

## Food Security and Nutrition in Period of Covid 19 in Kyrgyz Republic

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### Objectives

Contribute to solving food security problems by analyzing and monitoring the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Tasks

- Provide an overview of the current food security situation in the Kyrgyz Republic
- Estimate the degree of damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the food security situation in the Kyrgyz.

### Republic

- Identify the reasons for the deteriorating food security situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

According to the definition of the UN Committee on World Food Security, food security in the country is achieved under conditions when the population has constant physical and economic access to the necessary quality and quantity of food for a healthy lifestyle [1]. Physical access means that basic types of food must be available on the shelves for purchase, and economic access means that the income of the population must be sufficient to allow the purchase of the necessary types of food. However, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization for 2018, Kyrgyzstan was still on the list of low-income countries with poor food security, which negatively affects the growth of human capital in the country [2]. For example, according to USAID, 16% of the poor in Kyrgyzstan are constantly undernourished, and more than 20% of children in the southern regions are stunted [2].

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened an already dire food security situation in the country. This report will provide a snapshot of the impact of government restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic on the food security situation in the country.

### Decrease in GDP and income level of the population

According to the statistics of the National Statistical Committee, the volume of GDP in 2020 decreased by 8.6% compared to the previous year and amounted to 598.3 billion soms [3]. The decline in GDP had a negative impact on the level of income of the population, especially on those who were employed in trade, construction and private services due to the restrictions imposed by the state on economic activity in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic [4]. According to the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 54% of households felt a decrease in income, and 22% of the population reported that at least one member family lost his job [5]. According to information from the World Food Program, the estimated minimum unemployment rate may reach 18.8% [4]. If we take into account the influx of migrants from abroad during the pandemic and the reduction in bank remittances, there is a risk that incomes of the population will further decline, and access to food will decrease.

### Price rise and inflation

Along with the decline in GDP and income levels, the country has seen a sharp rise in the prices of consumer goods. Wheat and flour prices are up 30% from 2019, according to the World Food Program [4]. According to the statistics of the National Statistical

Committee, the consumer price index for 2020 increased by 5.2% compared to 2019 [6]. And the consumer price index for meat, fish, cereals and vegetables increased by 17.3% on average [6].

**Consumer price index by region**

The name of indicators	2019	2020
Republic of Kyrgyzstan	101,1	106,3
Batken region	102,5	107,9
Jalal-Abad region	101,6	106,1
Issyk-Kul region	102,9	106,2
Naryn region	102.0	106.3
Osh region	101.3	105.3
Talas region	100.8	108.1
Chui area	100.6	106.0
Bishkek city	100.9	106.9
Osh city	100.9	103.8

**Table 1:** Data from the National Statistical Committee, [www.stat.kg](http://www.stat.kg).

The rise in consumer prices was also affected by the depreciation of the national currency. Despite the financial intervention of the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic, the dollar increased by 19.3% by January 2021 compared to February 2020 [4]. And the maximum inflation rate among the EAEU countries was noted in the Kyrgyz Republic and reached 9.7% by January 2021 [7]. Inflation and price increases had a negative impact on the purchasing power of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic.

**Import dependency**

The rapid rise in prices and inflation in Kyrgyzstan is associated with the country's high dependence on imports - 47% for wheat, 37% for sugar and 84% for vegetable oil [4]. Food security in the country can be ensured when 85% of food is produced within the state, and 15% is imported from outside [4]. Despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan is an agricultural country, it cannot provide its stalls with food and brings it from neighboring countries. And during the pandemic, food imports plummeted and led to food shortages and increased prices.

**Import volumes by region in comparison**

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the pandemic had an adverse impact on food security in Kyrgyzstan and shook the already unstable situation with the provision of the required minimum food supply. It is necessary to establish domestic production

The name of indicators	2019	2020*
Republic of Kyrgyzstan	4 989,0	3 684,1
Batken region	40.6	24.3
Jalal-Abad region	49.4	68.5
Issyk-Kul region	246.0	229.3
Naryn region	4.4	4.6
Osh region	304.1	171.9
Talas region	39.9	47.4
Chui area	823.4	511.6
Bishkek city	2 918.5	2,246.9
Osh city	348.1	207.3

**Table 2:** \*Data from the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

of agricultural products and other food products in order to avoid a repetition of the situation in the future.

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