



## Covid-19 Impact on the Agriculture and Food Value Chains

Agriculture and food processing industry sectors are among the main growth drivers of Moldovan economy. It constitutes around 18% of GDP and 50% of total exports originate in agriculture and food products.

Covid-19 outbreak in Moldova is having a negative impact on agriculture production and processing, farmers' income and access to inputs. Currently, the main affected sectors are vegetable, cereal and berry production, as well as animal feeding. At the same time, the most impacted group of producers are smallholder farmers who have insufficient financial resources and inputs.

The planting season of cereals started, but it is progressing slowly due to lack of some inputs and low level of precipitations. At least 200 small and medium greenhouse vegetable growers face significant issues marketing and selling their products (cucumbers, radish, tomatoes etc.) as the local markets have been closed due to government lockdown measures and they lack access to supermarket chains. Export of agri-food products to some traditional partner countries (e.g. Russian Federation) was suspended as the authorities from importing countries do not issue the relevant certificates. There is also a significant impact due the Covid-19 pandemic on poultry sector during March-April as this is the season for chicks production and sales. The loss for a two-week period is estimated at about 112 million lei.

## Needs and Challenges

There are two major needs of the farmers in the current agriculture season. The farmers and food producers need access to inputs and financial resources. The availability is limited due to the impact of Covid-19 outbreak on the economy and by the imposed restrictions of the Government. Despite the exceptions approved by the Government on import and distribution of inputs, the capabilities of smallholders to access those products is low. The Republic of Moldova has also been impacted by the recent restrictions on export of agriculture products imposed by the countries in the region. This is expected to influence the increase of the export of cereals from Moldova and might lead to a food security risk for the country. The low number of precipitations is increasing the risk of having a drought which will decrease significantly cereals, fruit and other plant origin products' harvest.

## Way Forward

- Continuous monitoring and analysis of the key indicators and processes in agriculture and food systems (food supply, stocks, prices)
- Prepare and implement an emergency recovery plan of the sector
- Provide financial and technical support to smallholder farms
- Enhance the capacities of the public authorities for drought assessment and response

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*For more information: Tudor Robu, Assistant FAO Representative in Moldova, Email:  
Tudor.Robu@fao.org*