



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Agricultural Inputs and Commodity Price Bulletin

in the Syrian Arab Republic

March 2023– Issue #15



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.

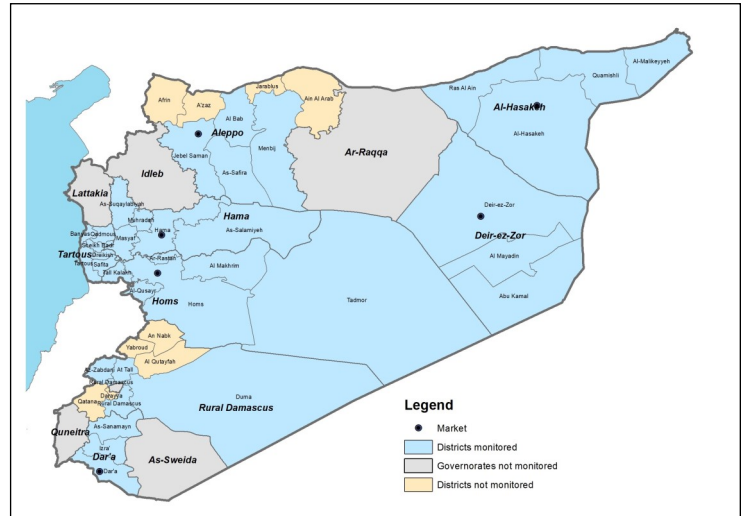


Figure 1: Markets monitored by FAO country office on a monthly basis.

Map source: UN – OCHA Feb 2021.

Key Highlights

- ◆ In March 2023, there was a very slight or marginal depreciation of the informal exchange rate for the domestic currency (2 percent m-o-m). This resulted in the general stability of prices for most agricultural inputs, especially seeds and agrochemicals.
- ◆ Local authorities in monitored governorates made a decision to increase the allocation of diesel for agricultural use out of the total available amounts, in an effort to support supplementary irrigation and boost wheat production output. Each farmer can apply to buy 50 litres of subsidized diesel and 25 litres at the official price for each planted hectare.
- ◆ The Agricultural Cooperative Bank (ACB) delivered the second phase of subsidized fertilizers, mainly urea and ammonium nitrate for wheat farmers, based on planting licenses issued by the local agricultural departments at field level.

Exchange Rate

In Though a slight or marginal depreciation of the informal exchange rate for the domestic currency (2 percent m-o-m) was recorded in March 2023, general stability in the informal exchange rate in some locations and prices for most agricultural inputs across monitored locations was observed. The stability could be linked to the floating exchange rate announced by the Central Bank of Syria (CBS) in February 2023.

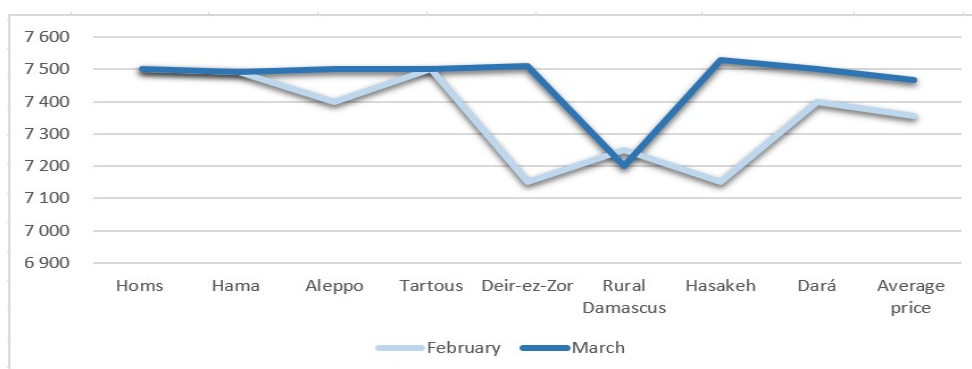
The informal exchange rate in Homs, Hama and Tartous was constant while a slight increase were recorded in Aleppo, Dara', Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor. Rural Damascus was the only monitored governorate where a slight improvement or gain of 50 SYP was recorded for the domestic currency versus the United States Dollar (USD).

Note: FAO market bulletin continues to monitor prices in the official domestic currency – Syrian Pound (SYP) - and does not specifically analyse price changes in other foreign currencies. The price trends, whether increase or decrease, are therefore in reference to the domestic currency and not in any foreign 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
February	7 500	7 490	7 400	7 500	7 150	7 250	7 150	7 400	7 355
March	7 500	7 490	7 500	7 500	7 510	7 200	7 530	7 500	7 466

Source: Monthly survey conducted by FAO field staff

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



Agricultural Inputs

In March 2023 and as the winter season comes to an end, the availability of most winter crops and vegetable seeds were similar to the previous month across monitored governorates. Prices for most monitored winter seeds only increased slightly, with increases ranging from 1 to 9 percent m-o-m. Prices for some vegetable seeds remained constant, particularly peas, spinach, lettuce and carrot.

For the summer crops and vegetables seeds, the prices were generally stable for hybrid seeds and slight increases not exceeding 8 percent m-o-m, were observed for non-hybrid seeds. A moderate price increase of 26 percent m-o-m was only recorded for bean seeds, reaching an average price of 24 201 SYP per Kg. The increase could be attributed to the increased demand in Dara' and the specific marketed variety in the mentioned location. The price of bean seed in Dara' was the highest price recorded across all monitored governorates.



Maize seeds SYP/kg

1M: **3** LM: **3 422**
6M: **11** 1Y: **19**



Beans seeds SYP/kg

1M: **26** LM: **24 201**
6M: **42** 1Y: **44**



Cucumber local seeds

SYP/kg

1M: **8** LM: **78 656**
6M: **14** 1Y: **24**

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

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

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

Agro-chemicals

In March 2023, basal and top dressing fertilizers remained generally available across all monitored markets and very slight price increases were recorded for the following agro-chemicals; urea (3 percent m-o-m), super phosphate (1 percent m-o-m) and NPK (5 percent m-o-m), while the price of liquid ammonium slightly decreased by 2 percent m-o-m. The marginal price increases for agro-chemicals could be linked to the general stability in the informal exchange rate and ripple effects of the roll-out of the second phase of subsidized fertilizers, specifically urea and ammonium nitrate from the agricultural cooperative bank (ACB).

In general, most insecticides, fungicides and herbicides were available across all monitored locations and the price changes ranged between -1 to 1 percent m-o-m, except for Acetamiprid insecticide which recorded a 17 percent moderate decrease m-o-m. Sulfonyl urea herbicide increased slightly (4 percent m-o-m).

FAO continues to scale up trainings on more effective, safe and efficient agricultural techniques and practices, which aim to enhance or boost food production and food safety, including the safe use of agrochemicals. Such trainings include integrated pest management (IPM), integrated weed management (IWM) and integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) practices such as compost making and application. Due to the generally high cost of fertilizers, FAO continues to encourage sector partners and farmers to adopt the 4 R's of nutrient stewardship, namely right fertilizer source, right application rate, right time and right place (see: https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/impact_and_possible_response_to_high_fertilizers_prices_rebrev_17-5-2022.pdf).

Furthermore, FAO continues to encourage sector partners to continue supporting vulnerable and resource-constrained farmers with interventions that improve access to high quality and critical agriculture inputs to support local food production.

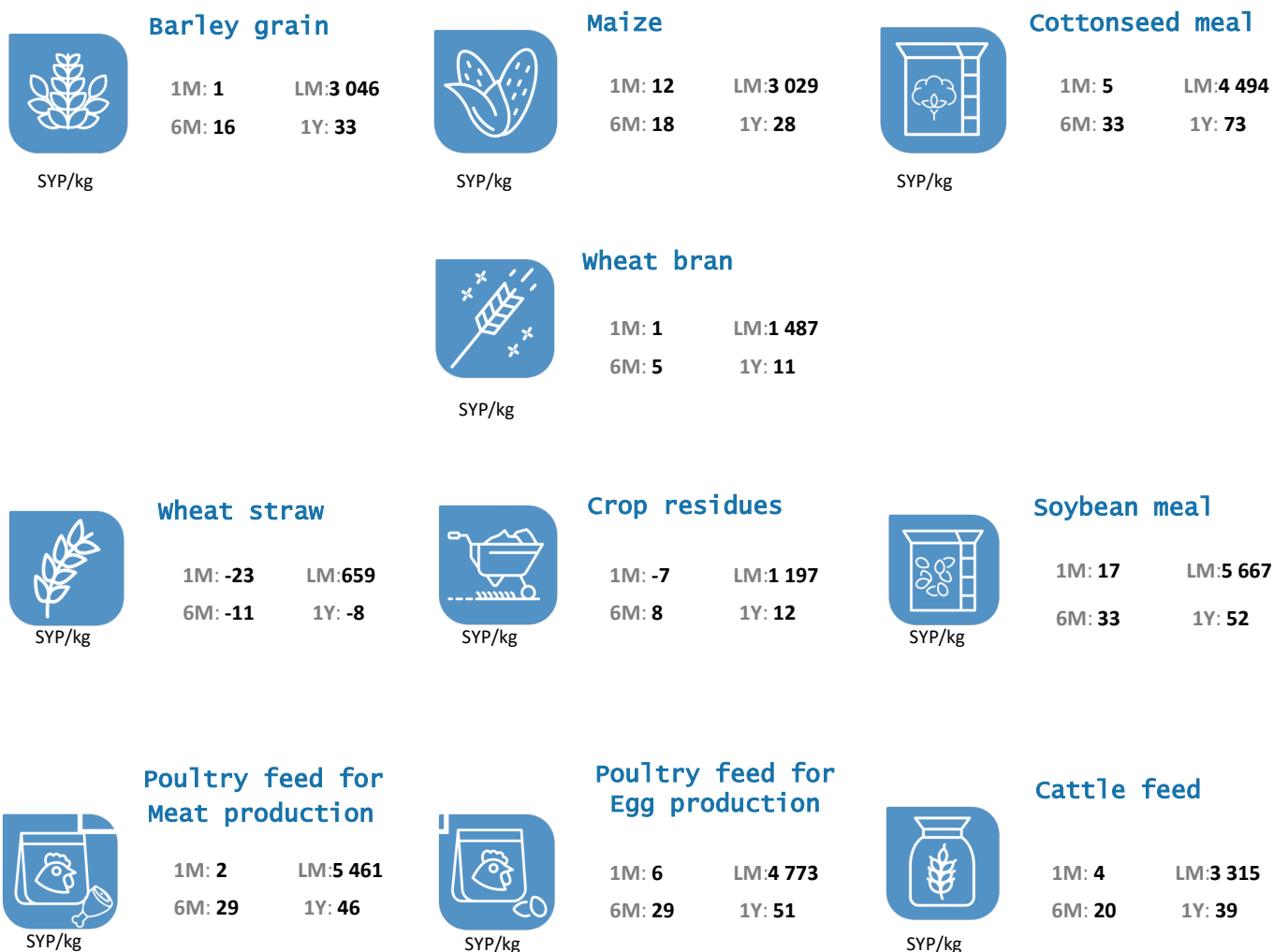
Items		Unit	Rural Damascus	Homs	Hama	Aleppo	Deir-ez-Zur	Tartous	Hasakeh	Dará	Average price	
Fertilizer	Top dressing	Urea (Agriculture Bank)	bag(50 kg)	150 000			150 000	150 000		150 000	150 000	
		Urea (Granular) Local Market	bag(50 kg)	375 000	340 000	340 000	285 000	286 000	340 000	265 000	275 000	313 250
		Nitrate (Liquid) (Local Market)	lt	27 000	14 500	14 500	22 500	14 333	14 500	17 000	30 000	19 292
	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)	140 000	206 000	206 900	110 000	140 667	206 700	180 000	135 000	165 658
		NPK (Local Market)	kg	23 000	25 500	26 400	16 500	21 667	26 200	18 500	27 000	23 096
Pesticides	Insecticide	(Dusts, Granules, Wettable powders)										
		Mythomel	kg	221 650	225 000	225 000	450 000	191 667	225 000	106 667	205 000	231 248
		Acetamiprid	kg	140 635	143 000	143 900	121 400	93 667	143 700	76 000	125 000	123 413
		(Liquids)										
		Dimethoate	lt	130 300	111 000	111 900	112 200	56 000	111 700	85 000	127 000	105 638
		Delta Methrin	lt	140 635	143 000	143 900	121 400	93 667	143 700	76 000	125 000	123 413
	Fungicide	(Dusts, Granules or Wettable powders)										
		Thiophanate-methyl	kg	171 900	171 000	171 900	148 000	63 667	171 700	90 500	155 000	142 958
		Trifloxystrobin	kg	132 000	166 000	166 900	960 000	240 667	166 700	235 000		295 324
		(Liquids)										
		Propamocarb Hydrochloride	lt	125 000	131 000	131 900	107 000	60 000	131 700	81 000	112 000	109 950
		Herbicide	(Dusts, Granules or Wettable powders)									
	sulfonyl urea		kg	234 000	161 000	161 900	82 500	458 333	161 700	345 000	130 000	216 804
	Glyphosate Equivalent		kg	122 120	100 000	100 900	105 500	52 000	100 700	75 000		93 746
	(Liquids)											
glyphosate	lt		105 500	97 000	97 900	68 000	56 000	97 700	70 000	70 000	82 763	
Haloxypop-R-methyl	lt		138 130	146 000	146 900	119 350	85 667	146 700	138 750	124 000	130 687	
Trifluralin	lt	102 000	116 000	116 900	88 200	45 000	116 700	58 750	91 000	91 819		

Livestock feed

In March 2023, livestock feed availability was quite similar to the situation observed in the previous month, though the price trends varied. Most types of animal feed recorded slight increase in price, ranging between 1 to 5 percent m-o-m. Only Soybean meal and Maize prices witnessed moderate increases (17 and 11 percent m-o-m respectively). The price of wheat straw decreased moderately by 23 percent m-o-m, including the price of crop residues which also decreased slightly by 7 percent m-o-m.

Despite the precipitation received during the reporting period across monitored governorates, the growth, development and condition of natural pastures still remained weak. The condition of natural pastures is not helping livestock keepers to absorb the pressure of high fodder prices.

FAO continues to advocate for increased support towards own fodder production, targeting vulnerable smallholder livestock keepers and pastoralists. Interventions that build local capacity of farmers to produce fodder can enhance the availability and affordability of quality fodder at community level.



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

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

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

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

Live Animals



Sheep SYP/kg

1M: 23 LM: 32 763
3M: 46 1Y: 117



Sheep female SYP/Head

1M: 13 LM: 832 833
3M: 38 1Y: 87



Dairy Cow SYP/Head

1M: 16 LM: 8 208 800
3M: 32 1Y: 67



Calf SYP/Kg

1M: 25 LM: 30 565
3M: 46 1Y: 116

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

LM: The price in Local Market in SYP

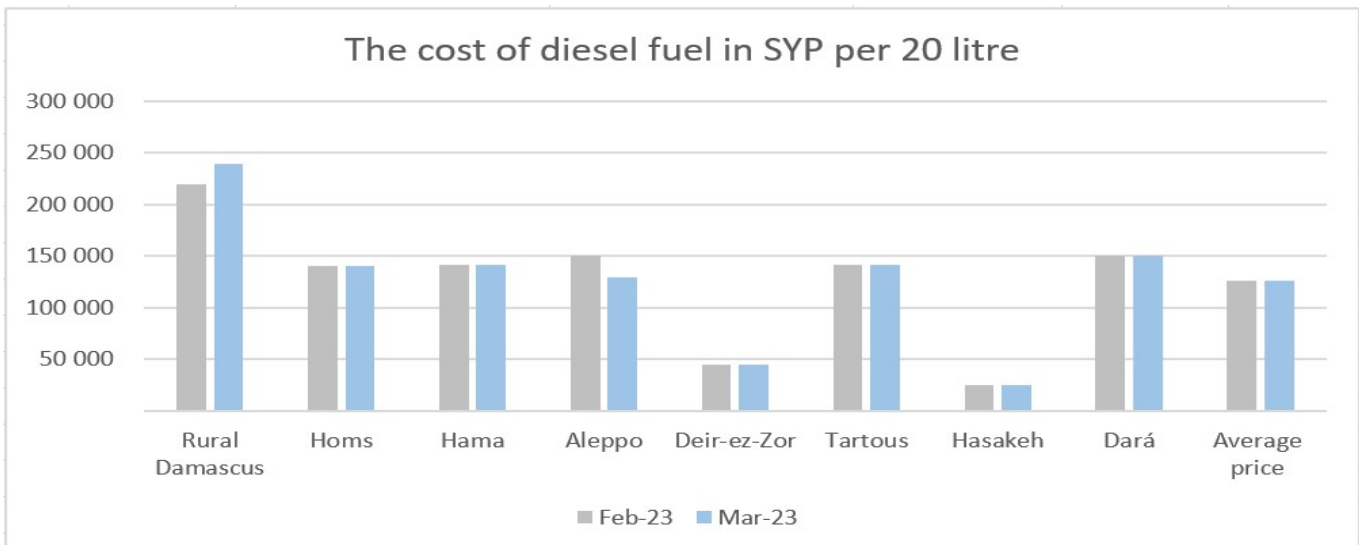
1Y: % Current Month Vs. Same Month in Previous Year

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

Diesel Fuel (20 liters)

In March 2023, the price of diesel fuel stabilized across most monitored locations except for Aleppo where the prices recorded a decrease of 15 percent m-o-m. In Rural Damascus, the diesel price increased by 9 percent m-o-m. It is important to note that the average price across all monitored markets remained generally constant at 126 783 SYP per 20 litre, similar to trends observed in the previous month.

The general stability in the price of diesel in March 2023, could be due to two main factors. Firstly the decision by the local authorities to increase the allocation of diesel for agricultural purposes out of the total amounts assigned for their respective governorates and the diesel allocation for wheat irrigation purposes. For each hectare planted under wheat, farmers are able to buy 50 litres of subsidized diesel and 25 litres of diesel at the official price. Secondly, precipitation received during the peak of the rainfall season delayed the need for supplementary irrigation in some locations and may have resulted in the subsequent limited demand for diesel for pumping irrigation water.



Food Items

In March 2023, the prices of most monitored food items increased, except for tomato and sunflower oil, which both recorded a slight decrease (4 percent m-o-m). Notably, most animal source foods (ASFs) continued to significantly increase, especially meat from cattle (i.e. beef), sheep (i.e. mutton) and poultry (i.e. chicken). The average price of sheep meat increased by 27 percent m-o-m, beef increased by 23 percent m-o-m and chicken 14 percent m-o-m. The moderate to significant increases in the price of meat and other ASFs could be linked to the increased and special demand during Ramadan. For more detailed analysis on food commodities and market price trends, please refer to the WFP Market Price Bulletins for Syria, found on the official Syria Food Security Cluster (FSC) website.

Items	M-O-M
Bread	→ 0%
Flour	↑ 10%
Sugar	↑ 2%
Rice	↑ 3%
Olive oil	↑ 7%
Sunflower oil	↓ -4%
Cow Meat (Calf)	↑ 23%
Chicken Meat	↑ 14%
Sheep Meat	↑ 27%
Fish Meat /Sea	↑ 7%
Fish Meat /Rivers	↑ 8%
Eggs crate	↑ 3%
Sheep Milk	↑ 6%
Cow Milk	↑ 4%
Tomatoes	↓ -4%
Eggplant	↑ 13%
Potatoes	↑ 22%

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: 0 LM:267
6M: 4 1Y: 1

Rice



SYP/kg

1M: 3 LM:8 499
6M: 36 1Y: 65

Chicken Meat



SYP/kg

1M: 14 LM:24 549
6M: 54 1Y: 85

Sunflower oil



SYP/Litre

1M:-4 LM:16 610
6M:6 1Y: 12

Flour



SYP/kg

1M: 10 LM:4 574
6M: 29 1Y: 40

Egg



SYP/(1800—2000)g

1M: 3 LM:22 459
6M: 19 1Y: 43

Cow Meat



SYP/kg

1M: 23 LM:55 154
6M: 69 1Y: 93

Tomato



SYP/kg

1M: -4 LM:2 879
6M: 26 1Y: 31

Sugar



SYP/kg

1M: 2 LM:7 000
6M: 18 1Y: 40

Cow milk



SYP/litre

1M:4 LM:3 665
6M: 21 1Y: 51

Sheep Meat



SYP/kg

1M: 27 LM:63 842
6M: 71 1Y: 98

olive oil



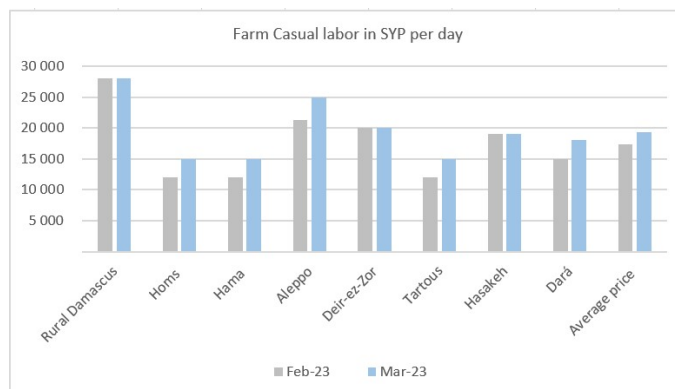
SYP/Litre

1M: 7 LM:25 559
6M: 31 1Y: 47

Other Factors

Farm Casual Labour and Wage

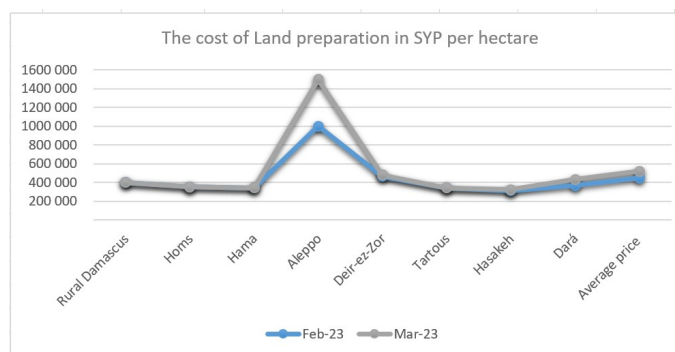
In March 2023, the recorded average wage rate for farm labour across monitored sites was 19 375 SYP per day (11 percent m-o-m increase). However, the daily average wage rate remained constant in Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh, while the daily wage rate for farm labour increased moderately in Aleppo, Tartous and Dar'a (17, 13 and 20 percent m-o-m respectively). The worth to mention that the recorded increases are attributed to the general increase in the cost of living and prevailing economic constraints.



Land Preparation

During March 2023, the cost of land preparation reached a peak of 522 029 SYP per hectare (16 percent increase m-o-m). It is important to mention that despite the price stability of diesel fuel during this reporting period, coupled with limited demand for hiring agricultural machinery for field operations, the cost for land preparation still increased. This could be attributed to the general rise in the cost of living and speculative price increases by those who provide agricultural machinery services.

The continued monitoring of diesel fuel prices and land preparation costs and others, allows FAO and other sector partners to track changes in agricultural production and operational costs. This helps in the identification of potential hurdles that may affect food production output, profitability and commodity prices. The monitoring of such costs also helps the Food and Agriculture Sector (FAS) to plan appropriate interventions that will benefit vulnerable smallholder farmers and improve their resilience.



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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