

mVAM Bulletin

The data presented here was collected through the World Food Programme's mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) survey. Data was collected via telephone interviews conducted across eleven administrative divisions using random-digit dialing between October and November 2024.

MVAM SURVEY CONTEXT

Overall, food security in Samoa remained **stable** within the first three quarters of 2024 with no major natural and environmental shocks and hazards. High food price trends remained the main economic challenge for households, particularly those depending on markets for acquiring food.

Agriculture, along with fisheries, tourism, and small-scale manufacturing sectors, provided livelihoods for a significant portion of the population, contributing to food security, nutrition, and supporting rural communities. With over **80 percent** of the population of Samoa living in rural and peri-urban areas, households have a relatively diverse income, including from selling of **own produce** in the markets, supplemented by substantial **remittances** from overseas.

Although food from household production contributed significantly to daily diets, imported food accounted for a significant portion of the dietary energy of Samoans.

HOUSEHOLD FOOD CONSUMPTION

In October 2024, **89 percent** of households in Samoa reported acceptable levels of food consumption, reflecting a 7 percent decline compared to September 2023, when 96 percent of surveyed households reported adequate food intake. **Eleven percent** of households experienced inadequate food consumption, with 10 percent classified as **borderline** and 1 percent as **poor**, based on respondents' seven-day recall.



89% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN SAMOA HAVE ACCEPTABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION

The prevalence of inadequate food intake was higher among **rural** households in Samoa, with 12 percent reporting borderline or poor food consumption, compared to 4 percent of **urban** households reporting borderline food intake.

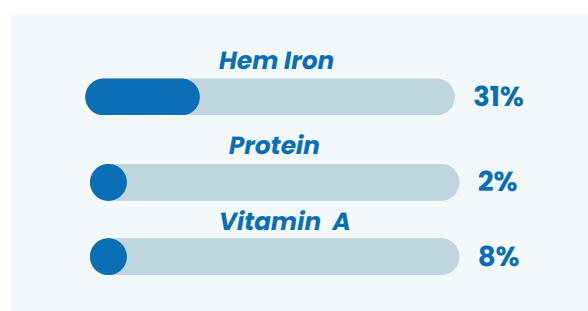
Despite nearly 90 percent of Samoans reporting acceptable food intake, **dietary diversity** remained inadequate, as many households continued to consume a selection of foods that provided insufficient essential nutrients necessary for a healthy, balanced diet.

In October 2024, **69 percent** of households in Samoa reported **daily** consumption of **iron-rich** foods—4 percent lower than in September 2023 (73 percent). **Insufficient** intake of hem iron was observed among **22 percent** of respondents, who consumed iron-rich foods only 1 to 6 days in a week. Additionally, **9 percent** of households **had not consumed** any iron-rich foods in the past seven days. The highest proportion of households with zero-day consumption was recorded in Northwest Upolu, at 13 percent.

Hem iron is typically found in animal based proteins such as meat, poultry, fish and is a crucial macronutrient essential for maintaining a healthy immune system and for prevention of anemia.

Ninety eight percent of households had acceptable levels of **Protein** intake in October 2024, indicating that the majority of households were able to meet their nutritional needs for this essential macronutrient, found in sources such as fish, meat, eggs, legumes, and dairy products.

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

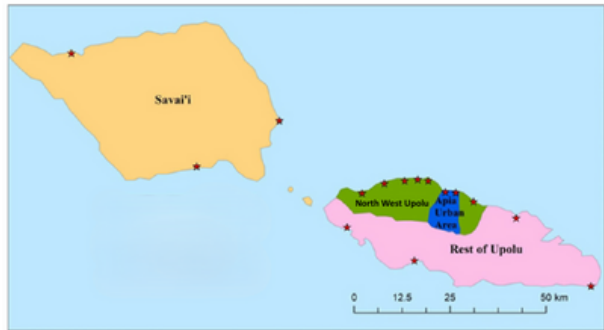


Ninety-two percent of respondents had adequate **Vitamin A** intake, derived from both animal-based sources (such as liver, fish, dairy, and eggs) and plant-based sources (like dark leafy greens and sweet potatoes). Nonetheless, the remaining **8 percent** of households with insufficient or no Vitamin A consumption over the past week may continue to face challenges in achieving a balanced and nutrient-rich diet.

SUB-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

CONSUMPTION, DIET: In October 2024, food consumption remained at an acceptable levels for most households across **four regions** in Samoa.

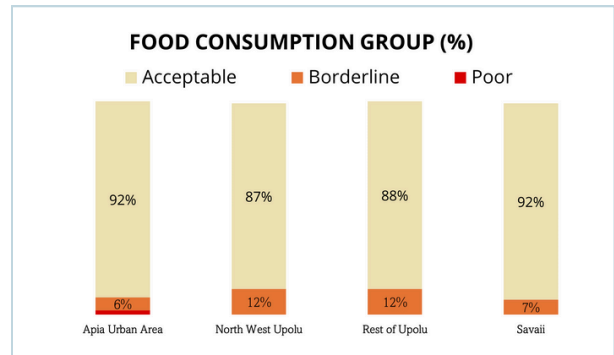
Map of Samoa



Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics (revised version)

North West Upolu and the **Rest of Upolu** had the highest number of households with inadequate food consumption levels, with **12 percent** reporting borderline or poor food consumption.

These households have limited dietary diversity, relying primarily on staple foods with little to no protein, dairy, or vegetables. Long-term persistence of the conditions may increase the risk of malnutrition.

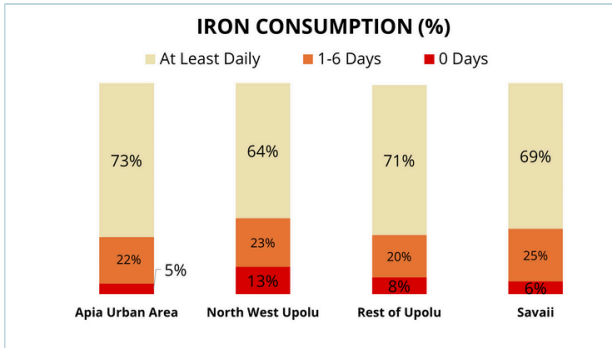


Nine out of ten households in Samoa consumed **protein** and **Vitamin A** rich foods in an adequate quantities. **North West Upolu** remained the division with the highest proportion of households – over **10 percent** – consuming insufficient Vitamin A rich foods (between 1-6 days in a week).

Vitamin A is a crucial macronutrient that supports healthy vision, strengthens immune function and helps prevent anemia.

Consistent access to a variety of protein- and Vitamin A-rich foods, including plant-based options, plays a crucial role in promoting dietary diversity and ensuring households maintain an adequate diet.

More than **20 percent** of interviewed households across all four divisions in Samoa reported consuming **insufficient iron-rich** foods— between 1 to 6 days during the week prior to the survey.



Additionally, **13 percent** of respondents in **North West Upolu** and **8 percent** in the **Rest of Upolu** division reported **not consuming** any iron-rich foods in the past seven days respectively.

Hem iron is an essential nutrient that helps prevent anemia and is primarily found in animal-based proteins and in dark green leafy vegetables and other plant sources.

LIVELIHOOD-BASED COPING STRATEGIES (LCS): Over half of the interviewed households across Samoa resorted to **coping strategies** to meet essential needs—such as shelter, education, healthcare, and other basic necessities—when faced with shocks and have insufficient resources, including food and cash, to sustain the livelihoods.

Rest of Upolu and **Savaii** had the highest proportion of households—**40 percent**—resorting to **crisis** and **emergency** coping strategies, such as cutting expenses on health and education, selling productive assets, land and dependence of a household member on the kindness of strangers for support*. This reflects a high level of vulnerability, making these households increasingly susceptible to future shocks and disasters.

* In their responses, the interviewees may have also been referring to support received through the community customary practices, which does not necessarily reflect the intended meaning of the indicator's question.

SUB-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

Another **23 percent** of respondents in **Apia Urban Area** and **Savaii** noted using their **personal savings** and/or **borrowing money** or **food** to cope with the situation when shock hit. The households resorting to **stress coping** strategies in Rest of Upolu and North West Upolu were 16 percent and 19 percent respectively.

The respondents expressed **ongoing challenges** as they continue to rely on using their personal savings and resorting to borrowing money or food.

Nonetheless, **long-term** adoption of **stress** coping strategies to meet essential needs indicates that households remain less resilient to economic shocks, often dedicating a significant portion of their total expenses to acquiring food.

Forty one percent of interviewed households reported they **hadn't used** any coping strategies when disasters or shocks occurred with highest of these households in North West Upolu – 44 percent.

Households identified rising **food prices** as a key factor driving the use of negative coping strategies. In October, **37 percent** of households cited high food prices as a **primary concern**, up from 28 percent in September 2023.

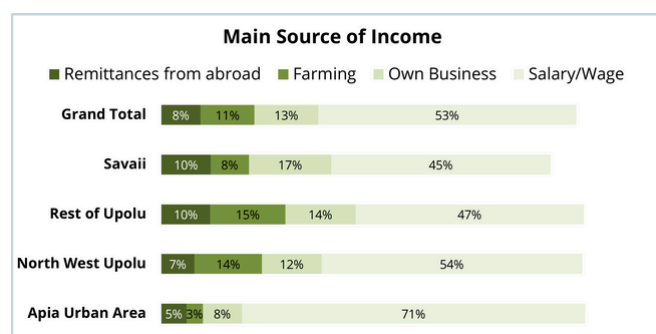
Interviewed Households Top Three Concerns



Falling sick was other top concern, highlighted by **20 percent** of respondents, with highest in Savaii– 23 percent. Potential illness directly impacts households well-being and financial stability. When combined with rising food prices, concerns over sickness become even more pressing, especially for vulnerable households.

The other noteworthy concerns highlighted was the **disruption of livelihoods**, cited by 12 percent of the interviewed households.

HOUSEHOLD MAIN INCOME SOURCE: Salaries and wages were the primary source of income for **53 percent** of respondents. In the Apia Urban area, nearly 71 percent of households relied on salaries as their main income, making them highly dependent on markets for essential food items.



Thirteen percent of households cited **self-employment** or own business as their main income source, with a higher proportion in **North West Upolu** (15 percent) and the **Rest of Upolu** (14 percent).

Sixty-seven percent of respondents across four divisions reported receiving remittances in the past 30 days, reflecting a 4 percent decline from September 2023. On average, **11 percent** of respondents identified remittances as their **primary source of household income**, with the highest proportion in the Rest of Upolu at 15 percent.

Female-headed households received slightly more remittances (70 percent) than those led by men (66 percent).

Savaii had the highest proportion of households receiving remittances – at **75 percent**, while the Apia Urban Area had the lowest proportion of households receiving remittances – at 61 percent.

As a vital source of income, remittances help households sustain consumption patterns and maintain access to essential needs.

Methodology:

This mVAM Bulletin presents data collected remotely in October and November 2024 through telephone interviews. Telephone numbers were generated using random digit dialing, resulting in a sample of 1,215 households across four divisions of Samoa. The survey conducted in participants' preferred language, either Samoan or English.

The questionnaire covered key topics, including household livelihoods, food consumption, nutritional quality, livelihood-based coping strategies, remittances, and debt.

Additionally, a final open-ended question allowed respondents to share any concerns about food security disruptions in their communities. The data collected through mobile interviews may be subject to bias—particularly with regard to gender representation and only the households subscribed to the phone provider.

Sample Population at a glance :



Survey Respondents: 1,215 households



Urban Households: 86 percent
Rural Households: 14 percent



Male-headed households: 78 percent
Female-headed households: 22 percent



Households reporting having a member/s with disability: 33 percent

Level of education of the head of the household:

- Primary education: 8 percent
- Secondary education: 59 percent
- Tertiary education: 13 percent
- Vocational Training: 0 percent
- None: 19 percent

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

<https://resources.vam.wfp.org>

Bulletins & Dashboard:



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