

Monthly News Report on Grains (MNR)

End-of-Year Message from the FAO Grains Team

December 2022

While we are used to grain markets being the subject of constant scrutiny, study and media attention, on few occasions did the eyes of the world focus so sharply on the workings of grain markets as they did in 2022. Talk of grains was heard not just in farmyards and boardrooms, but also at bus stops and in coffee shops in every corner of the globe.

Trade in grains and developments in the Black Sea region, which supplies essential foods to many low-income countries, especially in Africa and Asia, were of particular concern. Discussions of how exportable wheat and coarse grains from Ukraine and the Russian Federation would reach those who depend on these foods dominated not only agricultural circles, but infiltrated global newsfeeds more broadly. How to move grains, by sea, road or rail was, however, not the only topic of debate. Attention also focused on the obstacles faced by producers in the face of surges in prices of inputs, adverse weather and the physical dangers and difficulties of growing crops in conflict zones.

FAO's Grains Team was required to undertake sober, rational and timely analyses of complex and far-reaching situation. The Team contributed to various issues of the comprehensive [Information notes](#) published by FAO, as part of a stream of [information products](#) issued by the Organization to keep governments, stakeholders and the public informed of the situation in the Black Sea Region.

As uncertainty heightened and prices of grains and other basic food commodities rose sharply, the FAO Grains Team continued to be responsible for the compilation and publication of the [FAO Food Price Index](#). It complemented that work with contributions to the [Food Price Monitoring and Analysis \(FPMA\)](#) resources issued by GIEWS. The team also produced FAO's monthly [Cereal Supply and Demand Briefs](#). It was, as usual, heavily involved in the production of the bi-annual [FAO Food Outlook](#) and provided inputs to the [OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook](#) and the [Crop Prospects and Food Situation](#) reports. The [Monthly News Report on Grains](#) was also distributed for a seventeenth year, while the team continued to keep a record of policy developments affecting grain markets through the [Commodity Policy Developments Tool](#) and to actively participate in international events and conferences.

The FAO Grains Team continued to work extensively with the G20 Agricultural Market Information System ([AMIS](#)) in 2022. This included participating in both regular and ad-hoc webinars, contributing to the monthly [AMIS Market Monitor](#) reports and presenting market overviews at the two meetings of the [Global Food Market Information Group](#).

At the start of 2022, the FAO Grains Team bade a fond farewell to its longtime leader, Abdolreza Abbassian, who went into a well-deserved retirement. Abby, as he is known to everyone, left large shoes to fill, but with the help of the greater Basic Foodstuffs Team in FAO's Markets and Trade Division, the work started by Abby has moved seamlessly forward.

If anything can be learned from 2022 it is that our attention can never stray from world grain markets. We can not know what is in store in 2023, but we can be sure that FAO's Grains Team will continue to monitor, analyse, and inform next year, as it did in 2022.

With best wishes for the New Year.