

Smallholder Farmers and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

To better support smallholder farmers clients around the world,

TechnoServe programs in 10 countries* are surveying approximately 800 smallholder farmer clients regularly to understand how they are being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Threats to Income and Food Security

Business and supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic are making it more difficult for farmers to earn a living and feed their families.

Women farmers were more likely to report losing income or going to bed hungry than were men.



"I used to sell two sacks of passion fruits each week at 300,000 shillings a bag. Due to the suspension of transport systems, closure of markets, and closing of borders, I can now only get 50,000 shillings a bag.

Sometimes I fail to find a buyer, and they spoil in the garden."

A Male Farmer
Kabale District, Uganda



Reduced Income

40% of farmers reported reduced income over the past month, due to COVID-19.



Diverse Disruptions

Farmers reported lost income due to disruptions to both agricultural and non-agricultural activities.



Farmers Squeezed

Farmers are paying higher food and input prices while receiving less for their crops.



Food Security at Risk

Reduced incomes and higher prices are creating food security challenges: 70% report difficulties feeding their families.

* Benin, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe

Long-Term Risks

Left unaddressed, the impacts of COVID-19 on farmers will not end when the pandemic does; rather there is a risk that there will be consequences for years to come.



“With the lockdown, there’s been an increase in price on everything, so

I am reducing the size of the farm, using recycled seeds and animal dung.”

A Female Farmer
Kaduna Province, Nigeria



Immediate Effects

Already, more farmers are reporting issues with quality and productivity.



Lasting Consequences

Nearly 40% reported investing less in their farms; this underinvestment will lead to lower production and quality in future harvests, impacting supply chains.



Eroding Resilience

The longer disruptions exist, the deeper and more enduring the negative consequences for farmers will be.

Responding to the COVID Crisis

TechnoServe Support Boosts Farmer Resilience

Among farmers reporting lost incomes in August:



17% report reduced income from sale of a crop supported by a TechnoServe program



31% report reduced income related to sale of food crops not supported by a TechnoServe program



32% said it was related to other cash crops not supported by a TechnoServe program

To respond to these momentous challenges, TechnoServe’s programs are prioritizing three types of actions:



Supporting the Supply Chain

Assisting producer organizations, food processors and other key actors in supply chains.



Finance for Farmers

Developing market-based solutions for pricing and financing to address farmers’ immediate need for cash.



Streamlined Training

Tailoring farmer support to address the most pressing needs, and harnessing digital tools like WhatsApp and SMS to deliver support remotely.

While not definitive, this suggests that interventions to address supply chain disruptions are benefiting farmers.