Key highlights

➢ Thirty-six percent reported a decrease in their main source of income during the three months preceding the survey.

➢ A significant proportion (56 percent) of the surveyed households were agricultural producers, 75 percent of whom experienced production difficulties.

➢ Fifty-eight percent of the surveyed households reported the use of crisis or emergency strategies according to the livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI) in this pre-harvest period.

➢ Forty-one percent of the surveyed population was moderately or severely food insecure during the month preceding the survey. Five percent were severely food insecure. The area identified as most critically food insecure was Baja Verapaz, where 60 percent experienced moderate or severe food insecurity and 11 percent experienced severe food insecurity.

➢ The main shock reported by households was illness, accident or death of a household member (19 percent) followed by the increase of food prices (16 percent).

➢ Actions should be implemented to allow households to increase their income, such as unconditional money transfers.

➢ Access to and the provision of agricultural inputs should be improved through low-cost alternatives.
Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conducted a household survey through the Data in Emergencies Monitoring System (DIEM-Monitoring), between 31 January and 1 March 2023, to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security in Guatemala. Data were collected with a digital questionnaire in all 22 departments of the country and occurred after the second planting season, but only the results from 20 departments are presented. These 20 departments were those in which computer-assisted telephone interviews were conducted, while the surveys in the departments of Escuintla and Suchitepéquez were conducted face-to-face. A total of 4,305 households were reached in 20 departments and 281 municipalities.

The first round was conducted between 28 June and 3 August 2022. This round has been drawn from to make comparisons throughout this brief.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring Systems


The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO established the 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.

At the core of the DIEM-Monitoring System are country-level dashboards. Readers are encouraged to explore these dashboards to gain more insight into the context of Guatemala and other countries.

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

Thirty-six percent of the surveyed households reported a decrease in their main source of income, while in the first round, 31 percent reported a decrease in income (Figure 2). In addition, households that indicated that they had suffered a shock reported that the two main shocks experienced were higher food prices than usual and higher fuel prices than usual (Figure 3). Agricultural livelihoods were the most affected by declining incomes, in particular, basic grain producers.

Figure 2. Change in income (percentage of households)

Figure 3. Main shocks reported (percentage of households)

- Not impacted by shocks: 49%
- Higher food prices than usual: 38%
- Higher fuel prices than usual: 24%
- Sickness/death of...: 15%
- Loss of employment: 11%
- Other economic shock: 7%
- Plant disease: 4%
- Other intra household shock: 4%
- Pest outbreak: 3%
- External event impeding work: 2%
- Flood: 2%
- Animal disease: 2%

A significant proportion (56 percent) of the surveyed households were producers, of which 75 percent reported experiencing difficulties compared to the first round in which 65 percent reported difficulties. Crop producers mainly faced problems accessing fertilizer, followed by pest outbreak. Thirty-one percent of the surveyed crop producing households faced difficulties selling crops. This was mainly due to low selling prices (38 percent), and high transportation and other marketing costs (32 percent). In general, problems accessing inputs can be observed.
Livestock

About 44 percent of the surveyed households were engaged in animal production, mainly poultry, swine and cattle. The reported production was mostly small-scale, with a large majority of producers with less than 30 animals for poultry and less than 10 for cattle. Fifty-three percent of animal producers faced production difficulties, compared to 42 percent in the first round of data collection. The greatest difficulty was animal diseases or injuries, which was reported by 58 percent of the producers, followed by 34 percent who reported difficulties buying feed (Figure 6). Thirty-one percent of producers faced difficulties selling animals, compared to 22 percent in the first round, which was mainly due to low selling prices (37 percent). This is evidence of other difficulties, such as economic access to production inputs and the ability to cover marketing costs.
Figure 6. Livestock production difficulties (percentage of livestock producers)

- Livestock diseases: Round 1 - 60%, Round 2 - 78%
- Purchasing feed: Round 1 - 34%, Round 2 - 78%
- Access to veterinary services: Round 1 - 10%, Round 2 - 20%
- Access to veterinary inputs: Round 1 - 7%, Round 2 - 21%
- Access to pasture: Round 1 - 2%, Round 2 - 9%
- Access to water: Round 1 - 2%, Round 2 - 6%
- Livestock theft/insecurity: Round 1 - 3%, Round 2 - 6%
- No access to credit: Round 1 - 1%, Round 2 - 1%
- Access to livestock markets to buy young animals: Round 1 - 1%, Round 2 - 1%


Food security

According to the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), food security outcomes demonstrate an improvement when compared to the first round (Figure 7), however, these results hide an important disparity between departments and the use of coping strategies, including crisis strategies. It should be considered that this round of data collection was very close to the post-harvest period, in addition to the fact that crisis and emergency strategies were used by 58 percent of the surveyed population (Figure 8). This led to the sale of assets, which would justify higher food consumption due to the availability of cash, although in the medium and long term it could put the economic stability of households at risk.

According to different indicators such as the household hunger score (HHS) or HDDS, the departments with the highest food insecurity in the second round of data collection were Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Petén and Retalhuleu. Forty-one percent of the surveyed population was moderately or severely food insecure in the month preceding the survey. Five percent were severely food insecure according to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).¹ The most food insecure department was Baja Verapaz, with 60 percent of households in the department experiencing moderate and severe food insecurity and 11 percent experiencing severe food insecurity (Figure 9).

¹ FIES results are subject to change, until the country scale is established for more consistent comparability across rounds.
Figure 7. HDDS (by round)


Figure 8. LCSI (by round)

Figure 9. Prevalence of recent moderate or severe household food insecurity (FIES)


Needs

Eighty-three percent of the agricultural households surveyed reported the need for assistance in the three to six months following the survey, mainly in agricultural production. This figure increased from 69 percent in the first round. The main production-related assistance needs expressed were for seeds, fertilizer and tools for crop production (56 percent), food (38 percent), and training and technical strengthening/advice for crop production (33 percent). In addition, 21 percent of households reported the need for cash or food assistance.
Recommendations

Short-term recommendations

> Implement actions that allow households to increase their income, such as unconditional monetary transfers.

> Improve access to and the provision of agricultural inputs through low-cost alternatives and use local materials to satisfy the needs of producers, the production of organic fertilizers, selection of native or creole seeds, and the production of organic pesticides.

> Provide technical assistance aimed at reducing damage to crops other than plant diseases during the growth phase, which would allow the identification, prevention and reduction of the incidence of plant diseases.

> Promote the implementation of drought-tolerant seeds and short-cycle vegetables.

> Protect the poultry heritage of households as it is a source of income that enables food access and promote an increase in the number of poultry at household level.

> Promote vaccination days for backyard birds and alternative foods for birds.

> Promote cooperative systems that allow for reduced marketing costs.

Medium- and long-term recommendations

> Increase crop and livestock technology.

> Provide trainings on the creation of by-products and innovative forms of marketing.

> Support the opening of new local and international markets to market new by-products.

> Strengthen the use and marketing of agricultural inputs that are organic and environmentally friendly, reducing the use of petroleum derivatives.