

# SAMOA

## mVAM Bulletin

The data presented here was collected via the World Food Programme's mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) survey through telephone interviews conducted across eleven districts using random-digit dialing between September and October 2023.

### HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

In September 2023, food consumption among households in Samoa was at a similar level as in March 2023, with about **96 percent** of households recorded having **acceptable** food consumption.

This trend is aligned with the patterns observed in previous rounds of the survey, suggesting a level of consistency in dietary choices over time by Samoans households.



**96% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN SAMOA HAVE ACCEPTABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION**

Households in Samoa consumed **staples, proteins, meat and fish, and vegetables** for over **5 days** in a week. Consumption of **fruit** – nearly 4 days in the past 7 days, remained at an acceptable level too, although it decreased in comparison with March 2023, when households reported consuming fruit 5 days per week. Households ate fewer **pulses** in September (2.6 days) than in March (3.6 days) this year, but slightly more dairy products.

Overall, the frequency of consumption of food groups (8) changed insignificantly since March 2023. **In 7 days, the average Samoan household in September 2023 consumed:**

STAPLES	PROTEINS	VEGETABLES	FRUITS
6.5 days down from 6.7	5.9 days down from 6.3	5.2 days down from 5.7	3.9 days down from 4.9
PULSES	FATS	DIARY	SUGARS
2.6 days down from 3.6	2.9 days up from 2.6	3.3 days up from 3.1	2.8 days down from 3.0

In September 2023, **96 percent** and **94 percent** of households in Samoa had acceptable levels of **protein** and **Vitamin A** intake respectively.



Survey Respondents: 1,214 households



Male-headed households: 77 percent  
Female-headed households: 23 percent



Urban Households: 29 percent  
Rural Households: 71 percent



Households reporting having a member/s with disability: 37 percent

Level of education of the head of the household:

- Primary education: 12 percent
- Secondary education: 66 percent
- Tertiary education: 15 percent
- Vocational Training: 4 percent
- None: 3 percent

Insufficient intake of **Hem Iron** was reported by **27 percent** of the respondents, consuming iron-rich foods for 1-6 days in a week. Remaining households reported consuming iron-rich foods in a daily basis. The same level reported in March 2023.

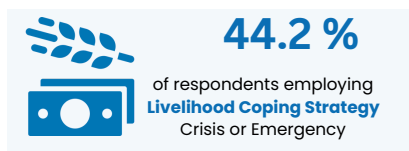
**Female-headed households** in Samoa had better consumption patterns in September with 98 percent of respondents reported having acceptable food consumption (95 percent among male-headed households). Similarly, households with female heads had more diverse proteins-, vitamin A- and Iron-rich foods (see Samoa mVAM dashboard for more details).

**Urban** households consumed sugary products 3.7 days and fat 3.6 days in a week – more frequently than **rural** households consuming sugar and fats for 2.4 days and 2.6 days respectively. This is possibly due to urban households having easier access to foods with higher sugar and fat content. Households in urban areas also had more fruits, vegetables, proteins and pulses included in their diet.

## LIVELIHOOD-BASED COPING STRATEGIES (LCS)

LCS identifies negative coping strategies adopted by households and captures the activities households have to engage in when there **aren't enough resources** available (food, cash) to access **essential needs** (e.g. adequate shelter, education services, health services or other basic needs).

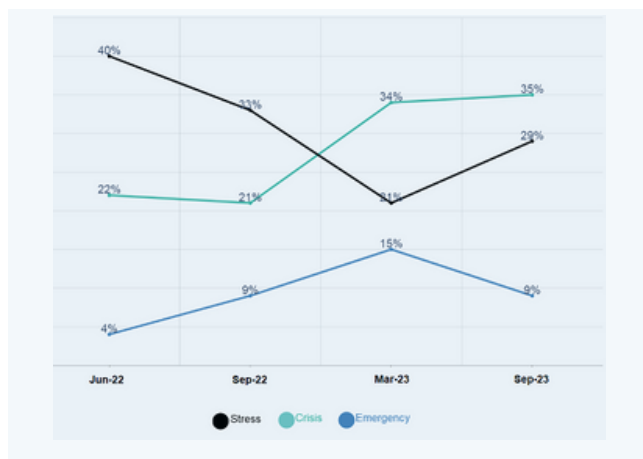
In the third quarter of the year, many Samoan households adopted negative livelihood-based coping strategies to meet their essential needs and sustain livelihoods when faced with the shock.



**Crisis** and **emergency** coping strategies were used by over **44 percent** of the surveyed households. Although this was a slight decrease of 5 percent from March 2023, the high percentage suggests that many households still have limited resilience to in the face of future shocks and crises.

**Crisis** coping strategies increased slightly compared to March 2023 - by 1 percent in September with 35 percent of respondents using crisis strategies. This included, as in the previous round, selling of household productive assets, potentially affecting future capacities and resilience to potential shocks and disasters.

Percentage of households resorting to coping strategies



Following a steep rise in use since June 2022, **emergency** coping strategies were employed by 9 percent of households in September 2023 (6 percent lower than in March). In a few instances, households reported selling major productive assets, thereby reducing their capacity to bounce back from future shocks. These strategies may also remain difficult for the households to reverse.

**Stress** strategies, such as borrowing money or spending savings, were employed by 29 percent of respondents, 8 percent more than in March 2023. Interviewed households expressed ongoing challenges as they continue to rely on using their personal savings and resorting to borrowing money or food.

**Twenty seven percent** of interviewed households reported they hadn't used any coping strategies when disasters or shocks occurred.

The **top three** negative **coping strategies** adopted in September 2023 were spending personal savings, removing children from school, and reducing spending on health.



The main coping strategies used by households in Samoa hadn't significantly changed from the previous round in March 2023. In third quarter, 16 percent of households spent savings, 5 percent more than in March, making it the primary coping strategy.

**Reducing health expenses** was reported by **14 percent** of households in September, 4 percent less than in March, indicating a slight sign of improvement. Interviewed households reported to also **taking children out of the school** temporarily to minimize the expenses and to meet essential needs. This, the second top negative coping strategy, was used by 16 percent of the households in the third quarter of 2023, 3 percent more than previous quarter.

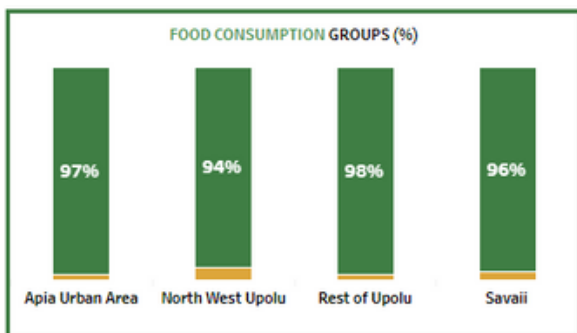
One major reason for the increased adoption of coping strategies would be **high food prices**. Although, in September, the proportion of households reporting high prices as a major concern decreased significantly - by 15 percent compared to March 2023, still **28 percent** of households expressed it as a **primary concern**. The increased food prices, followed by a considerable increase in households worries over the interruption of education (21 percent) and disruption of livelihoods (12 percent).

- 1 INCREASE OF FOOD PRICES
- 2 DISRUPTION OF EDUCATION SERVICES
- 3 DISRUPTION OF LIVELIHOODS

## SUB-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

### FOOD CONSUMPTION & LCS

In September 2023, food consumption remained at acceptable levels across all regions in Samoa. In North West Upolu, **6 percent** of the respondents reported having **borderline** food consumption.

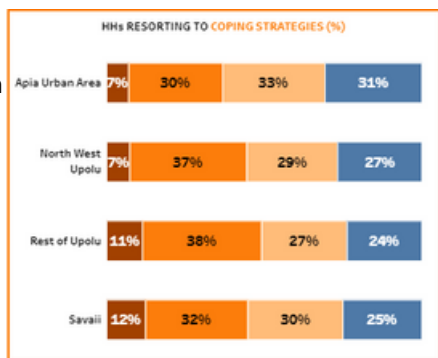


Weekly consumption of **protein** and **Vitamin A** were at sufficient levels in all four provinces in Samoa. Insufficient intake of **Iron** was reported in North West Upolu: during 7 days before the survey, **one third** of households had consumed iron-rich food for 1-6 days.

Hem Iron is a crucial macronutrient required for the prevention of anemia and is typically found in animal based proteins, dark green leafy vegetables, etc.

Nearly 70 percent of interviewed households employed some form of negative **coping strategies** - stress, crisis or emergency - to maintain livelihoods and meet their daily essential needs.

The use of **crisis** negative coping strategy was high - over 30 percent of households in all 4 regions across Samoa adopted this category to meet basic needs during shocks.



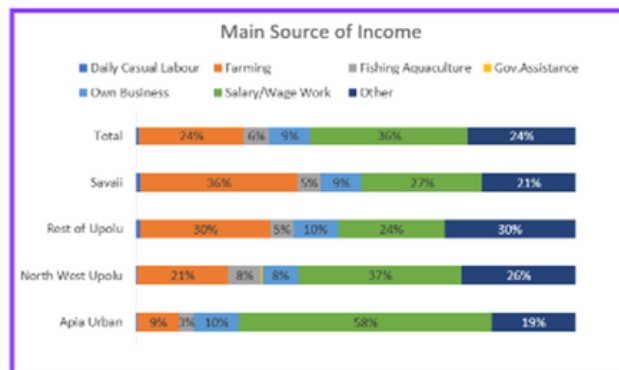
Emergency coping strategies were employed by **12 percent** and **11 percent** of households in **Savaii** and **Rest of Upolu** respectively.

### HOUSEHOLD MAIN INCOME SOURCE

**Salary/wages** was a main source of income for 36 percent of respondents. In Apia Urban area, nearly 60 percent of households reported salaries as their main income. These households depend much on markets for accessing essential food items.

**Farming** was mentioned as a main source of income by 24 percent of households, with higher proportion in Savaii (36 percent) and Rest of Upolu (30 percent).

### Main income source of interviewed households



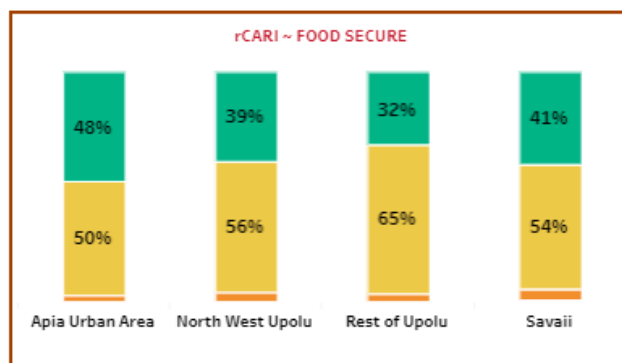
The respondents noted the great portion of their foods coming from the own sources.

### REMITTANCES

In September 2023, **71 percent** of interviewed households in Samoa reported receiving **remittances** within the last 30 days. In North West Upolu over 73 percent and in Savaii - 67 percent of households received external support. This important source of income may have contributed well in maintaining consumption patterns by many households and ensuring access to some of essential needs.

### LAYING OUT HOUSEHOLDS FOOD SECURITY PATTERNS & LCS

Laying out the results of two main food security indicators, the console (reduced Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (rCARI)) indicates that although the food consumption of majority of households was at acceptable level, a significant number of respondents who used negative coping strategies fall under the **'Marginally Food Secure'** category over 65 percent of households Rest of Upolu province and over half of households in other 3 provinces.



This suggests that respondents adopting stress and crisis coping strategies to meet their essential needs remain less **resilient** to economic shocks and typically allocate a sizable portion of their total household expenses on acquiring food.

\*For information on rCARI see the "Technical guidance for WFP's CARI" here: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000134704/download>

## Methodology:

This mVAM bulletin reflects data collected from September to October 2023 via remote data collection facilitated through telephone calls in participants preferred language, either Samoan or English. The telephone numbers were generated using random-digit dialing, yielding 1,214 households. The questionnaire contained questions on households, livelihoods, food consumption – nutritional quality, livelihood based coping strategies, multi-dimensional deprivation index, remittances, and debt. A final open ended question gives respondents the chance to share any additional concerns regarding disruptions about food security in their community. The information collected through mobile interviews may be biased towards gender and households subscribed to the phone provider.

**Other Resources:** [Samoa mVAM Dashboard](#)

**Bulletins & Dashboard**



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