VANUATU
mVAM Bulletin

The data presented here was collected from 1,306 households across Vanuatu by the World Food Programme's mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) survey. The data collected through telephone interviews conducted using random-digit dialing across six provinces during the period from October to November 2024.

MVAM SURVEY BACKGROUND

Vanuatu experienced a series of severe tropical cyclones in 2023, resulting in extensive damage, supply chain disruptions, reduced agricultural production, and significant impacts on economic activity and growth prospects throughout 2024.

These events substantially affected households' food security conditions, including consumption patterns and nutrition status, particularly in rural communities heavily reliant on subsistence agriculture. In 2024, many households in Malampa and Penama, impacted by Tropical Cyclone Lola, and in Shefa and Tafea, affected by Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin, were recovering from the impacts of the cyclones.

A devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck 30 km west of the capital city, Port Vila, on December 17, 2024, severely damaging infrastructure in and around Port Vila in Shefa Province. This new disaster is likely to exacerbate the ongoing recovery challenges from the 2023 cyclones. Timely, targeted, and adequate response and recovery efforts are critical to preventing further deterioration in food security and nutrition.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

In October 2024, **67 percent** of households in Vanuatu reported **acceptable** food consumption patterns—a significant decline from the same period in the previous year, when nearly 97 percent of households had acceptable levels. Meanwhile, **16 percent** of households reported **borderline** food consumption, and **17 percent** had **poor dietary diversity and limited consumption** of key food groups, based on a seven-day recall.

*In the past **7 days**, the average Vanuatu household in October 2024 had consumed:*

| STAPLES	VEGETABLES	FATS	SUGARS
4.6 days down from 6.9	4.1 days down from 6.4	3.3 days down from 4.5	3.4 days down from 6.2
FRUITS	**PROTEINS**	**DIARY**	**PULSES**
3.6 days down from 4.1	3.2 days down from 5.9	2.4 days down from 2.9	3.0 days down from 5.0

The **quality and diversity** of diets in Vanuatu remained relatively favorable, with the average household consuming more vegetables and fruits and smaller quantities of fats and sugars. However, significant variations were observed across the six provinces.

Many households across the country consumed insufficient quantities of micronutrient-rich foods, including those containing heme iron, proteins, and Vitamin A.

Thirty nine percent of the interviewed households at national level had not sufficient intake of Hem Iron, reflecting a 3 percent increase compared to September 2023. Additionally, 7 percent of households reported not including iron-rich foods in their diet over the past 7 days, a 4 percent increase from the same period last year.

Hem Iron is a vital micronutrient essential for preventing anemia and is found in higher quantities in animal-based proteins such as meat, poultry, and fish. Iron is particularly important for nursing women and for supporting the growth and development of children.

Percentage of interviewed households with low or no intake of nutrient rich food

Hem Iron	45%
Protein	18%
Vitamin A	14%
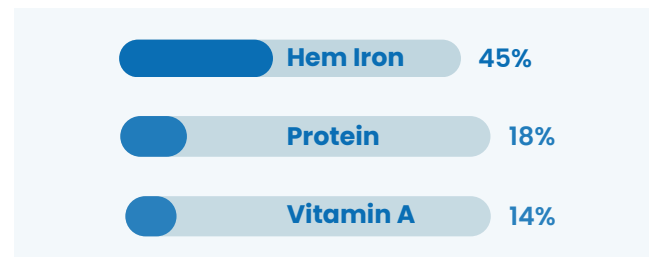
Insufficient quantity of **Vitamin A** (consumed between 1-6 days in the past 7 days) was reported by 14 percent of interviewed households in Vanuatu.

A higher proportion of households with **children under 5** had inadequate Vitamin A rich food consumption, a 4-percentage point difference compared to households with no children under 5 (16 percent and 12 percent respectively). This indicates a higher risk of deficiency in vitamin A for mothers and young children.

The proportion of respondents with **low protein intake**, defined as consuming protein-rich foods 1-6 days a week, increased by 13 percent compared to September 2023, reaching **18 percent**. Additionally, **1 percent** of households reported **not consuming** sufficient quantities of protein-rich foods, such as pulses, dairy, meat, organ meat, fish, and eggs, over the past 7 days.

LIVELIHOOD-BASED COPING STRATEGIES (LCS)

The adoption of Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS) reflects the medium- to long-term capacities of households to sustain their livelihoods when negatively impacted by shocks or disasters.

The LCS index captures the strategies households have to resort to when insufficient resources are available (food, cash) to meet essential needs, such as adequate shelter, education, and health services. It offers insight into households' ability to cope with and recover from future shocks.

16.8%
of respondents employing
Livelihood Coping Strategy
Crisis or Emergency
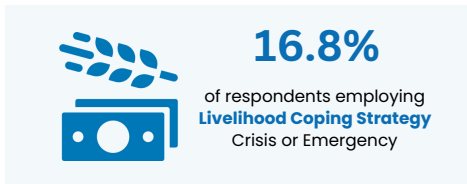
In October and November 2024, fewer negative coping strategies were adopted by Ni-Vanuatu households to maintain their consumption patterns and sustain their livelihoods. **Seventeen percent** of interviewed households reported using emergency and crisis coping strategies, representing an **8 percent decrease** compared to September 2023.

**Percentage of households resorting to coping strategies**
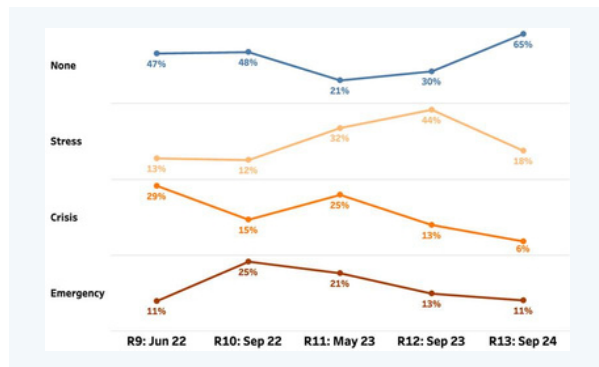
Stress strategies such as borrowing money and spending savings, were employed by 18 percent of the households interviewed, marking a significant decrease from the previous survey in September 2023, when 44 percent of respondents reported using such strategies.

Prolonged reliance on these strategies can result in increased debts and erode the capacities of already stretched households to cope with future shocks.

Crisis strategies were adopted by 6 percent of households, representing a 7 percent decrease compared to September 2023, when 13 percent of households reported using such strategies. This decline suggests a reduction in the sale of productive assets.

Emergency strategies were used by 11 percent of respondents, a 2 percent decrease compared to September 2023. This indicates a high level of vulnerability among these households, making them more susceptible to future shocks and disasters.

The top **three** negative coping strategies employed by households in Vanuatu in October 2024 were the use of personal savings, selling the last female animal and reducing health expenses.

11%	7%	4%
Spent savings	**Sold last female animal**	**Reduced health expense**
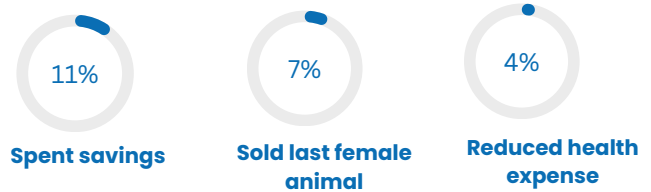
Spending savings to sustain livelihoods and meet essential needs can result in a reduction in household resources or an increase in debt. This indicates a reduced short-term ability of households to address future shocks.

However, negative coping strategies, such as selling the last remaining female animals or cutting health expenses, may have longer-term consequences. These strategies can be difficult to reverse, potentially undermining the livelihoods of affected households in the future.

The increase in food prices was highlighted by 44 percent of respondents as a major **concern.** The escalating costs of essential food items have placed significant strain on household budgets, leading to the adoption of negative coping strategies.

Households main concerns

1	INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES
2	FOOD SHORTAGE
3	SHORTAGE OF MEDICINE

Sixty one percent of households reported having acquired their food through their own production, with the highest proportion in Malampa Province at 84 percent, and the lowest in Shefa Province at 29 percent. In contrast, 69 percent of households in Shefa Province purchase their food from markets or supermarkets, followed by 35 percent of households in Sanma Province.

Twenty five percent of all respondents had received **remittances** within the last 30 days, a 3 percent decrease compared to September 2023.

The proportion of **female-headed households** receiving remittances was higher by **1 percent** compared to male-headed households. Additionally, **40 percent** of households with one or more **disabled individuals** received remittances during the past month.

SUB-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

In October 2024, the survey highlighted that across Vanuatu, **Tafea** province has the highest number of households with inadequate food consumption levels with **53 percent** reporting borderline and poor frequency and diversity of diet, followed by **Penama** at **42 percent**.

The analysis also indicated that nearly **one in three** households in **Shefa Province** had inadequate food consumption levels. These findings may have significant implications following the **earthquake**, which primarily affected **Shefa Province**.

FOOD CONSUMPTION GROUPS (%)
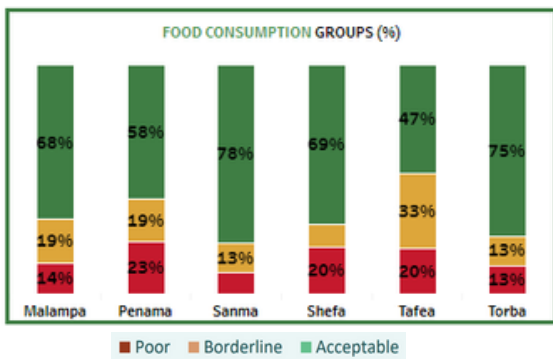
Households with acceptable food consumption levels were found to consume higher quantities of flesh meat, fish and fish products, eggs, dairy, pulses, fruits, and vegetables.

The national average of **protein** intake of households in Vanuatu decreased by **14 percent** compared to September 2023, from 95 percent to 81 percent.

Torba and **Sanma** provinces reported significantly higher protein intake compared to other provinces, with **90 percent** and **88 percent** of households, respectively, consuming protein foods daily over the past seven days. In contrast, **21 percent** of households in **Shefa, Tafea, and Penama** had insufficient protein intake (consuming protein-rich foods 1-6 days a week), while an additional **2 percent** of households in **Shefa** reported **no consumption** of protein-rich foods in the past seven days.


PROTEIN CONSUMPTION (%)
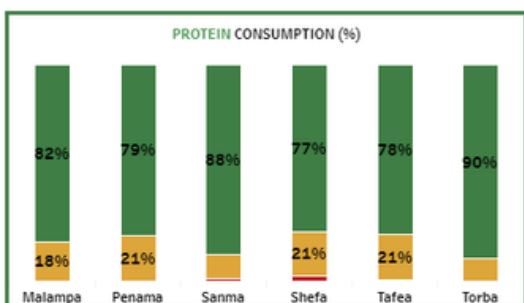
A significant gap was observed in Ni-Vanuatu households consumption of **iron-rich foods**, such as fish, shellfish, legumes, and lentils.

A majority of households in **Tafea and Malampa**, **65 percent** and **53 percent** respectively, reported consuming **iron-rich foods**, such as flesh meat, organ meat, fish, very infrequently over the past seven days. As a result, these households are unlikely to be meeting their nutrient needs for this essential micronutrient.

This includes households reporting not having consumed iron-rich food groups in the past week - **9 percent** in **Tafea** and **8 percen**t in **Malampa** respectively - the highest proportions among all provinces.

In Shefa, the proportion of households with insufficient iron intake remained high at **31 percent**, while an additional **7 percent** reported **not consuming** any iron-rich foods over the past seven days.


IRON CONSUMPTION (%)
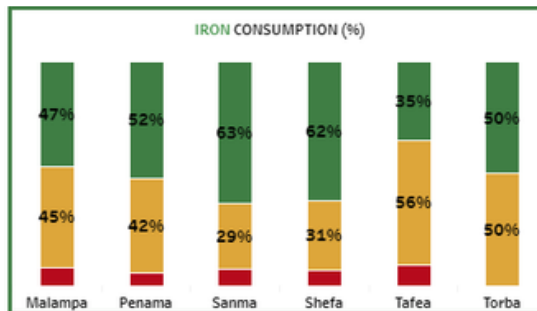
The lowest intake of **Vitamin A** (consumed 1-6 days over the past 7 days) was reported in **Shefa,** with **18 percent** of respondents, and in **Penama**, with **15 percent**. Additionally, **1 percent** of households in both provinces did not include any Vitamin A-rich foods such as dairy, organ meat, eggs, orange vegetables, green leafy vegetables, orange fruits in their diets.

VITAMIN-A CONSUMPTION (%)
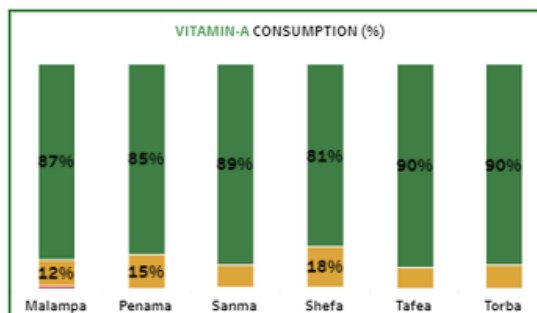
To sustain their livelihoods, essential needs and consumption patterns, households across Vanuatu reported employing diverse **coping strategies.**

The analysis of individual coping strategies reveals that households most commonly resort to borrowing money to cover food needs, spending savings, selling the last female animal, and reducing expenditures on essential health services.

Besides Shefa and Torba, the number of households resorting to emergency coping strategies decreased in other provinces compared to September 2023.

HHs RESORTING TO COPING STRATEGIES (%)
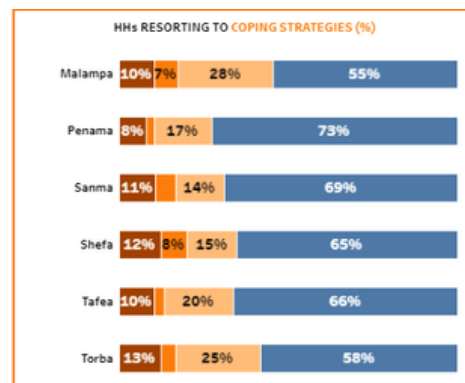
The proportion of households using **emergency** coping strategies in **Shefa doubled** in October 2024 compared to September 2023, rising from 6 percent to 12 percent.

Methodology:

This mVAM Bulletin presents data collected in October and November 2024 through remote data collection via telephone interviews. The survey conducted in participants' preferred language, primarily Bislama. The telephone numbers were generated using random-digit dialing, reaching 1,306 households. The questionnaire covered various topics, including household livelihoods, food consumption, diet's nutritional quality, livelihood-based coping strategies, the multi-dimensional deprivation index, remittances, and debt. An open-ended question at the end of the survey allowed respondents to share any additional concerns regarding food security disruptions in their community. It should be noted that the information collected through mobile interviews may be subject to bias, particularly with regard to gender and households subscribed to specific phone providers.

Other Resources: Vanuatu mVAM Dashboard

Sample Population at a glance :
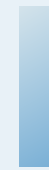
Survey Respondents: 1,306 households

Urban Households: 18 percent
Rural Households: 82 percent

Male-headed households: 80 percent
Female-headed households: 20 percent

Households reporting having a member/s with disability: 6 percent

Level of education of the head of the household:
- Primary education: 40 percent
- Secondary education: 51 percent
- Tertiary education: 5 percent
- Vocational Training: 1 percent
- None: 3 percent

Bulletins & Dashboard:

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