

# Impact of COVID-19 on Food Systems and Rural Livelihoods in Nigeria

COVID-19 Country Report 2 - December 2020

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## Introduction

This study provides insights from a second survey assessing COVID-19 impacts on agricultural commercialisation, food and nutrition security, labour and employment, and well-being in rural Nigeria. Data for round 2 (R2) were collected between September and October 2020, from 109 households that were interviewed in mid-July (R1). Households were drawn from a stratified random sample from three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ogun State and two in Kaduna State. This survey data is complemented by insights from seven in-depth key informant interviews. This analysis compares COVID-19 effects in the second quarter (Q2) and the third quarter (Q3) of 2020, which corresponds to the first and second 3-month periods after Nigeria's countrywide lockdown was put in place.

## Context

The COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria commenced on 30 March 2020, lasting for 3 months before a substantial relaxation began on 1 July. By the end of June, 25,694 infections and 590 deaths related to COVID-19 had been recorded, rising to 58,848 infections and 1,112 deaths by the end of September. By late November, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control was reporting a cumulative total of 67,412 cases, 1,173 deaths, and 3,184 active cases.<sup>1</sup> Despite recording 15,532 new infections in June alone, normal daily livelihood activities resumed substantially across the country from the beginning of July, but federal and state governments continued to monitor the situation and encourage compliance to safety regulations.

## Health and disease

Results show that only 64% of households followed COVID-19 safety guidelines during R2 compared with 86% in R1. Respondents stated that the major reason for this non-compliance was the over-restrictive nature of the guidelines and discomfort of using face masks, especially since known cases of COVID-19 were very rare in their communities. The proportion of respondents who had someone in their households with COVID-19 symptoms fell from 5% in R1 to below 1% in R2. About 72% of households were able to access healthcare services in R2 compared with 63% reported in R1.

*"With lockdown relaxed, farmers were able to go about their business, but have reduced their farm sizes due to COVID-19-related production constraints, as well as the emerging security challenges from bandits and herdsmen... Food is likely to be more expensive in the coming year due to expected low production."* - Farmer representative, Chikun LGA, Kaduna State

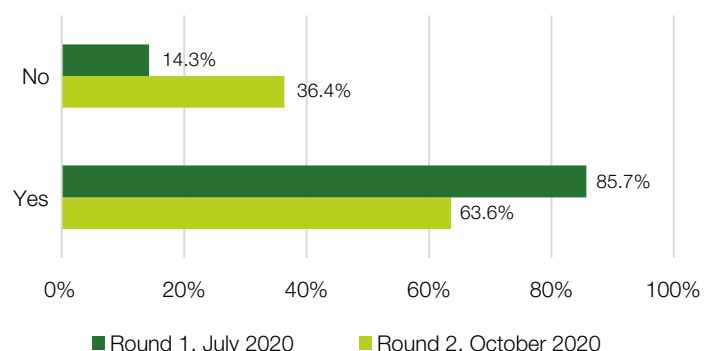
## Key findings

- There was a substantial decline in compliance with government safety regulations on COVID-19 in public spaces, from 86% in R1 to 63% in R2.
- The high cost of farm labour observed during lockdown continued during Q3, even after most restrictions were lifted.
- The proportion of households that experienced a diminished ability to sell their produce at the farmgate declined from 71% in Q2 to 55% during Q3.
- A substantially lower proportion of households (32%) received COVID-19-related assistance in Q3 compared with Q2 (49%).
- Higher prices of food items, seen during Q2 2020, worsened in Q3; 71-100% of households claimed that food prices, except for vegetables, were higher in Q3 compared with Q2
- Food consumption improved among most households in R2. For example, in R2, 47% of households had occasions when members were hungry but could get food to eat, down from 63% reported in R1.

## Farming, labour and marketing

Findings show that 65% of households reported being able to access off-farm work outside their village during R2, compared to 41% in R1. About 83% of households had access to hired labour during Q3 2020, up from 69% in Q2. R2 results also show that the cost of casual labour increased for 76% of households relative to 47% in R1. Only 55% of households said they experienced a diminished ability to sell their produce at the farmgate during Q3 compared with 71% in Q2. Furthermore, 44% and 33% of households interviewed in R2 experienced decreased farm and business activities respectively, which is

Are you following the guidelines put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19?



1 NCDC: COVID-19 Situation Report, Weekly Epidemiological Report 7: 23rd – 29th November 2020 - [bit.ly/373TXEw](https://bit.ly/373TXEw)

a significant improvement on figures obtained in R1 (79% and 62%). Some 94% of respondents also stated that their households experienced increased transportation costs for people and goods in Q3, up from 86% in Q2. The ability to sell farm produce also declined. About 71% of households reported a reduced ability to sell at the farm gate, while 86% faced increased transportation costs. About 82% reported a decline in the number of buyers coming to purchase farm produce directly from them.

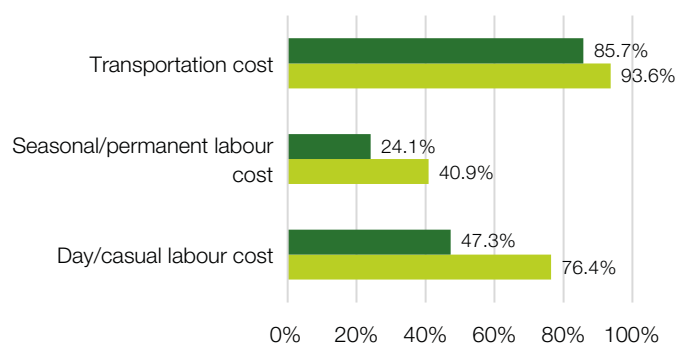
### Availability of services for agricultural production

Most households (45%) reported an increase in availability of purchased farm inputs in R2 compared with R1. The majority of households also claimed that they experienced higher prices for purchased farm inputs (91%), tillage services (50%) and land rentals (55%) in R2 compared to R1. This suggests that the negative price effect of COVID-19 deepened in Q3 relative to Q2.

#### Food and nutrition security

Depending on food type, 33-54% of sampled households claimed that food availability increased, while 15-32% claimed that it declined, in Q3 compared to Q2. Though, except for vegetables, 71-100% of households claimed that food prices were higher in R2 than R1. The proportion of households that had occasions when members were hungry but could get food to eat fell to 47% in R2, from 63% in R1. Furthermore, the proportion of households that had members who did not eat for a whole day due to lack of resources declined slightly from 18% to 16% between the Q2 and Q3. Finally, 76% of households indicated that their overall costs of living were higher in Q3 compared with Q2.

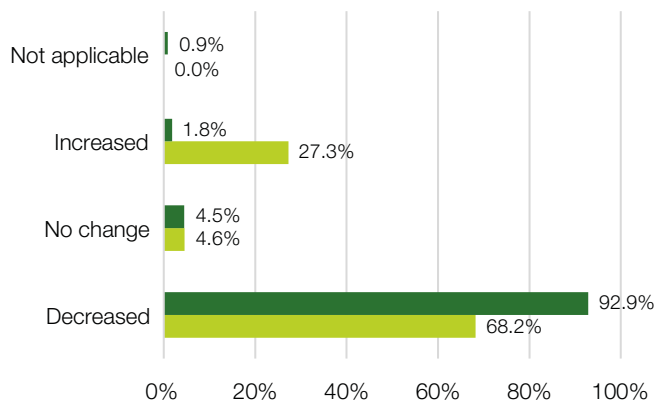
Proportion of households that experienced increase in costs due to COVID-19



#### Responses to the threat of COVID-19

This study investigated the effect government responses to COVID-19 had on the livelihoods of farming households in selected LGAs in Ogun and Kaduna. Only 53% of households reported restrictions to movement outside their village in R2, down from 93% in R1, when the lockdown was fully in effect. Households that experienced school closures fell from 100% in R1 to 77% in R2. During school closures, most girls spent their time doing schoolwork at home and housework, while most boys carried out farm work and paid work away from home. Furthermore, households who received COVID-19-related assistance declined from 49% in R1 to 32% in R2. The government was the major source of COVID-19-related assistance in Q3, which was provided to 11% of surveyed households, down from 15% in Q2.

Number of buyers or traders coming to do business in your community



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