

Price Monitoring for Food Security in the Kyrgyz Republic

This issue of the Price Monitoring Bulletin is prepared based on the operational daily food price data collected by the National Statistics Committee from 18 markets across the country and disaggregated at province level as the average value (Chuy province - Tokmok, Kara-Balta; Osh province - Osh, Uzgen, Kara-Suu and Nookat; Talas province - Talas and Manas; Naryn province - Naryn and Chaeik; Batken province - Batken and Isfana; Jalal-Abad province - Jalal-Abad, Toktogul and Kerben; Ysyk-Kul province - Karakol and Balykchy; and Bishkek city). This is a secondary data analysis.

Highlights

SITUATION UPDATE: Since March 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic and its resulting negative impacts on the global economy have led to a recession in the economies of many countries, including the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, the recent political instability is likely to further contribute to the deterioration of the economy. The situation in regard to COVID-19 worsened in the country in October 2020 rising to 422 COVID-19 cases on 19 November, suggesting a second wave has begun. Compared to the same period last year, the Kyrgyz Republic's GDP decreased by 7.4 percent totaling 457 billion Kyrgyz soms from January to October 2020. Negative trends were observed in the construction (-11.5 percent), wholesale and retail trade (-16 percent) economic sectors, while the agriculture sector improved by 0.8 percent. Compared to the same period last year, the Consumer Price Index, which measures price inflation, increased by 5.8 percent for all goods and services and by 10.7 percent for staple foods (cereals, meat, fish, milk and dairy products, fruits and vegetables). According to the latest updates of the National Statistics Committee (23 October), wheat production increased by 4.7 percent, while potato production decreased by 3.2 percent. The Government continues to monitor and stabilize food markets across the country through establishing price controls on 11 essential food items and regulating import and export volumes.

The following section discusses the average prices for the two weeks from 4 to 18 November 2020 in comparison to the previous two weeks, the monthly average of February 2020 (before the COVID-19 outbreak began in the country), the previous month's average (October 2020) and the monthly average in November 2019. The weekly monitoring of food prices reveals the fluctuations of several commodities with a significant increase of potato prices:

- WHEAT:** During the weeks from 4 to 18 November 2020, the national retail prices of wheat increased by 2 percent from the previous two week's levels, reaching an average price of 22.69 KGS/Kg. As of 18 November 2020, the highest price of wheat was observed in Jalal-Abad and Batken provinces (24 KGS/Kg) and the lowest price was in Naryn province (16 KGS/Kg). The rise in the average national prices was in line with an increase of the wheat export prices in the Russian Federation. Compared to October 2020 and February 2020, the prices were 1 percent and 19 percent higher, respectively. The prices were 24 percent higher compared to November 2019 and continues to be higher than normal annual price fluctuations, within 15 percent of the benchmark.
- WHEAT FLOUR (1st grade):** The national retail prices of wheat flour increased by 2 percent from the previous two week's levels, reaching a national price average of 39.55 KGS/Kg. As of 18 November 2020, the highest price was in Bishkek city (40 KGS/Kg) and the lowest was in Naryn province (35 KGS/Kg). Prices remained unchanged compared to October, while they were 18 percent higher than February 2020 levels. However, the prices were 20 percent higher compared to November 2019, an increase above normal annual price fluctuations. The stability of wheat and wheat flour price is critical as it remains one of the most consumed staples in the country.
- POTATOES:** The national retail prices of potatoes continued to grow by another 5 percent from the previous two week's levels, reaching a national average of 25.11 KGS/Kg. As of 18 November 2020, the highest price was observed in Bishkek city (27 KGS/Kg), while the lowest price was in Ysyk-Kul province (20 KGS/Kg). Compared to October 2020 and February 2020, prices were 10 percent and 14 percent higher, respectively. The prices were 33 percent higher compared to November 2019, which is significantly higher than normal seasonal price fluctuations.
- OIL (COOKING):** From 4 to 18 November, the national retail prices of vegetable oil rose by another 3 percent from the previous week's levels (128.25 KGS/Kg), reaching the highest value of all time. As of 18 November 2020, the highest price was in Batken province (133 KGS/Kg) and in Naryn province (134 KGS/Kg) and the lowest in Chuy province (117 KGS/Kg). The Kyrgyz Republic has a high import dependency on vegetable oil due to its low internal production and low capacity for the processing of oil seeds. The increasing trend of vegetable oil prices is caused by the growing export prices in the Russian Federation, attributed to unfavorable weather conditions, a consequently lower harvest and the depreciation of the Russian ruble against the US dollar. Compared to October 2020 and February 2020, the prices were 5 percent and 34 percent higher, respectively. The prices were 34 percent higher compared to November 2019, an increase above the normal annual price fluctuations.
- SUGAR:** The national retail prices of sugar continued to grow by 2 percent from the previous week's levels, reaching an average price of 53.30 KGS/Kg. The increase in sugar prices was in line with global trends, as historically proven by the positive correlation between global and national prices. As of 18 November 2020, the highest price was observed in Batken province (56 KGS/Kg), while the lowest price was in Chuy province (49 KGS/Kg). The prices of sugar were 2 percent and 30 percent higher than October and February 2020 levels, respectively. The sugar prices rose by 26 percent compared to November 2019, which is significantly higher than normal annual price fluctuations.
- MEAT (BEEF and MUTTON):** During the weeks from 4 to 18 November 2020, the national retail prices of meat increased by 5 percent for beef and by 3 percent for mutton compared to the previous two week's levels, leading to an average price of 415.09 KGS/Kg for beef and 391.92 KGS/Kg for mutton. As of 18 November 2020, the highest prices for beef and mutton were observed in Osh province at 433 KGS/Kg and 445 KGS/Kg, respectively. The prices for beef increased by 5 percent and the price for mutton by 2 percent compared to October levels and by 21 percent and 29 percent compared to February 2020, respectively. The prices of beef and mutton were 21 percent and 29 percent higher, respectively, compared to November 2019, an increase above normal annual price fluctuations.

EXCHANGE RATE: During the two weeks from 4 to 18 November 2020, the Kyrgyz som depreciated by almost 1 percent from 84 KGS to 84.80 KGS per 1 USD, the Russian ruble appreciated from 80 RUB to 76.3 RUB per 1 USD and the Kazakh tenge appreciated from 433 KZT to 428 KZT per 1 USD. However, these currencies depreciated by 21 percent, 14 percent and 12 percent, respectively, against the US dollar since the beginning of March 2020, according to the exchange rate of the National Bank. Lower remittances levels were among the factors affecting the weakening of the external position of the Kyrgyz som. During the February-July 2020 period, remittances decreased by 9 percent compared to the same period in 2019. The recent political unrest and related uncertainty also contributed to the weakening of the national currency. Currency movements are one of the main driving forces of the retail prices of imported basic food commodities including wheat, vegetable oil and sugar.

GLOBAL OIL PRICES: Since the beginning of 2020, crude oil prices have slumped dramatically following the lockdowns, travel restrictions and the decline in consumer demand with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, further impacting the global economy. According to global forecasts, the full recovery of oil demand levels may not take place until 2022. During the weeks from 2 to 16 November 2020, global oil prices slightly improved its position due to the temporary recovery in fuel demand and though remained under pressure. It could be derailed by a rise in the pace of coronavirus infections around the world. The pandemic may force countries to reinstitute lockdown measures that will slow economic growth and curb energy demand. WTI prices increased from 36.60 USD per barrel to 41.14 USD per barrel, while Brent prices increased from 37.78 USD per barrel to 42.71 USD per barrel. As of 16 November, both WTI and Brent prices remained 12 percent and 19 percent lower, respectively, than March 2020 levels.

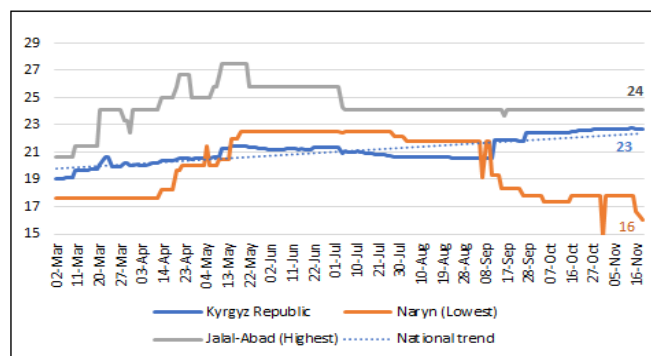
AVAILABILITY: Since the last price monitoring issue, the availability of wheat and wheat flour improved overall in Osh province and slightly decreased in Chuy and Talas provinces. Thirty-four districts showed good levels of availability though the situation was critical in Aksy and Bazar-Korgon (Jalal-Abad), Alay (Osh), Bakay-Ata (Talas) and Ysyk-Ata (Chuy) districts. Considering the prevalence of poverty, the share of income spent on food by the poor and the high retail prices in the province that may affect their access to food, particular attention should be devoted to districts in Jalal-Abad province as insufficient availability may further hinder the ability of the poor to consume wheat and wheat flour. In the past two weeks, the availability of vegetable oil remained critically unvaried in Osh and Chuy provinces while decreased in all other provinces. Only thirteen districts showed 'sufficient' stocks levels. Given the high poverty rate in Batken (33 percent) and the highest retail price, the most dramatic situation was observed in Leilek where 'insufficient' availability may have further hindered the ability of the most vulnerable to consume vegetable oil. Compared to the previous two weeks, the availability of sugar slightly increased in Chuy and Osh provinces, while it worsened in Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces. Overall, the situation remained critical with 'insufficient' or 'severely insufficient' stock levels in thirty-one districts. Considering the high incidence of poverty, the high prices and the scarce availability, particular attention should be devoted to Leilek and Batken districts in Batken province.

Trends of Retail Prices of 12 Staple Foods (Weekly Trends) - Kyrgyz Republic

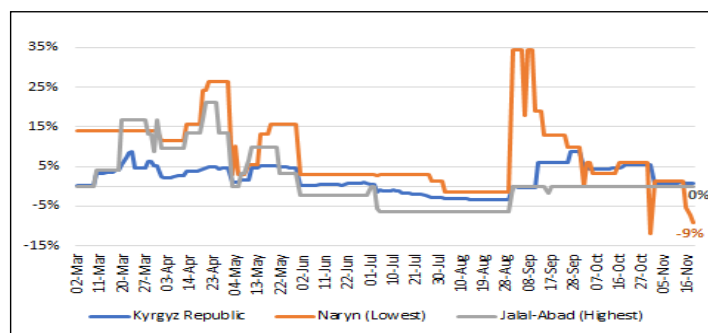
	4-18 Nov 2020 (KGS/kg)	21 Oct-4 Nov 2020 (KGS/kg)	Trend		4-18 Nov 2020 (KGS/kg)	21 Oct-4 Nov 2020 (KGS/kg)	Trend
Bread (1st grade)	48.01	47.99	0%	Rice (medium)	79.96	79.83	0%
Milk	36.68	36.37	1%	Sugar	53.30	52.25	2%
Meat (beef)	415.09	401.08	5%	Wheat	22.69	22.27	2%
Meat (mutton)	391.97	387.85	3%	Wheat flour (1st grade)	39.55	38.95	2%
Oil (cooking)	128.25	126.82	3%	Wheat flour (high-grade)	47.69	47.12	1%
Potatoes	25.17	24.41	5%	Eggs	83.82	81.98	3%

WHEAT

Pic 1. Retail wheat prices (KGS/Kg)

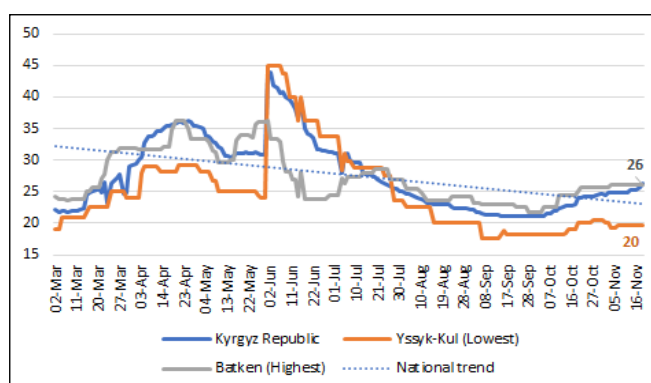


Pic 2. Growth rate of wheat, as a percentage of the daily prices from the previous average monthly price

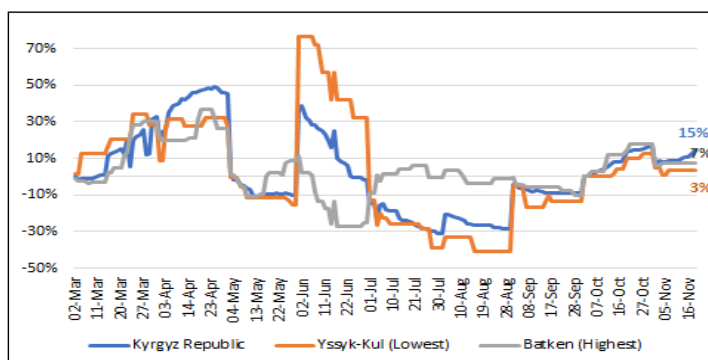


POTATO

Pic 3. Retail potato prices (KGS/Kg)

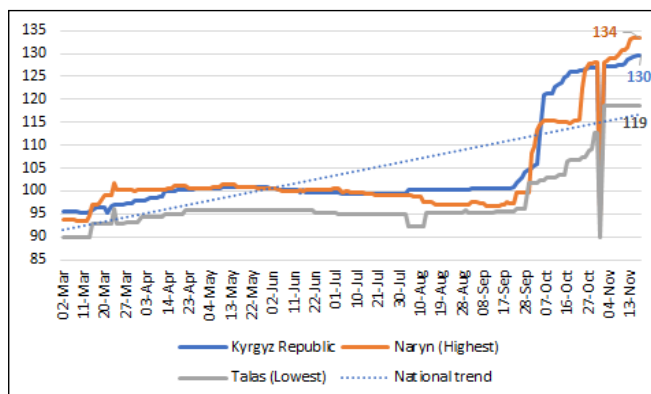


Pic 4. Growth rate of potato, as a percentage of the daily prices from the previous average monthly price

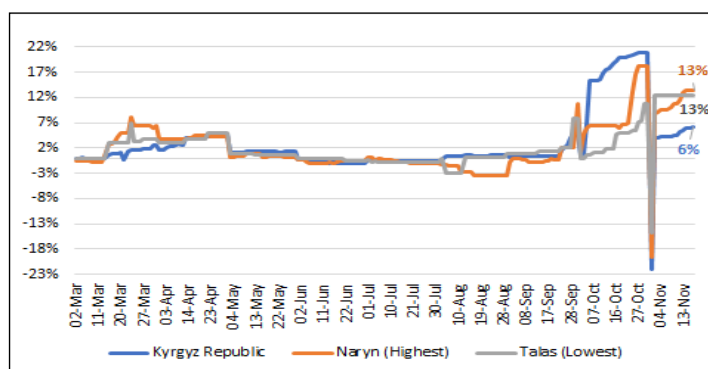


OIL (COOKING)

Pic 5. Retail vegetable oil prices (KGS/Kg)

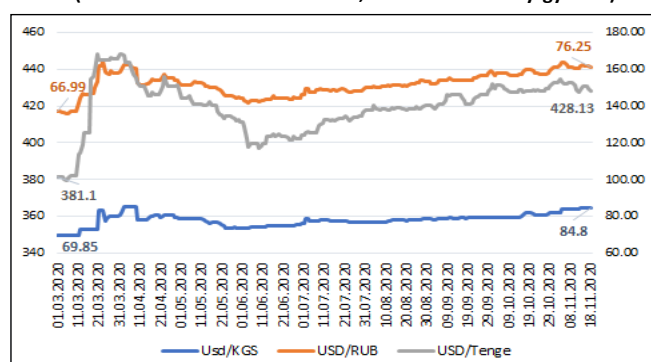


Pic 6. Growth rate of vegetable oil, as a percentage of the daily prices from the previous average monthly price



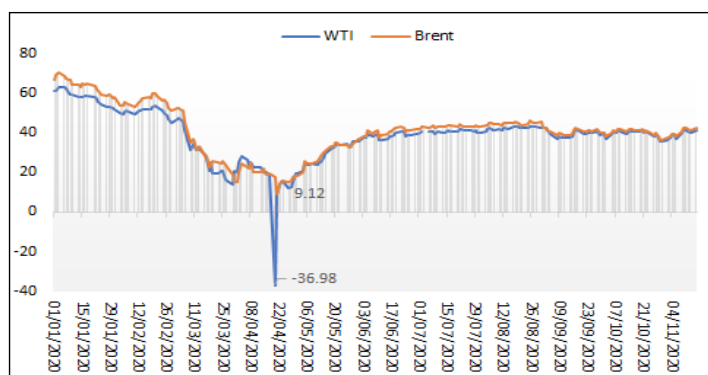
EXCHANGE RATE

Pic 7. Exchange rates of Ruble, Kyrgyz Som and Kazakh Tenge against US Dollar (source: National Bank of Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan)












GLOBAL OIL PRICES

Pic 8. Daily WTI, Brent prices (Jan 2020 to 2 Nov 2020, source: EIA)



Annex: Prices of 13 Food Commodities

The table shows the changes of the average retail prices of the current day, current week and current month compared to the average prices of the previous month.

Province	Commodity	Nov 18 Price (KGS)	Change in Price (%)				Level of Fluctuation				Commodity	Nov 18 Price (KGS)	Change in Price (%)				Level of Fluctuation			
			04-18 Nov /21 Oct - 04 Nov	WEEKLY PRICE/ Oct 2020	WEEKLY PRICE/ Feb 2020	WEEKLY PRICE / Nov 2019	04-18 Nov /21 Oct - 04 Nov	WEEKLY PRICE/ Oct 2020	WEEKLY PRICE/Feb 2020	WEEKLY PRICE / Oct 2019			04-18 Nov /21 Oct - 04 Nov	WEEKLY PRICE/ Oct 2020	WEEKLY PRICE/Feb 2020	WEEKLY PRICE / Oct 2019				
	Bread (1st grade)	26	1%	0%	12%	17%	▶	▶	▲	▲	Potatoes	26	2%	7%	6%	19%	▶	▶	▲	▲
	Bread (lepeskha)	63	1%	0%	5%	14%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	78	0%	0%	2%	-2%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	80	3%	6%	12%	25%	▶	▶	▲	▲	Sugar	56	3%	3%	30%	18%	▶	▶	▲	▲
	Meat (beef)	424	3%	2%	12%	14%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	24	2%	5%	18%	31%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	376	2%	3%	14%	18%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	1%	1%	18%	18%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	38	1%	0%	7%	7%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	49	1%	1%	11%	14%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	129	4%	9%	39%	36%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	46	0%	0%	4%	5%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	27	7%	13%	0%	43%	▲	▲	▶	▲
	Bread (lepeskha)	63	0%	0%	0%	2%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	76	1%	1%	2%	2%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	80	3%	5%	4%	14%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	53	2%	1%	33%	27%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	424	5%	6%	19%	20%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	23	2%	0%	24%	24%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	386	2%	1%	24%	34%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	2%	0%	24%	25%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	38	1%	1%	-4%	6%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	46	1%	0%	17%	19%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	129	3%	4%	32%	33%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	42	1%	0%	8%	9%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	26	9%	12%	14%	28%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	65	0%	0%	2%	2%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	83	-1%	-2%	8%	11%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	88	3%	6%	11%	16%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	49	2%	0%	29%	29%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	393	4%	4%	19%	23%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	19	5%	9%	4%	14%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	376	2%	2%	19%	22%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	39	2%	1%	13%	18%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	35	2%	4%	-2%	11%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	46	1%	0%	6%	10%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	123	4%	4%	32%	33%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	54	0%	0%	4%	0%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	25	1%	2%	5%	13%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	75	0%	0%	2%	3%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	87	0%	-1%	4%	4%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	91	2%	2%	10%	13%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	54	1%	0%	32%	24%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	420	5%	5%	19%	26%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	24	1%	0%	17%	20%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	424	6%	6%	20%	26%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	5%	4%	13%	13%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	33	2%	3%	-13%	0%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	45	1%	0%	8%	9%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	127	5%	6%	39%	39%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	54	0%	0%	4%	5%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	20	2%	6%	-1%	25%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	63	0%	0%	6%	6%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	74	1%	2%	5%	8%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	96	7%	11%	13%	25%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	54	5%	3%	36%	34%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	402	6%	6%	18%	20%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	16	-1%	-1%	-1%	18%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	400	5%	5%	17%	20%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	35	2%	3%	10%	14%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	30	7%	15%	-7%	0%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	40	1%	0%	4%	3%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	134	7%	11%	39%	39%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	62	0%	0%	2%	3%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	25	5%	7%	3%	17%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	76	1%	0%	-2%	8%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	99	1%	0%	7%	9%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	98	3%	3%	31%	17%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	54	1%	2%	13%	12%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	433	6%	5%	3%	24%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	22	2%	0%	16%	26%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	445	5%	5%	23%	25%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	1%	0%	5%	7%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	38	5%	5%	-2%	3%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	50	1%	1%	6%	7%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	130	4%	5%	31%	30%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	50	1%	1%	10%	13%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	23	3%	8%	4%	15%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	71	2%	1%	12%	16%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	67	3%	3%	22%	15%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	90	4%	5%	7%	7%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	51	2%	2%	28%	17%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	378	2%	2%	23%	26%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	17	2%	0%	11%	31%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	368	2%	1%	18%	22%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	38	-5%	-13%	13%	15%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	30	3%	7%	6%	9%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	49	3%	3%	29%	32%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	119	8%	13%	32%	32%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	45	0%	0%	1%	2%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	20	0%	3%	5%	45%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	61	0%	0%	3%	3%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	85	1%	-2%	8%	10%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	85	4%	7%	11%	16%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	52	3%	2%	42%	43%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	394	5%	3%	14%	21%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	19	2%	2%	9%	16%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	376	4%	2%	20%	23%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	39	1%	0%	10%	13%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	33	1%	2%	20%	8%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	50	1%	1%	4%	9%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	125	5%	3%	-7%	33%	▶	▶	▶	▶										
	Bread (1st grade)	48	0%	0%	5%	5%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Potatoes	26	5%	10%	14%	33%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Bread (lepeskha)	65	0%	0%	1%	3%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Rice (medium)	80	0%	0%	4%	4%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Eggs	86	3%	5%	9%	17%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	53	2%	2%	30%	26%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	420	5%	5%	19%	21%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat	23	2%	1%	19%	24%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	397	3%	2%	22%	29%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	2%	0%	18%	20%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	37	1%	2%	-5%	4%	▶	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (high grade)	48	1%	0%	13%	15%	▶	▶	▶	▶
	Oil (cooking)	130	3%	5%	34%	34%	▶	▶	▶	▶										

▲ Price increase above normal price fluctuation
▶ Normal price fluctuation
▼ Price decrease below normal fluctuation

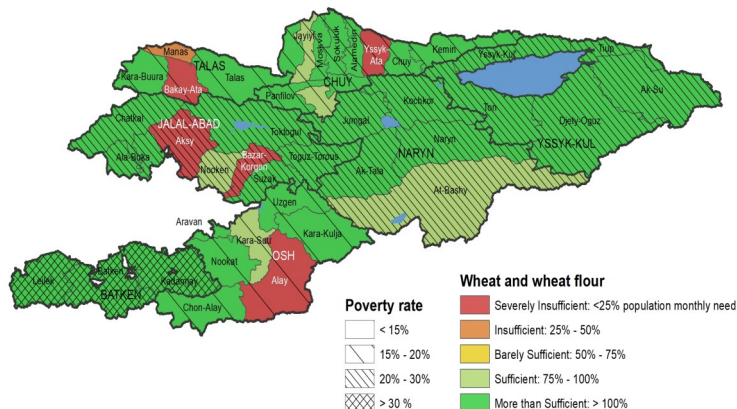
Price fluctuation is considered normal if change within:
+/- 5% for 1 month, +/- 10% for 3 months, +/- 15% for 1 year

Annex 2: Availability of three main food commodities

The maps below show the level of availability and sufficiency of three main staple foods at district level — wheat and wheat flour, vegetable oil and sugar during the period from 4 to 15 November. Given the high import dependency that the Kyrgyz Republic has of these commodities, they are being monitored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration and reflect the population's overall physiological needs of the commodities under consideration. The overlapping of poverty rates shows a population's economic access to food and provides useful information on the geographical areas to which particular attention should be devoted as insufficient levels in these areas may further prevent the poor to consume the commodity. It should also be noted that the poverty rates are pre-COVID-19 estimates, which are likely to have worsened as a result of the pandemic.

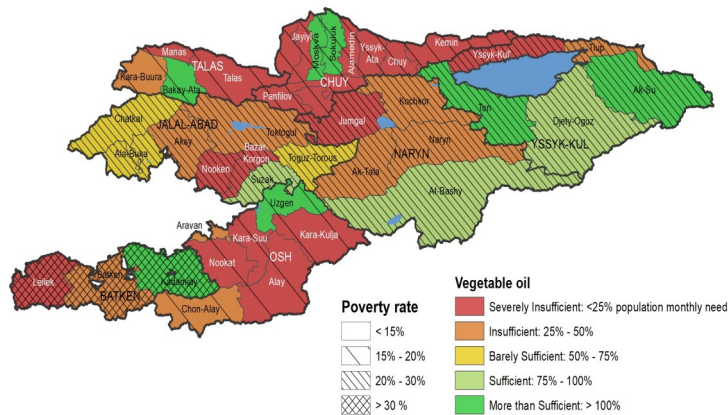
WHEAT AND WHEAT FLOUR

Since the last price monitoring issue, the availability of wheat and wheat flour improved in Osh province and slightly decreased in Chuy and Talas provinces. During the past two weeks, 34 districts reached 'sufficient' wheat and wheat flour stock levels to cover over 75 percent of their population's monthly needs. Among these 34 districts, 30 districts were able to satisfy the needs of their entire population for more than one month. Although the availability may have been 'sufficient', the incidence of poverty affects the ability of the most vulnerable to access wheat and wheat flour. One district showed 'insufficient' level (Manas) and five districts experienced 'severely insufficient' levels of wheat and wheat flour stock: Aksy and Bazar-Korgon districts in Jalal-Abad province, Alay district in Osh province, Bakay-Ata district in Talas province and Yssyk-Ata district in Chuy province. Considering the incidence of poverty at 27 percent, the already high share of income spent on food (59 percent) and the high retail prices, which affect access to food and households' purchasing power, particular attention should be devoted to districts showing 'severely insufficient' levels in Jalal-Abad province as the scarce availability may further prevent the most vulnerable to consume wheat and wheat flour.



OIL (COOKING)

In the past two weeks, the availability of vegetable oil remained unvaried in Osh and Chuy provinces while it decreased in all other provinces. Thirteen districts showed 'sufficient' levels to satisfy more than half of their population's monthly needs, with seven districts being able to satisfy their population's needs for over a month. Nevertheless, the incidence of poverty in Batken (33 percent), Naryn (28 percent), Jalal-Abad (27 percent) and Issyk-Kul (24 percent) provinces could have hindered the capacity of the most poor to access cooking oil. The availability of vegetable oil was 'insufficient' in ten districts (Kara-Buura, Tiup, Aksy, Toktogul, Naryn, Kochkor, Ak-Tala, Aravan, Chon-Alay and Batken) and 'severely insufficient' in all districts in Chuy (except for Moskva and Sokuluk), Talas and Manas districts in Talas province, Yssyk-Kul district in Yssyk-Kul province, Nookan and Bazar-Korgon districts in Jalal-Abad province, Jumgal district in Naryn province, Kara-Kulja, Kara-Suu, Alay and Nookat districts in Osh province and Leilek in Batken province. Given the high poverty rate in Batken (33 percent) and the fact that in Batken the highest retail price of vegetable oil was observed—factors that affect access to the commodity—the most dramatic situation was noted in Leilek, where the 'insufficient' availability may have further hindered the ability of the most vulnerable to consume vegetable oil.



SUGAR

Compared to the previous two weeks, the availability of sugar slightly increased in Chuy and Osh provinces, while it worsened in Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces. Overall, the availability of sugar was critical. Only nine districts had 'sufficient' levels to satisfy more than half of their population's monthly needs, with seven districts being able to satisfy their population's needs for over a month. The incidence of poverty rates in Naryn (28 percent) and Yssyk-Kul (24 percent) provinces may have affected the ability of the poorest households to access sugar although it was available. All districts in Osh (except Uzgen and Kara-Suu), Jalal-Abad (apart from Chatkal), Chuy (except Panfilov, Jayыл, Moskva and Sokuluk) and Naryn provinces (with the exception of At-Bashy and Naryn) faced a status of 'severely insufficient' levels of sugar stocks that satisfied less than a quarter of their population's monthly needs. In addition, Talas and Manas districts in Talas province, Yssyk-Kul district in Yssyk-Kul province, Leilek and Batken districts in Batken province had 'severely insufficient' levels of sugar stocks. Considering that 33 percent of the population was living below the national poverty line in Batken province, with the poorest quintile already spending 57 percent of their income on food and that the highest retail price for sugar was observed in this province, particular attention should be devoted to the 'severely insufficient' levels in Leilek and Batken districts. Poverty and higher prices affect access to food, which combined with a reduced availability, may further compromise the ability of the poor to consume sugar.

