

Timeline

June-November 2020

Study Type

Descriptive / Surveillance

Article Link

<https://www.ifpri.org/program/myanmar-strategy-support-program>

Research Implemented by IPA

Yes

COVID-19 Economic Vulnerability Phone Survey in Myanmar (Rice Mills Focus)

Researchers

Joseph Goeb, Phoo Pye Zone, Yulu Tang, Amit Khandelwal, Rocco Macchiavello, David Atkin, Meredith Startz

Abstract

The Feed the Future Myanmar Agriculture Policy Support Activity (MAPSA) is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded activity, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in partnership with Michigan State University (MSU), that seeks to improve governance in the agricultural sector in Myanmar. In partnership with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), MAPSA conducted ten rounds of the Miller Phone Survey. The miller phone survey seeks to understand how rice mills are affected by the crisis: have they changed their purchasing behaviors – e.g., how they purchase and from whom? Have they changed sales behaviors – e.g., how they sell and to whom? Do they have changing demands for credit provision? Do they expect different repayment and changes in trade patterns? Understanding the crisis' impact on rice mills can help inform policymakers on measures for mitigating adverse economic impacts on the rice sector and assisting in the sector's recovery.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Economic activities of farmers, retailers and rural households, including the constraints these actors face from the economic crisis and the efforts made by the Government of Myanmar to mitigate the health crisis caused by COVID-19.

Partners

United States Agency for International Development, International Food Policy Research Institute, Michigan State University, Innovations for Poverty Action

Key Findings

July 2020 Key Findings:

- Strikingly, 60 percent of mills are anticipating a revenue drop of at least 30 percent this year compared to 2019. Only 3 percent of mills are expecting an increase in revenue.
- Just over half of the mills interviewed experienced disruptions in selling milled rice and in buying paddy. However, those impacts have lessened considerably, as only 15 percent of millers reported experiencing those disruptions in the past 30 days.
- Almost all mills regarded byproduct sales as important to their business. Roughly half reported no changes in byproduct prices compared to 2019, but one-quarter reported price increases, while the other quarter reported decreases. Mills from Ayeyarwady have been more negatively impacted by lower byproduct prices than elsewhere.
- For most mills, both paddy purchase and rice sales prices are now slightly higher than the 2019 average. Interestingly, prices increased more for low-quality varieties than for high-quality varieties. Margins for low-quality varieties have increased relative to 2019, while they have decreased for high-quality varieties. Thus, mills producing larger quantities of high-quality rice now may be adversely affected by lower margins.

August 2020 Key Findings:

- 44 percent of rice millers reported challenges buying paddy and 26 percent reported disruptions to rice sales. With the timing of the survey in August, these challenges are unlikely to have been driven by the transportation restrictions that were a challenge earlier in the monsoon season.
- 71 percent of rice mills were using some safety measures, but adoption of social distancing was near zero and use of face coverings decreased 19 percentage points from July.
- 46 percent of mills reported lower daily throughput compared to the same time in 2019. The median decrease among those reporting lower throughput was 30 percent.
- Milling margins increased on average in the August survey compared to July.
- 38 percent of mills applied for new loans in the thirty days prior to interview. However, just 57 percent of those who applied were successful.

Link to Results

- [Policy Note- July 2020](#)
- [Policy Note- August 2020](#)

Impact Goals

- Build resilient and adaptable businesses and employment opportunities
- Improve social-safety net responses

Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

Results Status

Results

Results

Full results forthcoming