

The COVID-19 Crisis and Food Systems: probable impacts and potential mitigation and adaptation responses

	Low income context	Mitigation/adaptation	High income context	Mitigation/adaptation
Food demand	<p>If more nutritious food is already higher priced, then uncertainty will see increased purchase of non-perishables, especially staples.</p> <p>Income shocks lead to reduced overall spending on food.</p>	<p>Social protection programmes can focus more on nutritious foods, shoring up demand for these kinds of foods and helping low income populations eat healthier.</p> <p>Massive support from the global and regional Development Banks needed. Bail out packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) needed.</p> <p>Overseas development assistance to be maintained, and where politically possible, increased.</p>	<p>If more nutritious food is already higher priced, then uncertainty will see increased purchase of ultra-processed foods which tend to have longer shelf lives.</p> <p>Income shocks lead to reduced overall spending on food.</p>	<p>Work with major retailers to ensure fresh food supply chains remain open.</p> <p>Income support to those who have lost their jobs or have been furloughed (still employed but no work).</p> <p>Protecting self employed in food system is doubly important.</p>
Food preparation	<p>Less food consumed away from home/street food, although delivery services might emerge. This will take more time to prepare and take away from child care. Not clear if food at home safer/cheaper/healthier. Increased handwashing will help.</p>	<p>More handwashing material made available.</p> <p>Government advice on cooking healthily at home ramped up.</p> <p>Efforts to mitigate cost and availability of clean cooking fuel needed.</p>	<p>Less food away from home, although take outs from restaurants continue. Not clear if food consumed at home will be safer/cheaper/healthier.</p>	<p>Government advice on cooking healthily at home is ramped up.</p> <p>Chefs provide free cooking shows online.</p>
Food production	<p>Higher prices for nutritious food not likely to be matched by supply response as input prices will also likely increase and risk appetites will be low.</p> <p>More volatile input and output prices (markets working less smoothly due to higher transactions costs and less reliable market information), leads to greater uncertainty and lower investment in production (although production diversity may increase as a result of risk).</p>	<p>Extension services find ways to help farmers keep going.</p> <p>Use SMS to set up farmer helplines.</p> <p>Easier finance to farmers.</p> <p>Consider designating some domestic farmers as essential frontline workers.</p>	<p>Supply of nutritious foods likely to be maintained given more diverse supply chains but with more irregular delivery, quality, and price.</p> <p>Hiring of farmworkers may be more difficult if they cannot move cross-border.</p>	<p>Designate domestic farmers as essential frontline workers.</p> <p>Preferential tax relief to domestic farmers/producers.</p> <p>Reduce transactions costs on imports and exports (with exception of food safety.)</p>

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	Farmers who are elderly, may be hard hit by disease.			
Food distribution and storage	More likely to be loss as travel is discouraged or hampered (although more could be eaten locally instead of sent to market).	Set up shared economy systems for using spare haulage capacity to get food from farmers to markets. Expand systems that transparently link farmers with retailers, reducing opportunities for profiteering.	Restrictions on movement lengthen the time in transit.	Set up shared economy systems for using spare haulage capacity to get food from farmers to markets.
Food processing	Food safety and quality levels will probably be lowered as processors attempt to cope with lower margins and fractured supply lines. Foods with longer shelf life and lower nutritional value may be prioritised.	Accelerate work on strengthening food control systems and food safety monitoring capacity in key food system checkpoints. Keep staple food fortification going by managing the risk of cross-border holdups in premix trade. Government/ civil society to monitor	Lots of anxiety about hygiene, potentially extra costs. Foods with longer shelf life and lower nutritional value may be prioritised.	Strengthen food safety monitoring capacity in key food system checkpoints.
Food markets, food retailing	Food safety will worsen if systems breakdown. More vulnerable/lower income/weaker will lose out in the physical scramble for food in markets. Profiteering.	Food safety to get much higher prominence in national and international policy and action. Find ways to give priority to the elderly and vulnerable in physical access to safe nutritious foods. Restrictions on volume of purchases at point of sale. Civil society monitoring and exposing of profiteering. Better organisation of wet markets to reduce risks and curtail profiteering.	Panic buying favours those with deeper pockets. Lots of anxiety about hygiene, potentially increasing price of food in future. Profiteering.	Strengthen food safety standards authorities. Find ways to give priority to the elderly and vulnerable in physical access to safe nutritious foods. Restrictions on volume of purchases at point of sale. Civil society monitoring and exposing of profiteering. Better organisation of retail outlets to limit impacts of panic buying.
Food marketing	Potential to mislead is enhanced (i.e. claims that these foods prevent or ameliorate COVID 19 infection)	Government/civil society to monitor claims. Enhance messaging about food safety in general food preparation advice.	Potential to mislead is enhanced (i.e. claims that these foods prevent or ameliorate COVID 19 infection).	Government/civil society to monitor claims. Enhance messaging about food safety in general food preparation advice.

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Throughout supply chain	<p>Companies' ability to care for workers health and wellbeing diminishes throughout supply chain</p> <p>Women's greater social connectedness may put them at greater risk of infection and transmission.</p>	<p>Consider giving some key food system frontline status.</p> <p>Large companies ramp up workforce health efforts for their supply chains contractors, building loyalty in supply chain workforce.</p> <p>Be more sensitive to the gendered nature of food systems and try to counter them.</p>	<p>Companies' ability to care for workers health and wellbeing diminishes throughout supply chain.</p> <p>Women's greater social connectedness may put them at greater risk of infection and transmission</p>	<p>Government support to workers laid off and furloughed.</p> <p>Be more sensitive to the gendered nature of food systems and try to counter them.</p>
Enabling policy environment	<p>Food system loses priority as health system is the focus.</p> <p>Enforcement of food regulation is hampered or deliberately relaxed.</p> <p>Finance is drawn towards less risky high return activities and away from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and safe nutritious foods.</p>	<p>Policymakers need to be reminded that poor food quality is the number one driver of ill health in all countries.</p> <p>Need careful thought as to which regulations can be relaxed and which cannot. Need to ensure regulation enforcement is stepped up once crisis abates.</p> <p>More than ever finance needs to be geared to maintaining the provision of nutritious foods. Development banks should increase focus on this SMEs and safe nutritious foods.</p>	<p>Food system loses priority as health system is the focus.</p> <p>Enforcement of food regulation is hampered or deliberately relaxed.</p>	<p>Policymakers need to be reminded that poor food quality is the number one driver of ill health in all countries. Diabetes and other diet related NCDs are a risk factor for severe symptoms of Covid-19 and undernutrition weakens immune systems leading to increased contagion from asymptomatic children.</p> <p>Need careful thought as to which regulations can be relaxed and which cannot. Need to ensure regulation enforcement is stepped up once crisis abates.</p>