GIEWS Country Brief
Colombia

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Paddy and maize 2021 outputs estimated at above-average levels
- Planting of 2022 minor paddy and maize crops underway
- Cereal import requirements in 2021 anticipated at high levels
- Prices of maize and wheat flour well above year-earlier values in October 2021
- Temporary legal status granted to Venezuelan migrants improves livelihood prospects

Paddy and maize 2021 outputs estimated at above-average levels

The harvest of the 2021 main paddy crop concluded in mid-October and production is estimated at an above-average level due to large plantings and good yields. Despite the decline in prices after the 2020 record harvests, the seasonal planted area is officially estimated at 393,000 hectares, above the previous five-year average. The 2021 aggregate paddy production, including the above-average minor harvest gathered in the second quarter of 2021, is estimated at 2.9 million tonnes, over 5 percent above the average.

Harvesting of the 2021 main season maize crop has also been recently completed with a slight delay due to torrential rains in the second half of August that hampered operations in the key producing departments of Tolima and Meta. Yields of the main crop were reported to be above average reflecting favourable weather conditions between April and July. The 2021 aggregate maize production, including the minor season crop harvested in the first quarter of 2021, is estimated at a near-average level of 1.4 million tonnes.

Planting of 2022 minor paddy and maize crops underway

Planting operations of the 2022 minor paddy and maize crops are ongoing under favourable weather conditions. Due to higher year-on-year prices of maize, farmers are likely to expand sowings of maize, shifting away from paddy cultivation. Weather forecasts indicate a high likelihood of above-average precipitation amounts in the November 2021 to January 2022 period and a close monitoring of pest infestations, caused by wet weather conditions, is required.

Source: FAO/GIEWS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>2016-2020 average</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021 estimate</th>
<th>change 2021/2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice (paddy)</td>
<td>2.717</td>
<td>3.015</td>
<td>2.870</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>1.350</td>
<td>1.350</td>
<td>1.430</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.098</td>
<td>4.392</td>
<td>4.308</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Cereal import requirements in 2021 anticipated at high levels

About 85 percent of the country’s cereal consumption needs are usually covered by imports. Cereal import requirements in the 2021 marketing year (January/December) are anticipated at a high level of 8.4 million tonnes. The forecast requirements are expected to decline year on year due to large carryover stocks from the record 2020 imports. The above-average requirements reflect the strong demand for maize by the feed sector and for wheat for human consumption. In responses to the weakening domestic currency, the import tariff for wheat was reduced to zero in mid-2020 for a period of two years.

Prices of maize and wheat flour well above year-earlier values in October 2021

Prices of rice have been declining steadily since July 2020, mainly reflecting abundant market supplies from the above-average harvests in 2020 and 2021. As of October 2021, rice prices were on average 20 percent lower year on year. By contrast, prices of yellow maize were well above their year-earlier levels in October due to costlier imports reflecting high quotations in the United States of America, the main maize supplier to the country. Similarly, prices of domestically produced white maize were higher year on year, supported by elevated costs of production and transportation. Prices of wheat flour, which is entirely imported, have increased sharply between June and October 2021 in line with trends in the international market. Overall, prices of most food items were higher than a year earlier, as indicated by the official annual inflation rate of food and non-alcoholic beverages, estimated at 12 percent in September 2021.

Temporary legal status granted to Venezuelan migrants improves livelihood prospects

The country hosts the highest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the world, with a population of 1.74 million people as of September 2021. Amid worsening food insecurity among Venezuelan migrants in the country caused by income losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government announced an issuance of the Temporary Protection Statute (TPS) in February 2021, which will grant ten-year residence permits to Venezuelan migrants. As of end-August 2021, about 1.22 million Venezuelan migrants have been registered in the TPS programme and started receiving their permits from mid-October. This measure is expected to improve livelihoods of Venezuelan migrants and enable their inclusive integration in the Colombian society. Since June 2021, the government has gradually re-opened the border with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and has started to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Venezuelan refugees and migrants since October 2021.