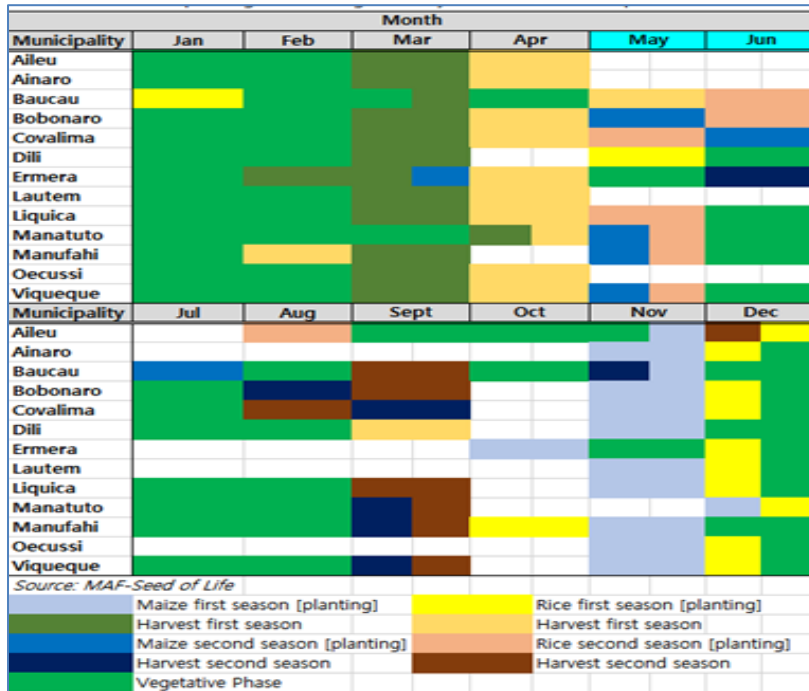


# Timor-Leste

## Food Security Bulletin

Edition no. 18 April - June 2020

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### Highlights

- Food insecurity levels are expected to be high in 2020 due to lower rainfalls, and the disruption in some agriculture activities due to COVID-19.
- The national maize production for the first half of 2020 was 77,606 tonnes, while rice production data is unavailable due to ongoing rice harvesting. Hence, the national rice production data will be released within the July - September 2020 Food Security Bulletin.
- Private sector rice imports for Timor-Leste from April to June 2020 were 44,846 tonnes compared to 25,498 tonnes during the last quarter (January – March 2020).
- The National Logistic Center (NLC) and MSSI has a total food stock of 126 tonnes of rice by the end of June 2020.
- As per the May 2020 survey, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) in collaboration with OXFAM and Mercy Corps, over 40% of households are engaging in coping strategies and experiencing food insecurity during the harvest season.
- The prices of cereal food (Imported rice, maize, wheat flour) increased at an average of 15%. Salt and sugar increased by an average of 34%, whilst Bean, Potatoes, and Chili prices gradually decreased for various reasons for the harvesting season, flood, and the COVID-19 including the State of Emergency measures impacting shipping costs.

The Timor-Leste Food Security Bulletin (FSB) is a product of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) supported by WFP and FAO supported project on establishing a sustainable National Information and Early Warning System (NIEWS) on Food Security in Timor-Leste. The FSB aimed at reporting and providing information on national and household levels of the food security situation quarterly. This is a MAF led innovation of ensuring the timely delivery of information to the decision-makers and wider stakeholders on the general overview of the food security situation in the country as an early warning to mitigate the serious impacts of food shortage and hunger. The data sources used for this bulletin included primary and secondary data such as Rapid Assessment of Food Security by MAF in collaboration with development partners, Fill Nutrient Gap (FNG) analysis 2019, satellite and remote sensing data collected by WFP and MAF, food prices data reported by Directorate General of Statistics, importation data collected by Customs, food availability data collected by MAF and the food utility data reported by National Logistic Center, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) and Civil Protections.



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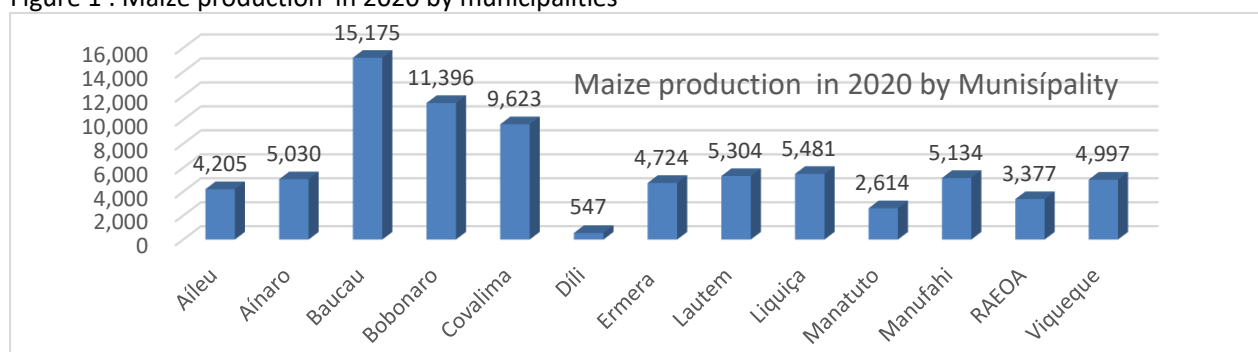
## National Production

**Rice:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic followed by the declaration of a “State of Emergency”, the rice production data from all the 13 Municipalities is unavailable due to ongoing rice harvesting. Hence, the final national rice production data will be reported within the next quarterly bulletin for July to September 2020.

**Rice importation:** Private sector rice imports for Timor-Leste from April to June 2020 were 44,846 tonnes compared to 25,498 tonnes during the last quarter (January – March 2020) see Table 1 below.

**Maize:** The first harvest of maize was completed in March-April. Total maize production during the first half of 2020 is nearly at the average expected yield, at 77,606 tonnes, due to favourable weather conditions, according to MAF (see Fig. 1 below).

Figure 1 : Maize production in 2020 by municipalities

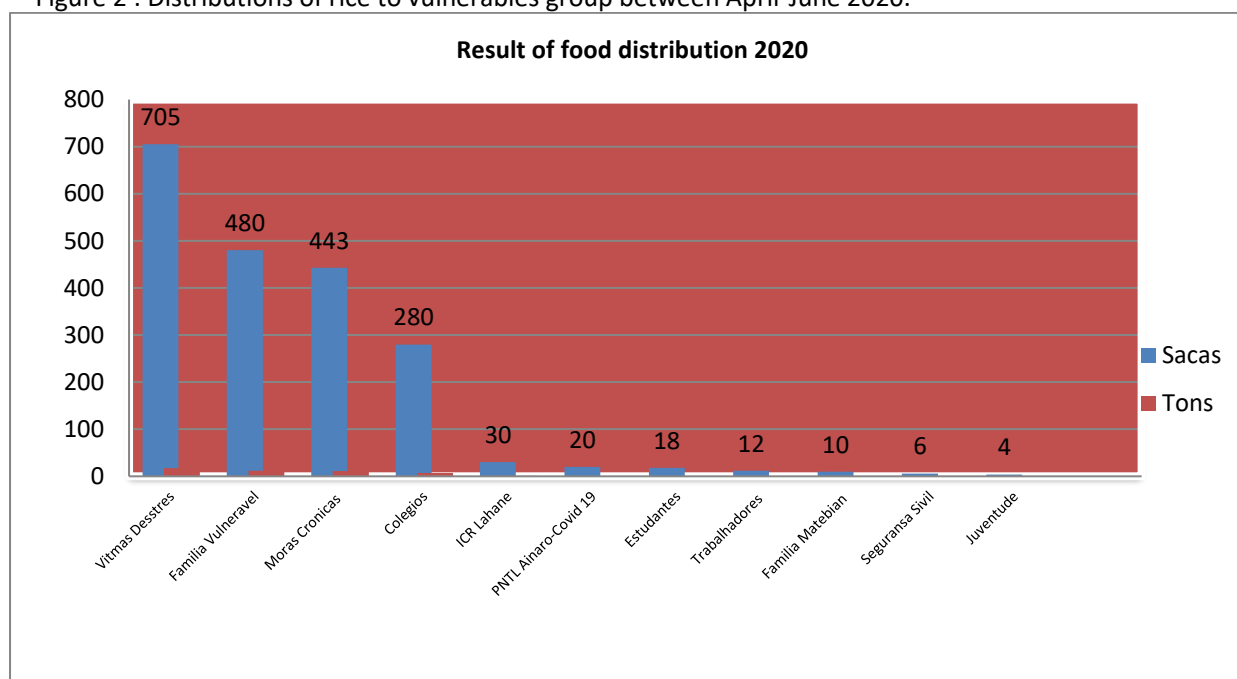


Sources: MAF

## Food stock availability and distributions (April-June 2020)

National Logistic Center (NLC) and MSSI report has a total food stock of 126 tonnes by the end of June. 96 tonnes were in NLC stock while 30 tonnes were stored in the MSSI warehouse. Out of the total, 49.9 tonnes of rice were distributed during April - June as described in figure 2 below. The figure shows the distributions of rice to 11 vulnerable groups. 17.625 tonnes of the food stocks were distributed to the national disaster victims which were the highest. 12 tonnes were distributed to vulnerable families in 12 municipalities, people with chronic diseases received 11.075 tonnes, 7 tonnes were distributed to colleges and the vulnerable group within religious institutions, while COVID-19 PNTL supporting team, students, workers, and other youth groups received a total of 2.2 tonnes.

Figure 2 : Distributions of rice to vulnerables group between April-June 2020.



Source : MSSI

## National food supply and demand 2020

Analysis of food supply and demand indicates that during the first semester of 2020 the food availability shows deficit because the production and importation activities were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, due to the COVID-19 pandemic followed by the declaration of a “State of Emergency”, the rice production data from all the 13 Municipalities were not available, the final national rice production data will be reported within the next quarterly bulletin for July - September 2020. Hence, only maize production data was available, the first harvest of maize was completed in March - April showing a total maize production during the first half of 2020 nearly at the average expected yield, at 77,606 tonnes, due to favourable weather conditions, according to MAF. Thus, the total deficit of maize shows -855 uncovered and can be anticipated by the other commodity like imported rice and root crops cassava and tara. Meanwhile, according to the Customs Department of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) statistics, 44,848 tonnes of rice were imported in the country by the private sectors from April – June 2020 (see table 1 below). Besides, the Government through the National Logistic Center (CLN) has contracted Vietnam to procure 30,000MT of rice as a part of its G2G agreement with the Government of Vietnam.

Table 1 Rice importation in Timor-Leste during January 2019-June 2020 (Unit: tonnes)

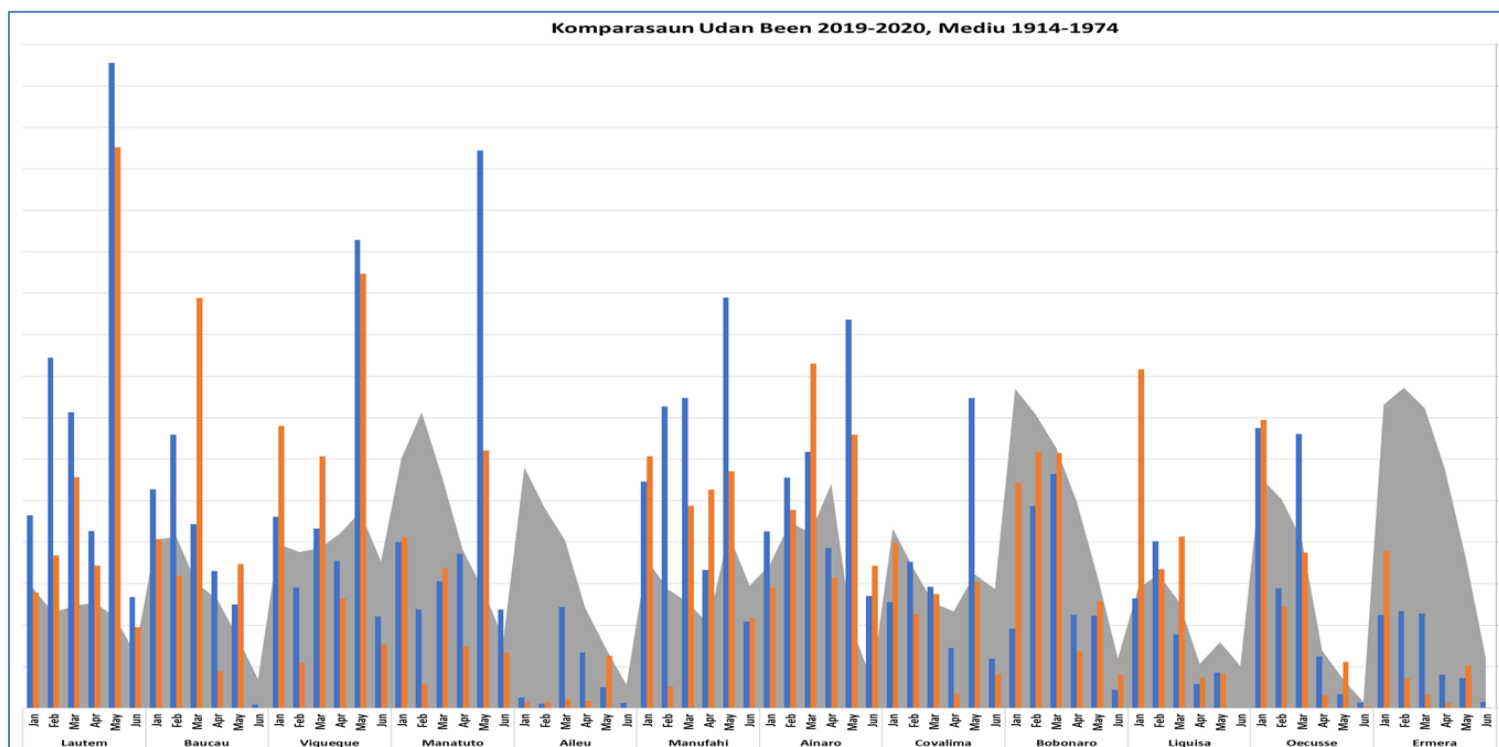
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total (to date)
2019	18,431	18,181	17,424	9,042	7,445	1,951	72,474
2020	11,484	4,431	9,583	4,728	21,494	18,627	70,346

Source: Custom-MoF

## Climate Situation in Timor-Leste

A report from the department of ALGIS, Ministry of Agriculture indicates that in general, the rainfall volume decreased during the last 3 months (April-June) compared to quarter 1 (January-March) 2020. The distribution of rainfall by municipalities shows Liquica, Ermera, Oecussi, Aileu experiencing minimum rainfall in quarter 2 (April-June) 2020. However, the low volume of rainfall was found in Lautem, Viqueque, Manufahi, Ainaro, and Bobonaro (see figure 3 below).

Figure 3 : Rainfall distribution during Quarter 2 (April-June) 2020 by Municipality



Source: MAF-ALGIS

Although the distribution of rainfall in April 2020 was over 150 mm across the country, rainfall accumulation was below average - with lower rainfall received in parts of Covalima, Dili, the upper part of Manatuto, and Oecussi.

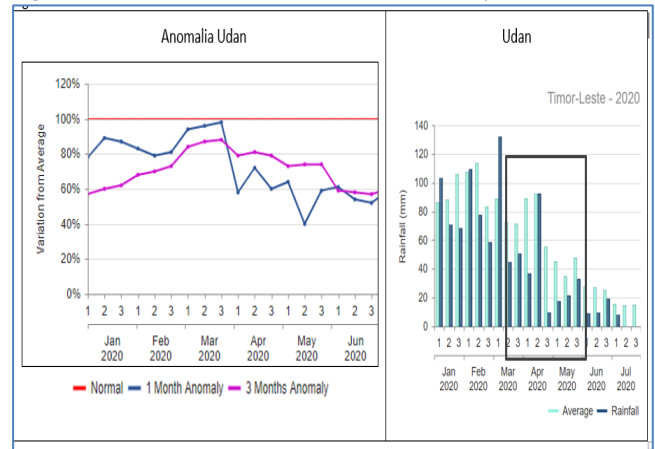
In May 2020, the amount of rainfall over the country was again below normal. The southern part of the country received over 150mm of rainfall, while other places like Oecussi, Atauro, and Baucau experienced relatively lower rainfall. The drought was found in some areas of Baucau, Bobonaru, and Covalima.

In June 2020, Timor-Leste received below 40 mm of rainfall - only about 60% of usual rainfall. The rainfall anomalies for both 1 month and 3 months periods shown have been significantly below the long term average and can be expected to be reflected in vegetation status in the coming months (Fig. 4).

The Vegetation Health Index (VHI) indicates that some parts of croplands in Bobonaro are in severe or moderate

drought (Fig. 4). Farmers delayed the planting of the second season of rice and maize in May-June 2020 due to water shortages in these areas.

Figure 4 Rainfall accumulation between April-June 2020

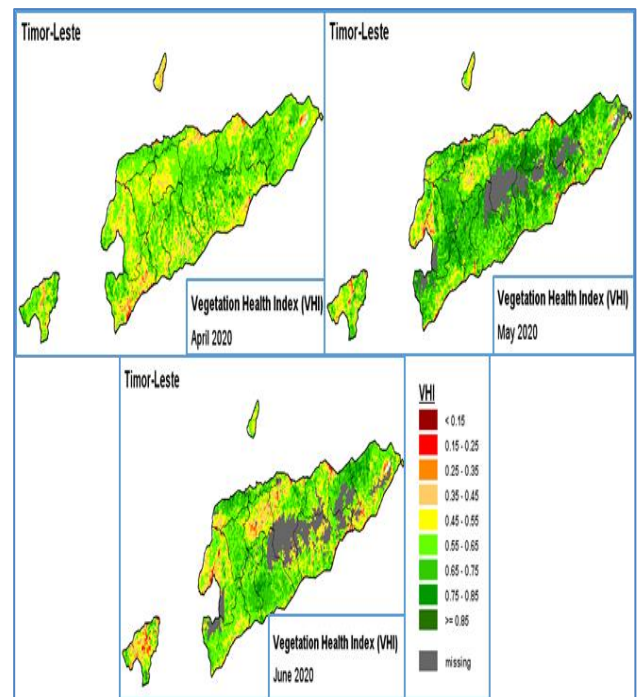


Source: WFP-VAM

**Vegetation condition**

- Health index vegetation in Timor-Leste (Figure 5) indicates the level of vegetation in April. In the north shows condition between 0.25 to 0.55 (red to yellow color) in Dili, Manatuto, Baucau Vila. In the mountain-side like Aileu, Bobonaro, Maubara, Fuiluru, and Tutuala include Southside such as Suai, Tilomar, Zumalai, Uatolari, and Uatocarbau shows health vegetation with an index between 0.65 to 0.85 (green color) which indicates healthy vegetation.
- Generally in May, the index vegetation is healthy as in April with an index between 0.65 to 0.85 (Green). The index vegetation was low between 0.15 to 0.55, as mentioned for April but some part not yet identified due to the cloud. In June the vegetation was healthy with an index between 0.65 to 0.85 (green) but a north side like Manatuto, Lacro, Laleia, Baucau, Atabae, Balibo, Cailaco, and Oecussi shows vegetation index low between 0.25-0.55). This condition was good for harvesting.

Figure 5: Health vegetation index in Timor-Leste during April-June 2020



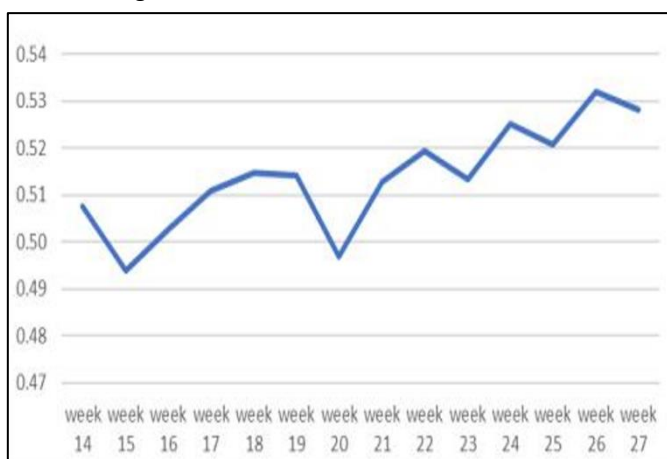
**Food Prices Monitoring**

Timor-Leste relies on rice imports to meet rice consumption needs. COVID-19 restriction, (temporary) rice export bans, and the lockdown in South East Asian Countries caused food supply risks for Timor-Leste. The imported rice price between April-June 2020 shows an upward curve with a range of 0.50 US/kg - 0.54 US/kg (see figure 6 below).



Figure 6: Trends Imported rice between April-June 2020

Unit: US\$/kg



In Dili, the stable food price between April-June fluctuated. In April, prices of chili and bean were high due to failing harvests affected by heavy rain and floods, and limited transport movement due to COVID-19 pandemic. In May, prices of chili, bean, and tomato dropped compared to April. The prices of egg, sugar, cooking oil, and onion stayed relatively stable. The prices of cereal food (Imported rice, maize, wheat flour) increased at an average of 15%. Salt and sugar increased by an average of 34%, whilst Bean, Potatoes, and Chili prices gradually decreased for various reasons for the harvesting season, flood, and the COVID-19 including the State of Emergency measures impacting shipping costs (see Table 2 and Figure 7 below).

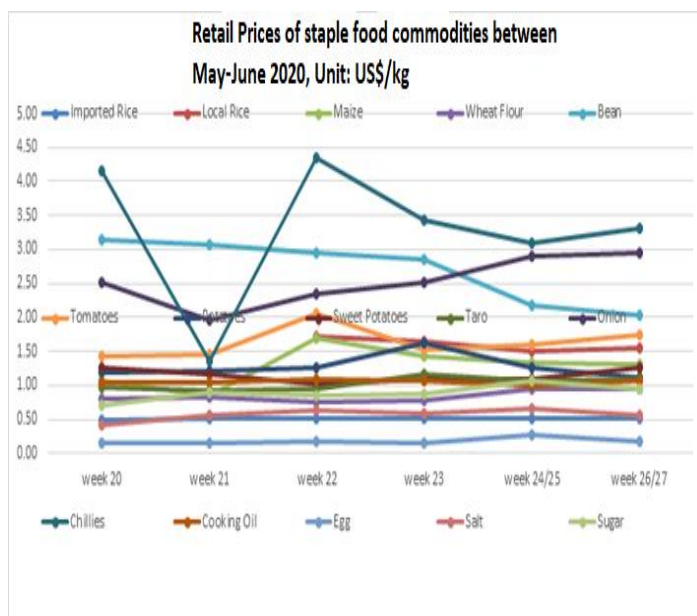
Source: WFP-VAM

Table 2. Retail Prices of staple food commodities between May-June 2020, Unit: US\$/kg

Commodities	May			June		
	week 20	week 21	week 22	week 23	week 24/25	week 26/27
Imported Rice	0.50	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	0.52
Local Rice			1.71	1.64	1.50	1.55
Maize	1.07	0.87	1.71	1.44	1.34	1.32
Wheat Flour	0.81	0.82	0.76	0.78	0.94	0.95
Bean	3.14	3.06	2.95	2.86	2.17	2.02
Tomatoes	1.44	1.47	2.05	1.53	1.60	1.74
Potatoes	1.18	1.21	1.26	1.63	1.26	1.11
Sweet Potatoes	1.26	1.17	1.03	1.10	1.09	1.26
Taro	0.98	0.92	0.94	1.18	1.07	1.09
Onion	2.52	1.97	2.34	2.51	2.91	2.95
Chillies	4.16	1.36	4.34	3.43	3.11	3.32
Cooking Oil	1.05	1.06	1.08	1.07	1.00	1.08
Egg	0.16	0.16	0.19	0.17	0.28	0.17
Salt	0.43	0.57	0.62	0.60	0.65	0.57
Sugar	0.70	0.90	0.84	0.87	1.06	0.94

Source: WFP-VAM

Figure 7: Retail Prices of staple food commodities between May-June 2020, Unit: US\$/kg

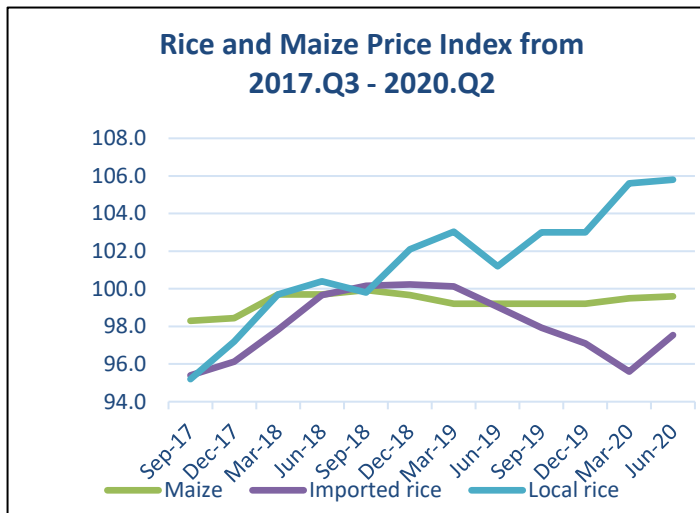


Source: WFP-VAM

## Consumer Price Index (CPI)

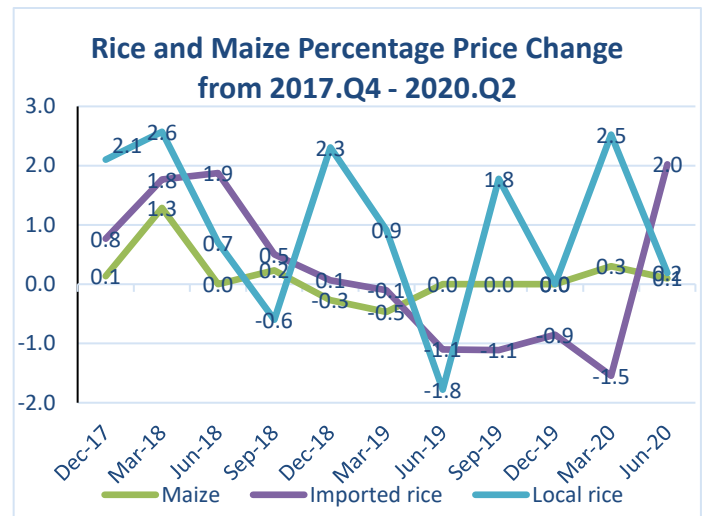
- The index price for imported rice increased to 97.5% in April - June 2020, compared to 95.6% in January - March 2020. The price index for local rice also increased slightly from 105.6% to 105.8% (see Figure 8 below).
- The Price Index for maize increased to 99.6% in April - June 2020, compared with the price index of 99.5% in January – March 2020.
- Imported rice percentage change was (+2%) from April - June, compared to January - March 2020, which decreased by (-1.5%). There was a normal fluctuation in imported rice prices depending on the external factors.
- Percentage changes for local rice were (+0.2%) in April - June compared to January - March which was (+2.5%). The local rice prices normally do not follow the local production season.
- Percentage changes for maize price in April - June increase slightly to (+0.1%) compare with January - March 2020 which was (+0.3%). Please see details in Figure 9 below.

Figure 8: Rice and Maize index price (2017 - 2020)



Source: DGE-statistics

Figure 9: Rice and Maize index price and percentages changes (2017 - 2020)



Source: DGE-statistics

## Food Security Assessments

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) supported by **Development Partners (DP) especially Mercy Corps and OXFAM conducted a rapid food security assessment in May 2020, to a total of 1,217 households in all 13 municipalities.**

- Households are experiencing food insecurity during the harvest season for staples - the most food-secure time of the year. Over 40% of households are already engaging in coping strategies and are reducing the normal amount of food consumed at least once per week.
- The main income sources of surveyed households comes from relying on Agriculture (92%), Livestock (53%), and Pensions (18%).
- Due to (temporary) movement restrictions, closure of markets, and reduced food availability in the markets, 81% of households reported that their food and income sources have been affected by COVID-19.
- Agricultural activities have been disrupted due to lack of seeds or fertilizers, lack of transporters, and closures of shops. Over 40% of farmer households reduced the planting of maize, rice, tubers, beans, and peanuts during the first half of the year.
- 96% of households indicated difficulties in accessing the markets to buy/sell goods over recent months. The highest numbers of households observing market access challenges are in the municipalities of Oecusse, Manatuto, Baucau, Ainaro, and Ermera.

These above findings in May 2020 during the “State of Emergency” reflect that food insecurity and fragility already exist in Timor-Leste; with many households showing low levels of food storage, savings, limited recovery from shocks, and practicing coping

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