



Food and Agriculture  
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# Agriculture Input and Commodity Bulletin

## August 2020





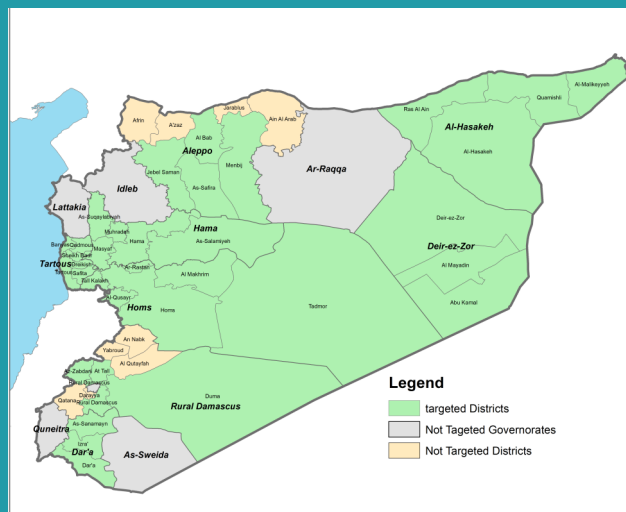
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## Introduction

In an effort to inform the Syrian farming community and stakeholders within the Food and Agriculture Sector (FAS), about the prevailing prices of agriculture inputs and commodities, FAO Syria releases this Monthly Agriculture Input and Commodity Bulletin. The Bulletin is a publication which can be useful to food security and agriculture-based livelihood actors, smallholder farmers, donors and relevant agriculture value chain actors. This bulletin is published once every month and covers insights from 35 Districts across Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Tartous, Deir-ez-Zor, Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh and Dará Governorates.

## Key Highlights

- Prices of Wheat Seed, Barley Seed, Nitrate fertilizer and herbicides surged in August 2020 compared to the prices recorded in July 2020. The average price for monitored sites for wheat sourced from GOSM rose from 250 Syria Pounds (SYP) to 450 SYP almost reaching the average local market price of 481 SYP.
- Average price of Wheat and Barley seed from the local market remained generally stable with an average price of 481 SYP and 267 SYP respectively. There was a significant price decrease of Barley seed sourced from the local market in Al-Hasakeh from 313 SYP in July 2020 to 160 SYP in August 2020 and this is mainly due to the surplus production and that we are far from the next cultivation season for Barley which starts in 2-3 months.
- The significant rise of 43% in the average price of Nitrate fertilizer sourced from the local market and Herbicides was compounded by a further depreciation of the Syrian country's currency on the parallel market. Herbicides and Nitrate fertilizers are mostly imported and there is need to monitor these specific agriculture input prices as we approach the winter cropping season.
- There was no major increase for most food items monitored from July 2020 to August 2020, except for eggs and vegetables that include tomatoes and eggplants, which rose by an average of 20% and 22% respectively. Average prices of food items remain high in August 2020 as compared to the pre-crisis prices and also compared to the same period last year. There is still risk of food item prices increasing in the coming months due to the prevailing and difficult macro-economic situation. The devaluation of the Syrian Pound, coupled with fuel shortages and high prices of agricultural inputs and transportation costs continue to inflate production costs. Prices of vegetables may also increase as the summer vegetable harvest ends.
- Importation constraints as a result of the economic challenges, the ongoing crisis and sanctions and the impact of the ongoing Covid-19, which started in March 2020, have all contributed to the general rise in some agriculture inputs and products.



## Agriculture Commodity and Input Prices

### Wheat

Wheat seed is accessed from General Organization for Seed Multiplication (GOSM) through a supportive price of 450 SYP/kg for the coming season and this wheat seed meets 50% of their needs. Farmers meet the remaining seed requirements from the local market for 481 SYP/kg.

### Barley

Barley seed can be accessed through GOSM through a supported price of 200 SYP/kg. To meet the gap of their seed requirements, farmers are purchasing Barley seed from the local market at a price of 267 SYP/kg. Important to note is that Barley seed in the local market reached a peak of 400 SYP / kg in Tartous since this Governorate is not a major Barley producer.

### Topdressing Fertilizer

Nitrate fertilizer is provided by the Agriculture Bank through a supported price averaging 214 SYP/kg with good quality. This top-dressing fertilizer from the Agriculture Bank covers not more than a third of farmer's needs. Farmers purchase the rest of their requirements from the local market at an average price of 1224 SYP/kg. Highest prices of 4,000 SYP/kg and 1,200 SYP/kg were noted in Hasakeh and Aleppo respectively, with a lowest price of 500 SYP/kg observed in Tartous.

### Phosphate fertilizer

Mostly provided by the Agriculture Bank through a supported price of 232 SYP / kg. Farmers reported purchasing the rest of their needs from the local market at an average cost of 673 SYP/kg. The highest price of 1,000 for Phosphate was recorded in Al-Hasakeh with the lowest price of 500 SYP/kg recorded in Hama and Deir-ez-Zor.

### Pesticide

Most pesticides are available in the local market with an average price of 36,465 SYP/litre. It is important to note that most of the pesticides are of uncertain origin and quality. There was a slight decrease of 16% in the average price of a litre of fungicide from July into August 2020. However, there was an increase of almost 23% in the average price of Herbicides across the monitored sites. It is also important to note that some of the pesticides and fungicides that are purchased from the local market are of unknown origin and the quality is poor.

### Fuel

A specific amount of fuel is allocated to each farmer for agriculture purposes and this is accessed through a supported price of 185 SP/litre. However, farmers cannot access this due to fuel shortages. Farmers reported relying on the expensive local market to cover the unmet fuel requirements at 478 SYP/litre.

### Livestock Products

The highest price of milk was recorded in Rural Damascus with a litre of cow milk selling for 775 SYP and sheep milk in Aleppo selling for 1,125 SYP. Milk price in Deir-ez-Zor was the lowest recorded at 467 SYP for cow milk and 717 SYP for sheep milk. Chicken meat price was highest in Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor at 5,000 SYP/kg, with the lowest price of 3,500/kg recorded in Rural Damascus. Sheep meat price reached the peak in Tartous at 16,500 SYP/kg with a noted decrease in Deir-Ez-Zor (12,500 SYP).

## Oil

The price for both olive and sunflower oil were highest in in Rural Damascus, while the lowest price was recorded in Tartous 3,500 SP for olive oil, since the Governorate is the main producer of this commodity. The price of a 1 package of eggs (=30 eggs) ranged from 4,500 – 5,400 SYP in all Governorates except Al-Hasakeh, which reached a bottom of 3,500 SYP. The average buying price for 1 kg of Tomato, Eggplant and potatoes was recorded around 290 SYP.

## Food Prices

The average bread price across most of the monitored Governorates was 50 SYP per Rabta, and this is in line with the bread price stipulated by the Government of Syria (GoS). However, Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh recorded an average bread price of 70 SYP and 75 SYP respectively. Flour price was highest in Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh, with a kilogram of flour pegged at 1000 SYP. The lowest price was recorded in Dará at 400 SYP and Rural Damascus at 500 SYP. The price of rice reached a peak of 2,000 SYP per kg in Rural Damascus, while it ranged between 1233 - 1520 SP/kg in other Governorates. This variation in rice prices between the Damascus Countryside Governorate and the other Governorates is due to the difference in the varieties. The price of sugar was recorded highest in Tartous at 1 225 SYP per kg with the lowest price of 1,050 SYP being recorded in Aleppo. Average sugar price recorded in July 2020 in all Governorates is 1,130 SYP/kg.

## Local infrastructure

Road closure is not affecting food or input supply in 63% of the monitored locations across the 8 Governorates and the remaining 38% of locations have been affected in terms of food and input supply. Road closure is mainly affecting food and input supply in Dará, (Rural Damascus) and Deir-ez-Zor.



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**Comparison of Agriculture Input Costs from different sources: July and August 2020**

	Month	Items	Homs	Hama	Aleppo	Tartous	Deir-ez-Zur	Rural Damascus	Hasakeh	Dará	Average price	Average % Increase
1	July	Wheat seed / kg (GOSM)	200	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	125
	August	Wheat seed / kg (GOSM)	450	450	450	450	450	-	-	-	450	
2	July	Wheat seed / kg (local market)	510	550	500	525	400	513	500	370	484	-1
	August	Wheat seed / kg (local market)	500	555	500	525	400	600	340	425	481	
3	July	Barley seed / kg (GOSM)	145	145	NA	-	-	-	-	-	145	38
	August	Barley seed / kg (GOSM)	200	200	200	200	200	-	-	-	200	
4	July	Barley seed / kg (local market)	252	275	313	400	225	238	313	225	280	-5
	August	Barley seed / kg (local market)	284	249	319	400	222	275	160	225	267	
5	July	Nitrate fertilizer / kg (Agriculture Bank)	198	193	NA	200	300	200	-	195	214	0
	August	Nitrate fertilizer / kg (Agriculture Bank)	198	193	-	200	300	200	-	195	214	
6	July	Nitrate fertilizer / kg (Local Market)	-	1,140	1,100	400	800	700	1,100	733	853	43
	August	Nitrate fertilizer / kg (Local Market)	600	1,140	1,200	500	800	700	1,100	850	1,224	
7	July	Phosphate fertilizer / kg (Agriculture)	245	237	NA	130	300	240	-	240	232	0
	August	Phosphate fertilizer / kg (Agriculture)	245	237	-	130	300	240	-	240	232	
8	July	Phosphate fertilizer / kg (Local Market)	-	500	525	600	500	800	525	783	605	11
	August	Phosphate fertilizer / kg (Local Market)	600	500	600	600	500	800	1,000	783	673	
9	July	Average pesticide / liter (Local Market)	25,800	24,200	75,000	38,000	25,300	31,250	75,000	35,333	41,235	-12
	August	Average pesticides / liter (Local Market)	27,600	24,200	75,000	38,000	25,333	31,250	35,000	35,333	36,465	
10	July	Average fungicides / liter (Local Market)	25,800	23,800	100,000	97,000	21,300	36,250	100,000	39,667	55,477	-16
	August	Average fungicides / liter (Local Market)	26,520	23,800	100,000	97,000	21,333	36,250	28,000	39,667	46,571	
11	July	Average herbicide / liter (Local Market)	17,200	14,400	20,000	14,500	17,000	16,250	20,000	15,000	16,794	23
	August	Average herbicide / liter (Local Market)	18,000	14,400	20,000	14,500	16,667	16,250	20,000	15,000	20,602	
12	July	Diesel Fuel - 20 liter Gallon	7,800	9,200	11,500	9,000	6,000	8,250	11,500	8,000	8,906	7
	August	Diesel Fuel - 20 liter Gallon	22,600	7,400	11,500	9,000	7,133	8,250	3,000	7,667	9,569	

**Comparison of Average Food Prices (July - August 2020)**

		Items	Homs	Hama	Aleppo	Tartous	Deir-ez-Zur	Rural Damascus	Hasakeh	Dará	Average price	Average % Increase
1	July	Bread (1 rabta)	56	60	70	50	50	50	62	50	56	7
	August	Bread (1 rabta)	65	60	70	60	50	50	75	50	60	
2	July	Flour / Kg	810	730	1,000	1,000	417	500	694	400	694	13
	August	Flour / Kg	860	740	1,000	950	833	500	1,000	400	785	
3	July	Sugar / Kg	1,120	1,060	1,050	1,240	1,133	1,100	1,125	1,158	1,123	1
	August	Sugar / Kg	1,120	1,210	1,050	1,225	1,200	1,100	1,050	1,083	1,130	
4	July	Rice / Kg	1,180	1,520	1,500	1,300	1,100	2,000	1,435	1,467	1,438	2
	August	Rice / Kg	1,440	1,520	1,500	1,300	1,233	2,000	1,400	1,300	1,462	
5	July	Dozen Eggs	3,500	3,460	3,500	3,500	3,800	3,500	3,557	3,600	3,552	31
	August	Dozen Eggs	4,600	5,080	4,500	5,400	5,200	4,500	3,500	4,500	4,660	
6	July	Milk Cow / Litre	480	540	575	540	400	475	499	483	499	15
	August	Milk Cow / Litre	500	590	575	600	467	775	550	550	576	
7	July	Milk Sheep / Litre	630	530	1,125	650	500	688	676	667	683	19
	August	Milk Sheep / Litre	-	765	1,125	750	717	-	750	767	812	
8	July	Chicken meat / kg	3,700	4,000	4,500	3,700	4,500	3,500	3,929	3,433	3,908	6
	August	Chicken meat / kg	4,180	4,100	5,000	4,000	5,067	3,500	3,700	3,600	4,143	
9	July	Sheep meat / kg	12,800	12,400	13,750	16,500	12,500	14,750	13,912	13,167	13,722	2
	August	Sheep meat / kg	13,600	13,700	13,750	16,500	12,500	14,750	13,500	13,667	13,996	
10	July	Cow meat( males ) / kg	11,000	10,900	13,000	11,000	13,300	12,000	11,952	12,000	11,894	4
	August	Cow meat( males ) / kg	11,400	11,400	13,000	12,000	13,167	12,000	13,500	12,167	12,329	
11	July	olive oil / liter	3,850	3,600	3,875	3,500	7,230	5,000	4,604	5,000	4,582	-1
	August	olive oil / liter	4,180	4,700	3,875	3,500	5,000	6,000	3,875	5,000	4,516	
12	July	Sunflower oil/ liter	3,090	3,180	2,850	3,100	3,230	2,800	3,049	2,800	3,012	-1
	August	Sunflower oil / liter	3,020	2,920	2,800	2,900	3,133	3,500	2,850	2,800	2,990	
13	July	Tomatoes/ kg	290	245	165	325	250	250	258	200	248	20
	August	Tomatoes/ kg	330	295	213	325	250	300	425	250	298	
14	July	Potatoes / kg	214	225	250	250	380	250	265	183	252	19
	August	Potatoes / kg	300	250	250	250	383	300	375	292	300	
15	July	Eggplant / kg	235	190	200	275	160	250	220	250	222	22
	August	Eggplant / kg	260	260	263	300	150	300	375	258	271	

## ADVICE TO SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

### Managing price volatility and input quality risks in agricultural markets

1. To manage the risk of input price volatility, farmers are encouraged to buy their inputs early as they prepare for their next planting season for Wheat and Barley, before potential price spikes (increases).
2. Having a diversified agro-business enterprise can also help absorb the ongoing price shocks.
3. For risks associated with crop price volatility, farmers are advised to consider adding value to their crops through agro-processing, i.e. tomato paste, dry pepper, etc.
4. To minimize the risk of buying sub-standard seed, chemicals, livestock feed and fertilizers, smallholder farmers are encouraged to buy inputs from reputable Agro-Input Suppliers and make sure that the stamp of the ministry of agriculture exists on the pack. Buying agricultural inputs from unreliable sources at lower prices, may result in losses in terms of production, which significantly exceeds the savings in the price of inputs.
5. In order to reduce transportation costs and obtain inputs at moderate prices, farmers are advised to adopt collective input purchasing and transportation.
6. There is need to check with agriculture extension, the possibility to use organic fertilizers to compensate the lack of chemical fertilizers.

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