COVID-19 risks to global food security

Webinar on Food Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

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COVID-19 Shakes all Four Pillars of Food Security

- Availability
- Access
- Utilization
- Stability
Availability

- Disrupting production in labor-intensive activities
- Disrupting movement of workers
- Closing some food service sectors
  - Whether through shutdowns or consumer reluctance
- Export restrictions
Access

- Through sharp declines in household incomes
  - Mostly through declines in non-agricultural incomes

- Especially serious in developing countries with limited resources
  - Where many households spend large shares of income on food

- Social safety nets particularly important
Utilization

- Health problems reduce ability to utilize food
- Reductions in dietary diversity
  - Making people more vulnerable to illness
Stability

- Trade and regulated labor mobility help diversify supplies
  - Reduce volatility relative to isolated economies

- Quantitative trade policies like export bans & quotas inject instability

- Important to keep food systems operating
  - Eg green lanes for food movement under lockdown
Conclusions

▪ COVID-19 highlights need for assessments of vulnerability to food insecurity

▪ Food access particularly important in this case

▪ Substantial disruptions in food supply chains
  o Well functioning borders help diversify supplies
  o And minimize price shocks