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# Cambodia

## Food price update – December 2020

Focus: Effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on food prices

Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit - Cambodia Country Office

# Preface

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The COVID-19 pandemic has been rapidly evolving across the globe since the beginning of 2020. On 11 March, the World Health Organization (WHO) categorized it as a global pandemic. There are more than 83 million confirmed cases and more than 1.8 million deaths worldwide (WHO, 31 December). In Cambodia, since the first reported case on 27 January, there have been a total of 383 cases and no deaths. A majority of cases were imported and there have been 41 cases from community transmission (MOH, 6 January 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the global economy. Trade and travel have been severely restricted, and many countries, including Cambodia and others across Asia, have instituted measures to contain the spread.

In order to understand if the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted food availability and access at markets in Cambodia, the World Food Programme (WFP) monitors the retail and wholesale prices of key food commodities (see Annex 1 and 2) in 45 urban and rural markets across the country (see the *Methods section for more details*). An average of 340 traders and market chiefs are interviewed every two weeks, through a call center contracted by WFP. In addition to prices, market chiefs are also interviewed to assess market functionality, including supply and demand issues. Additional information is used to interpret the results and understand the broader context.

This update is based on market data collected in the first and third weeks of December 2020.

This system is based on long-term cooperation between WFP and the Agricultural Marketing Office (AMO) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

# Contents

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<b>1. Key findings</b>	3
<b>2. Results</b>	
Market functionality	4
National: Longer-term price trends	5
National: Short-term price trends	6
Sub-national: Price trends in urban and rural areas	7
Sub-national: Price trends of mixed rice and snakehead fish	8
Sub-national: Price trends of duck eggs and vegetable oil	9
<b>3. Context</b>	
Trade and local production	10
Policy responses to date	11
<b>4. Methods and market locations</b>	12
<b>5. Annex 1</b>	
Changes in retail prices	13
<b>6. Annex 2</b>	
Changes in wholesale prices	14
<b>7. Annex 3</b>	
Rainfall pattern, population distribution and paddy cultivation	15

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## COVID-19 & Environmental Factors Influencing Prices

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread rapidly since January and continued to impact economic activities across the world. The World Bank now projects that economic activity in Cambodia contracted by 2% in 2020 due largely to the impacts of COVID-19. However, the gradual easing of social distancing measures and continued benefits of the Government's fiscal support should drive growth of 4% in 2021. A separate analysis by the Ministry of Economy and Finance estimated GDP per capita could reach USD 1,771 in 2021, up from USD 1,600 in 2020.

For the global food trade, COVID-19 has impacted both supply and demand. Several Southeast Asian countries imposed border controls early in the pandemic, disrupting the flow and prices of commodities.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, Cambodia exported 0.69 million tonnes of milled rice, 11.4% higher than last year (MAFF Minister's Facebook, 1 January 2021).

In December, Cambodia received more rainfall than the long-term average (see Annex 3). The government has advised farmers to reserve water for use in the upcoming dry season.



## Longer-Term Trend Analysis (November 2019 – December 2020)

In Cambodia prices have remained fairly stable for most key food commodities, though there was a slight spike in late October likely due to the floods. Following an initial increase in prices at the end of March and beginning of April, prices stabilized by May until early October. Some of this spike was likely related to the increase of COVID-19 cases and subsequent border closures. Price fluctuations in October and November are likely a result of the floods. Prices in December remain fairly stable.

Prices of mixed rice, duck egg, and snakehead fish remained stable from May to early October, but since then prices of mixed rice and duck egg have increased, while the price of snakehead fish has decreased. The price of vegetable oil decreased in June-July, increased from August to November, and decreased in late December. The price of morning glory has fluctuated since May, spiking in October following the floods, but dropping in late November. Pork prices had an upward trend from May to late September, had a downward trend to late November but increased in December.



## Monthly Food Price Change (November - December 2020)

In December, prices were relatively stable for key food commodities except vegetable prices, which showed large fluctuations, including ridge gourd (+36.1%), Chinese flowering cabbage (-10.3%) and mustard greens (-25.8%).

Prices of mixed rice, snakehead fish, duck egg, and vegetable oil in urban areas was higher than in rural areas. In contrast, the price of pork with fat in urban areas was lower than rural areas. Between the first and third weeks of December, prices for these commodities slightly changed in both rural and urban areas. Morning glory prices decreased in rural areas (-5.2%) and urban areas (-10.3%). The price of duck egg declined in rural areas (-7.2%) and urban areas (-1.0%). Snakehead fish increased in urban area (6.8%) and in rural area (0.1%).

At provincial level, Koh Kong, Prey Veng, Kratie and Stung Treng had the highest reported prices of some food commodities, such as mixed rice, snakehead fish and duck egg.

Seasonal fluctuations in food prices are expected in the coming months due to the harvest of wet season paddy and the dry season.

## Conclusion:

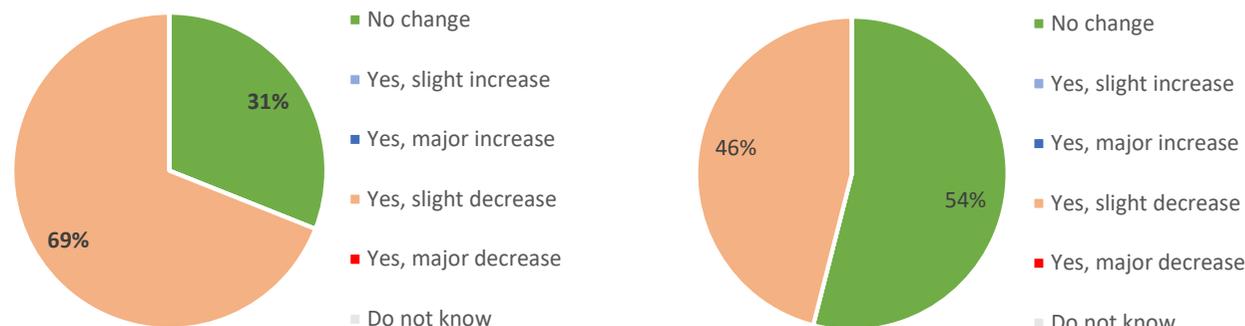
In December, prices have remained fairly stable except for vegetables. Prices of other key commodities remained within expected seasonal fluctuations. Markets also appear to be functioning well. So far, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security is more likely to come from the demand side, with many households suffering economically with a loss of livelihoods and income as a result of the crisis, which in turn restricts their ability to afford a sufficient and diverse basket of nutritious foods. In response, the Government has rolled out on-demand IDPoor nationwide and launched a cash transfer programme since June to provide support to IDPoor households. As of 24 December, about 682,000 IDPoor households have received cash transfers, totaling an estimated USD 169.38 million since June. This programme will be extended for 3 months as part of the Government's COVID-19 economic recovery plan.

In the 45 markets monitored across the country, market chiefs were interviewed in the first and third weeks of December. All respondents reported that markets were open, as usual.

Market chiefs reported changes in the number of customers visiting markets in the first and third weeks of December. In early December, 69% of market chiefs reported a slight decrease in customers visiting markets while 31% reported no change. However, the situation was improved in late December as more than half (54%) of market chiefs reported no change and 46% reported a slight decrease. These changes may be due to the increased cases of COVID-19 following the reported cases from community transmission in early December.

In December, the majority of market chiefs (>90%) reported no issues with the food supply to their markets in the first and third weeks of December, whereas 9% of market chiefs reported an increase in supply prices.

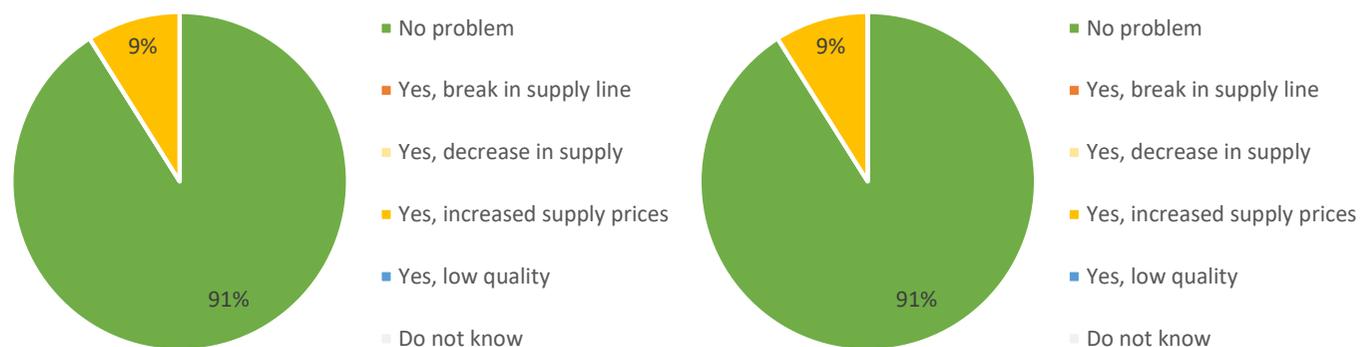
## Change in Customers Visiting Markets in the Past 2 Weeks in December 2020



December 2020, Week 1 (n=13)

December 2020, Week 3 (n=13)

## Change in Supply in the Past 2 Weeks in December 2020

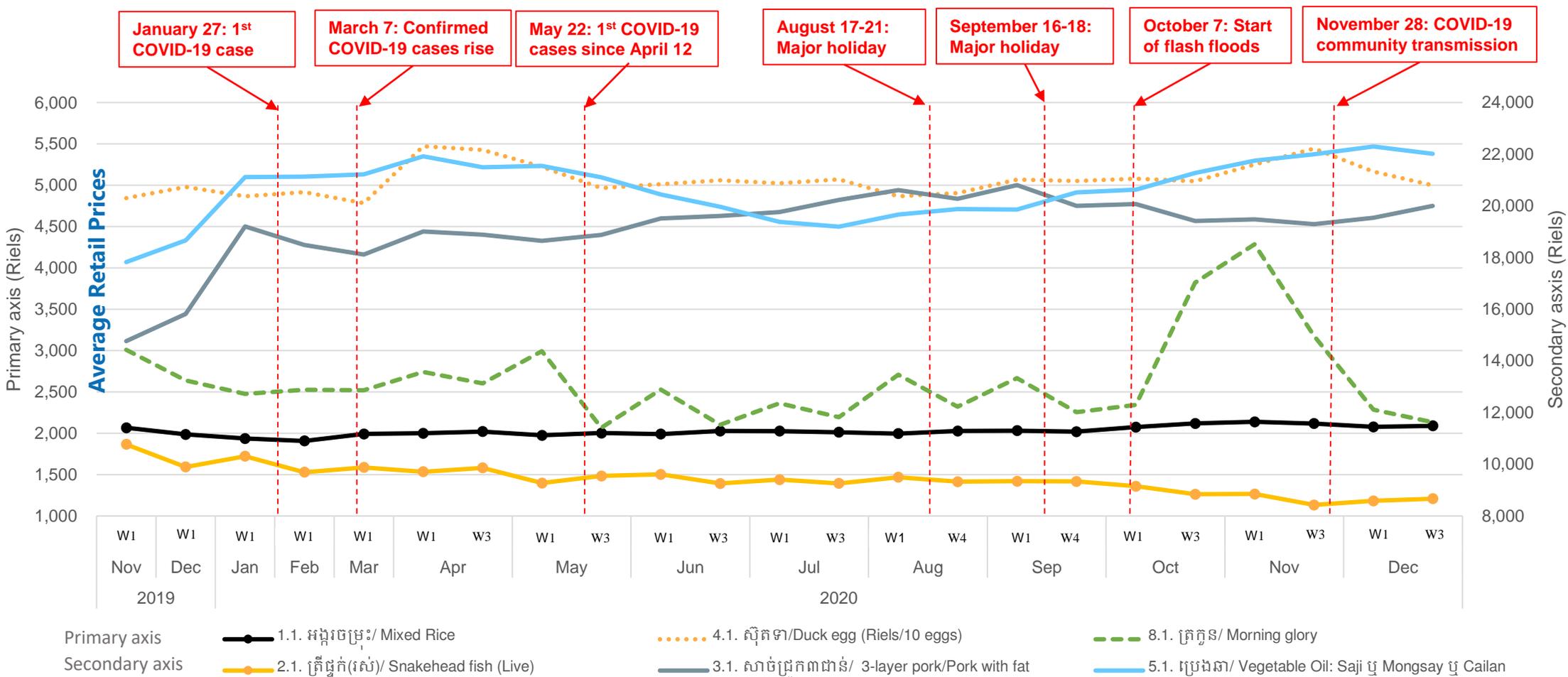


December 2020, Week 1 (n=13)

December 2020, Week 3 (n=13)

# National: Longer-term price trends

Longer-term trends of six commonly consumed food commodities (mixed rice, duck egg, morning glory\*\*, snakehead fish, pork and vegetable oil) in 14 urban and rural markets\*\*\* in 7 provinces (Battambang, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Oddar Meanchay, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear and Stung Treng) indicate that after a slight spike in early April, prices have mostly remained stable until early October when some prices started to fluctuate. The price of morning glory started increasing in late October and peaked in early November but sharply decreased from late November to late December. Similarly, the price of duck egg has had a downward trend since early December. The prices of snakehead fish and pork had a slight upward trend since early December. Vegetable oil has seen a gradual upward trend since late July until early December but slightly dropped in late December. In contrast, mixed rice had a slight downward trend in early December but slightly increased in late December. See Annex 1 and 2 for additional prices.

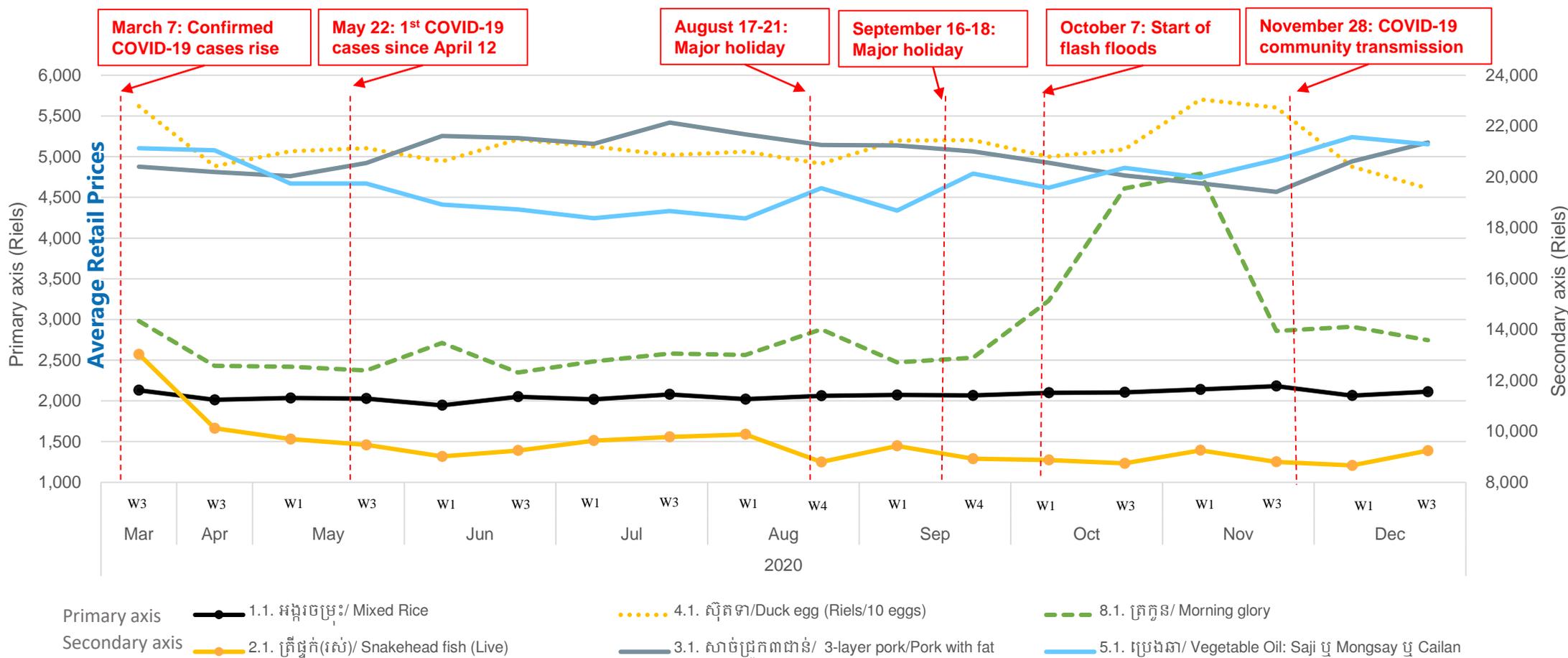


\*\* Morning glory is commonly eaten in Cambodia and its price trend does not always indicate price fluctuations of other vegetables in the Annexes.

\*\*\*Note: Data is from 14 markets that have been monitored since November 2019. See the Methods section for more details.

# National: Short-term price trends

Short-term trends of six commonly consumed food commodities (mixed rice, duck egg, morning glory\*\*, snakehead fish, pork and vegetable oil) in 31 urban and rural markets\*\*\*\* in 16 provinces (Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Tboung Khoum, Kampong Speu, Kampot, Kandal, Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk, Kratie, Phnom Penh, Prey Veng, Pursat, Monduliri, Ratanakiri, Svay Rieng, and Takeo) indicate that most prices remained stable until early August and then showed some fluctuation. The price of morning glory started rising in early October, peaked in early November and then declined in December. Likewise, the price of duck egg peaked in early November and then decreased in December. In contrast, the price of pork with fat has had a downward trend since late July through late November but has increased since early December. Mixed rice and snakehead fish had a slight downward trend in early December but slightly increased in late December. The price of vegetable oil increased in late November until early December but decreased in late December. See Annex 1 and 2 for additional prices.



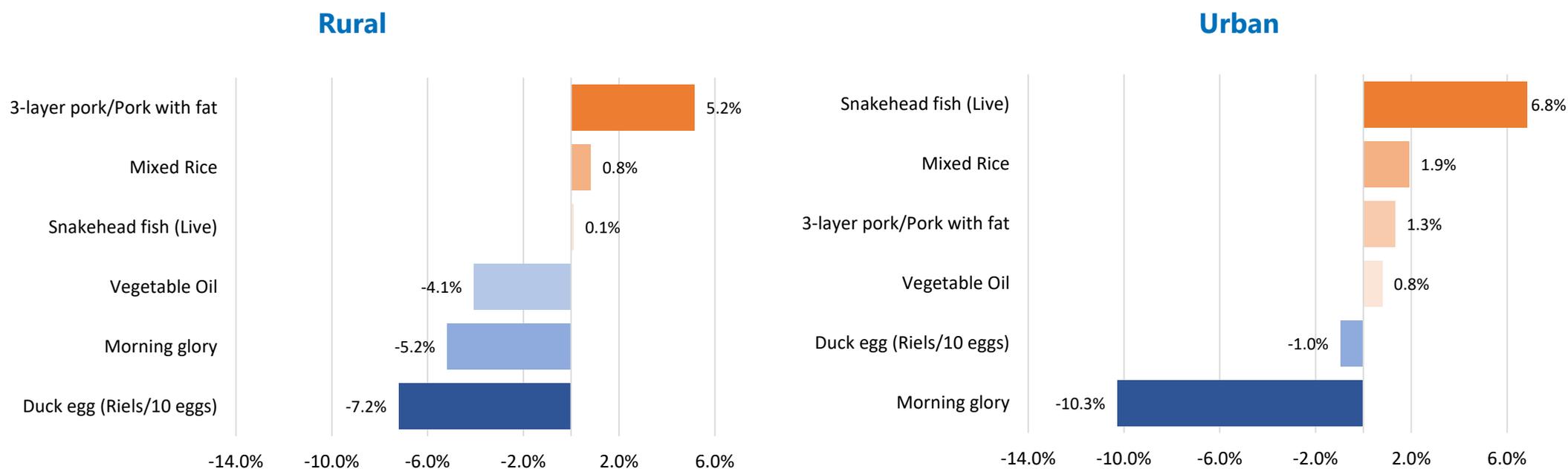
\*\* Morning glory is commonly eaten in Cambodia and its price trend does not always indicate price fluctuations of other vegetables in the Annexes.

\*\*\*\*Note: Data is from the expanded list of markets that have been monitored since March 2020. See the Methods section for more details.

# Sub-national: Price trends in urban and rural areas

In late December, the average prices of mixed rice, snakehead fish, duck egg, and vegetable oil in urban areas was higher than in rural areas while the average price of pork with fat in urban areas was lower than rural areas. Between the first and third weeks of December, the price trend of pork, mixed rice, snakehead fish, duck egg, and morning glory in rural and urban areas followed the same direction of change, with pork, mixed rice, and snakehead fish prices increasing but morning glory and duck egg prices decreasing. Morning glory prices declined by 5.2% and 10.3% in rural and urban areas, respectively. Price of duck egg decreased in rural (-7.2%) and slightly decreased in urban areas (-1.0%). In contrast, prices of pork, mixed rice and snakehead fish increased by 5.2%, 0.8%, and 0.1%, respectively in rural areas and 1.3%, 1.9%, and 6.8%, respectively in urban areas. The price trend of vegetable oil had different directions in rural and urban areas: in rural areas it decreased by 4.1% while in urban areas it slightly increased by 0.8%.

**Bi-Weekly Change (%)**  
1<sup>st</sup> week of December vs 3<sup>rd</sup> week of December 2020



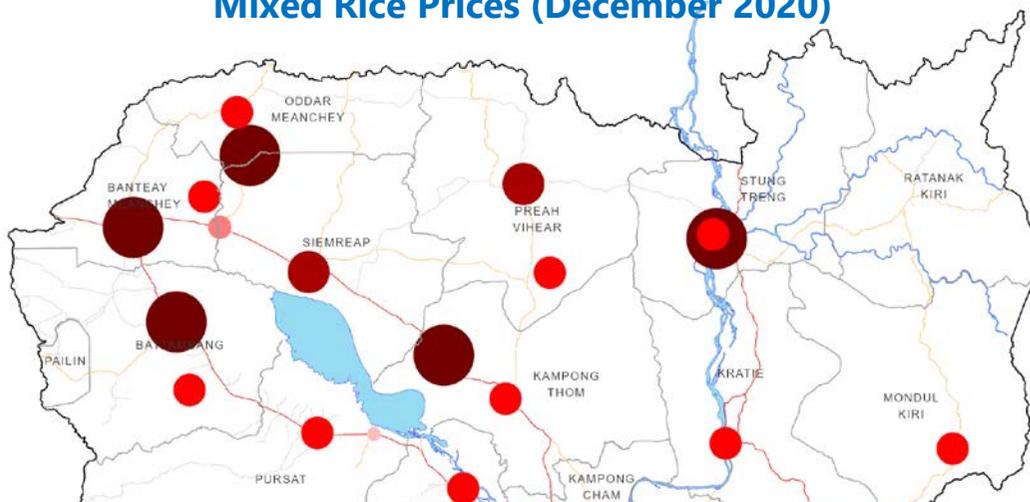
**Note:** Data is from all 45 markets. See the Methods section for more details.

# Sub-national: Price trends of mixed rice & snakehead fish

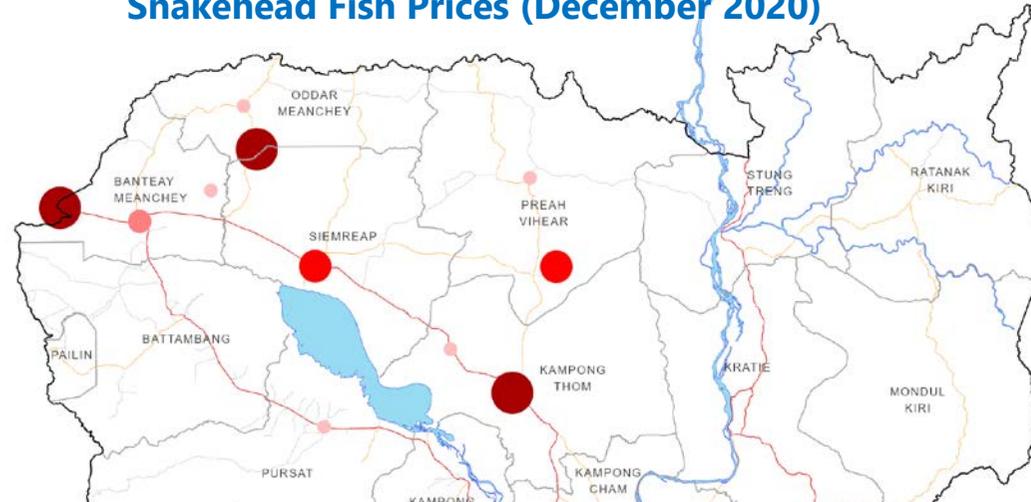
In late December 2020, the national average retail price of mixed rice was **2,099 riels/kg**. The highest price (2,500 riels) was found in three markets including Dang Tong, Koh Kong (17% lower than the price in late November), Prey Veng, Prey Veng (25% higher than the price in early November) and Stung Treng, Stung Treng (14% higher than the price in late November). The second highest price of rice was 2,350 riels in Serey Saophoan, Banteay Meanchey (13% lower than the price in early November). The lowest price was 1,800 riels in Krakor, Pursat (10% lower than the price in late November).

In late December 2020, the national average retail price of snakehead fish (live) was **9,102 riels/kg**. The highest price (13,000 riels) was found in Dang Tong, Koh Kong (7% lower than the price in early November). The second highest price (10,000 riels) was found in multiple markets, such as Veal Yun, Svay Rieng (same as late November), Kandal, Banteay Meanchey (same as late November), Dang Tong, Kampot (same as late November), Kampong Thom, Kampong Thom (same as late November), Chong Kal, Oddar Meanchey (same as late October) and Tom Leap, Takeo (same as early October). The lowest price (7,167 riels) was found in Stoung, Kampong Thom (4% lower than the price in late November).

### Mixed Rice Prices (December 2020)



### Snakehead Fish Prices (December 2020)



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[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_2403](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_2403)

