

THE JOINT MARKET MONITORING INITIATIVE (JMMI)

The Afghanistan Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) was launched by the **Afghanistan Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) and partners**, in collaboration with REACH Initiative (REACH), and funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). The objective is to provide regular updates on prices of key items and market functionality to inform Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). Data presented in this snapshot was gathered by JMMI partners during eight monthly rounds of data collection across 29 provinces of Afghanistan throughout March to December 2020. On average, each round accounted for 800 key informant (KIs) interviews with traders and wholesalers sampled at district level based on partners coverage, access, and operations.

This snapshot aims to inform the CVWG partners and the broader humanitarian community about the effect of seasonality on markets and prices of specific items. For this snapshot, three key food groups were selected from the monthly JMMI data collection, namely: cereals (including local wheat, and imported wheat), fresh products (tomatoes, potatoes, and onions), pulses (split peas, beans, and lentils).

Findings presented are indicative of local market dynamics in assessed markets across Afghanistan. REACH and the CVWG will continue monitoring these trends into the early months of 2021.

KEY FINDINGS

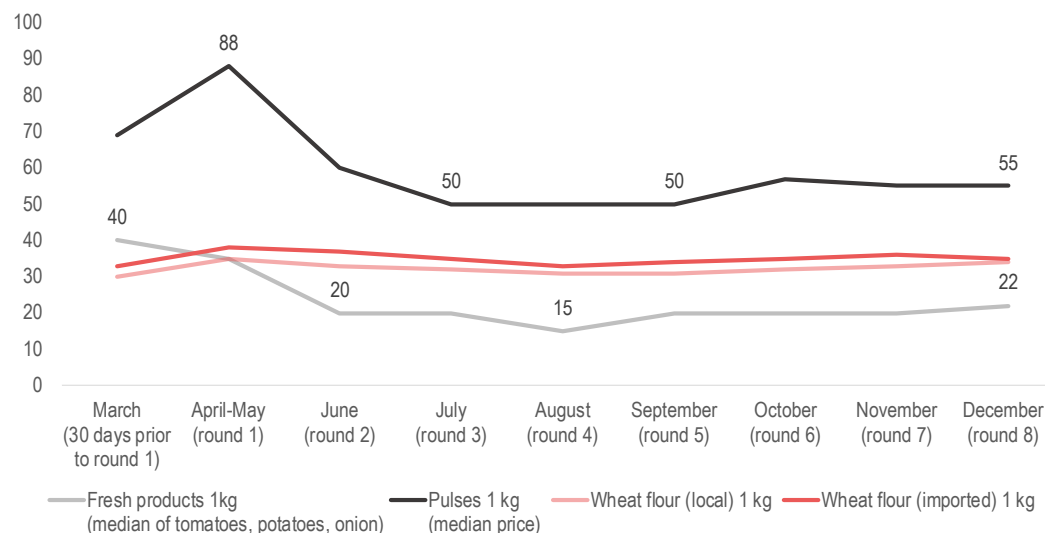
- Findings suggest that **prices of key groups of food commodities remained fairly stable since March 2020**, with the exception of pulses, which spiked between March and June 2020, and fresh products, due to the change in prices of tomatoes, as visible in the second line graph.
- In spite of the differences between local and imported wheat, and of the border closure at the outbreak of COVID-19 (March-May 2020), the **prices of the assessed food groups remained aligned and fairly stable across 2020**.
- When observing just the prices of fresh products (tomatoes, potatoes, and onions), it is possible to note that, while the price of onions and potatoes remained fairly stable, **tomatoes were significantly more expensive between March and May, and again after November 2020**. These variations may easily be justified by the seasonality and limited availability of this commodity during winter.

SEASONALITY AND ACCESS TO THE MARKETPLACES

- The JMMI also captures the percentage of KIs reporting that customers encountered barriers to accessing the marketplace. In April/May, 92% of traders reported at least one barrier, with **"fear of exposure to COVID-19 and public health restrictions"** most frequently reported. **The proportion of traders reporting that customers experience barriers to access the market decreased between June and September**, and reached what appears to be a plateau, at approximately 60%, between November-December 2020.
- In August, however, **"seasonality"** appeared for the first time as a reported barrier to accessing marketplaces, with 9% of the KIs indicating it as a main challenge. This percentage increased to 27% in the following months.
- Additional challenges that may reflect the seasonality aspect are the KIs' reported difficulties in meeting demand. Whilst prevalence of difficulties did not appear to change notably (7% in July and August, 4% from September onwards), the reported reasons did. **The change in reporting from COVID-19 to financial constraints, reduced movements, and difficulties in transporting items may reflect a shift in the impact of COVID-19 on markets from public health restrictions to financial concerns and seasonality.**
- Wheat (both local and imported) and vegetable oil consistently remained the most frequently reported commodities difficult to restock and obtain.

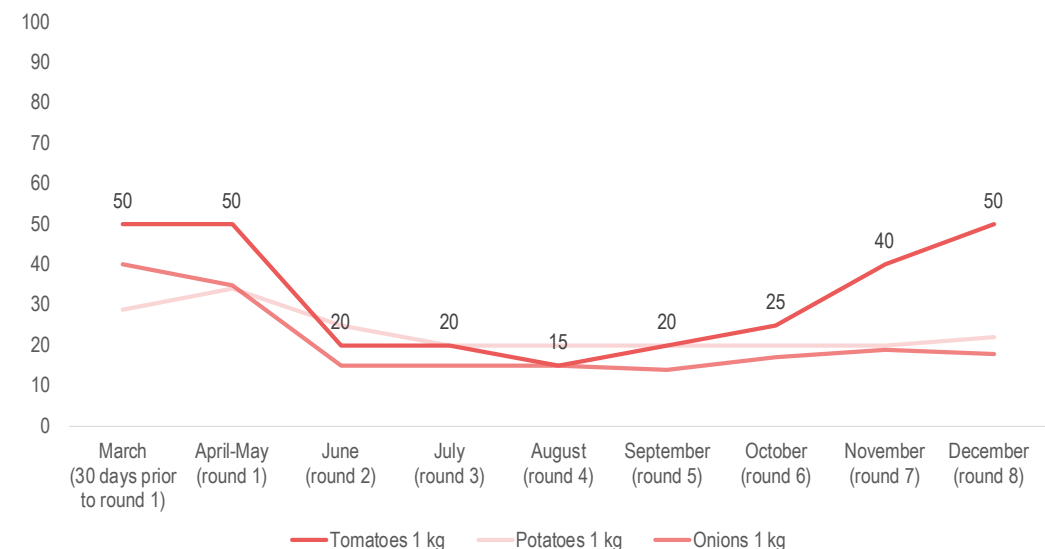
MEDIAN COST OF KEY FOOD ITEMS OVER TIME, BY ROUND

IN AFN



MEDIAN COST OF FRESH PRODUCTS OVER TIME, BY ROUND

IN AFN



METHODOLOGY

The JMMI assessment employed a quantitative key informant interview (KII) approach. The methodology includes surveys with purposively sampled traders (both retail and wholesale), acting as key informants (KIs) for their respective markets. Participants are selected through partner KI networks in their respective market areas.

Each KI was asked to report on general market functionality indicators, as well as prices for all relevant items that they trade. Depending on access and availability, partners conduct 4 KIIs per item with retail traders, and 2 KIIs per item for wholesale traders (for food and NFIs). KIs were asked for information encompassing the 30 days prior to data collection. Findings represent KIs' understanding of the situation in their markets and therefore are **indicative only**.

All prices were triangulated with the World Food Program (WFP) price monitoring for equivalent products. Further information on WFP's price analysis can be accessed [here](#).

Challenges & Limitations

- Due to COVID-19, data collection continued to be difficult as enumerators faced challenges finding KIs to interview at the markets.
- A total of 29 provinces were consistently covered in the eight rounds of the JMMI. Nationwide coverage is yet to be achieved.
- Each round, JMMI partners assessed available KIs based on snowball sampling and their area of coverage/access. While some KIs were interviewed in each of the eight monthly rounds, other were interviewed once. Yet, the tool remained almost the same across rounds, with just minor changes and adjustments as lessons learned (LL) component.

ABOUT THE AFGHANISTAN CVWG AND REACH INITIATIVE

The Afghanistan Cash and Voucher Working Group (CVWG) is an inter-cluster technical working group set up to ensure cash and voucher assistance (CVA) in Afghanistan is coordinated, follows a common rationale, is context specific and is undertaken in a manner that does not inflict harm or exacerbate vulnerabilities of the affected population. The working group was initially established in 2012 under the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC), but since 2014 it has become an inter-cluster working group which is overseen by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT). The working group is currently co-chaired by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the World Food Programme (WFP). For more information, please visit <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/cash-voucher>.

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @REACH_info.

JMMI Partners

- **AADA** - Agency for Assistance and Development of Afghanistan
- **ACF** - Action Against Hunger
- **ACTD** - Afghanistan Center for Training and Development
- **ACTED**
- **Caritas Germany (with RCDC and VOPOFA)**
- **RCDC** - Rural Capacities Development Committee
- **VOPOFA** - Village of Peace Organization for Afghans
- **CRDSA** - Centre of Rehabilitation and Development Services for Afghanistan
- **DRC** - Danish Refugee Council
- **HAADAF** - Humanitarian Assistance And Development Association for Afghanistan
- **IOM** - International Organization for Migration
- **IRC** - International Rescue Committee
- **JACK** - Just for Afghan Capacity and Knowledge
- **JIA** - The Johanniter International
- **MEDAIR**
- **OHW** - Organization of Human Welfare
- **Save the Children**
- **WHH** - Welthungerhilfe
- **World Vision**

