## Responding to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on food value chains through efficient logistics



The COVID-19 pandemic has developed into the greatest global health, social and financial challenge of the 21st century. It is impacting not only people’s lives, livelihoods and nutrition but also food trade, food supply chains and markets.

The pandemic falls into a period that was already seeing an increase in the number of hungry people in the world, coupled with a global economic slowdown[[1]](#footnote-1). The recession, which is being forecast as one of the immediate results of the pandemic, will exacerbate these problems and calls for swift multi-disciplinary responses to avoid that the health crisis will trigger a subsequent food crisis.

With the pandemic reaching its peak at different points in time across the world and hitting some places with more severity than others, some countries are already slowly reducing their containment measures. These recovery phases come with their own challenges but could at the same time provide invaluable insights for countries that are still facing the full brunt of the disease.

To support countries in assessing their local situation and to help decision makers design coherent and effective policies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food production, trade and consumption (access), FAO has prepared a collection of policy briefs, which present policy recommendations grounded on qualitative and quantitative assessment of the pandemic’s impacts on these areas.

All policy briefs can be accessed here: [www.fao.org/2019-ncov/resources/policy-briefs/en](http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/resources/policy-briefs/en/).

Forming part of this series is the Policy Brief “Responding to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on food value chains through efficient logistics”[[2]](#footnote-2) prepared by the Agricultural Development Economic Division and the Nutrition and Food Systems Division of FAO.

This brief highlights that the measures implemented around the world to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have entailed a severe reduction not only in goods and services that rely on transport, but also in the migration of labour both domestically and internationally. To avoid that these measures have a negative impact on food systems and might result in food shortages, this brief summarizes some practices that could be useful for governments and the private sector to maintain critical logistical elements in food value chains, while prioritizing the health of consumers and workers.

With this online consultation we invite you to share examples, best practices and case studies of how the impact of the COVID-19 containment measures on food security and agriculture are being managed in your countries from a logistical point of view.

Please let us know if and how the measures to maintain a functioning food supply chain from “farm to fork” are being applied locally and nationally, and if any unexpected challenges have been encountered along the way.

Your input will be used to further refine FAO’s policy tools and to learn about examples of good practices that could be used to guide the response in other parts of the world.

To help us with the subsequent analysis of the consultation’s outcomes, we kindly ask you to address these guiding questions:

1. Can you share examples on how the bottlenecks listed in the policy brief have been addressed and with which result?
2. What has been the impact of measures to face the COVID-19 pandemic on the exports of food and cash crops?
3. What has been the impact of measures to face the COVID-19 pandemic on the imports of food ingredients, inputs, packaging and other goods related to the food value chain?
4. How have logistics from the national to the local level been impacted by the pandemic and response measures?
5. What have been the implications on informal cross-border trade?
6. What challenges related to the food value chain have emerged during the relaxing of COVID-19 containment measures?
7. Are there any additional areas not yet included in the brief that warrant particular attention with regard to logistics affecting the food supply chain?

We thank you very much for your valuable comments and look forward to learning from your experiences.

Marco V. Sánchez

Deputy-Director and Officer-in-Charge (day-to-day matters)

Agricultural Development Economics of FAO

1. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8466en> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)