

# MONTHLY UPDATE ON FOOD SECURITY AND PRICES IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

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Monthly Update on Food Security and Prices is produced by the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit of the World Food Programme Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic as a contribution to periodic food security monitoring in the country. This is the 31th issue of the update.

## Highlights

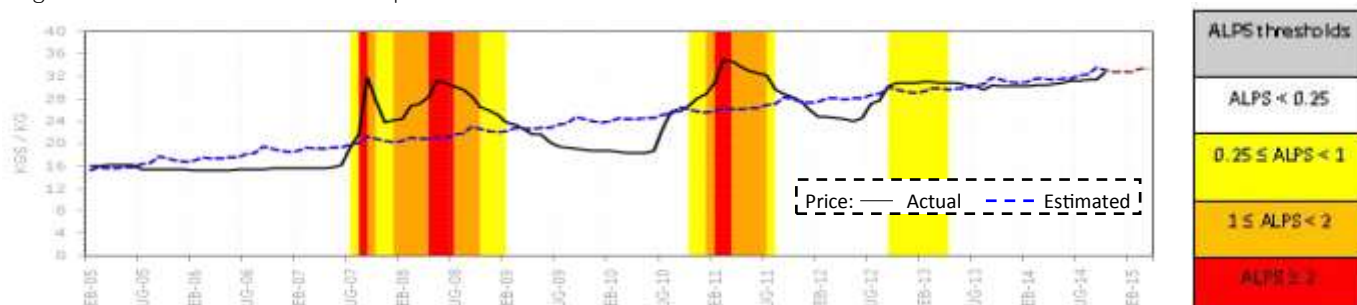
- ◆ The national average retail price of wheat flour has increased by 2% on a month-on-month basis in February 2015 (Figure 2). However, it is still 19% higher than the same month of 2014.
- ◆ The export price of wheat in Kazakhstan (Free on Board [FOB] rate) did not change on a month-on-month basis in February 2015 (Figure 3). However, the US FOB price decreased by 5% in February 2015.
- ◆ The Kyrgyz Som depreciated against the US dollar by 2% on a month-on-month basis and 13% during the last six months (September 2014 - February 2015), and by 18% when compared to the same month last year (Figure 4).
- ◆ The national average price of Petrol 92 decreased by 9% in February 2015 on a month-on-month basis. Similarly, the average price of diesel decreased by 2% in February 2015 (Figure 5).
- ◆ The price of mutton decreased by 3% on a month-on-month basis, but the price of beef remained unchanged in February 2015. However, prices are 4% and 9% higher than in February 2014 for mutton and beef respectively (Figure 6).
- ◆ The prices of onion and cabbage decreased by 3% and 2% respectively on a month-on-month basis, while potato prices remained unchanged and carrot prices increased by 7% (Figure 7).
- ◆ The average wage rate in November 2014 was 10% higher than in November 2013 (Figure 8), while the national average price of wheat flour increased by 18% during the same period. This shows a slight deterioration of wheat flour purchasing power among households reliant on income from wage labour.
- ◆ From January to October 2014, the volume of incoming remittances was almost at the same level as in the same period over the previous year. However, the volume was lower by 20% and 32% respectively in November and December 2014, compared with the same months of 2013 (Figure 9).
- ◆ From December 2014 to February 2015, seasonal precipitation was above the historical average in most areas of the country, except in the month of December 2014. (Figure 10).

## Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) for early detection of price hike

The Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) provides early warning of rising food prices by detecting abnormally high levels of local food prices. The ALPS calculates the difference between the latest observed price available and the corresponding seasonal price trend. Colour-shaded bars indicate the periods where the actual price (black line) was above the estimated trend (blue dotted line). The ALPS attributes colour codes according to the severity of the gap between the two lines. The ALPS is updated each month using the latest price data available for the main staples in more than 30 countries.

WFP has conducted ALPS analysis for wheat prices in Bishkek using long-term price data from the National Statistics Committee. The analysis in Figure 1 illustrates that wheat flour prices experienced an alarmingly higher than normal seasonal trend from mid-2007 to mid-2008 and from late 2010 to mid 2011. The price level in February 2015 was within the normal pattern of the price series. The intensity of price abnormalities are classified using standard deviations (STD).

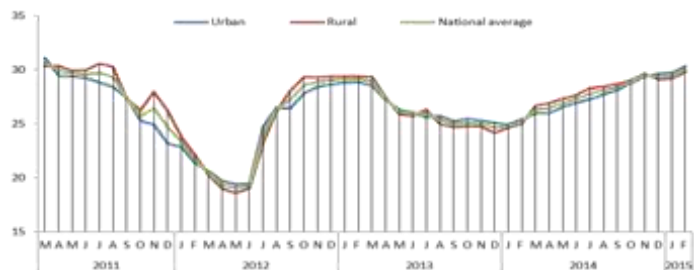
Figure 1. Abnormal wheat flour price hikes—Bishkek



Data source: National Statistics Committee, analysis provided by WFP

## Wheat flour prices in urban and rural areas (February 2015)

Figure 2. Retail prices of wheat flour (KGS/kg)

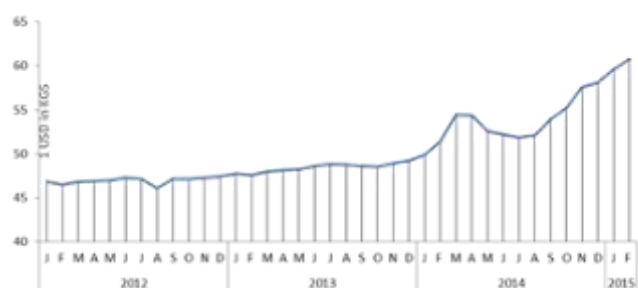


Data source: WFP Monthly Market Monitoring

The national average retail price of wheat has increased by 2% on a month-on-month basis in February 2015 (Figure 2). It is 19% higher than the same month of 2014.

## Currency exchange rate (February 2015)

Figure 4. Exchange rate of US dollar against the KGS



Source: National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic

The Kyrgyz Som (KGS) depreciated against the US dollar by 2% on a month-on-month basis and 13% during the last six months (September-February), and by 18% when compared to the same month last year (Figure 4). The sharp depreciation will likely affect fuel prices and retail prices of the main imported food commodities, including wheat.

## PRICES OF OTHER BASIC COMMODITIES (February 2015)

Meat: The mutton price decreased by 3% on a month-on-month basis in February 2015, while the price of beef remained unchanged. (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Retail prices of meat (KGS/kg)



Data source: WFP Monthly Market Monitoring

## International prices of wheat flour (February 2015)

Figure 3. Wholesale price of wheat (USD/ton)



Data source: FAO GIEWS (Kazakhstan FOB, Gulf of Mexico US FOB)

The export price of wheat in Kazakhstan (Free on Board [FOB] rate) did not change on a month-on-month basis in February 2015 (Figure 3). However, the US FOB price decreased by 5% in February 2015 on a month-on-month basis.

## Fuel prices (February 2015)

Figure 5. Retail prices of fuel (KGS/litre)

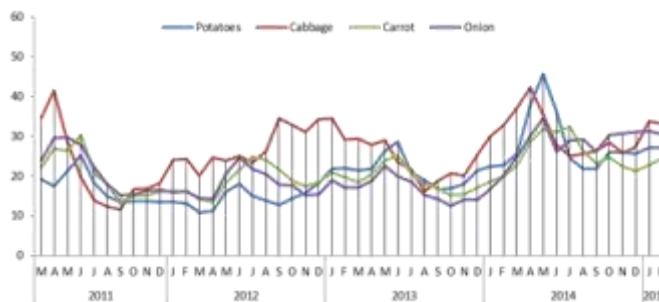


Source: WFP Monthly Market Monitoring

The national average price of Petrol 92 decreased by 9% in February 2015 on a month-on-month basis. However, the price was still 3% higher compared to the same month last year. The national average price of diesel decreased by 2% in February 2015 and by 16% when compared to the same month in 2014.

Potatoes and vegetables: The prices of onion and cabbage decreased by 3% and 2% respectively on a month-on-month basis, while potato prices remained unchanged and carrot prices increased by 7% (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Retail prices of potato, cabbage, carrot and onion (KGS/kg)



Data source: WFP Monthly Market Monitoring

## HOUSEHOLD PURCHASING POWER

### Wage rates

Figure 8. Average wage (average of all sectors, KGS/month)



Data source: NSC

The average wage rate in November 2014 was 10% higher than in November 2013<sup>1</sup> (Figure 8), while the national average price of wheat flour increased by 18% during the same period (Figure 2). This shows a slight deterioration of wheat flour purchasing power among households reliant on income from wage labour.

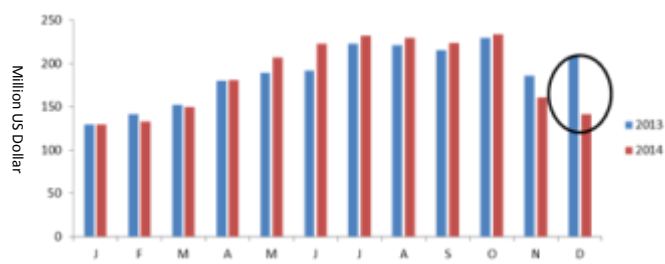
## WATER AVAILABILITY

October to April constitutes a critical rain and snow season, during which most of the Kyrgyz Republic receives its annual rain or snowfall. Seasonal precipitation during this season is an important climatic parameter in the context of agricultural production in the Kyrgyz Republic, given that large amounts of water for domestic and agricultural use originate from snow melt.

From October 2014 to February 2015, seasonal precipitation has been above the historical average in most areas of the country, except in the month of December 2014. Close attention should be paid to precipitation in the next few months.

### Remittances

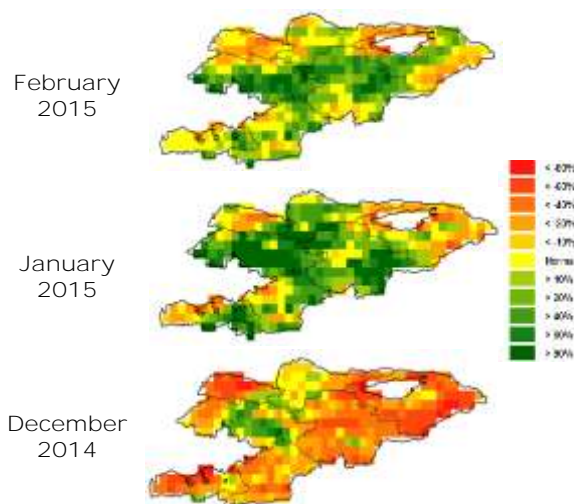
Figure 9. Aggregate volume of incoming remittances (mln. USD/month)



Data source: National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic

From January to October 2014, the volume of incoming remittances was almost at the same level as in the same period of the previous year. However, the volume was lower by 20% and 32% respectively in November and December 2014 compared with the same months of 2013 (Figure 9).

Figure 10. Relative difference in precipitation compared to long term average



Source: European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecast (ECMWF), FAO GIEWS

## OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

The higher prices for some basic commodities, such as meat, potatoes and vegetables, may put pressure on already limited economic food access among the most vulnerable households, potentially worsening the diets of these households. These effects could be further exacerbated during early spring, when additional resources for agricultural inputs are required.

Economic access to basic food may also be further affected by reduced remittances, especially among households who rely on income from labor migration for food expenditure. In the months ahead, WFP will pay close attention to changes in food prices, remittances, labour migration patterns and household coping strategies, particularly with regard to the quality of food consumption among vulnerable groups.

<sup>1</sup> Wage data were available only up to November 2014.

# ANNEX 1—PRICES OF BASIC COMMODITIES IN RURAL AND URBAN MARKETS (FEBRUARY 2015)

The retail prices of basic commodities are monitored on a monthly basis in selected rural and urban markets in all oblasts (provinces) of the country. The latest retail prices are compared against prices in the previous month, three months ago, and one year ago.

Area	Commodity	Current Price	Change in Price (Rub.)		Level of fluctuation			Commodity	Current Price	Change in Price (Rub.)		Level of fluctuation				
			1 m	3 m	1 yr	1 m	3 m			1 yr	1 m	3 m	1 yr			
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	35	3%	6%	23%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	31	4%	-1%	15%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	272	-3%	-4%	-6%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	300	-5%	-7%	0%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	355	1%	-7%	11%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	320	0%	0%	7%	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	38	-4%	-4%	16%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	27	-6%	-11%	7%	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	27	-20%	-29%	16%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	25	0%	25%	4%	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	82	2%	-8%	-17%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	79	-5%	1%	-19%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	50	0%	0%	4%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	51	-4%	1%	-4%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	38	-7%	-24%	3%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	38	-8%	-24%	3%	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	34	-1%	-22%	-15%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	34	-1%	-22%	-15%	▶	▶	▶	
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	26	4%	6%	13%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	25	2%	4%	6%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	300	-6%	-2%	9%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	290	-7%	-9%	4%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	320	0%	5%	15%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	335	4%	5%	7%	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	33	19%	57%	19%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	32	12%	41%	15%	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	26	16%	16%	24%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	22	0%	-1%	-1%	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	92	0%	-2%	11%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	93	0%	2%	6%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	56	-3%	5%	17%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	54	1%	-7%	11%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	36	-15%	-25%	-1%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	35	-16%	-26%	-2%	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	33	0%	-22%	-14%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	34	0%	-19%	-13%	▶	▶	▶	
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	33	12%	12%	30%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	30	7%	7%	20%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	320	2%	1%	19%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	305	0%	0%	5%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	330	-1%	0%	3%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	330	0%	0%	3%	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	30	0%	20%	50%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	25	0%	0%	0%	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	20	0%	0%	20%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	20	0%	7%	33%	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	100	0%	0%	0%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	100	-5%	-5%	-5%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	50	-9%	-9%	-1%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	50	-17%	-17%	-7%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	40	-6%	-21%	-3%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	-	-	-	-	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	35	-1%	-21%	-14%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	-	-	-	-	▶	▶	▶	
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	33	0%	0%	21%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	35	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Meat (mutton)	307	-4%	-3%	-4%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Meat (beef)	340	3%	6%	6%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Milk	35	0%	0%	17%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	30	0%	-	-	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	30	6%	6%	22%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	28	0%	0%	-	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	85	-11%	-11%	-2%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	110	0%	-6%	-2%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	46	-9%	-9%	-1%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	60	0%	5%	9%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	37	-10%	-12%	-1%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	-	-	-	-	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	34	0%	-21%	-13%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	-	-	-	-	▶	▶	▶	
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	31	-3%	2%	13%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	32	4%	-3%	23%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	350	-9%	-3%	6%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	360	-3%	-3%	0%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	355	-7%	-1%	11%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	360	-3%	-3%	13%	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	35	0%	0%	11%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	30	-5%	0%	0%	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	31	0%	24%	24%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	30	0%	0%	13%	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	90	0%	-4%	-10%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	93	0%	2%	-7%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	50	0%	-6%	0%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	50	-2%	-9%	0%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	38	-11%	-27%	2%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	38	-11%	-27%	-3%	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	35	-4%	-19%	-14%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	34	-4%	-20%	-16%	▶	▶	▶	
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	28	-1%	4%	16%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	29	-1%	5%	16%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	350	0%	0%	9%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	350	0%	0%	9%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	350	0%	3%	9%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	340	0%	0%	13%	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	35	0%	17%	17%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	33	-5%	11%	11%	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	30	0%	-3%	25%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	30	0%	-8%	20%	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	83	0%	-2%	-2%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	83	0%	0%	-2%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	50	0%	0%	-4%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	50	0%	0%	4%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	38	-12%	-27%	0%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	-	-	-	-	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	34	-5%	-23%	-17%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	34	-5%	-23%	-17%	▶	▶	▶	
	Urban							Rural								
	Wheat flour (1st quality)	28	0%	-5%	20%	▶	▶	▶	Wheat flour (1st quality)	27	0%	-7%	14%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (mutton)	350	0%	0%	0%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (mutton)	350	0%	0%	0%	▶	▶	▶
	Meat (beef)	350	0%	0%	9%	▶	▶	▶	Meat (beef)	350	0%	0%	9%	▶	▶	▶
	Milk	35	0%	24%	11%	▶	▶	▶	Milk	33	0%	18%	25%	▶	▶	▶
	Potato	32	12%	36%	36%	▶	▶	▶	Potato	30	0%	20%	23%	▶	▶	▶
	Cooking oil	112	0%	2%	16%	▶	▶	▶	Cooking oil	110	0%	2%	12%	▶	▶	▶
	Sugar	55	0%	0%	6%	▶	▶	▶	Sugar	53	0%	-6%	0%	▶	▶	▶
Petrol (Octane rating 92)	46	0%	-13%	17%	▶	▶	▶	Petrol (Octane rating 92)	47	0%	-14%	17%	▶	▶	▶	
Diesel	36	0%	-24%	-15%	▶	▶	▶	Diesel	37	0%	-22%	-14%	▶	▶	▶	

- ▲ Price increase above normal price fluctuation
- ▶ Normal price fluctuation
- ▼ Price decrease below normal fluctuation

Price fluctuation is considered normal if change within:  
5% for 1 month, 10% for 3 months, 15% for 1 year

## ANNEX 2 – MARKET LOCATIONS MONITORED BY WFP AND NSC

Retail prices of basic food commodities are monitored and reported by the NSC in selected province and rayon capitals (coloured in red).

WFP monitors prices of basic food commodities in seven markets in urban areas and thirteen markets in rural areas, where **more than two thirds of people classified as 'poor' live**.

Increased and volatile food prices will affect food insecure and vulnerable families the most because they spend the largest proportion of their household budgets on food.



The price data of this report reflects WFP's actual monthly recording of prices in seven urban and thirteen rural markets around the country, as well as in urban settlements monitored by the NSC. Should any recipient of this bulletin require information from previous monitoring conducted by WFP since June 2009, please contact the WFP Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic at [WFP.Bishkek@wfp.org](mailto:WFP.Bishkek@wfp.org)

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