



Food and Agriculture  
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# Agriculture Input and Commodity Bulletin January 2021



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## Introduction

Agriculture, including crop and animal husbandry, forestry and agro processing, constitutes the basis of socio-economic lives of most smallholder farmers in the Syrian Arab Republic. FAO's attention and interventions cover all stages of the agriculture commodities' value chain, this includes activities that improve production, processing, marketing and entrepreneurship. The Organization in Syria releases the "Monthly agriculture input and commodity price bulletin" that provides timely insights from 35 districts across Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Tartous, Deir-ez-Zor, Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh and Dar'a Governorates, to inform relevant stakeholders and food security sector (FSS) partners supporting agriculture and food security interventions in the country, about the prevailing prices of agriculture inputs and commodities. This bulletin is a useful publication since markets and market information both play an important role in food security, income generation, resilience and rural-market linkages. Regular dissemination of market information will benefit smallholder farmers in their market-oriented production endeavours.

## Key Highlights

Until the end of January 2021, the characteristic of winter season was different from the regular in Syria, as temperature degrees decreased by end of January to below zero (-1 to -3 C°) across all governorates (except for the coastal governorates). The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) images indicates low vegetation percentage comparing to the previous year. The scarcity of snow this season raises concerns on the

water situation in the upcoming months, especially in summer. As snow is the main water provider for springs and wells.

In January 2021, the volatility in the exchange market continued to raise most prices of agricultural inputs, making it out of the vulnerable farmers' reach in some governorates. Especially barley seed, herbicide, poultry feed, diesel fuel. There is still a need to address the prevailing economic hardships and limited access to agricultural inputs by most Syrian families across the country in a holistic and multipronged approach.

The electricity and fuel shortage is persisting in most governorates. This challenge contributes in raising the agricultural production costs, especially transportation, which limits the farmer's capacity regarding mitigating climate shocks and other challenges.

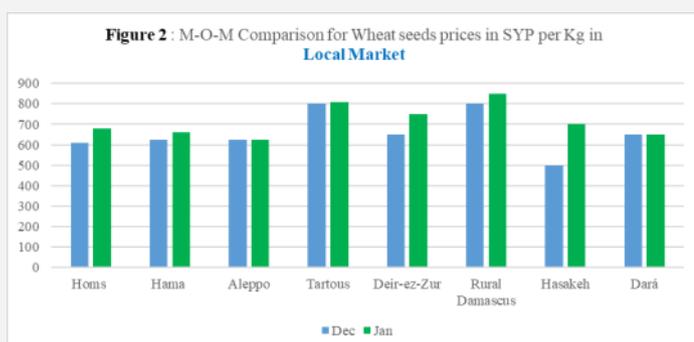
Because of the consistent depreciation of the informal exchange rate of the SYP Vs. USD, and the weakening of the Syrian economy, the prevailing high cost of agricultural inputs in the local market will continue to limit access for vulnerable smallholder farmers. The Government's subsidized sources are unable to meet the farmer's full requirements. The existing constraints, further worsened by the Covid-19 impact on supply chains, besides the economic sanctions' impact on Syria, will continue to affect importation and exportation of most agricultural inputs and commodities respectively.

The observations showed a shortage of fertilizers and pesticides in addition to its high prices, making it almost impossible to be purchased by the farmers. This has resulted in limited access to agro-chemicals and it will continue to affect the agricultural production activities for most smallholder farmers in negative manners.

The shortage and high prices of poultry, cattle and sheep feed, besides the fragile veterinary services, remain a challenge for livestock keepers. As a result, the livestock products' prices are sharply high, making most Syrian families cope with the situation by not consuming any livestock products. Low access to various livestock products is limiting dietary diversity since most families are unable to buy eggs and meat.

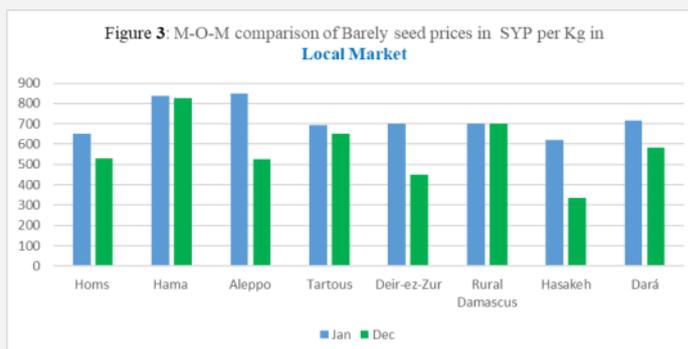
### Agriculture Commodity and Input Prices

**Wheat:** Most farmers have already purchased their wheat seed for 2020-21 cropping season. However, and since August 2020, the General Organization for Seed Multiplication (GOSM) still provides wheat seed at the same price of 450 SYP per kg, while the local market's price remains stable as of December 2020 across the eight monitored governorates. The local market is the farmers' alternative source for wheat seed to cover their production needs. However, this key input's price is quite high in Rural Damascus and Tartous governorates comparing to others, reaching 850 SYP per kg (figure 2). In Hasakeh, the selling price of wheat seed has recorded 700 SYP per kg in January (40 percent m-o-m increase) comparing to 500 SYP per kg in December 2020, while the selling price in Deir-ez-Zor reached 750 SYP per Kg (15 present m-o-m decrease).



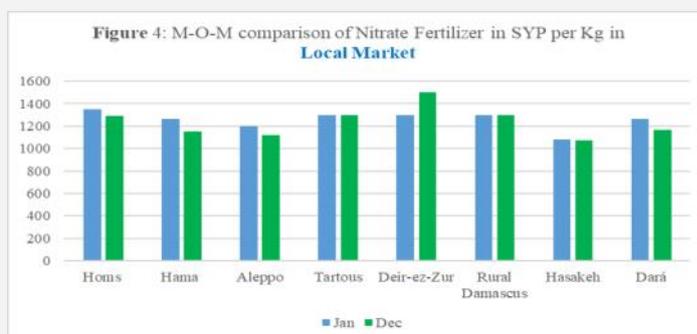
**Barley:** Most farmers have already purchased their barley seed for 2020-21 cropping season. However, the price of barley seed purchased from GOSM reached 200 SYP per kg in January. On the other hand, the local market has offered barley seed at a ranging price of 545 SYP per kg to 721 SYP per kg. In Hasakeh, there was a significant increase indicated by 85 percent m-o-m, the price in the market reached 620 SYP per kg, while it reached 700 SYP per kg in Deir-ez-Zor. Observations have revealed a significant m-o-m price increase in Aleppo governorate that reached 62 percent, the average

selling price was 850 SYP per Kg (Figure 3).

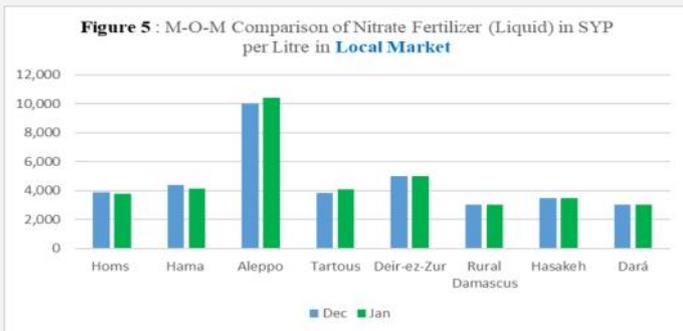


**Nitrate fertilizers:** The Agriculture Bank provides each farmer with granular nitrate fertilizer at a support price of 200 SYP per kg, this item's price remained constant m-o-m across the monitored governorates. Taking into account that the Agriculture Bank cannot provide granular top dressing fertilizer in Al-Hasakeh governorate due to security concerns, forcing most farmers to buy their requirements from the local market. In governorates where granular top dressing fertilizer is available, the Agriculture Bank provides almost third of the farmers' needs, pushing them to purchase the rest of their requirements from the local market at an average price of 1 257 SYP per kg (2 percent m-o-m increase).

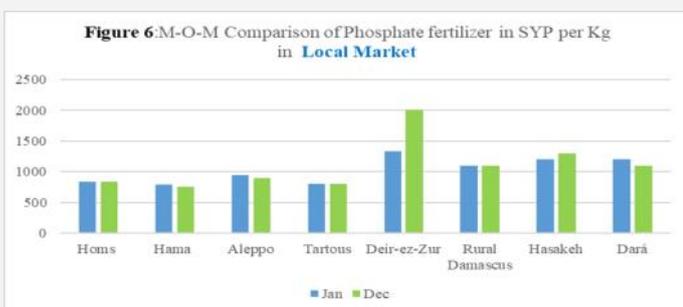
The selling prices in Homs, Hama and Dará governorates increased (prospectively 5, 10 and 9 percent as m-o-m increase), while the price in Deir-Ez-Zor recorded a decrease in the average selling price at 1 300 SYP per Kg (13 percent m-o-m decrease). The prices remained stable in Tartous and Rural Damascus governorates, the average selling price was 1 300 SYP per Kg (figure 4). The currency depreciation makes the situation challenging as it continues to cause significant market price volatility for agricultural inputs sourced from local markets.



The average selling price of liquid nitrate fertilizer was 4 618 SYP per litre in January, with a slight increase from December 2020. The average selling prices in Dará, Hasakeh, Rural Damascus and Tartous governorates remained similar to December 2020 with a slight m-o-m decrease in Homs and Hama Governorates (Figure 5). In general, the liquid nitrate fertilizer is more expensive than the granular type. Yet, the team will monitor closely the selling prices of liquid fertilizer in local markets during February 2021 as the peak season and demand for top dressing fertilizer application are approaching.



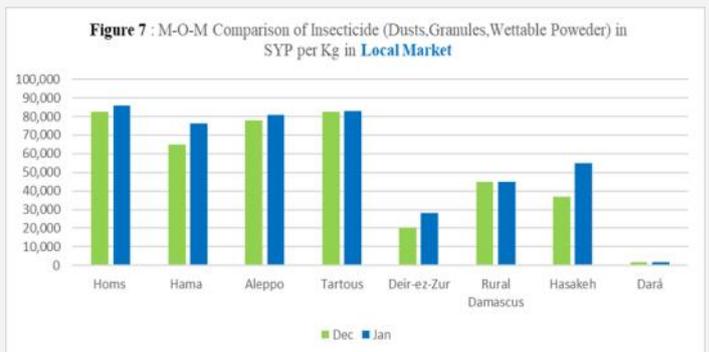
**Phosphate fertilizers** The Agriculture Bank could not provide phosphate fertilizer mostly in Homs, Hama, Tartous and Al Hasakeh because of the harsh economic situation, while the available quantities were in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Rural Damascus and Dara at a subsidised price of 240 SYP per kg. Unfortunately, the quantities provided by the Agriculture Bank are unable to meet the farmers’ full requirements, therefore, they continue to purchase the rest of their needs from the local market, where the average price for phosphate fertilizer recorded in January has reached 1 025 SYP per kg. On the other hand; the highest price of phosphate fertilizer from the local market was recorded in Deir-Ez-Zor at 1 333 SYP per kg (Decrease 33 percent m-o-m), while the lowest price was recorded in Hama at a price of 788 SYP per Kg (5 m-o-m increase) as highlighted in (figure 6).



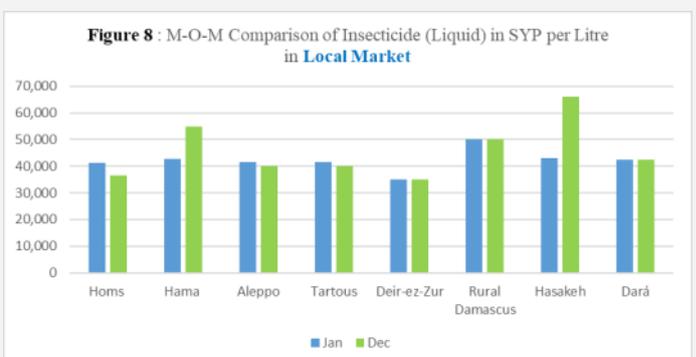
**Pesticides** Crop-protection agro-chemicals (i.e. pesticides), which include insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, are available across the governorates. However, they remain generally expensive and out of reach for most farmers. The exorbitant price of pesticides limit a farmer’s use of the efficacious application rates, exacerbating pest-related

production constraints. To address this access constraint, most farmers will have to rely on other integrated pest management (IPM) options and tactics that minimize reliance on the expensive synthetic or inorganic pesticides. It is important to note that most of the available and promoted pesticides within the local market are of uncertain origin and the quality is difficult to verify. This is because, from time to time, un-accredited crop protection material continues to find its way into the market especially through the borderlines areas.

**Insecticides (dusts, granules, wettable powders):** These are generally available at an average price of 57 050 SYP per kg. The highest selling price was recorded in Homs governorate at 86 000 SYP per kg (4 percent m-o-m increase), the change in price was significant in Al Hasakeh (49 percent m-o-m increase) then Deir-ez-Zor (38 percent m-o-m increase) (Figure 7).



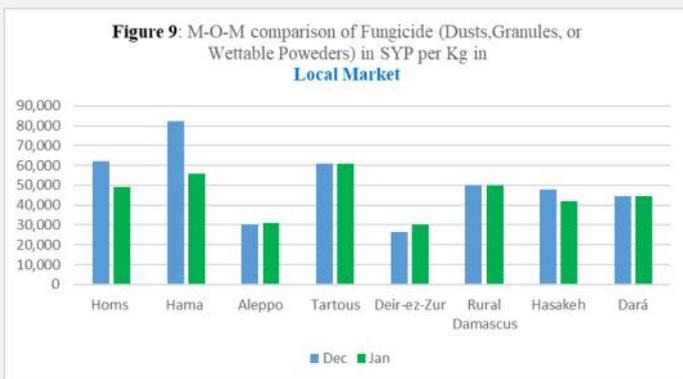
**Liquid Insecticides:** The liquid insecticides prices decreased in January (7 percent m-o-m decrease), the average selling price was 42 196 SYP per litre and it was available in the local markets. The prices in Hasakeh governorate has recorded a significant decrease at 43 000 SYP per litre. While the prices in Hama governorate have witnessed a decrease at 42 800 SYP per litre (22 percent m-o-m decrease) (figure 8).



**Fungicides (dusts, granules or wettable powders):**

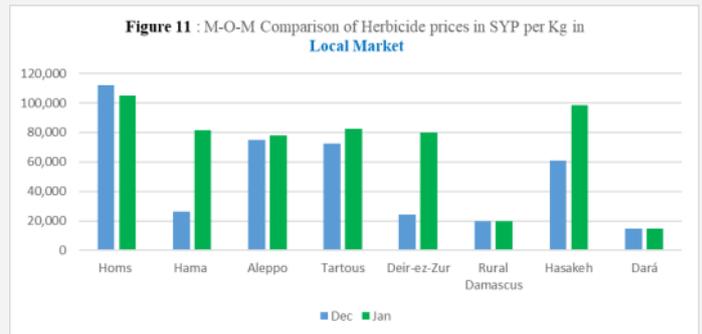
Fungicides were available across the monitored governorates at an average selling price of 45 463 SYP per kg (10 percent m-o-m decrease). In Hama, the decrease in the average price was the highest recorded among the monitored governorates, with a selling price of 65 000 SYP per kg (32 percent m-o-m decrease), while in Homs the selling price was 49 000 SYP per kg indicating a 21 percent m-o-m decrease. In Deir-ez-Zor, the average price increased by 14 percent m-o-m and the prices remained constant in the other remaining governorates (Figure 9).

There was a notable decrease in the average selling price of liquid fungicides in Tartous, Hasakeh and Hama (51, 40, 24 percent m-o-m decrease respectively). However, in Deir-ez-Zor, there was a 19 percent m-o-m increase and the average selling price was 35 000 SYP per Litre (Figure 10).



**Herbicides:** The average price of herbicides (i.e. dusts, granules or Wettable Powders) was 62 500 SYP per kg (38 percent m-o-m increase). A sharp increase in the selling price of herbicides was recorded in central and northern Syria. This includes Deir-ez-Zor governorate, where a 229 percent m-o-m increase was recorded, reaching an alarming price of 80 000 SYP per Kg. Hama governorate also witnessed a significant increase (207 percent m-o-m increase) at a selling price of 81 400 SYP per Kg. On the contrary, the prices in Rural Damascus and Dará remained stable, however, a slight decrease of 6 percent m-o-m was recorded in Homs governorate at an average selling price of 105 000 SYP per Kg (figure 11). The

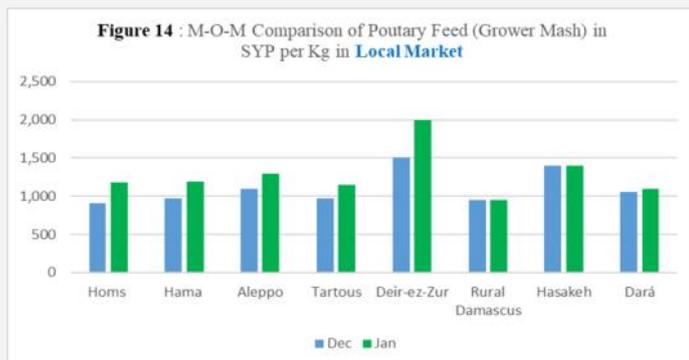
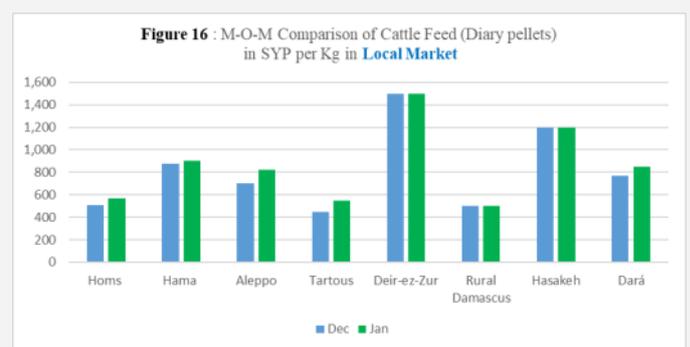
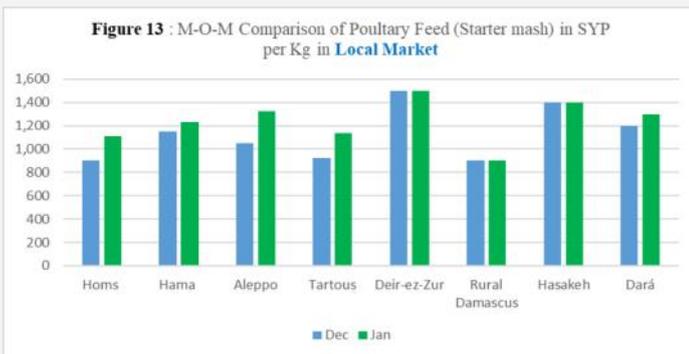
liquid herbicides recorded a 35 percent m-o-m increase with an average selling price at 37 488 SYP per litre. The highest selling price was recorded in Tartous governorate at 62 500 SYP per litre. Furthermore, the price in Rural Damascus has recorded the lowest rate at 22 000 SYP per kg, the same price recorded in December 2020, while a slight price decrease was noticed in Homs governorate at 56 000 SYP per litre (figure 12).



**Poultry Feed** Since December 2020, the observations showed stable prices for poultry feed (starter mash) in Rural Damascus, Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor governorates, the average selling price reached 1 050 SYP per kg (7 percent m-o-m decrease). The highest selling price was recorded in Deir-ez-Zor governorate at 1 500 SYP per kg, while Aleppo recorded the highest unstable selling price (26 percent m-o-m increase), the lowest m-o-m increase price was recorded in Hama governorate of 7 percent (Figure 13).

The average selling price for poultry feed (grower mash) is 1 283 SYP per Kg across all governorates (13 percent m-o-m increase). However, it is important to note that the prices in Rural Damascus and Hasakeh remained stable since December 2020 (Figure 14).

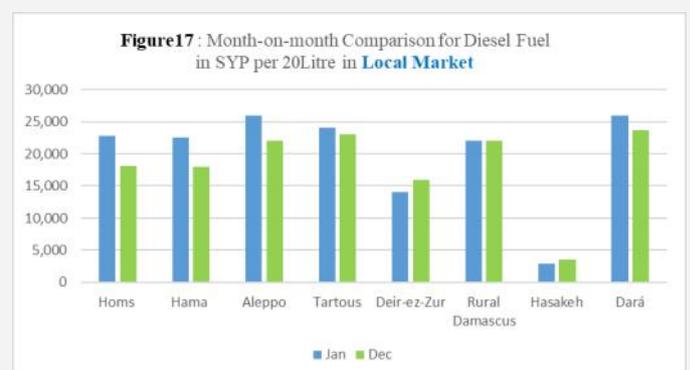
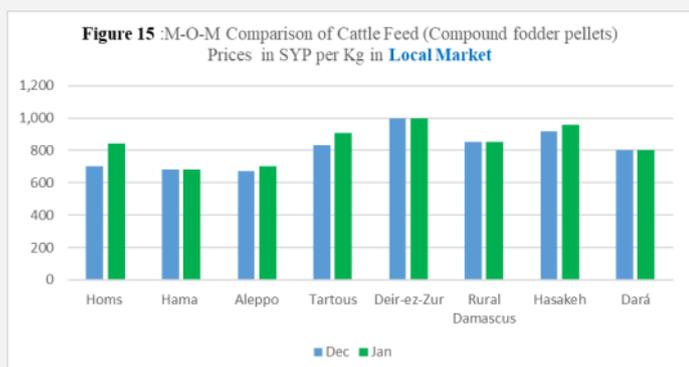
The average selling price for the poultry feed (finisher mash) was recorded at 1 271 SYP per Kg, indicating a 6 percent m-o-m increase. On the other hand; the price for the layers mash reached 1 154 SYP per Kg.



**Diesel Fuel:** The government has allocated a specific quantity of diesel fuel for farmers in an endeavour to support the agriculture sector. The farmers continue to access fuel through a subsidised price of 180 SYP per litre. There was a significant m-o-m increase of 10 percent in the average diesel fuel price within the local markets, reaching 20 038 SYP per 20 litres (see figure 17). Dará and Aleppo governorates recorded the highest diesel fuel price at 26 000 SYP per 20 litres, while the price in Al-Hasakeh was 2 900 SYP for the same amount (figure 17), indicating the lowest diesel fuel price across the monitored sites.

**Cattle feed:** Cattle compound fodder pellets were generally available in the monitored sites, with an average price of 843 SYP per kg recorded in January 2021 (4 percent m-o-m increase). The highest selling price was observed in Deir-ez-Zur at 1 000 SYP per kg (figure 15), while the lowest price was recorded in Hama governorate at 680 SYP per kg. Cattle feed for dairy (i.e. dairy pellets) highlighted in figure 16, were available within the governorates at an estimate price of 862 SYP per kg.. Deir-ez-Zur also recorded the highest price for dairy pellets, which were sold for at least 1 500 SYP per kg. Feed is the main challenge affecting livestock keepers, as it constitutes about 70 percent of the total costs for livestock production. However; the availability of livestock feed is fair to good, but the financial access to livestock feed due to the high and ever increasing costs, remains the most significant challenge for farmers. This is coupled with the economic and financial constraints that are worsening the situation. Lastly, the fodder price also increased dramatically in the last quarter of 2020 due to the dry spell that occurred during the onset of the 2020-21 rainfall season.

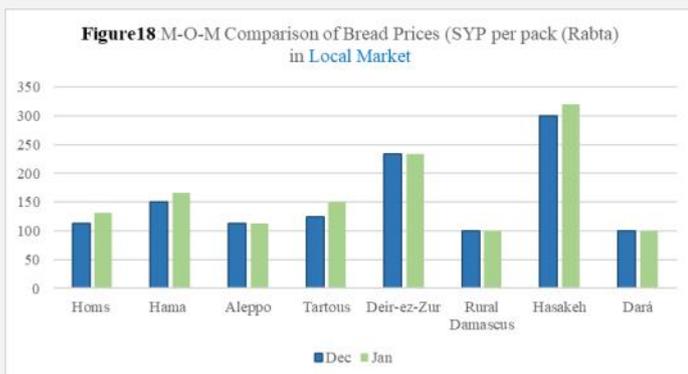
Most farmers have to rely on the expensive diesel fuel prices offered in the local market to cover the unmet needs. The availability and subsequent price changes of fuel and other energy sources will be monitored as this may have ripple effects on land preparation, and subsequently agriculture production and processing. Furthermore, diesel fuel and other forms of energy are essential for groundwater extraction for irrigation purposes, transportation of products and inputs to markets, food processing and preservation; the high cost and limited availability of diesel fuel, in particular, will have adverse effects on agricultural production.



## Food Prices

The observations noticed that four out of fifteen food items' prices has generally increased in January 2021 in variable proportions. Potato recorded the highest price value within the changing ratio comparing to the prices in December 2020. sunflower oil comes second .

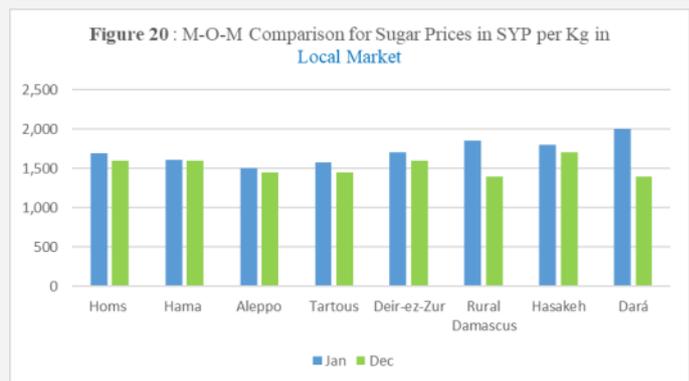
The average selling price of bread increased in Tartous at 150 SYP per pack (20 percent m-o-m increase), the highest selling price was recorded in Hasakeh governorate at 320 SYP per pack (Figure 18).



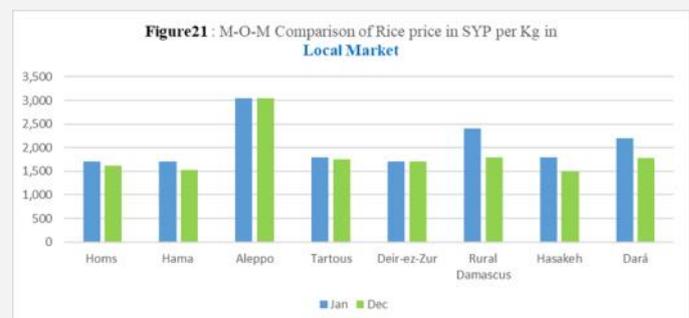
Generally, flour prices decreased in Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zur governorates (12 and 21 percent m-o-m decrease respectively), the average selling prices was 950 SYP per kg. The average recorded price for flour across all monitored governorates was 1 062 per kg. In Dará, the average selling price increased to 1 250 SYP per kg while it reached 1 263 SYP per Kg in Hama governorate. The price remained generally constant in Rural Damascus and Homs governorates (Figure 19).



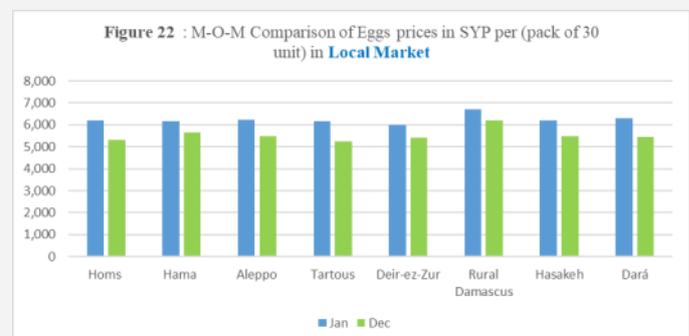
The average price of sugar increased 13 percent m-o-m in January 2021 across the monitored locations. Dará registered the highest average selling price of 2 000 SYP per kg (43 percent m-o-m increase), the prices has recorded a 32 percent m-o-m increase in Rural Damascus, ranging between 1 400 to 1 850 SYP per kg (figure 20).



In regards of rice prices, it remained the highest in Aleppo governorate at 3 050 SYP per kg and there was no change from December 2020 to January 2021. The prices were steady in Deir-ez-Zur, while a 33 percent m-o-m increase was recorded in Rural Damascus (figure 21).

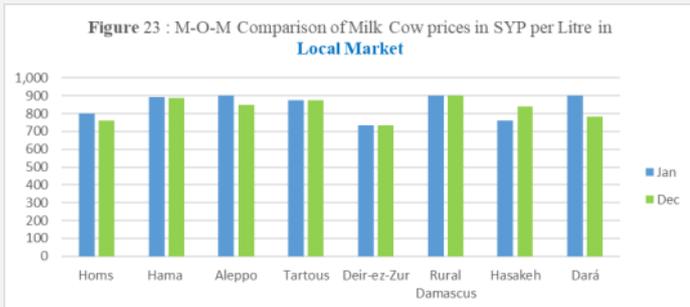


As for eggs, the selling prices were increased in the local markets across the monitored governorates. The highest increase was recorded in both Tartous and Homs governorates (17 percent m-o-m increase) with a selling price of 6 167 for thirty eggs, and 6 200 SYP being recoded respectively in the afore-mentioned locations. The highest selling price was recorded in Rural Damascus, reaching 6 700 SYP for a pack of 30 eggs (Figure 22).

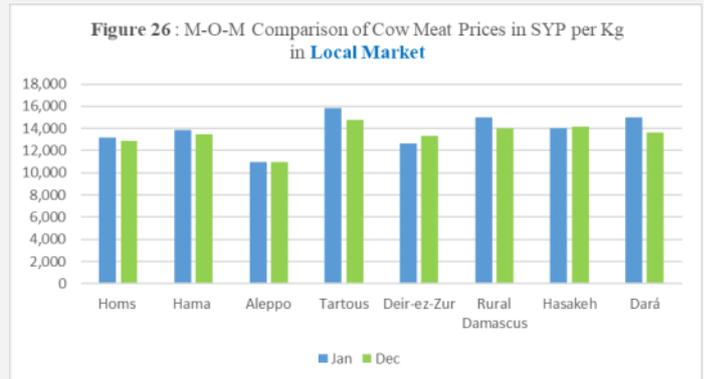
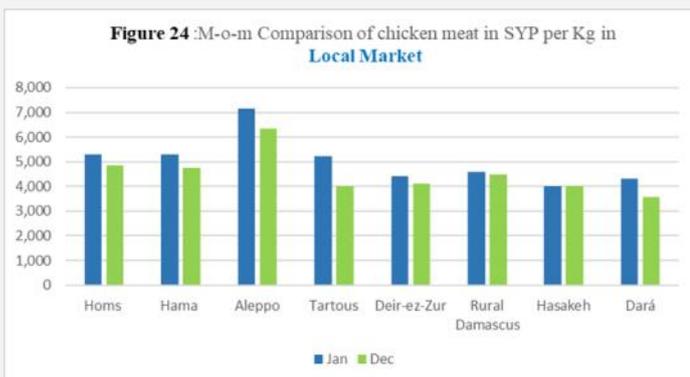


The cow milk's selling price increased in Dará, Aleppo and Homs governorates and decreased in Hasakeh (10 percent m-o-m decrease). The average selling price reached 845 SYP per litre and the highest price recorded a 900 SYP per litre in Dará (figure 23).

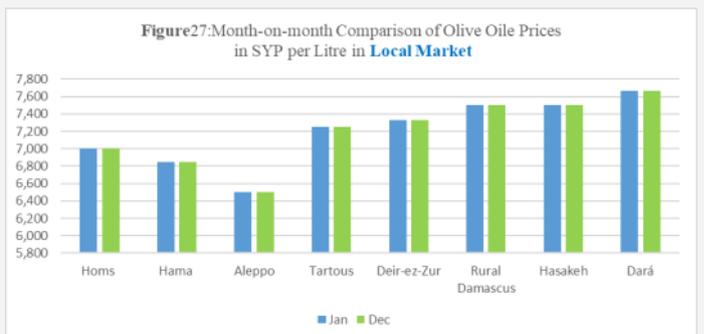
For sheep milk, the average selling price reached 1 093 SYP per litre, the highest selling price recorded in Homs at 1 300 SYP, followed by Hama at 1 213 SYP per litre, the lowest selling price observed in Deir-ez-Zor at 833 SYP per litre.



For chicken meat, the prices in Aleppo continued to raise high at 7 150 per kg since December 2020, despite a 13 percent m-o-m decrease observed. An average selling price of 5 035 SYP per kg was recorded across the monitored locations (figure 24). Sheep and cow meat average prices reached 15 466 SYP per kg and 13 817 SYP per kg respectively, indicating 6 and 3 percent m-o-m decrease observed for both food commodities as highlighted in figure 25 and 26.



Olive oil prices remained generally constant from December 2020 to January 2021, an average selling price of 7 200 SYP per litre was recorded. Within the eight monitored governorates, Dara governorate witnessed the highest selling price of olive oil at 7 667 SYP per litre, 7 500 SYP per litre in Hasakeh and 7 500 SYP per litre in Rural Damascus (figure 27). The price of olive oil will be monitored due to the general increase over the past six months.



Sunflower oil average price increased to 5 162 SYP per litre (up 17 percent m-o-m) as highlighted in figure 28. In Tartous, the average selling price reached 5 317 SYP per litre (31 percent m-o-m increase).

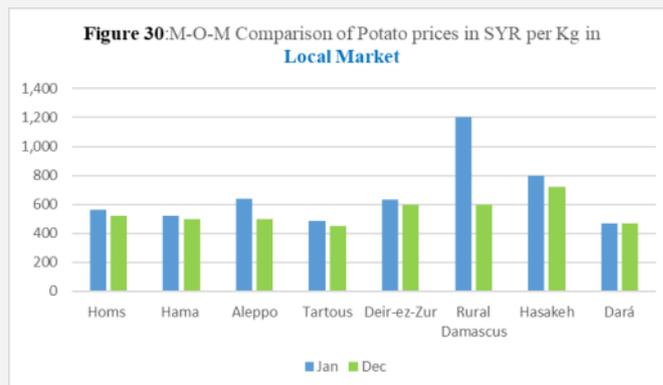


Tomato average selling prices have slightly increased across the monitored locations and markets. The average selling price reached 1 050 SYP per Kg. The tomato selling prices in Aleppo reached 1 275 SYP per kg (31 percent m-o-m increase). A slight decrease was noticed in Rural Damascus and Hama governorates. In Deir-ez-Zor, the selling price of tomato increased from 900 SYP in December 2020 to 1 000 SYP in

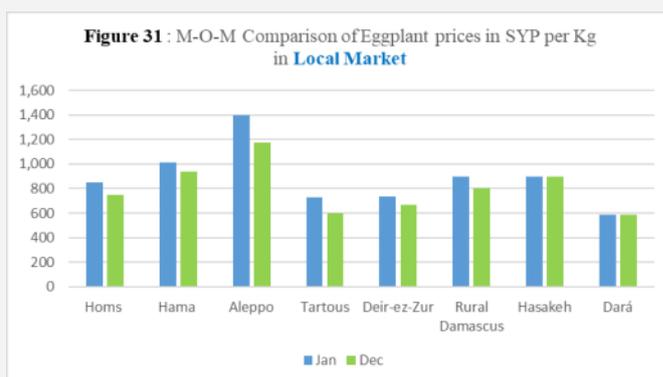


January 2021 (Figure 29).

Potatoes average selling price increased by 22 percent m-o-m increase. The average selling price was 663 SYP per kg across the monitored governorates. A significant price raise was noticed in Rural Damascus, reaching 1 200 SYP per kg in January 2021 comparing to the recorded price back in December 2020 (600 SYP per kg) (100 percent m-o-m increase) as highlighted in figure 30.



The average selling price for eggplant remained constant in Dará (583 SYP per kg), while it recorded 900 SYP per kg in Hasakeh, indicating an 11 percent m-o-m increase. The highest selling price reached 1 400 SYP per kg was recorded in Aleppo for eggplants, followed by Hama at 1 010 SYP per kg. The highest m-o-m increase was recorded in Aleppo (19 percent), Rural Damascus (13 percent) Homs governorates (13 percent) as shown in figure 31.



**DISCLAIMER:** The information in this bulletin comes from monthly market surveys conducted informally by FAO field staff. While FAO Syria strives to provide accurate and timely early warning information, there may be slight unintended technical or factual inaccuracies. Decisions based on information contained herein are the sole responsibility of the reader.

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