



# Food systems and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: Trade performance during the crisis

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## 1. Editorial



Three months ago, the aim was to identify the threats and risks that could affect international trade in agriculture and fisheries in Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of COVID-19. On that occasion, risks were predicted on the demand side, due to the economic crisis that would impact on consumers, and the supply side, due to disruptions in the mobility of workers and products. The conclusion was that a high level of dependence on certain partners, who might stop sending or buying products, represented a significant vulnerability for the country that needed to be considered. Still, countries mainly dependent on food imports seemed to be more vulnerable to food shortages.

As time goes by, we want to take another closer look at the commercial situation of agrifood products that are produced in the region, and the conclusion seems to be that the food systems have proved to be more resilient than expected. However, this conclusion does not apply to all by-products and it is too early to make such a strong statement. We have not yet reached the end of this crisis, which is not likely to happen in the short term. Therefore, it remains crucial to monitor the performance of food trade worldwide and to warn against the policies that have a negative impact on global and national food security.

This issue delves into the behaviour of trade in agricultural and fishery products during the crisis, especially those destined for food, and we will try to identify the reasons for this evolution. We also highlight the main recommendations to strengthen a positive trend in marketing.

## 2. Key messages



- Before the pandemic, Latin America and the Caribbean was expected to become the world's largest food producer in the coming years, contributing 28 percent of agricultural and fisheries products.
- This projection does not seem to be affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The marketing of regional agricultural and fisheries products has actually increased by 6 percent in the last six months, compared to the same time last year.
- In contrast, other traded goods have declined by 21 percent, reflecting a loss of productive capacity and a process of refocusing the Latin American and Caribbean export basket on primary commodities.
- In other words, to date, the agrifood sector has been more resilient than the rest of the internationally traded goods.
- Soy, sugar and their derivatives are the fastest-growing agrifood sectors during the pandemic period; the most affected are live animals, fruits and vegetables. This confirms that the food products most vulnerable to this crisis are those labour-intensive and perishable products.
- The above statement, by the way, is detrimental to the availability of healthy food to consumers.
- Exported products have been mainly sent to countries outside the region (87 percent). A relatively low percentage (13 percent) is traded within the region.
- Intraregional exports declined because of a considerable drop in the purchasing power of Brazil and Chile, the two main importers of agricultural and fisheries products in the region.
- On the contrary, so far, extraregional exports have been less affected: the demand from the main destinations – United States of America, the countries of the European Union, and China – has not varied significantly, even showing growth in China and Asia.
- It is extremely risky for exports to depend only on these partners, as these economies are entering a recession of unprecedented depth in recent history.
- An effort must be made to diversify the portfolio of countries to which exports are directed. To begin, consideration should be given to how to increase intraregional trade.
- In order to minimise risks and ensure food security, the number of countries providing food needs to be increased. This is a particularly important challenge for Central America, which imports much of its food from the United States of America.
- Finally, appropriate measures need to be taken to improve the flow of products –especially perishables –, such as facilitating logistics, and health and customs formalities.

### 3. Evolution of trade during the COVID-19 crisis

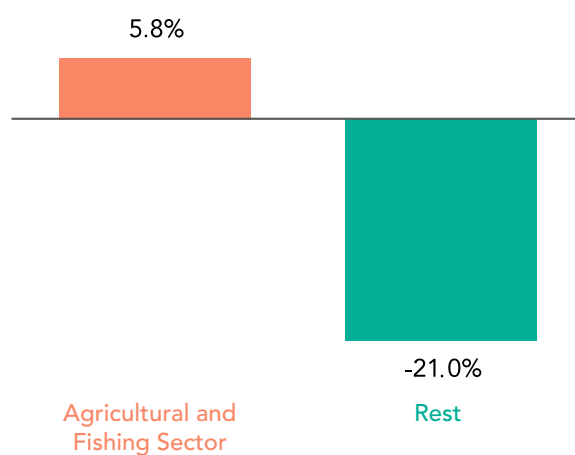


#### 3.1. Agricultural and fisheries export performances

Latin America and the Caribbean is a food exporting region: it is responsible for 14 percent of the world's production of agricultural and fisheries products. Before the pandemic, it was projected to double its contribution by 2028, growing to 28 percent and becoming the world's largest food-exporting region (OECD and FAO, 2019).

Although this projection could be affected by the COVID-19 crisis, it can be seen that products related to agriculture and fisheries have grown by 6 percent in relation to the same period last year, based on an analysis of available national figures – which contemplate 88 percent of the agricultural and fisheries products marketed in the region between January and June 2020. This figure becomes crucial when we see that the rest of the goods exported by the region show a 21 percent fall, mainly due to losses in manufacturing, mining and fuel (ECLAC, 2020a); which suggest a loss of productive capacity and a process of refocusing the export basket on primary commodities (ECLAC, 2020b).

Figure 1/ Percentage change in the value (FOB) of exports, January-June 2020 versus the same period in 2019.



Source: FAO, based on official information from national sources (customs, central banks and statistical institutes).

If we analyse only the products destined to food, the significant growth of some agro-industrial products stands out, such as soy, sugar and their derivatives; followed by some primary agricultural products, such as eggs and dairy. On the other hand, exports of live animals, fruits and vegetables have been the most affected sectors. This confirms that the food products most vulnerable to this crisis are those with; these products are labour-intensive and perishable, which is detrimental to the availability of healthier food for the population during the crisis.

**Figure 2/** Percentage change in Latin American and Caribbean exports by subcategory, January-June 2020 versus the same period in 2019.



Source: FAO, based on national figures from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and El Salvador.

### 3.2. Destination of agricultural and fisheries exports

Latin America and the Caribbean exports USD 160 billion worth of products annually. Eighty-seven percent of these are destined for other regions of the world. The countries of the region receive only the remaining 13 percent (FAO, 2020a).

At the subregional level, less than 4 percent of the Caribbean's exports go to other countries in the subregion; over 93 percent go to markets outside Latin America and the Caribbean. Central America, including Mexico, allocates about 9 percent to the subregion, 1.5 percent to South America and almost 90 percent to countries outside the region. South American countries send 14 percent of their exports to other countries in the region; the rest go outside (FAO, 2020a).

**Table 1/ Food exports\* in Latin America and the Caribbean: intraregional and interregional trade (in USD millions)**

Export Region	Destination				
	World	Caribbean	Central America	South America	Rest of the world
Caribbean	1 279	48	23	10	1 197
Central America**	40 536	316	3 594	624	36 002
South America	118 268	415	1 946	14 264	101 643
Latin America and the Caribbean	160 083	779	5 563	14 898	138 842

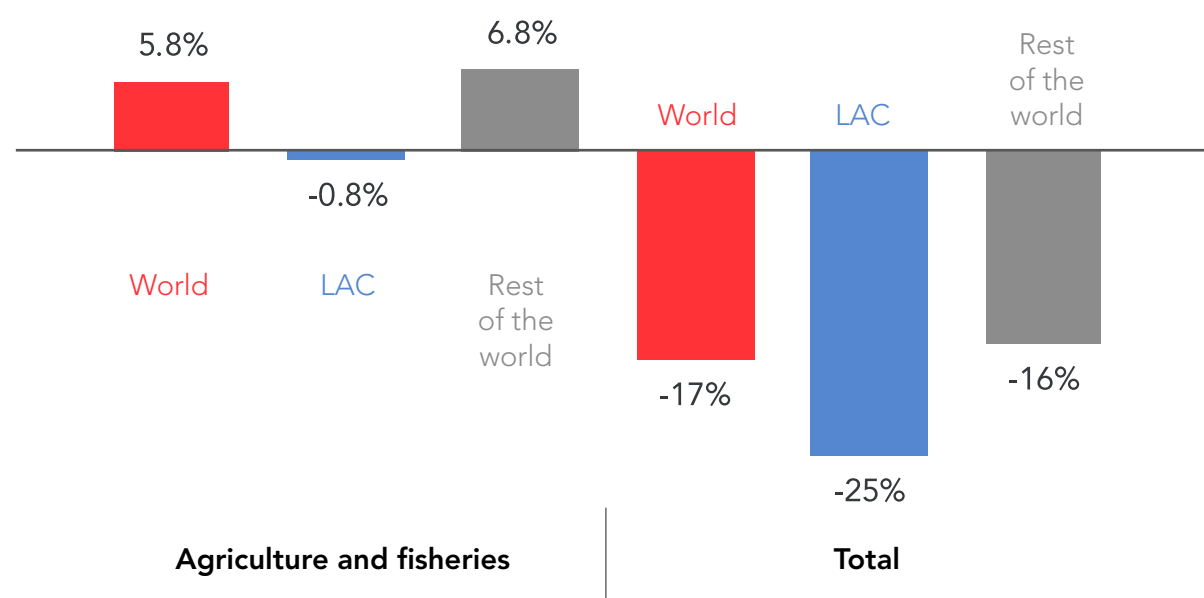
\* Figures are for 2017, the latest year with available information for most Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the case of Panama, the figures are for 2016.

\*\* Includes Mexico, which represents 62 percent of total food.

Source: FAO (2020a).

An analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on intraregional and interregional trade shows that exports to countries within the region have been hit harder than exports to countries outside the region. Agro-industry continues to be the most resilient subsector, even showing positive growth during the crisis. However, the agriculture and fisheries sector remains the most resilient sub-sector, even showing positive growth during the crisis. (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3/ Percentage change in intraregional and interregional exports, January-June 2020 versus the same period in 2019.**



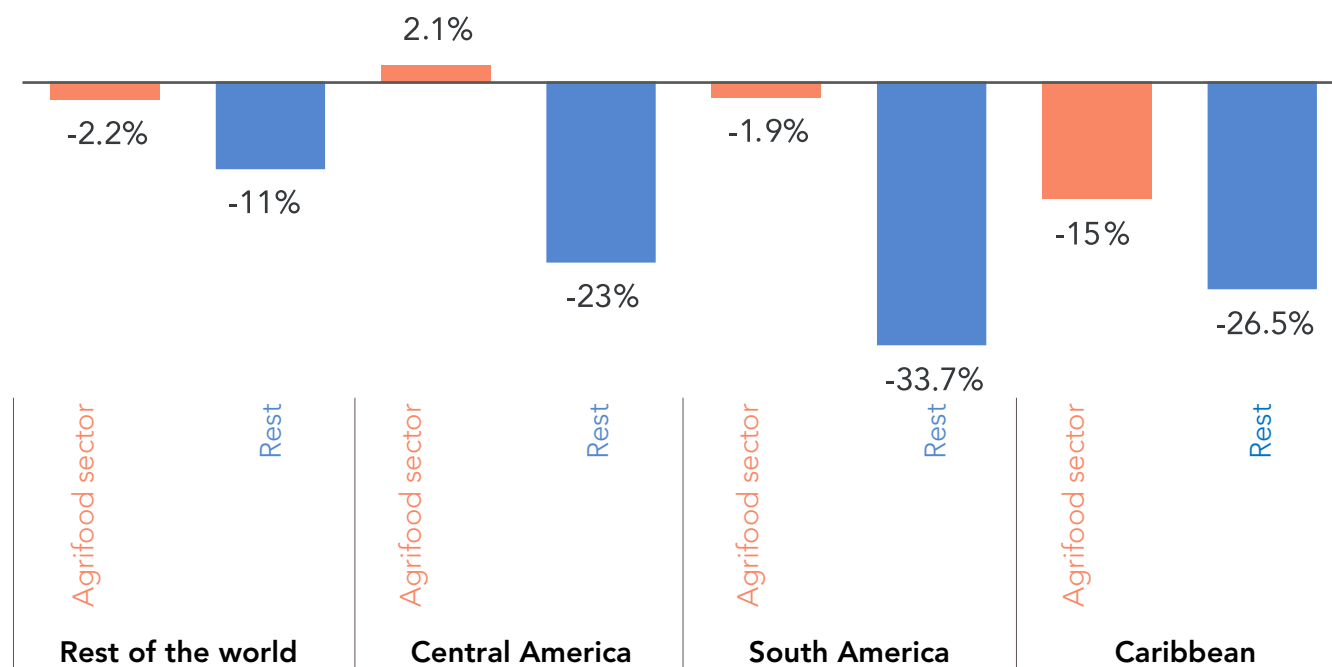
Source: FAO, based on official information from national sources (customs, central banks and statistical institutes). The values of intraregional trade include estimates in the case of Ecuador, Peru and the Caribbean economies.

At the intraregional level, the decline can be explained by the economic crises in Brazil, the main importer of processed products in the region, with 3 percent of the total, and in Chile, the second largest importer in the region, although in smaller volume (1.9 percent).

The three main destinations for the region's agricultural and fisheries products – accounting for 53 percent of total exports – are outside the region. The United States of America is the prime destination, accounting for 21 percent of total exports (FAO, 2020b).

In that country, food imports have fallen slightly (2.2 percent). According to the data analysed, the most affected products are fruit (fresh and processed), fish (fresh and processed) and cereals. In contrast, products derived from sugar, milk and meat have grown the most. We can notice the positive figures shown by Central America concerning agrifood products exported to the United States of America.

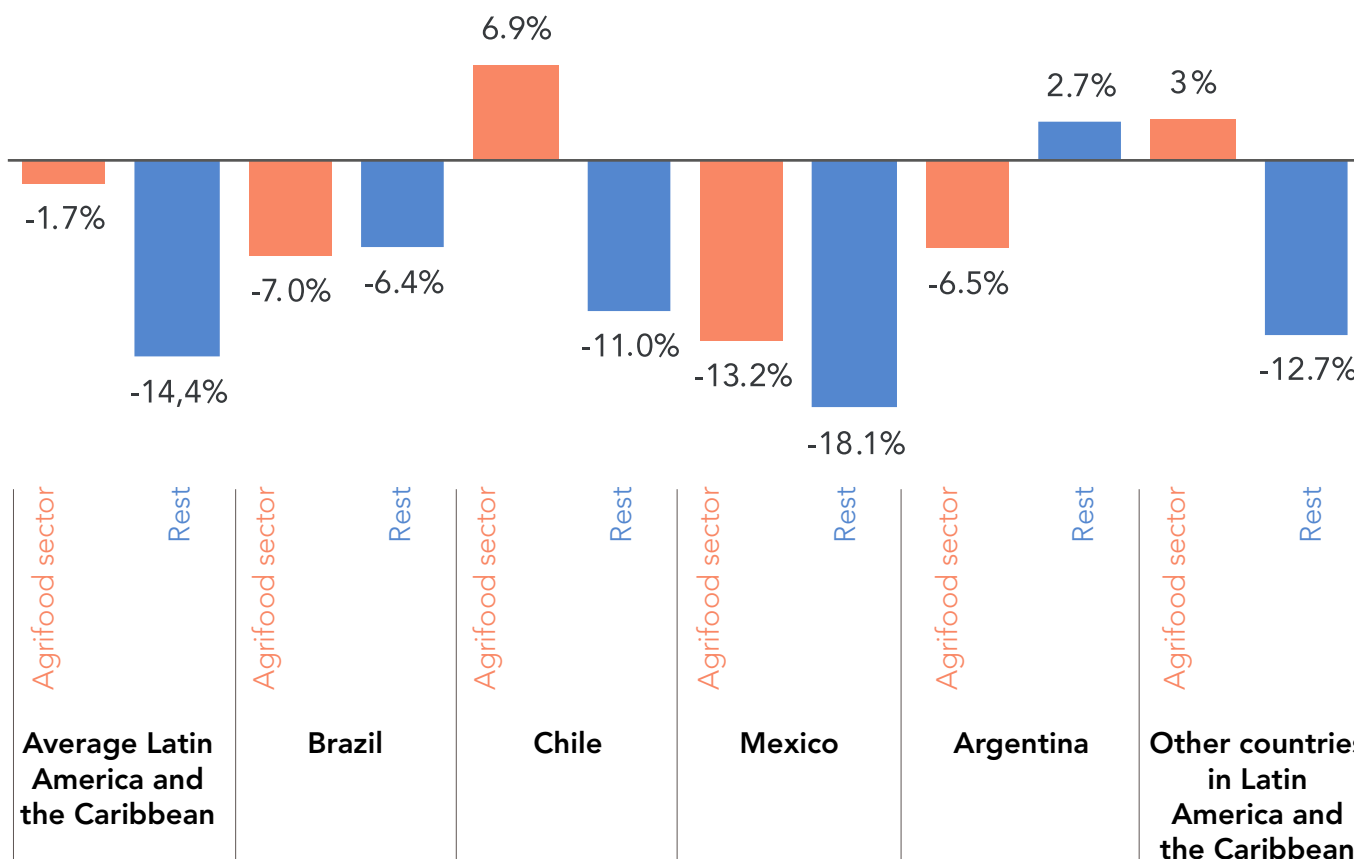
**Figure 4/** Percentage change in United States of America imports, by category and origin, January-May 2020 versus the same period in 2019.



Source: FAO, with data from the USA Census Bureau (2020).

The second most important trading partner of Latin America and the Caribbean is the European Union, which purchases 18 percent of the region's agrifood products (FAOSTAT, 2020). This partner experienced a decline of nearly 2 percent in the marketing of agrifood products from the region. The growth that Chile has experienced in its exports to the old continent stands out (6.9 percent) (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5/** Percentage variation in United States of America imports, by category and origin from January-May 2020 versus the same period in 2019.

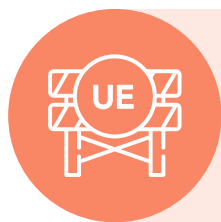


Source: FAO, based on European Commission (2020).

The People's China is the third most important destination: this country buys 14 percent of the products produced in the region (FAOSTAT, 2020). It is also the fastest recovering partner. In fact, agricultural and livestock products destined for Asia and China have benefited the most. Chinese total agrifood imports (annualised) increased by 11.1 percent in May 2020, compared to the same month last year (Arias, 2020).



### 3.3. Main reasons for this behaviour



#### Trade restrictions

As the COVID-19 crisis deepened, concerns arose about the response of countries with unilateral trade restrictions on food products. Indeed, by mid-year, 15 countries had imposed active and binding restrictions on food exports, especially in the Eastern European region. In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, trade liberalisation measures exceed export restrictions in the food and medical products sectors (IADB, 2020). Honduras is an exception, imposing a selective restriction on red bean exports; and so is Costa Rica, which initiated a World Trade Organization (WTO) procedure against Panama for trade blockade. The effects of these restrictions in the region are minimal since the countries that have implemented food export restrictions are not among the main food exporters to Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO, 2020c).



#### Volatility in food prices

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was feared that price volatility would affect both net food-importing and exporting countries. In the months leading up to the deepening crisis in the region, food prices had been falling steadily, concerning mainly exporting countries (FAO and ECLAC, 2020). During the first months of the crisis, some variations were observed in specific markets, but in most cases, prices moved within an expected range (FAO, 2020d). Since April, however, a rise outside the expected range has been observed in a large number of countries (ECLAC, 2020b), and this is a variable that should be monitored.



#### Transport disruptions

Any disruption in the transport of food can have severe impacts on its marketing. This is particularly true for shipping since it accounts for 90 percent of the movement of world trade (Torero, 2020). When restrictive travel measures and strict health protocols began to be implemented in ports, many crew members were trapped on their ships without being able to go ashore. This prevented crew change, with the consequent mental health problem that it entails. However, the countries were able to avoid a food crisis because these teams have continued to work. Although many countries have relaxed blockades in their ports, the movement of ships sailing to destinations where crew changes are prohibited has decreased by 20 percent. In destinations with lighter restrictions, there is a 6 percent decrease. Therefore, it is necessary to move forward on measures that allow for crew changes and non-disruption of food trade (Torero, 2020). Containerised maritime trade in Latin America and the Caribbean has fallen by an average of 6 percent between January and May compared with the same period in 2019 (ECLAC, 2020a).

Maritime trade is even more critical now because air freight rates are limited. In recent months, air passenger traffic has practically disappeared (-99 percent) and cargo traffic has dropped considerably (-62.1 percent) (ECLAC, 2020a). With most passenger flights cancelled, everything has been limited to cargo flights, so air freight rates have skyrocketed (Giordano and Ortiz de Mendivil, 2020). This has affected perishable goods such as certain fruits, vegetables, flowers and seafood. Thus, importers have been forced to place orders in large volumes to secure cargo space, but with a high risk of not being able to sell them later. All this results in higher prices for products of high commercial value, such as asparagus, fish and flowers (Torero, 2020).



## 4. Trade facilitation measures

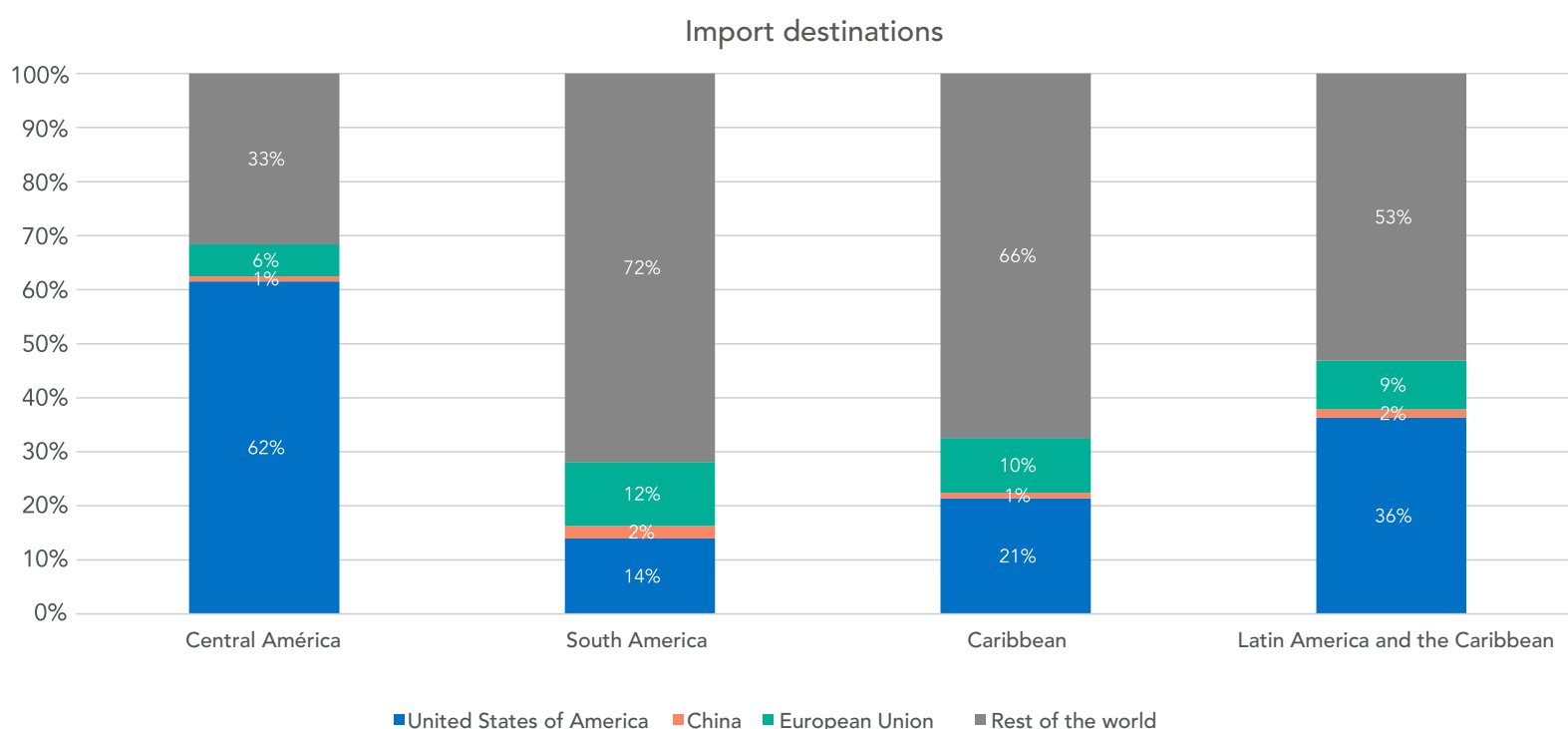


Trade policies can do much more than simply prevent harm. They can keep the wheels of food value chains turning, driving initiatives that facilitate trade. In short, they present an opportunity to mitigate the effects of the crisis in the short term and lay the foundations for a resilient post-crisis recovery (Giordano and Ortiz de Mendivil, 2020).

### 4.1. Diversify supplier portfolio

In Latin America and the Caribbean, several net food-importing countries depend on food produced outside the region. This represents a risk for the food security of these countries, because if a disruption of food logistics chains were to occur in the immediate future, the availability of food in these countries could be affected. This is a particularly sensitive issue for Central America, since more than half of the food imported comes from a single country outside the region.

Figure 6/ Origin of agricultural product imports by subregion.



Source: FAO, based on data from FAOSTAT (FAO, 2020).

In the face of possible depletion of national reserves and reduced availability of food in traditional foreign trade flows, importing countries must establish new ties with alternative partners to replace deficit flows. In other words, food-importing countries should be on a constant search for suppliers.

In an abnormal situation, such as the one we are experiencing, facilitating a rapprochement between the parties is essential, so that they can reach future agreements in commodities trade. It is necessary to define the countries that could be food suppliers, monitor international prices and seek financing alternatives, in order to make the exchange transparent and reduce possible speculative phenomena in times of emergency. In these cases, the competent public institutions are responsible for mobilising to initiate these processes of evaluation and identification of new intraregional or interregional partners, such as the ministries of agriculture, economy, foreign affairs or finance, as well as the offices in charge of promoting exports. It is therefore urgent that countries immediately review their trade and fiscal policy options and their likely impacts, in order to create an enabling environment for food trade.

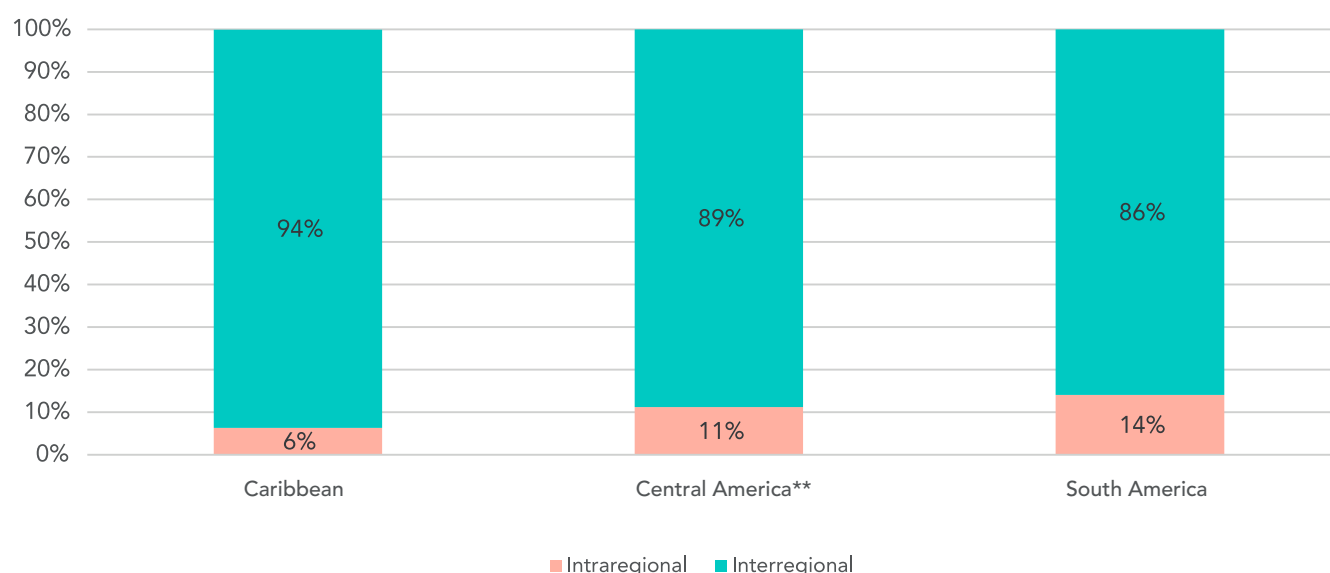


## 4.2. Strengthen intraregional trade

Eighty-seven percent of the value of food exports is destined for countries outside the region, and 53 percent is concentrated in three trading partners: the United States of America, the European Union, and China. This dependence poses a serious economic risk. In any of these countries, if the recession deepens to unprecedented levels, as is indeed predicted (Giordano and Ortiz de Mendivil, 2020), the economic and social consequences in the region could be devastating. The same could happen if access to these ports were blocked for health reasons.

Besides, the fact that the region is a food exporter and yet a significant number of countries are dependent on food imports from countries outside Latin America and the Caribbean (island countries) is a risk to food security that we must address.

Figure 7/ Destination of food exports by subregion\*.



\* Figures are for 2017, the last year with available information for most Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the case of Panama, the figures are for 2016.

\*\* Includes Mexico, which represents 62 percent of total food.

Source: FAO, based on FAO 2020a.

Therefore, it appears necessary to develop and strengthen joint actions aimed at facilitating food trade among the countries of the region and thus ensure food security.

Deepening regional integration is all the more desirable in a crisis, as increasing the potential number of new markets and alternative partners will help accelerate recovery. Interregional integration helps to minimise food loss and waste in addition to providing greater food security.

To achieve this objective, communication and information channels in the region need to be optimised; trade intelligence or market intelligence tools are also necessary in order to monitor trade and demand for agrifood products. It is critical to develop a broad work schedule, under the provisions of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, by its acronym in Spanish), which includes integration mechanisms and networks of existing agreements to work on expanding the free trade area in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In an outstanding event, 34 ministers and secretaries of livestock, agriculture and fisheries of Latin America and the Caribbean held the First Hemispheric Meeting by remote means to share their policies, actions and plans in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food security of their populations, on agriculture, food systems and the rural world.

As part of this initiative, a hemispheric task force is currently in operation, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). In addition to this exceptional regional collaboration effort, two essential measures have emerged from this dialogue.

First, after seven months closed, the Mexican market will be reopened for Uruguayan rice. Mexico's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development reported that it will once again admit rice produced and exported by Uruguay. To this end, the Agricultural Services of the Uruguayan Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries are working on a protocol, since exports from the South American country to the Aztec country had been interrupted by the appearance of a pest in some containers. It is worth mentioning that Mexico had been one of the main destinations of Uruguayan rice between 2017 and 2019. So, recovering this market, even if the sales of Uruguayan rice have not suffered much impact from the crisis, is an effective and concrete way to strengthen Uruguay's export supply.

On the other hand, Mexico awarded Argentina a quota of 100 000 tonnes of black beans per year. This means about 140 million USD for the provinces of Northwest Argentina. Mexico usually applies a tariff of 45 percent to Argentine imports, but with the definition of this quota, a zero-tariff is applied, and the country can thus be a competitive player. The United States of America is usually Mexico's largest supplier, even though the country has a large domestic production of black beans. Another concrete action that demonstrates the existing potential of intraregional trade.

A second version of the hemispheric meeting was recently held in July, and there are plans to deepen this space for dialogue and sectoral exchange.

If considered this way, the crisis is an opportunity to review the bilateral agreements between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This can serve as a basis for deepening intraregional trade.

### 4.3. Improve product flow



**Facilitate logistical aspects to** promote proper functioning of food chains.

- Maintain lines of communication with public and private actors in the logistics chain to publicise the new processes and adjust them in a coordinated manner according to how the emergency evolves.
- Maximise the use of transport, optimising the space available in means of transport and facilitating the coordination of actors to make it more efficient.
- Use information technology to keep food logistics channels in operation.
- Recognise workers in ports, warehouses and transporters, as essential personnel to carry out their work.
- Facilitate the operation of ports, airports and the main means of food transport.
- Use non-invasive control mechanisms to speed up the clearance of goods, with specific channels for perishable products and those requiring a cold chain.





Countries should also **facilitate health and customs procedures to** expedite the flow of goods.

- Implement an expeditious process for licensing and certification related to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards to prevent legitimate health and safety regulations from unnecessarily hampering trade.
- Promote cooperation between customs and border control authorities to implement a simplified and expedited emergency procedure for the clearance of critical goods, with particular attention to food. In this regard, electronic copies of export certificates, safety certificates, among other procedures, could significantly facilitate this process.
- Work with reliable and certified importers, such as authorised economic operators, and with companies that regularly trade essential foods, to facilitate import and export processes.
- Lay the foundation for coordinated border management systems in the region, in order to emerge from the crisis with a more efficient trade infrastructure.





## 5. Interview



**Héctor Echeverría**  
Commercial Director of ProChile in Mexico



**When we think that the main destination markets for food exports of Latin American and Caribbean countries have been strongly affected by the COVID-19, evidencing vulnerabilities in the regional export matrix, how could this vulnerability be addressed from the development of intraregional trade? What is required to move forward in that direction?**

It's a difficult subject to comprehend. As all countries moved forward in market opening and specialized in supplying certain priority markets, we also neglected others (whether because of price conditions, exclusive contracts, operators, etc.). This led us to a mono-dependence on big buyers. Today, in the middle of the crisis, these buyers could not distribute their products to relevant sectors such as the hotel, restaurant and cafeteria channel (HORECA). The export matrix has been working; consumption collapsed, due to distribution problems, market closures, transfer of consumer preferences to other sectors, etc. We need to keep markets open, continue lowering technical barriers to trade, and make progress in the negotiations to address sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Interregional trade is on the way to becoming more robust, but more actors and programmes must be added to ensure participation. In the case of small-scale agriculture, the development of short circuits certainly helps.

**In the case of the United States of America, how have exports from Chile, Mexico and other countries highly dependent on that market – such as the Central American countries – been affected?**

According to information shared with us by the National Agricultural Council (CNA, by its acronym in Spanish), Mexican agrifood exports grew by around 8 percent in the first quarter of 2020, reaching USD 10.39 billion. However, during April, exports suffered strongly, especially fruit and vegetable exports, which represent around 56 percent of Mexican agrifood exports. This contraction was due to lower demand from the hotel, restaurant and fast food sector in the United States of America. This market represents about 80 percent of Mexican fruit and vegetable shipments, according to data from the Agricultural Markets Consulting Group (GCMA, by its acronym in Spanish).

It is important to remember that we are experiencing a great decrease in market consumption of all products in general, not only in the United States of America and Mexico, but worldwide. If we had to highlight an example in the Mexican industry to evaluate the effect, we can look at the case of beer, which has gone through some difficult times. Beer is the main product sent to the United States of America, but for some reason, it was not considered essential by the Mexican Government when the lockdown and closure of factories were decided because of the novel coronavirus. To this, we must add a lower demand due to the closure of recreational centres and the HORECA channel. Although going through difficult times, Mexico is betting on having greater opportunities with the entry into force of the Treaty between Mexico, the United States of America and Canada (T-MEC).

Concerning the partnership between Chile and Mexico, we have not registered a significant effect during this long confinement; however, as the markets adapt to this new reality, it will be necessary to make an assessment to know how we can readjust to the new scenario.

**From the point of view of food export promotion, how are the challenges left by the pandemic being addressed so that the impact on food exports is as small as possible (food in the medium term)?**

I understand that promotion is very important, but right now, the focus must be on how to maintain trade flows. COVID-19 has struck Chile and Mexico, and many entrepreneurs have gone bankrupt because there are accounts receivable and they haven't been able to sustain their financial situation. This is happening in both countries. It is a reality.

One in three restaurants reduced workforce, while about two in three may close permanently as a result of physical distancing measures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is difficult to foresee a good scenario when the HORECA channel in Mexico has not been fully reactivated. This sector represents consumption of 30 percent of fresh food, and another 30 percent in animal protein consumption. Although some points have been reopened, people, given the prevailing health situation, have not normalized their activities and have modified their consumption patterns.

The challenge lies in adapting quickly to the constant change that is generating the movement of society in the midst of this pandemic. Now, we are making the most of the electronic tools at our disposal, looking for new channels of communication. Still, fundamentally, we want to know how we can help the client in the Mexican market to overcome this crisis. How is he facing it? How can we help ourselves? Chile is a friend, an ally, in good and bad times. It makes a lot of sense to the Mexican. This could be extended to other bilateral relations in the region.

**This pandemic has seriously affected family farming in the countries of the region. One way to support their development is to insert them in the export sector. What experiences do you know of or what strategies could be adopted to move forward in this direction and achieve effective integration?**

The pandemic has brought us closer to the use of technology; and as technology is implemented more in the field, in family farming, we will be able to move forward.

We must make available to producers the tools that can provide them with greater knowledge of climate change or water use in water-scarce areas, for example. To do so, we must take advantage of the experience of the Mexican Institute of Water Technology (IMTA, by its acronym in Spanish) to increase the physical productivity of water in irrigation units.

The National Service for Food Safety and Quality (SENASICA, by its acronym in Spanish) has a Health Intelligence Unit that serves as a mechanism for health information and analysis, with permanent monitoring in its national territory to generate data that help in epidemiological decision-making. This is another good experience to evaluate and try to implement in Chile and other countries in the region. We have to maintain dialogue, coordination and relations between our countries if we want to preserve the exchange of information and health measures, and look beyond the pandemic.

The issue of connectivity must move forward in the field, and we must address the need for decision-making on crops, prices, climate. In addition to helping distance learning for children, youth, women, to bring them closer to global knowledge in technologies and trends.

**Chile, Peru, Mexico and other net food-exporting countries are classified at a relatively low level of risk, compared to other countries in the region, concerning disruptions in agrifood trade. What measures have you seen countries trying to implement to keep the risk as controlled as possible?**

The Mexican agrifood sector has continued to operate during lockdown, but during the peak of the pandemic it became essential to take immediate action to ensure food supply. Here are some of the measures implemented in the sector:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER, by its acronym in Spanish) played an important role in getting the federal government to consider food production and the entire supply chain as a priority. As for the measures taken to counteract the effects of the pandemic to ensure food production, support has been provided through programs such as *Producción para el Bienestar* (production for welfare, supports small producers of grains, sugar cane and coffee), *Precios de Garantía* (guaranteed prices), *Fertilizantes para el Bienestar* (fertilizers for welfare), and *Fomento a la Productividad Pesquera y Acuícola* (promotion of fisheries and aquaculture productivity), among others.
- SENASICA has continued to monitor that good production and merchandise handling practices are ensured. This is fundamental for food mobilization and safe trade.

- There is close communication with sensitive production chains, such as grain, vegetables, poultry, meat, aquaculture and fish products. The SADER and the CNA work here in a coordinated manner.
- The Ministry of Economy and SADER monitor the supply of food and related goods. They also constantly evaluate the flow of national and international trade.
- The Agrifood and Fisheries Information Service (SIAP, by its acronym in Spanish) and the Agricultural Market Information Centre (CIMA, by its acronym in Spanish) have projected the panorama of the main products considered fundamental in Mexico.
- The operation of the Basic Food Basket supply, provided by the Mexican Food Security Agency (SEGALMEX, by its acronym in Spanish), has been guaranteed for highly vulnerable rural and urban communities.
- The surveillance system on roads and ports of entry has been strengthened to prevent merchandise theft and to ensure no disruption is caused in the supply chain.
- Support is provided for the mobilization of agricultural workers and day labourers, taking into account the measures implemented by companies to prevent contagion.

**Looking ahead, how can agrifood chains be strengthened in our region to be more resilient to disruptions such as the current one and others that may come in the future?**

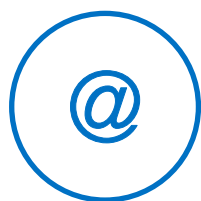
I believe that we must commit to creating an agro-industrial reactivation strategy with a solid exporter profile. Integrating value chains in our regions must be considered fundamental in order to be able to compete at the global level. The ideal scenario would be to achieve alliances among several companies, so as to translate this union of efforts into benefits for all the links in the value-added chains that can be formed.

We must also incorporate science and technology to promote good practice, health and food safety. The consumer is increasingly looking to buy healthy food with an added value; thus, we have to go on that path. In this new configuration of the global scenario, food producers, processors, packers, logistics service providers, distributors and others will no longer compete as individual entities; they will all be part of a strategic value chain, competing against other value chains in the market. We must seek to deploy and realize the fullest potential of each value chain.

It is critical to maintain between strategic partners an exchange of information on agricultural health measures, new technologies and processes, or strategies to maintain market continuity and flow. This is where our offices abroad, together with health organizations, can seek this cooperation in order to have more elements for the economic reactivation.



## 6. Resources



In this section, we provide you with publications and platforms that will allow for a deeper understanding of agricultural and fisheries trade in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### ECLAC

**Latin America and the Caribbean 2019 International Trade Outlook: the adverse global context deepens the region's lag**  
[https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44918/7/S1900748\\_es.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44918/7/S1900748_es.pdf)

This publication analyses the state of world trade, highlighting the lower global demand and the increasing substitution of imports by domestic production in some economies.



### FAO

**COVID-19 and food exports in Latin America and the Caribbean: intraregional and interregional trade**  
<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9268es/CA9268ES.pdf>

Micro-analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the domestic food supply in the region. The document shows that intraregional trade is minimal, thus presenting an opportunity for it to grow during the crisis.



### IADB

**Estimates of trade trends in Latin America and the Caribbean**  
<https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Estimaciones-de-las-tendencias-comerciales-America-Latina-y-el-Caribe---Edicion-2020-1T.pdf>

In this first quarter 2020 edition, the state of trade flows in the region is described. This analysis includes the initial effects of the pandemic on the region and the rest of the world.



### IICA

**Argentina and Chile implement ePhyto electronic phytosanitary certification for their vegetables trade**  
<https://blog.iica.int/en/blog/argentina-chile-implementan-certificacion-fitosanitaria-electronica-ephyto-para-su-comercio>

This article presents an initiative developed by two countries in the region that seeks, among other factors, to maintain and improve the international trade flow. An example of the small changes that will be required to maintain trade flows in the post-pandemic sector.



### IADB

**How can trade policy help avoid a food security crisis?**  
<https://blogs.iadb.org/integracion-comercio/es/politica-comercial-crisis-seguridad-alimentaria/>

This publication provides a series of recommendations where trade policy can help keep agricultural trade working, and prevent the health crisis from becoming a food security crisis.



### ECLAC

**The effects of COVID-19 on international trade and logistics**  
[https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45877/1/S2000497\\_es.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45877/1/S2000497_es.pdf)

A recent publication, which presents the main effects of COVID-19 on trade flows and logistics in the region.



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