

# Market Monitor Report

MAF | GDS | WFP VAM | Food Security Analysis

## Timor-Leste | Week 11/12 2021 ( 15th - 28th March)

### Highlights

- The current maize harvests and coupled with the government rice distribution programme likely to ease staple food access constraints for farming households. However, lockdowns and restrictions will have an impact on supply chains.
- Imported rice was observed to be relatively stable in the last two weeks of March 2021 compared to the first but remains elevated compared to the same time last year.
- A significant decrease in price of local rice during the reference period compared to the first two weeks of March, likely on the back of impending rice harvests in April as well as current government rice market intervention and food distribution programme to vulnerable population. However, the current price remains high on medium term.
- Rice stocks are depleting in most of the monitored markets; while brokers (intermediaries) are helping to bridge the gap between retailers and distributors in the municipality borders for various commodities.
- **Oecusse:** Lockdown and associated restrictions have had an impact on the import/export of goods between Dili and Oecusse, impacting on stock levels and operations. Much as the price of salt, sugar and wheat flour decreased in some of the surveyed shops, gasoline and diesel were reported to be out of stock by some fuel stations. *Cesta Basika*, government-led food and non-food assistance programme, has reportedly commenced in the municipality.

### Retail price trend of cereals

During the last two weeks of March 2021, the monitored markets experienced a drop in local rice prices. This is likely due to the impending harvests in April coupled with government rice distribution program as part of the intervention to support vulnerable population in the face of confinement rules. Local rice price ranged from 0.68 US\$ to 1.92 US\$, an average decrease of around 13 percent compared to this same time last month (Fig 2). Over the six-month period, local rice has increased by 14 percent. Relatively high prices were observed in the municipalities of Viqueque and Covalima (Map 2)

Fig. 1: Price trend of imported rice

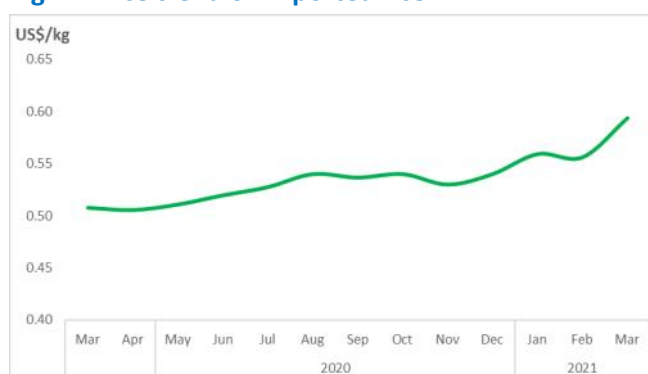
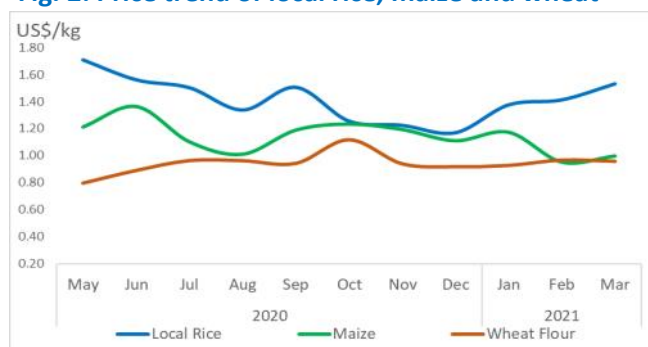


Fig. 2: Price trend of local rice, maize and wheat



While for imported rice, prices ranged from 0.53 US\$/kg to 0.65 US\$/kg, almost the same compared to this time last month. Over the six-month period, imported rice has increased by around 8 percent, and a further 15 percent increase compared to this same time last year. Viqueque, Ainaro and Bobonaro had relatively higher prices than the other municipalities during the reference period while Dili had the lowest (Map 1).

Map. 1. Average price of Imported rice (US\$ per kg)



On the global front, the FAO Rice Price Index extended the upward trend into a third straight month in February 2021, reaching 116.0 points, up 1.5 percent from January and a further 11.4 percent from a year earlier. Thai and Vietnamese rice, key imported commodity, remained on an upward curve due to limited supplies.

Map. 2: Average price of local rice US\$ per kg



Maize grain price continues to remain relatively low and stable, likely due to ongoing harvests. While wheat flour prices remain subdued (Fig 2).

Table. 1: Price trend for non-cereals

	Latest Price	Percent Change from previous period (%)		
	Mar (Wk3-Wk4)	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months
Sweet Potato	1.04	↓ -3	↓ -15	↓ -40
Potato	1.31	↓ -20	↑ 11	↑ 6
Taro	0.85	↑ 2	↓ -29	↓ -23
Beans	2.26	↓ -5	↑ 22	↑ 8
Egg	0.20	↑ 4	↓ -15	↑ 13
Chicken	3.10	↑ 0	↓ -2	↑ 1
Tomato	1.63	↑ 10	↑ 42	↑ 23
Onion	2.97	↑ 32	↑ 45	↑ 32
Cooking Oil	1.47	↑ 22	↑ 29	↑ 36
Chili	3.88	↑ 22	↑ 23	↑ 23
Sugar	0.97	↑ 1	↓ -1	↑ 2
Salt	0.67	↓ -28	↑ 16	↑ 4

**Retail price trend of non-cereals**

Compared to this same time last month, decreases in retail prices were also observed for sweet potatoes (1.04 US\$/kg), potatoes (1.31 US\$/kg), Beans (2.26 US\$) and Salt (0.67 US\$); while increases were observed for tomatoes, eggs and cooking oil; with no changes for frozen chicken (Table 1).



Open market-Oecusse



Maize harvesting-Oecusse



Open market-Viqueque



Market-Viqueque

**Methodology :** To monitor the impact of COVID-19 on market prices, WFP in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the General Directorate of Statistics collect food price data on a weekly basis across the country's main markets from 11 municipalities (Ainaro, Aileu, Bobonaro, Dili, Ermera, Lautem, Liquica, Manatuto, Viqueque, Covalima and Oecusse). On average, around 6 traders per market are surveyed, targeted food commodities weighed, and its price averaged per kilogram. Imported rice price are based on the most consumed brand per retailers.