



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Agricultural Inputs and Commodity Price Bulletin

in the Syrian Arab Republic

August 2023– Issue #20



Background

Agriculture, including crop and animal husbandry, forestry, fisheries and agro-processing, post-harvest handling and marketing, provides a source of livelihoods for most smallholder farmers in the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Syria works on strengthening value chains and food production systems by building technical and productive capacity of stakeholders, mainly farmers, expanding their knowledge and understanding of the local context and situation by sharing reports that aim to make agricultural production more sustainable, gender sensitive, market-driven and climate smart. The Organization in Syria releases the “*Monthly Agriculture Input and Commodity Price Bulletin - AICPB*”, which provides timely insights from 35 districts across Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Tartous, Deir-ez-Zor, Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh and Dar’a governorates. The purpose of the bulletin is to inform relevant stakeholders, including the Food Security and Agriculture (FSA) partners supporting agricultural and food security interventions in the country, about the prevailing price trends of agricultural inputs and commodities. The bulletin is a periodic resource as markets and market information, play an important role in enhancing food security, income generation, resilience and rural-urban market linkages. Regular dissemination of market information benefits smallholder farmers in their market-oriented production endeavor.

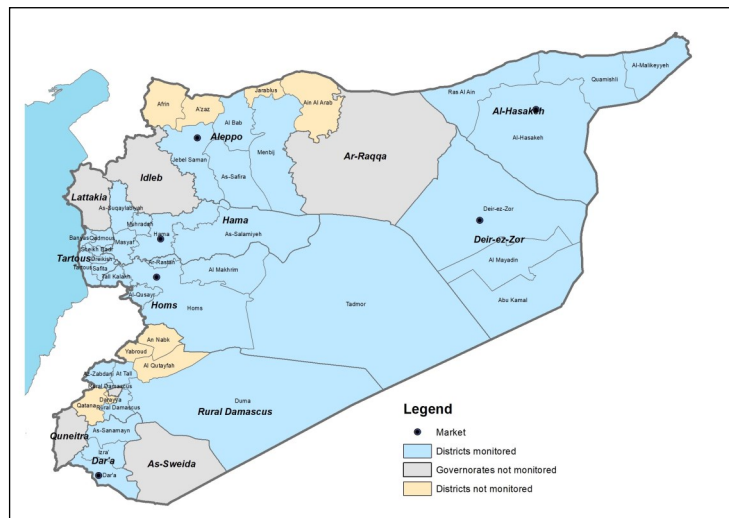


Figure 1: Markets monitored by FAO country office on a monthly basis.

Map source: UN – OCHA Feb 2021.

Key Highlights

- ◆ In August 2023, a notable increase in the prices of most oil derivatives was officially applied and this may affect most sectors, including agriculture. The price of petrol increased for the third this year, reaching 8 000 SYP per litre for subsidized octane 90, while the price for the non-subsidized octane 95 reached 13 500 SYP per litre. The price of subsidized diesel for bakeries was set at 700 SYP per litre; 2 000 SYP for household heating purposes; 8 000 for industrial and agricultural use was and the official non-subsidized price for diesel was set at 11 550 SYP per litre.
- ◆ The Council of Ministers announced a group of new resolutions in August 2023 related to the agricultural sector. The resolution will see all export of local olive oil being stopped as of 1 September 2023. Furthermore, another decision was also announced, that of allowing the import of second-hand agricultural machinery provided the machinery has not exceed 5 years of use and was manufactured by well-known companies. Meanwhile MAAR announced that the expected production of olive oil for the new season is 49 000 tons.
- ◆ In August 2023, the informal exchange rate experienced notable fluctuation, ranging between 11 950 SYP / USD and 15 500 SYP / USD. On average, the domestic currency exchange rate recorded 18 per cent of depreciation m-o-m (month on month).
- ◆ In August 2023, the Agriculture Cooperative Bank (ACB) received the Council of Ministers’ approval to offer renewable energy loans, enabling farmers to reach out to the ACB and apply for loans, which will cover installing solar power systems (SPSs) for pumping irrigation water from wells. This arrangement was reached through coordination of the ACB, the Ministry of Water Recourses (MWR) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR). A new requirement and list of guidelines was endorsed by the ACB to determine the amount of seed and fertilizer a farmer will be eligible to apply for under the ACB loan.

Exchange Rate

In August 2023, the informal exchange rate experienced notable fluctuation, ranging between 11 950 SYP / USD and 15 500 SYP / USD. On average, the exchange rate for the domestic currency recorded 18 percent of depreciation m-o-m (month on month). This instability in the exchange rate impacted pricing for most agricultural inputs, agricultural services, and agricultural commodities. It is worth mentioning that most farmers are not very skilled in farm business management, hence the currency fluctuation has had direct negative effects on some agriculture-based livelihoods. Furthermore, currency volatility and fluctuation continue to expose farmers to exchange rate risks. The fluctuation is also affecting the price of imported agricultural inputs and the overall competitiveness of the agricultural sector, including smallholder agriculture.

Note: The FAO market bulletin monitors prices of agriculture inputs and products in the official domestic currency – Syrian Pound (SYP) - and does not specifically analyze price changes in any other foreign currencies. The price trends, whether increase or decrease, are therefore in reference to the domestic currency.

Trends of unofficial exchange rate for the last two months (SYP/USD)									
	Homs	Hama	Aleppo	Tartous	Deir-ez-Zor	Rural Damascus	Hasakeh	Dará	Average price
July	11 600	11 590	12 600	11 600	11 500	11 800	11 500	12 250	11 805
August	14 000	13 990	14 000	14 000	14 033	13 100	14 000	13 900	13 878

Source: Monthly survey conducted by FAO field staff

Note: The exchange rate was 50 SYP/USD before the crisis in 2012.

Agricultural Inputs

In August 2023, the availability of most winter crops and vegetable seeds was similar to July 2023 across the monitored governorates, though moderate to significant price increases were noted. The price of winter crop seeds recorded increases ranging between 10 to 19 percent m-o-m and winter vegetables seeds recorded increases ranging between 7 to 29 percent m-o-m. This could be attributed to the currency exchange rate fluctuation and prevailing economic challenges, coupled with the exchange rate risk mitigation measures taken by agro-dealers and traders.

For summer crop seeds, the price of cotton seeds remained constant since it is only supplied through official entities. The price of maize seeds recorded a moderate increase of 13 percent m-o-m. The price of bean seeds recorded a slight increase of 6 percent m-o-m, while the only recorded price decrease was for soybean seeds at 7 percent m-o-m. Summer vegetable seeds were available across all monitored locations. In general, the prices for monitored vegetable seeds witnessed a slight increase for hybrid varieties, increasing 3 percent m-o-m for tomato and eggplant seeds and 7 percent for cucumber seeds. Local variety seed prices recorded different price shifts m-o-m, with local varieties of tomato recording a slight decrease of 2 percent m-o-m, eggplant recording 18 percent increase m-o-m, while cucumber seed prices remained constant. These marginal changes could be attributed to the fact that the summer season is already quite advanced and harvesting already underway in some locations, hence demand is low for summer vegetable seeds.



Eggplant Local seeds SYP/Kg

1M: 18 LM: 91 550
6M: 49 1Y: 73



Maize seeds SYP/kg

1M: 13 LM: 4 854
6M: 35 1Y: 47



Cabbage seeds SYP/Kg

1M: 28 LM: 218 913
6M: 49 1Y: 70

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

1M: % Current Month Vs. Previous Month in LM

6M: % Current Month Vs. 6 Months Before in LM

1Y: % Current Month Vs. Same Month Previous year in LM

Agro-chemicals

In July 2023, basal and top-dressing fertilizers remained generally available across all monitored markets and slight price increases were recorded for the following agro-chemicals: liquid ammonium (8 percent m-o-m); super phosphate (9 percent m-o-m); and NPK (10 percent m-o-m), while Urea recorded a significant price increase of 42 percent m-o-m. These price increases for agro-chemicals correlate with the significantly high depreciation in the informal exchange rate during the reporting period.

As a result, all monitored insecticides, fungicides and herbicides recorded slight and moderate price increases. For insecticides, price increases ranged between 2 to 11 percent m-o-m, fungicide price increases ranged between 10 to 11 percent m-o-m, and herbicide price increases ranged between 6 to 18 percent m-o-m. During this reporting period, the above-mentioned plant protection products (pesticides) were generally available across all monitored locations.

Farmers remain in need of technical trainings that provide them with more effective, good agricultural practices and techniques, such as integrated pest management (IPM) and integrated soil fertility management (ISFM), which will help them enhance or boost food production despite the high cost of agro-chemicals.

Items		Unit	Rural Damascus	Homs	Hama	Aleppo	Deir-ez-Zur	Tartous	Hasakeh	Dará	Average price	
Fertilizer	Top dressing	Urea (Agriculture Bank)	bag(50 kg)	150 000			150 000	150 000		150 000	150 000	
		Urea (Granular) Local Market	bag(50 kg)	415 000	750 000	750 000	700 000	490 000	750 000	350 000	320 000	565 625
		Nitrate (Liquid) (Local Market)	lt	30 000	27 000	27 000	42 000	22 000	27 000	28 000	53 000	32 000
	Basal	Phosphate fertilizers (Agriculture Bank)	bag(50 kg)	102 500	102 500	102 500	102 500	102 500	102 500		102 500	102 500
		Phosphate fertilizers (Local Market)	bag(50 kg)	150 000	291 000	291 900	300 000	170 000	291 700	178 750	130 000	225 419
		NPK (Local Market)	kg	30 000	36 000	36 900	30 800	36 667	36 700	34 000	50 000	36 383
Pesticides	Insecticide	(Dusts, Granules, Wettable powders)										
		Mythomel	kg	235 000	315 000	315 000	840 000	233 333	315 000	190 000	390 000	354 167
		Acetamiprid	kg	170 300	216 000	216 900	265 000	125 000	216 700	195 000	295 000	212 488
		(Liquids)										
		Dimethoate	lt	140 600	176 000	176 900	162 000	105 000	176 700	170 000	215 000	165 275
		Delta Methrin	lt	165 400	176 000	176 900	174 500	108 333	176 700	163 750	235 000	172 073
	Fungicide	(Dusts, Granules or Wettable powders)										
		Thiophanate-methyl	kg	185 200	291 000	291 900	212 300	118 333	291 700	177 500	290 000	232 242
		Trifloxystrobin	kg	146 000	301 000	301 900	1 792 000	270 000	301 700	350 000		494 657
		(Liquids)										
		Propamocarb Hydrochloride	lt	143 000	201 000	201 900	155 000	98 333	201 700	178 333	220 000	174 908
		Herbicide	(Dusts, Granules or Wettable powders)									
	sulfonyl urea		kg	265 000	286 000	286 900	154 000	483 333	286 700	600 000	235 000	324 617
	Glyphosate Equivalent		kg	135 200	189 000	189 900	137 500	100 000	189 700	160 000		157 329
	(Liquids)											
glyphosate	lt		125 800	131 000	131 900	88 000	106 667	131 700	126 250	122 000	120 415	
Haloxypop-R-methyl	lt		156 000	161 000	161 900	170 500	158 333	161 700	240 000	232 000	180 179	
Trifluralin	lt	116 000	176 000	176 900	126 500	88 333	176 700	110 000	173 000	142 929		

Livestock feed

In August 2023, moderate increases were recorded for the following types of fodder: barley 21 percent m-o-m, soybean 29 percent m-o-m, maize 17 percent m-o-m, crop residue 23 percent m-o-m and cottonseed meal 12 percent m-o-m. Wheat straw (dry roughage) recorded a significant increase of 36 percent m-o-m and this is likely due to limited supply in the market. Concentrate feeds for poultry and cattle recorded slight increases ranging between 4 to 11 percent m-o-m.



Barley grain

1M: 21 LM:3 492
6M: 24 1Y: 31

SYP/kg



Maize

1M: 17 LM:4 241
6M: 41 1Y: 54

SYP/kg



Cottonseed meal

1M: 12 LM:5 933
6M: 32 1Y: 56

SYP/kg



Wheat bran

1M: 6 LM:1 648
6M: 15 1Y: 17

SYP/kg



wheat straw

1M: 36 LM:721
6M: 24 1Y: 12

SYP/kg



Crop residues

1M: 23 LM:946
6M: -4 1Y: -7

SYP/kg



Soybean meal

1M: 29 LM:7 623
6M: 45 1Y: 64

SYP/kg



Poultry feed for Meat production

1M: 7 LM:8 380
6M: 52 1Y: 68

SYP/kg



Poultry feed for Egg production

1M: 11 LM:8 311
6M: 50 1Y: 85

SYP/kg



Cattle feed

1M: 4 LM:4 942
6M: 34 1Y: 57

SYP/kg

1M: % Current Month Vs. Same Month Previous year in LM

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

Y1: % Current Month Vs. Previous year in LM

6M: % Current Month Vs. 6 Months Before in LM

Live Animals



Sheep SYP/kg

1M: 16 LM: 51 054
3M: 29 1Y: 101



Sheep female SYP/Head

1M: 14 LM: 1 518 250
3M: 22 1Y: 102



Calf SYP/Kg

1M: 21 LM: 47 200
3M: 33 1Y: 102



Dairy Cow SYP/Head

1M: 26 LM: 16 089 008
3M: 45 1Y: 120

1M: % Current Month Vs. Previous Month in LM

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

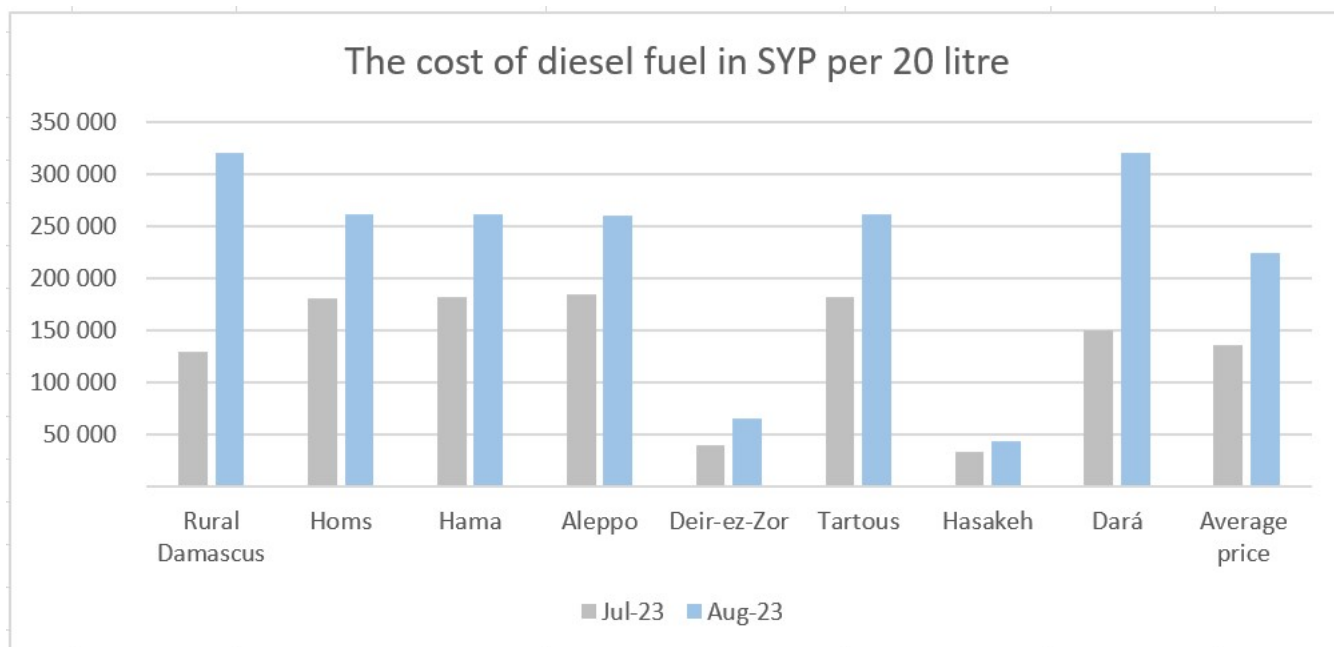
Y1: % Current Month Vs. Same Month in Previous Year

3M: % Current Month Vs. 3 Months Before in LM

Diesel Fuel (20 liters)

In August 2023, a notable increase in the prices of most oil derivatives was officially applied and this may impact most sectors, including agriculture. The price of petrol increased for the third this year, reaching 8 000 SYP per litre for subsidized octane 90, while the price for the non-subsidized octane 95 reached 13 500 SYP per litre. The price for diesel fuel was set based on its use and purpose. The price of subsidized diesel for bakeries was set at 700 SYP per litre; 2 000 SYP for household heating purposes; 8 000 for industrial and agricultural use was and the official non-subsidized price for diesel was set at 11 550 SYP per litre.

As a result of these new official prices, the affordability of diesel in the informal market will become challenging for most vulnerable and resource-constrained farmers since the average recorded price for diesel in the informal market in August 2023 was 224 200 SYP per twenty litre (66 percent increase m-o-m). The spike in the price of diesel in the informal market may unfortunately increase the cost of different machinery services, including transportation and other agricultural field operations such as land preparation and planting.



Food Items

In August 2023, food items monitored within sentinel market sites recorded slight, moderate, or very significant increases. The food price increases monitored and noted by FAO are mostly for agri-food items, including livestock products. The price increases noted for the various food items could be attributed to several factors: depreciation of the domestic currency which has a bearing on the cost of imported food items, as well as the pricing of locally produced food; diesel price increases and its impact on supply chains, mainly transportation cost and machinery cost; and fodder prices for livestock production.

For a more detailed analysis of food commodities and market price trends, please refer to the WFP Market Price Bulletins for Syria, which can be found on the official Syria Food Security Cluster (FSC) website:

<https://fscluster.org/syria/document/wfp-syria-price-bulletin-August-2023>

Items	M-O-M
Bread	↑ 26%
Flour	↑ 9%
Sugar	↑ 10%
Rice	↑ 24%
Olive oil	↑ 21%
Sunflower oil	↑ 20%
Cow Meat (Calf)	↑ 22%
Chicken Meat	↑ 31%
Sheep Meat	↑ 21%
Fish Meat /Sea	↑ 47%
Fish Meat /Rivers	↑ 11%
Eggs crate	↑ 24%
Sheep Milk	↑ 21%
Cow Milk	↑ 21%
Tomatoes	↑ 58%
Eggplant	↑ 7%
Potatoes	↑ 25%

1M: % Current Month Vs. Previous Month in LM

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

Y1: % Current Month Vs. year before in LM

6M: % Current Month Vs. 6 Months Before in LM

Bread



SYP/kg

1M: 26 LM: 357
6M: 32 1Y: 36

Rice



SYP/kg

1M: 24 LM: 16 511
6M: 75 1Y: 119

Chicken Meat



SYP/kg

1M: 31 LM: 36 845
6M: 47 1Y: 87

Sunflower oil



SYP/Litre

1M: 20 LM: 24 444
6M: 38 1Y: 49

Flour



SYP/kg

1M: 9 LM: 5 852
6M: 14 1Y: 45

Egg



SYP/(1800—2000)g

1M: 24 LM: 41 699
6M: 64 1Y: 94

Cow Meat



SYP/kg

1M: 22 LM: 97 133
6M: 58 1Y: 114

Tomato



SYP/kg

1M: 58 LM: 3 789
6M: 39 1Y: 61

Sugar



SYP/kg

1M: 10 LM: 14 147
6M: 58 1Y: 95

Cow milk



SYP/litre

1M: 21 LM: 5 049
6M: 32 1Y: 52

Sheep Meat



SYP/kg

1M: 21 LM: 110 383
6M: 58 1Y: 113

olive oil



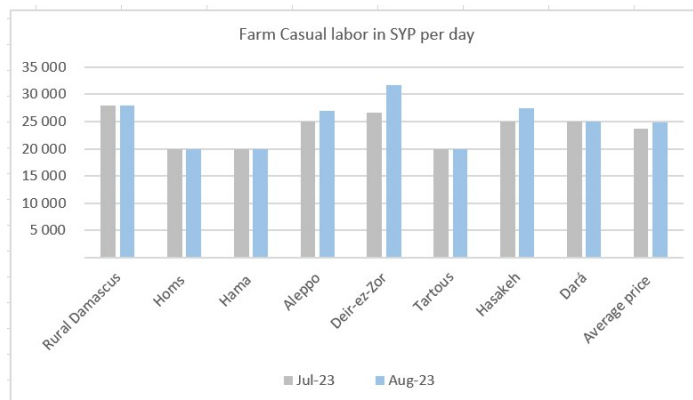
SYP/Litre

1M: 21 LM: 59 621
6M: 90 1Y: 142

Other Factors

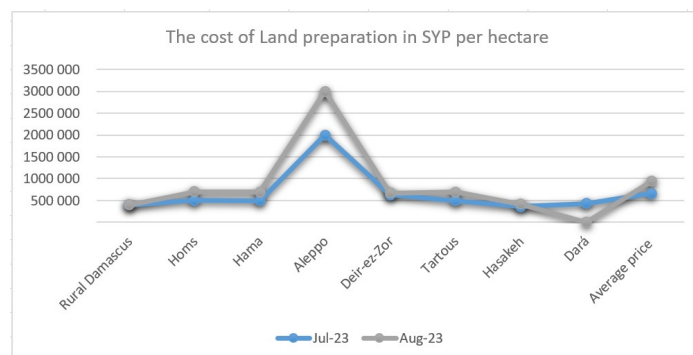
Farm Casual Labour and Wage

The average daily wage rate recorded in August 2023 for casual farm labour increased 5 percent m-o-m to 24 896 SYP per day. Due to the continued weakening of the local currency, coupled with the economic challenges, FAO continued to observe a general increase in the daily wage rates for casual farm labour. This moderate increase in farm casual labour can be attributed to currency depreciation and prevailing inflation noted during the reporting period. It is worth mentioning that the increase in the daily wage rate is not adequate to meet the daily cost of living for an average family.



Mechanized Farm Operations

In August 2023, the cost of hiring agricultural machinery services for land preparation increased significantly by 66 percent m-o-m, reaching an average of 938 52 SYP per hectare. This is directly attributed to the increase in the price of diesel fuel. The high cost of diesel and hiring agricultural machinery will be more noticeable as the peak period for preparing for the winter cropping season approaches. FAO will continue to closely monitor the availability of and access to diesel, and its implications on cropping in the 2023/24 winter season.



DISCLAIMER

The information in this bulletin comes from monthly market monitoring surveys conducted informally by FAO field staff. While FAO Syria strives to provide accurate and timely market information, there may be slight unintended technical or factual inaccuracies. Decisions based on information contained herein are the sole responsibility of the reader. All changes in market prices for the monitored agriculture inputs and commodities are in local Syrian currency (SYP). For further insights and analysis on food commodities, WFP also issues regular Market Price Bulletins for Syria and these can be found on the official Syria Food Security Cluster (FSC) website.

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