

## 2 ZERO HUNGER



## GOAL 2

# End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

## Context

Hunger has been on the rise in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2014 and the COVID-19 pandemic has served to exacerbate the situation. Between 2019 and 2020, the prevalence of hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean increased by 2 percentage points to 9.1 per cent. Forty-one per cent of the population of the region is moderately or severely food insecure, which translates to 267 million people whose human right to food is not being met. In Jamaica, gains have also been made to meet targets on undernourishment. Before the pandemic national food poverty prevalence was trending downwards. Food security is inexorably linked to the performance of the agricultural sector. Subsistence and commercial agriculture are vital to the Jamaican economy, contribute to nutritional status and social well-being and are a source of livelihood. In 2020, the sector recorded a 1.4 per cent decline in Real Value Added relative to 2019. The reduced performance stemmed mainly from the combined effect of the pandemic and adverse weather conditions on the economy (FAO, 2021).

## Zero Hunger Highlights 2018-2022



### Poverty

**Decline in food poverty prevalence to 4% in 2019, from 5.4% in 2017**

FIGURE 10: HIGHLIGHTS, ZERO HUNGER (2018-2022)

## Discussion

### Target 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

The food poverty rate was 5.4 per cent in 2017, some 3.5 per cent in 2018 and 4.0 per cent in 2019. The overall decline in food poverty rates indicates progress in implementing the country's National Policy on Poverty, and National Poverty Reduction Programme (NPP/NPRP) 2017 which constitute a responsive instrument to implement and evaluate measures to address poverty and vulnerability. Goal 1 of the National Policy on Poverty and Poverty Reduction Programme aims to eradicate extreme (food) poverty by 2022.

TABLE 7: FOOD POVERTY PREVALENCE (PER CENT) BY REGION, 2017-2019

Region	2017	2018	2019
Greater Kingston Metropolitan Area (GKMA)	5.5	2.9	0.4
Other Urban Centres (OUC)	4.8	3.9	3.5
Rural Areas	5.6	3.7	6.7
Jamaica	5.4	3.5	4.0

r – Revised; per cent estimates are weighted; discrepancies may be due to rounding.  
Compiled by PIOJ with data supplied by STATIN

Table 7 shows that the rural areas recorded the highest food poverty rates in 2017 (5.6 per cent) with this trend repeating in 2019 at 6.7 per cent. In 2018 the food poverty prevalence in GKMA declined below 3.0 per cent and continued to decline in 2019.<sup>28</sup>

Food security is a major aspect of social protection, and the following data from the JSLC provides a snapshot of the experience of food security at the household level. In 2017, some 58.2 per cent of households indicated they had sufficient food to eat generally, with 28.6 per cent indicating there was sufficient food sometimes. This compared with 62.7 per cent and 26.1 per cent respectively in 2018, and 62.0 per cent and 27.5 per cent respectively in 2019. By 2019, just ahead of the pandemic, some 31.3 per cent of households in Quintile 1 indicated they had sufficient food generally, along with 45.0 per cent of Quintile 2 households. The data shows some important trends but reveals a fair degree of inconsistency and therefore food insecurity at some income levels. On the demand side, this may be influenced mainly by affordability and income flows based on earnings. Food inflation is also a concern, as the country has high import content for the food industry.

During the review period, Jamaica implemented new programmes towards the achievement of the eradication of extreme (food) poverty. These include:

- In 2018, the Approval of the Interim Guidelines for Beverages in Schools, to help improve the dietary intake of school-aged children.

<sup>28</sup> Based on changes to sampling and weighting methodologies the current poverty series is available from 2017; future revision of prior year estimates by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica are anticipated for a full trend series.

- In 2019, the launch of the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Network (NIYCFN), in keeping with the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy<sup>29</sup>. The goal of the policy is to create a sustainable environment that will contribute to a reduction in child morbidity and mortality and improvement in child health and nutrition. The country's goals for health and poverty reduction are impeded by inappropriate feeding practices which lead to rising incidences of persons being overweight and obesity which are risk factors for chronic diseases in children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected food and nutrition security in Jamaica and the government has implemented short-term, intermediate and long-term strategies to reap measurable and sustainable outcomes. Feeding programmes traditionally targeting school children and the elderly were discontinued due to movement restrictions. Results from a UNICEF assessment<sup>30</sup> on the impact of the pandemic on children pointed to *inter alia* household food shortages with a prevalence rate that was higher among female-headed households. The UNDP/SALISES/CAPRI study<sup>31</sup> also highlighted that 49.9 per cent of respondents requested food support to cushion the effects of the pandemic. With the support of the private sector entities, the Government of Jamaica prepared and delivered food packages to needy persons, including the elderly and persons living with disabilities. Agricultural producers facing gluts of domestic food and fruit crops due to the closure of significant markets such as tourism benefited from government-organized take-up and sale in farmers' markets island-wide. These efforts complemented the government's medium and long-term focus on the implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2013) and aligned with programmes such as the School Feeding Programme, PATH, Poor Relief Programme, and special feeding programmes.

During the United Nations Food Systems Summit in September 2021, the government highlighted several persistent factors that are contributing to Jamaica's food insecurity.<sup>32</sup> These include the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events resulting from climate change, such as droughts, hurricanes, and floods; the limited availability and use of agricultural technology; a decrease in agricultural lands due to urbanization and the high cost of capital.

Some important priorities to address challenges and ensure that vulnerable populations and the poor have access to safe and nutritious food year-round are:

- Strengthen mitigation measures to lessen future effects of climate change. This includes further investment in alternate forms of energy – solar and wind – particularly in the agriculture sector.
- Improve the visibility of resources and networks that provide support in nutrition. This can be achieved through investment in public education campaigns to reach all beneficiaries.
- Invest in technology to address issues of food loss and waste to improve food and nutrition security, reduce environmental stress and meet climate goals.

29 The network fosters community effort towards the care and support of mothers and caregivers. It also provides knowledge of nutrition principles for the healthy development of infants and children.

30 UNICEF. [https://www.unicef.org/jamaica/media/2646/file/UNICEF\\_Covid-Impact-on-Children\\_to%20distribute%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/jamaica/media/2646/file/UNICEF_Covid-Impact-on-Children_to%20distribute%20FINAL.pdf).

31 UNDP/SALISES/CaPRI. 2021. Socioeconomic Impact Assessment (SEIA) of COVID-19 and Policy Options in Jamaica. Kingston.

32 Statement by the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, MP, PC, Prime Minister of Jamaica at the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/FSS\\_statement\\_Jamaica.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/FSS_statement_Jamaica.pdf)

- Enhance the resilience of local food systems to counter the effects of future shortages. Continued investment in local agricultural production and agro-industries is essential to achieving this goal.
- Further, implement the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Strategic Action Plan which incorporates strategies related to improving specific nutrition indicators.

**Findings from the upcoming WFP's "Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey" (fourth round) revealed a decline of food security levels in Jamaica.**

**Specific findings include:**

- A total of 7.0 per cent of respondents indicated that they went an entire day without eating in the week prior to the survey (February 2022), and 34.0 per cent of them skipped meals or ate less than usual. These findings represent a significant deterioration in the food consumption of Jamaicans compared to April 2020 (1.0 per cent and 11.0 per cent respectively) and are similar to the levels reported in June 2020 (10.0 per cent and 36.0 per cent respectively) which indicates a persistence in negative food security outcomes over longer periods of time.
- In February 2022, respondents in Jamaica went without eating a whole day and skipped meals more often than the regional average (5.0 per cent and 30 per cent respectively).
- When the FIES methodology is applied, 33.0 per cent of respondents in Jamaica are moderately food insecure and an additional 25.0 per cent severely food insecure, estimated over a recall period of 30 days. The prevalence of food insecurity is again higher in Jamaica, when compared to the Caribbean regional average of 19.0 per cent for severe and 29.0 per cent for moderate food insecurity.
- Respondents with lower income levels are experiencing severe and moderate food insecurity more often than those with higher incomes. Approximately every second respondent with well below average income level experienced severe food insecurity in the 30 days prior to the survey compared to every tenth respondent with well above average income. Lowest income households were most likely to resort to negative coping strategies, and over half of the lowest income respondents reported to have no food stocks at the time of the survey.
- Respondents are resorting to more severe actions, with 72.0 per cent drawing on savings to meet immediate food and other needs (85.0 per cent among lowest income households), nearly half reducing expenditures on education and health (61.0 per cent among lowest income households), and over a third selling productive assets (49.0 per cent among lowest income households).
- For 45.0 per cent to 46.0 per cent of all respondents with well below average incomes (poorest quintile), the main worry for the future is the inability to cover food needs (31.0 per cent among average respondents), other essential needs (37.0 per cent among average respondents), or unemployment (36 per cent among average respondents).

**Target 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.**

A decline in the prevalence of wasting and stunting, (measures of malnutrition)<sup>33</sup> in children under 5 years old points to progress towards addressing undernourishment. The global intermediate target is a reduction in the prevalence of stunting by 40.0 per cent by 2025 (from 2012 levels). The global target is for the elimination of wasting, and the prevalence of children being overweight by 2030. In 2018, the percentage of children under 5 years old whose height was too low for their age was 4.1 per cent in Jamaica, down from 5.7 per cent in 2012. In Jamaica, the prevalence of wasting in 2018 was 2.6 per cent (SDG Progress Report 2019/2020).

Efforts to improve the nutrition of Jamaican school children include:

- Provision of in-kind benefits by PATH as part of the School Feeding Programme (SFP), one of the largest social assistance programmes in Jamaica.
- The finalization of the National School Nutrition Policy (NSNP) by the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY).
- A halt to the provision of bullas and muffins (which have significantly high sugar content) in schools through MOH and MOEY collaboration. Interim Guidelines for Beverages in Schools were also implemented<sup>34</sup>.
- Social Marketing Campaign for the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines.
- The launch of a National Food Industry Task Force, and the launch of the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Network (NIYCFN) in 2019, in keeping with the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy.

There continues to be the need for sustainable programmes for iron supplementation to address anaemia, a common nutritional deficiency in Jamaican children and adolescents.

**Target 2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.**

The agriculture sector plays an important socio-economic role in the country, especially in rural areas where 48 per cent of Jamaicans reside and the poverty rate is high. In 2020, there was a 1.4 per cent decline in Real Value Added (RVA) for the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing industry relative to 2019; and the industry accounted for 7.8 per cent of Total Real Value Added (ESSJ 2020; Ministry of Agriculture Performance Report 2020-21).

<sup>33</sup> Stunting is defined as abnormally low height for age. Wasting is defined as low weight for height based on the global median from the World Health Organization child growth standards.

<sup>34</sup> Jamaica ranks in the top 10 globally for soft-drink consumption in adolescents, aged 13 to 15. Sugary-drink consumption is above the recommended amounts for maintaining good health in Jamaican children (JIS).

According to the PIOJ's Agricultural Productivity Index (API), the decline in the RVA resulted from reductions in gross output for 2020 compared to 2019 for Traditional Export Crops (-6.8 per cent), Animal Farming (-4.5 per cent), Fishing (-0.5 per cent) and Post-Harvest Activities (-27.7 per cent). This outweighed the increase of 0.7 per cent for Other Agricultural Crops. The combined negative effects of COVID-19 and adverse weather conditions were the main contributors to this performance.

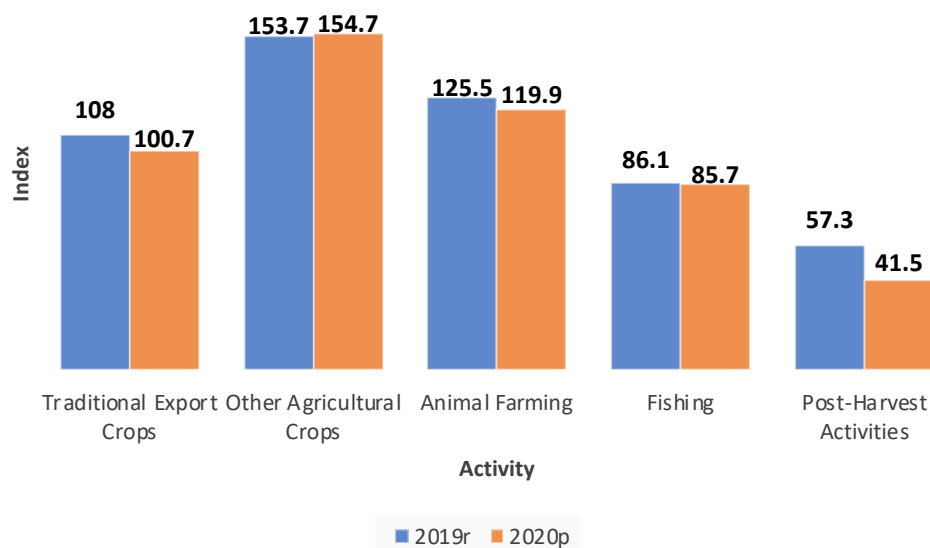


FIGURE 11: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION INDEX 2019 & 2020  
Source: Compiled using PIOJ's API in ESSJ 2020

The government has implemented several measures to cushion the negative effects of COVID-19 on the agricultural sector in Jamaica. As such, in 2020, despite a slight decline, the agriculture sector accounted for 51.4 per cent of all goods-producing employment; and 15.9 per cent of total employment.

### Initiatives by the GOJ to cushion the negative impact of COVID-19 on the agriculture sector

- Additional injection of \$1 billion (US\$ 6.85 million) into the Productivity Incentive Programme to assist small farmers and fisher folk during the crisis including to provide climate smart production practices and technologies and stimulus package to purchase excess fruits and vegetables from farmers.
- Eighty-three fishers operating at four fishing beaches in St Catherine received vouchers valued at JM \$30 000 (US \$198) each to purchase gear and equipment (December 2020).
- Several agriculture and tourism enterprises in the parishes of St Ann and Trelawny benefited from a donation of Coronavirus (COVID-19) resilient supplies (sanitation items and PPE) under the COVID-19 Resilience and Capacity Building sub-project of the Rural Economic Development Initiative, Phase II (REDI II) implemented by Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).
- Continued support for farmers by purchasing excess agricultural produce through the "Buy-Back Programme (February 2021).
- Exemption of farmers from curfew to allow continued attention to agricultural activities.

Source: UNDP Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 and Policy Options in Jamaica

The decline in employment in the sector may be attributed to weather-related shocks (drought and flooding) and reduced demand from the tourism sector (ESSJ 2020). The upcoming WFP's Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey (fourth round) indicated that farming and fishing have become important activities for many households as the pandemic progressed, primarily for household food consumption and complementing incomes. Nearly 25.0 per cent of respondents were engaged in any of these activities as of February 2022, compared to 14.0 per cent in April 2020. The survey also highlighted that those engaged in fishing/coastal activities appear to be facing more challenges related to income and food consumption. During each survey round they were more likely to report loss of jobs or reduced salaries/revenues relative to other respondents.

During the financial year 2020-2021, the government's Production Incentive Programme (PIP), aimed at increasing the production of strategically selected crops and livestock for local consumption with export potential, continued to be implemented benefitting both crop and livestock farmers. Efforts also continued under the Agro-Parks and Agro-Economic Zones Development Programme. In the financial year 2018/2019, production across the parks saw a steady increase from 1.8 million kilogrammes to 3.3 million kilogrammes up to February 2021 representing a 66.0 per cent increase over the period. (MOAF Sectoral Debate Presentation 2021-2022).

Work is ongoing to provide irrigation water to boost productivity on 718 hectares of land under the £35.5 million UKCIF-funded, Caribbean Development Bank-facilitated Essex Valley Agriculture Development Project (EVADP) in South St Elizabeth, and on 795 hectares of land under the £17 million Southern Plains Agricultural Development Project (SPAD) in St Catherine and Clarendon. Together these projects are impacting over 1 500 farmers and their families.

In May 2021, Jamaica developed a strategy for "Improving on the Nation Agri-Business". The strategy comprises programmes and activities designed to address the challenges inhibiting the expansion of the agribusiness industry and infusing the leveraging of advancements in agriculture. The strategy is also geared towards supporting ecosystems that function to ensure food and nutritional security (MOAF Sectoral Debate Presentation 2021-2022). Jamaica presented projects at the SDG Fair in 2021 to attract SDG-sustainable FDI in the agriculture sector. One such project was the Bamboo Bio-products Project (BBP). It is designed to be the first fully integrated bamboo market pulp mill globally, using a sustainable agro-ecological-industrial model.

The challenges for the agriculture sector vary, including changing global markets forces, climate change factors namely adverse weather conditions<sup>35</sup>, regular disruption to the supply and distribution chains, and small budgetary allocation to the sector. Inadequate access to low-cost formal sources of financing and credit remains a key issue for small farmers especially those in rural communities in Jamaica. Despite the wide array of traditional financial institutions and other specialized micro-lending institutions, farmers are denied financing for production and to upgrade their farms. Many small farmers have no formal land tenure (documented land ownership) although they are registered as agricultural producers. Land tenure and titling issues prevent small farmers from securing loans/financing and expanding crop production. About 30.0 per cent of the annual production of crops is lost due to poor post-harvest handling and treatment practices. There is also concern within the fisheries sector regarding unhygienic conditions, including inadequate washing and drainage facilities and the absence of cold storage and ice crushing facilities to avoid fish losses. The high incidence of theft from farms (Praedial Larceny) in terms of loss of stocks, produce and equipment of all types continues to be a major deterrent to agricultural production in Jamaica. The livelihoods of small farmers are sometimes completely wiped out when thieves strike.

Other challenges to the sector include:

- Insufficient provision of targeted and consistent extension services
- Poor infrastructure including farm roads
- Disconnect between production and productivity and trade arrangements
- Inadequate ICT infrastructure, innovation and technological solutions
- Inadequate research and development capabilities
- Inability to attract and retain young people

Despite the contribution of the sector to Jamaica's GDP and employment, the poor perception of agriculture as a viable economic industry remains. There is a need to focus on building the competitiveness of the Jamaican agriculture sector. The development of non-traditional exports is a strategy that will improve the overall output of the sector and strengthen the global niche that Jamaica has and attract more young people and entrepreneurs to the sector. The GOJ is committed to strengthening the legislative and policy framework to support the development of the emerging sub-sectors. Efforts to expand the use of idle lands by farmers across the island and to provide farmers with the required financing for production such as for land preparation, inputs, and harvesting costs as well as to upgrade their farms will go a far way in making the sector more competitive. Increasing water storage capacity and expanding irrigation facilities are therefore critical (MICAF Strategic Business Plan 2019-2023). Priority actions that will reduce the need for trucking water to farming communities include implementing rainwater harvesting systems and increasing the number of water tanks (Sectoral Debate 2021/2022). Incentivizing youth in agriculture through a partnership with the education sector is also critical for a consistent supply of labour and to support the overall sustainability of the sector.

**Target 2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.**

Climate impacts to smallholder agriculture systems include loss of agricultural assets, livestock, crops and agricultural infrastructure. Extreme events can delay land preparation, planting, and harvesting, thus increasing crop wastage. Droughts exacerbate soil degradation and loss of soil fertility and increase food production costs, affecting food security. Also, water and heat stress lead to reduced seed set and can exacerbate vulnerability to plant pests and diseases. Waterlogging and soil nutrients from floods cause crops loss. Floods can also cause soil erosion and landslides, further affecting crop production. Flood rains in October and November of 2020 impacted the agricultural sector resulting in losses of over \$2.5 billion.

Findings from the upcoming WFP's Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey (fourth round) are instructive. The data revealed that the main driver behind livelihood disruptions (two weeks before the February 2022 survey), as cited by 47.0 per cent of respondents, was the unaffordability of/or lack of access to livelihood inputs. Most impacted by this constraint are households with a well below average income level (52.0 per cent of those facing disruptions), and those relying on informal daily/casual labour (59.0 per cent). It is worthwhile noting that this factor has grown steadily in importance with each survey round (27.0 per cent in June 2020 and 9.0 per cent in April 2020) and is linked to wider trends related to supply chain disruptions and price rises in the Caribbean.



Water	Soils	Economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased <b>availability of water</b> resources due to increased temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns and prolonged periods of drought.</li> <li>Reduced <b>water quality</b> due to saline intrusion into ground water sources caused by rising sea-levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced soil <b>fertility and soil degradation</b> due to soil salinization caused by rising sea levels and drought.</li> <li>Accelerated <b>soil erosion and inundation of production fields</b> due to the occurrence of extreme events (floods, hurricanes etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of employment and income earning opportunities.</li> <li>Loss of foreign exchange due to potential reduction in agricultural exports; and</li> <li>Increased demand for foreign exchange for food imports.</li> </ul>

BOX 3 (ILLUSTRATIVE) POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE  
Source: GOJ Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica

To advance efforts to build the resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change and natural hazards impacts, Jamaica activated the Drought Management Committee in 2020 and drafted a Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy, in line with the Sendai Framework. Other key initiatives for the review period include:

- A Drought Adaptation and Mitigation Programme, through the National Irrigation Commission: As of May 2021, the programme delivered approximately 276 000 gallons of water to 136 farmers who had experienced threats or damage to crops.
- RADA distributed Drip Irrigation Kits, valued at \$126 million and covering 202.34 hectares (500 acres) to farmers.
- Rehabilitation and construction of water catchment areas, which are considered critical infrastructure to support crops and livestock production. Ten catchment ponds are currently undergoing rehabilitation.

Continued investment in climate-smart technology and supportive measures to advance sustainable agriculture for the domestic economy will be critical for Jamaica to achieve greater food security (ESSJ 2020, Sectoral Debate & MOA Annual Report 2020). At the Global Food Systems Summit in September 2021, Jamaica highlighted that multilateral assistance to developing countries to transform food systems should be delivered in line with the national priorities and realities, ensuring that the processes of transition are just, equitable and fair<sup>36</sup>.

The national agricultural extension agency provided technical assistance to 240,000 registered farmers in the following areas<sup>37</sup>:

- Best practices for crop production
- Livestock rearing and production

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/FSS\\_statement\\_Jamaica.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/FSS_statement_Jamaica.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Source: MOAF Summary Report on Sustainable Development Goal 2.

- Climate-smart technologies
- Proper usage of chemicals
- Water adaptation strategies
- Disaster Risk Management

**Target 2.5** By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

The availability and access to clean seeds to meet production requirements, especially during shocks including drought, natural disasters and pandemics is critical. Moreover, climate change impacts on agricultural production underscore the importance of seed security. In April 2019, the Cabinet approved the adoption of the National Seed Policy and Action Plan for tabling in Parliament as a White Paper. The National Seed Policy seeks to establish a sustainable seed system that ensures a consistent and reliable supply of clean, affordable and accessible seeds in support of agricultural production, productivity, food security and biodiversity. Policy implementation will commence during fiscal year 2021/2022. In 2019, the Senate passed the Protection of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Amendment) Act. The amendments will ensure the alignment and integration of the government's agricultural and rural development policies and programmes with the relevant international organizations to establish or strengthen the capabilities for the sustainable use of plant genetic resources, and promote the sharing and exchange of plant genetic resources. Jamaica ratified the 2001 International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2006.

Jamaica's domestic seed industry is not well developed as most planting material is imported or from farmer-saved seeds. Private sector involvement in certified seed production is limited for most crops, so the public sector is expected to meet the demand for locally produced planting material for key crops. The public sector seed programme is constrained by inadequate human resources for key skills (e.g., plant breeders, budders, and seed technologists), lack of funding for production and distribution activities, limited production capacity and stealing of the crops used for seed production. There remains the need for greater streamlining of resources and collaboration in the relevant sectors, and improved partnership with academia in biodiversity, and plant and animal research.

**Target 2.A** Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks, in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.

International Development Partners (IDPs) continue to support the Government of Jamaica with Official Development Assistance (ODA) to advance the agricultural sector. As Table 8 shows, grant support tripled between 2015 and 2020 (SDG Progress Report 2019/2020).

TABLE 8: FUNDING SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO AGRICULTURE SECTOR, 2015 AND 2020

	2015	2020 <sup>2</sup>
Grants (US\$)	0.98 million	3.04 million
Loans (US\$)	75.39 million	no loan inflows

Source: SDGs Progress Report 2019/2020

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary figures

In 2019, Jamaica secured a US\$40.0 million loan from the World Bank for the agriculture sector to improve economies of scale for small farmers and to mainstream climate resilience (Economic and Social Survey Jamaica 2019). Additionally, there has been increased investment in research and technical development in the agricultural sector in 2019, through the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience; this includes a \$26.2 million outlay to refurbish a seed storage facility for vegetative seeds that are of economic importance, as well as training sessions that focus on disseminating information on pest management and best postharvest techniques for storage (SDG Progress Report 2019/2020).

Notwithstanding, additional support is required to address existing challenges and strengthen programmes that have already been launched.

**Target 2.B Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.**

The Agriculture Trade Enforcement Advisory Mechanism (ATEAM), a government and business partnership that aimed at removing unjustifiable trade restrictions that affect the growth of Jamaica's export, was launched on September 2, 2021 by the MOAF. This initiative is part of the ministry's commitment to optimize opportunities for Jamaica's export earnings from agricultural products. The ATEAM comprises representatives from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, JAMPRO, Bureau of Standards Jamaica, the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Since its establishment, the ATEAM has disseminated information on export opportunities under the CARICOM Grant of Suspensions of the Common External Tariff, and prepared and disseminated 10 export profiles of products with the greatest export potential to the world.

Other achievements by the ATEAM include the establishment of strategic partnerships with Jamaica's Mission in Geneva, Switzerland, covering Italy, Austria, Turkey, Greece, Liechtenstein and Cyprus, honorary consuls in Rome, Athens, Istanbul, Ankara and Jamaica's Embassy in China to obtain market access for Jamaican products.

**Target 2. C Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.**

Limiting food price<sup>38</sup> volatility is important for achieving greater food security and a more efficient market. Since 2015, Jamaica recorded lower levels of abnormally high price increases; in more recent years there was low-price volatility, coinciding with stable inflation (Figure 12). (SDGs Progress Report 2019/2020).

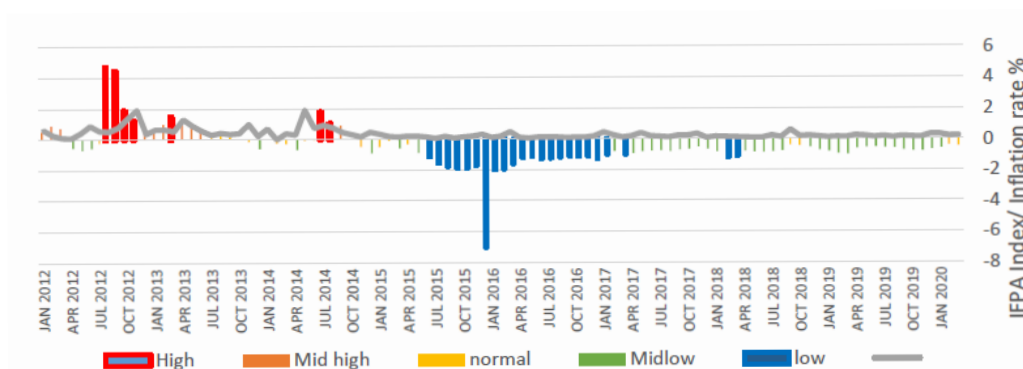


FIGURE 12 INDICATOR OF FOOD PRICE ANOMALIES  
SOURCE: PLANNING INSTITUTE WITH DATA FROM THE BOJ

Also, findings from the WFP's Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey (fourth round) indicated that:

- Food prices continued to increase since April 2020 with nearly every respondent (98.0 per cent) reporting an increase in food prices in the two weeks before the February 2022 survey, compared to April 2020 (71.0 per cent). There was no difference in perception between respondents from different income groups or residing in rural or urban areas. When compared with the regional average of 93.0 per cent, this means that slightly more respondents are reporting an increase in prices in Jamaica.
- Two-fifths of respondents reported challenges accessing markets in the week before the survey, primarily due to a lack of financial means (88.0 per cent of respondents). Respondents are increasingly buying cheaper and less preferred foods and in smaller quantities compared to April 2020.

The country has established **marketing monitoring mechanisms** through the platforms such as Jamaica Agricultural Marketing Information System (JAMIS) and Agri-linkages Exchange (ALEX). The data and information from these platforms support stakeholders to make informed decisions about the granting of import permits based on prevailing

38 The price of bread and cereals was tracked as the main food commodity, due to cereals still accounting for 45.0 per cent of a person's daily caloric intake, particularly for persons from developing countries (FAOSTAT 2017).

market conditions for example. This allows for the ministry to avoid extreme price volatility as decisions are made regarding the actual production and supply of food commodities.

## Lessons Learnt

**Food security in Jamaica is linked to the livelihoods and productivity of small-scale farmers, many of whom do not consistently apply sustainable agricultural practices.** More programmes offering agricultural support, in the form of knowledge sharing and technical support, to build capacity as well as measures to improve land tenure, irrigation, and access to markets must be pursued.

**Sustained partnerships and development assistance have proven to be beneficial in offsetting some of the challenges of the Jamaican agriculture sector.** Collaboration and support from both international entities and the private sector are crucial to ensuring the sustainability of interventions, as well as effectively implementing new initiatives. Leveraging partnerships to develop new programmes will advance diversification, thereby improving the resilience of the economy, and sustaining growth and quality of life.

**Extension services are essential for agriculture productivity.** The extension services provided by RADA will have to be strengthened to assist farmers in making the transition to more climate-smart, modern and efficient farm practices particularly in the small farmer sub-sector and in rural parishes.

Overall, an **enabling environment underpinned by the consistent and ongoing application of technology, innovation, research and development and strong data systems** remains critical for the transformation and sustainability of the agricultural sector.

## Way Forward

A decline in the incidents of wasting and stunting in children under five for example, shows that progress has been made to meet targets on undernourishment. Food poverty targets were also trending in the right direction until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several policies aimed at ensuring nutrition and food security for children from the early childhood to secondary levels have been implemented as well as programmes towards the achievement of the eradication of extreme (food) poverty.

Agricultural productivity however remains a challenge—primarily the level of crop yield and the susceptibility to transitory price instability due to climate-related events such as drought, despite overall relative stability in prices in recent years. Given projected climate change impacts, price anomalies that are driven by weather-related events may become more frequent. The agriculture industry remains an important contributor to the country's GDP and employment level. The clear and most critical need is therefore for more investment to better address the impact of climate change on agriculture (e.g., through the preparation of a national adaptation plan for agriculture) and the myriad of other challenges the sector faces.

Other strategies and actions that will accelerate the achievement of Goal 2 include:

### ***Key Initiatives and Programmes***

- Re-introduce the Backyard Gardening Programme which focuses on addressing food and nutrition security at the household level.
- Strengthen child nutrition screening and interventions to reduce the incidence of undernutrition.

- *Governance Framework and Mechanisms*
- Create an enabling environment to support investments in the agriculture sector including,
- public-private partnerships that would lead to increased research and development towards increasing outputs and enhancing productivity.
- Accelerate/undertake Land Titling Reform which will treat with security of tenure and therefore unlock the latent capital that is hampered by unregistered and common law titles.

### ***Infrastructure***

- Continue to upgrade irrigation, drainage and road infrastructure to support the agriculture sector.
- Strengthen marketing infrastructure and support systems for the agriculture sector.
- Support digitalization of the agricultural sector and the strengthening of Internet connectivity in farming communities, especially rural communities, across the island.

### ***Planning, Research and Knowledge Management***

- Undertake strategic planning including long-term planning exercises to ensure that the sector can withstand exogenous shocks and ensure that internal food supply systems are sustained and equipped to supply food and nutrition, especially to the vulnerable, should food import availability become compromised.
- Promote relevant research and foresight on emerging trends for the agricultural sector; strengthened partnerships between the public and private sector and academic and research institutions could advance this effort.
- Consider the establishment of a regional and virtual extension platform affiliated with tertiary institutions to facilitate the ongoing uploading and dissemination of up-to-date knowledge (case studies, good practices, success stories, etc.) to the farmers and farming communities across the island.

## **Resource Requirements**

Achieving the desired levels of food production locally which can satisfy nutritional needs and also support value added production require a multistakeholder approach targeting yields, distribution and storage. Ensuring the achievement of this goal has implications for health, poverty, economic and environmental development; as a result, the GOJ has developed and is guided by policies on production and standards for local and international markets that maintain safe foods in the market. The National Agribusiness Strategy 2020–2025 is one such initiative which outlines a plan of action for the industry.

Key to implementation of the strategy are investments in infrastructure, digitisation, and policy coordination. Support is required from international development partners, both local and international, private sector and community groups and trade associations. With the role of government clearly outlined in the design and implementation of elements of the strategy, other areas of support required includes:

- Public private partnerships with local and international investors for expansion of the Agroparks concept
- Implementation of climate smart agricultural practices and the technical expertise to train and mobilise new and existing farmers
- Developing innovative financing instruments to support spending on mitigation, and rehabilitation, through green funds, impact bonds or similar funds
- Development of digital technologies to support existing data collection and monitoring, research and development and the seed bank.