



# GIEWS Country Brief Bangladesh

Reference Date: 18-February-2021

## FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Area planted with 2021 wheat crop estimated at above-average level
- Above-average cereal production obtained in 2020
- Cereal import requirements in 2020/21 forecast above five-year average
- Prices of rice at high levels in January in Dhaka market
- Effects of COVID-19 pandemic increase poverty

## Area planted with 2021 wheat crop estimated at above-average level

Planting of the 2021 mostly irrigated “Boro” paddy crop, which accounts for about 55 percent of the annual output, has just been completed. Favourable weather conditions since the beginning of November 2020, strong domestic prices and ample supplies of irrigation water, following above-average June to October monsoon rains, supported planting activities and benefitted crop germination. In an attempt to increase productivity, the Government encouraged hybrid rice cultivation through a series of measures, including financial support and provision of hybrid seeds. Harvesting is expected to start in April 2021.

Planting of the 2021 wheat crop, to be harvested from March onwards, is completed and crops are growing under favourable weather conditions. The area planted is estimated to be close to the five-year average, while the increased use of high-yielding seed varieties boost yield prospects. The official production target is set at 1.3 million tonnes, slightly above the five-year average.

## Above-average cereal production obtained in 2020

The 2020 paddy cropping season has just been completed. The “Boro” and “Aus” crops, harvested earlier in the year, benefitted from generally favourable weather conditions and their output is estimated at a bumper level. The production of the “Aman” crop, which accounts for about 40 percent of the annual output, was estimated to its lowest level in three years, due to flash floods between July and August. Overall, 2020 aggregate paddy production is estimated to have remained stagnant at 54.9 million tonnes.

Harvesting of the 2020 main season maize crop was completed in July and the secondary season crop, for harvest from March

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Crop Calendar

(\*major foodcrop)



lean period

lean period

Sowing

Growing

Harvesting

Source: FAO/GIEWS, FAO/WFP CFSAM 2008.

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### Cereal Production

	2015-2019 average	2019	2020 estimate	change 2020/2019
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	53 205	54 784	54 850	0.1
Maize	2 920	3 569	3 900	9.3
Wheat	1 225	1 020	1 030	1.0
Others	6	6	6	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>57 357</b>	<b>59 380</b>	<b>59 786</b>	<b>0.7</b>

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

onwards, is growing under favourable weather conditions. The 2020 aggregate maize output is forecast at a high level of 3.9 million tonnes, mostly reflecting a record area planted, driven by the robust demand of the feed industry. Generally, favourable weather conditions benefitted maize yields in the 2020 main season, although localized losses were reported in the north due to floods between July and August 2020.

The production of the 2020 winter wheat crop, harvested last April, is officially estimated at 1.03 million tonnes, close to the previous year's level.

Overall, the 2020 aggregate cereal production is estimated at an above-average level of 60 million tonnes.

### Cereal import requirements in 2020/21 forecast above five-year average

Wheat import requirements, which account for the largest share of the cereal imports, are estimated at a record 6.6 million tonnes in the 2020/21 marketing year (July/June), following a steady increasing trend since 2012/13. The strong demand for wheat largely reflects a shift in local diet preferences. Similarly, maize import requirements are projected at a high level of 1.6 million tonnes, due to the sustained demand for feed by the growing livestock and fish industries. Rice imports in calendar year 2021 are forecast at 1.8 million tonnes, up from a mere 4 000 tonnes imported in 2020, as a surge in domestic rice prices prompted the Government to lower the custom duties on rice from 65.5 to 25 percent in December 2020. In addition, the Government has been purchasing rice on the international market to boost State reserves and secure supplies to meet the public distribution needs.

Overall, total cereal import requirements in 2020/21 are forecast at 9.5 million tonnes, well above the five-year average.

### Prices of rice at high levels in January in Dhaka market

Prices of rice in the Dhaka market increased steadily throughout 2020 and particularly in the March-April period, reflecting tight market availabilities, exacerbated by an upsurge in domestic demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, in January 2021, prices of rice were more than 35 percent above their year-earlier values and at their highest level since October 2017.

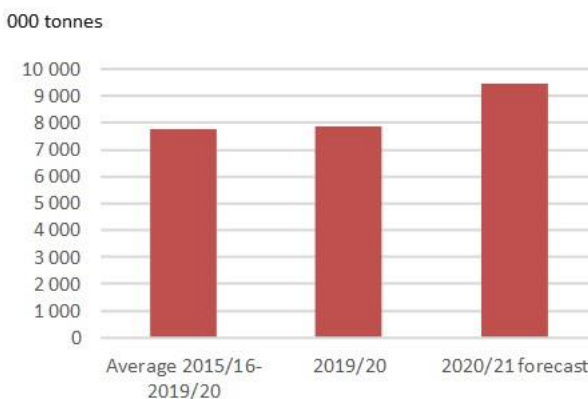
Prices of mostly imported wheat flour (locally called "atta") decreased in the first part of 2020, reflecting adequate market supplies from the bumper output harvested in April and above-average imports. Starting from August, prices have been generally increasing, supported by trends in the international markets. Overall, prices in January 2021 were slightly above their year-earlier levels.

### Effects of COVID-19 pandemic increase poverty

The food security situation for a large number of people is of concern, despite the Government's expansion of social protection. Losses in income and remittances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its containment measures led to an increase in poverty. According to an official estimate, as of June 2020, 29.5 percent of the total population was poor, compared to 20.5 percent in June 2019. In addition, the high

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### Cereals Imports

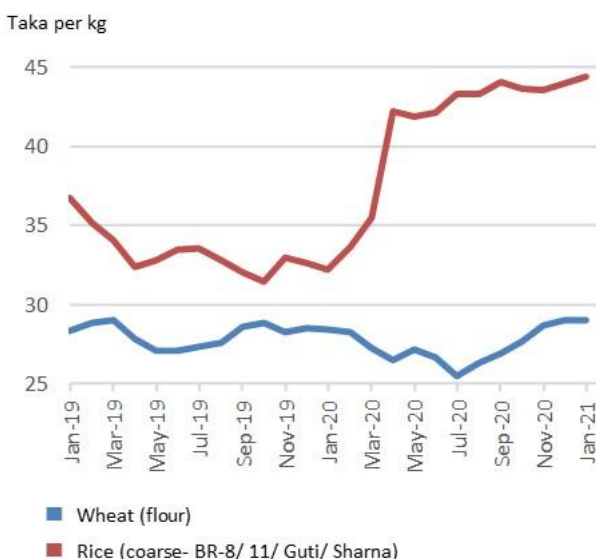


Note: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.

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### Retail cereal prices in Dhaka



Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.

prices of rice and other important food items, including edible oils (soybean oil and loose palm oil), have severely constrained the purchasing power for food for a large section of the vulnerable population above the poverty line. Tropical Cyclone “Amphan” in May 2020 in southwestern parts of the country and widespread floods in July 2020 have affected the livelihoods of about 5 million people and caused damages to houses and infrastructures.

The country hosts about 860 000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, most of them residing in the Cox’s Bazar District. A joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment published in November 2020 showed that the living conditions of the refugees and host communities have deteriorated in compared to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment shows that the percentage of refugee households with a poor consumption score jumped to 15 percent from 5 percent in the pre-COVID-19 period, while for the host communities the score increased from 3 to 8 percent.

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