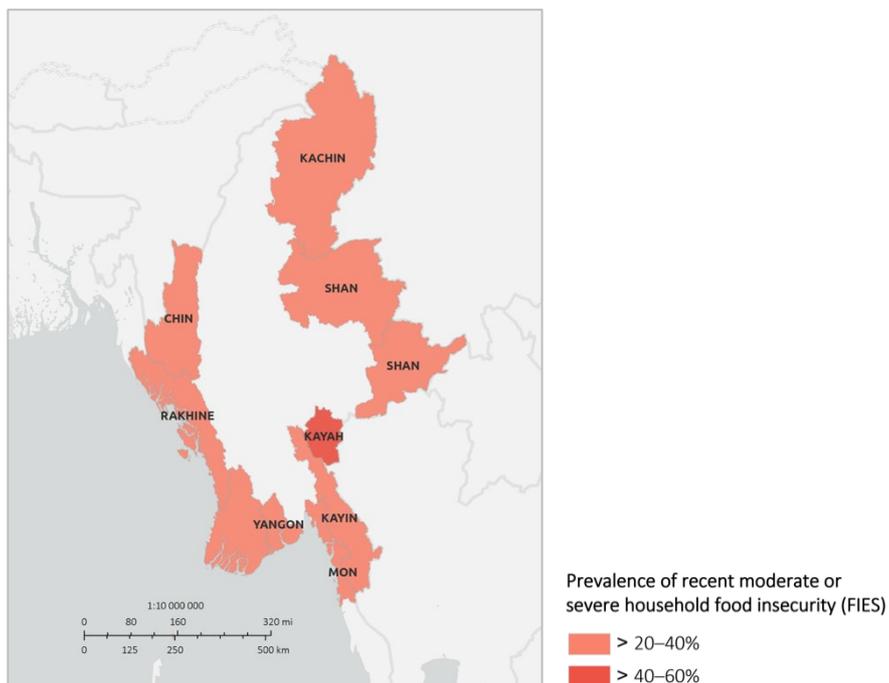
At the time of the survey, retail prices were substantially higher than the same time in the previous year (a rise in food prices was among the most frequently cited shocks). According to WFP market monitoring data comparing prices in August 2021 to the same period in 2020, the price of rice was 19 percent higher, chickpea was 31 percent higher, the price of eggs was 29 percent higher and edible oil was 61 percent higher. In the case of rice, a reduction in milling operations in July and August – reportedly due to COVID-19 restrictions – may have contributed to the rise in prices, and low pulse production in the previous growing season may have translated into declining trader inventory.

Both food consumers and producers saw decreased income in the context of rising food prices. One in three households spent more than 70 percent of their incomes to buy food; this proportion was slightly higher in rural areas and among agricultural households. In the past

three months, 55 percent of households had adopted Crisis- or Emergency-level coping strategies, which deplete livelihood assets (this figure was 67 percent among non-permanent residents).

Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) and Food Consumption Score (FCS) results were consistent in identifying the areas and livelihood profiles facing the worst outcomes. Recent moderate and severe food insecurity was assessed at 27.5 percent (± 3.3) in the nine states and regions surveyed. The FIES, FCS and Livelihood-based Coping Strategies Index (LCSI) converged in identifying Chin, Kayah and Rakhine (and to a lesser extent, Shan) as the most food-insecure areas (Figure 5). There was also a significant association between decreased planting area and crop production, and food consumption gaps.

Figure 5. Prevalence of recent moderate or severe household food insecurity (FIES), by state (percentage of respondents)



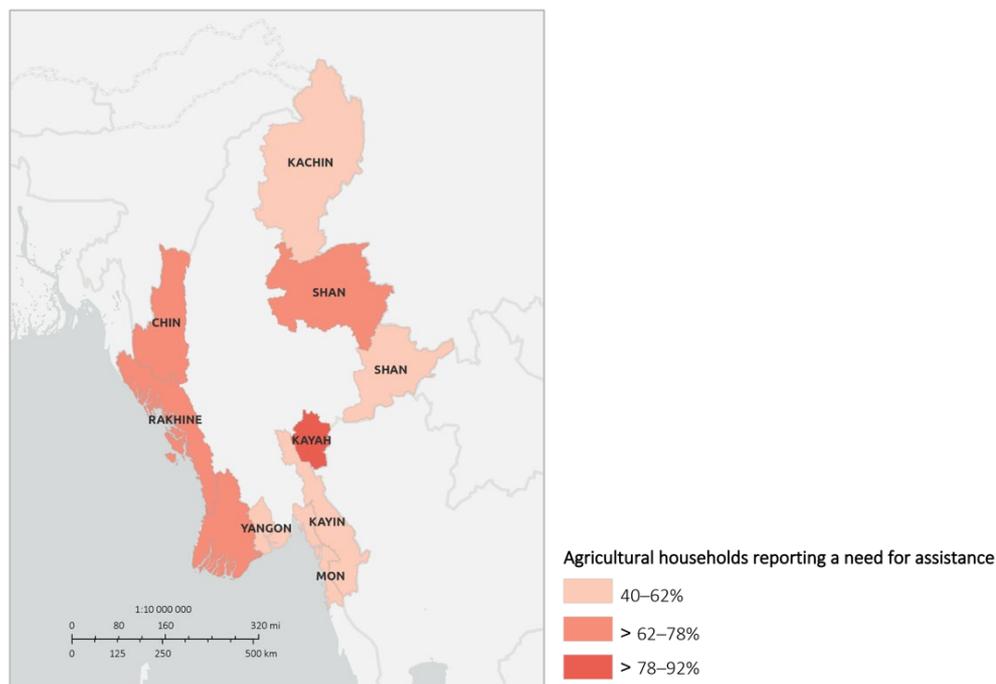
Source of data: FAO. 2021. Myanmar: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. *Map of Myanmar* [online]. [Cited 11 January 2022]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Needs

Amid a third wave of COVID-19 and political instability, 65 percent of interviewed agricultural households reported that they would need assistance in next six months (only 17 percent reported that they had assistance during the previous three months). More than 70 percent of reported needs were recorded in Kayah, Chin, Rakhine and Ayeyarwady (Figure 6). Food and cash assistance, and medical supplies and services were among the most frequently reported needs.

Figure 6. Agricultural households reporting a need for assistance, by state (percentage of respondents engaged in agriculture)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Myanmar: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).
Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. *Map of Myanmar* [online].
 [Cited 11 January 2022]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Recommendations

- > Moderate and severe food insecurity was assessed at 27.5 percent in this sample, with Chin, Kayah and Rakhine experiencing particularly high rates of recent food insecurity. Humanitarian assistance is required to address food-consumption gaps for the most vulnerable households, especially in conflict-affected states and regions. It should be prioritized in Chin, Kayah, Rakhine as well as Ayeyarwady and rural areas throughout the country.
- > With poor crop yields and depletion of agricultural assets in the surveyed area, emergency support is needed to ensure adequate crop and livestock production, rebuild farmers' assets and improve access to agricultural inputs.
- > Given the difficulties in crop production and significant association between decreased crop production and food consumption gaps, cash-based transfers should be used in areas where markets are functioning to encourage crop production and stabilize market supply.
- > Food security monitoring should be continued in both rural and urban areas to assess changes over time and develop timely response plans that match the scale and type of needs experienced by different livelihood groups and in different geographic areas.



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