

End-of-Year Message from the Secretary of the FAO Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Grains

December 2015

Dear colleagues,

It is December so this year is drawing to a close. Let me begin by thanking you - subscribers to this Monthly News Report - for your continued interest and loyalty over all these years, ten to be precise. As we had hinted at this time last year, 2015 turned out to be a relatively calm year for grains, a good year, as large crops pushed up stock levels and consumers were generally better off with international prices lower in dollar terms and remaining under downward pressure.

As in the past, over the course of this year, the FAO Grains Team did its best to provide to the international community the very latest information and analyses on grain markets worldwide with a view to enhance market transparency and reduce world hunger. The Team represented FAO at several major events, including the [Global Forum for Food and Agriculture](#) in Berlin, the [China Agricultural Outlook Conference in Beijing](#), the [International Grains Conference](#) in London and the Russian Grain Union's [International Grain Trading Conference](#) in Sharm-El-Sheik. The Grains Team was also involved in a number of specific grains market development projects, including one aiming at strengthening market information systems and transparency in Kazakhstan.

The team continued to publish the [Cereal Supply and Demand Briefs](#) and [FAO's Food Price Indices](#) on a monthly basis while also overseeing the production of the bi-annual [FAO Food Outlook](#) reports and, of course, producing the [Monthly News Report on Grains](#).

Given its Secretariat role, the FAO Grains Team was also firmly engaged in the day-to-day work of the [G-20 Agricultural Market Information System](#) (AMIS) , publishing the monthly [AMIS Market Monitor](#) reports, organizing the regular meetings of the Global Food Market Information Group and the Rapid Response Forum as well as holding the first ever [Expert Workshop on China Stocks and Utilization Measurement](#) in Beijing. Furthermore, the Team set in motion the very first [Food Outlook Conference of AMIS](#) which took place at Expo 2015 in Milan, an event that was webcast live and proved exceptionally successful.

2015 was indeed a very productive year, full of activities and concrete results. This was in part thanks to a new team member, Mr. Adam Prakash. Please join us in welcoming Adam whose high level of quantitative skills in economics will certainly be a source of inspiration and help in strengthening the work of the Grains Team. Sadly though, 2016 will begin with one of our core and longest serving members, Ms. Rita Ashton, leaving for retirement. We wish Rita a good rest, and while she will be missed on a daily basis, we still hope to be able to call on her unique expertise gained from 37 years of working in FAO's Trade and Markets division.

Dear subscribers, the Grain Team is determined to keep a tight grip on developments in world grain markets, recognizing that markets are always vulnerable and that the prevailing stability

may disappear at the stroke of a pen or in the passing of a storm. As such, we count on your continuing support and welcome your feedback and suggestions with regard to our activities, the Monthly News Report on Grains.

With best wishes for the New Year.

FAO Grains Team:

[Abdolreza Abbassian](#) (Secretary of AMIS and FAO IGG on Grains); [Rita Ashton](#) (Food Outlook production manager); [Valentina Banti](#) (administrative support); [David Bedford](#) (MNR manager); [Francesca Bruzzese](#) (administrative support); [Concepcion Calpe](#) (foodstuffs outlook team leader); [Claudio Cerquiglini](#) (database manager); [Denis Drechsler](#) (AMIS project manager); [Friederike Greb](#) (economist); [Adam Prakash](#) (econometrician/research coordinator); [Natalia Merkusheva](#) (economist/grains); [Shirley Mustafa](#) (economist/rice), [Philippe Paquotte](#) (AMIS database coordinator); [Estefania Puricelli](#) (AMIS market monitor coordinator)