

The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Burkina Faso



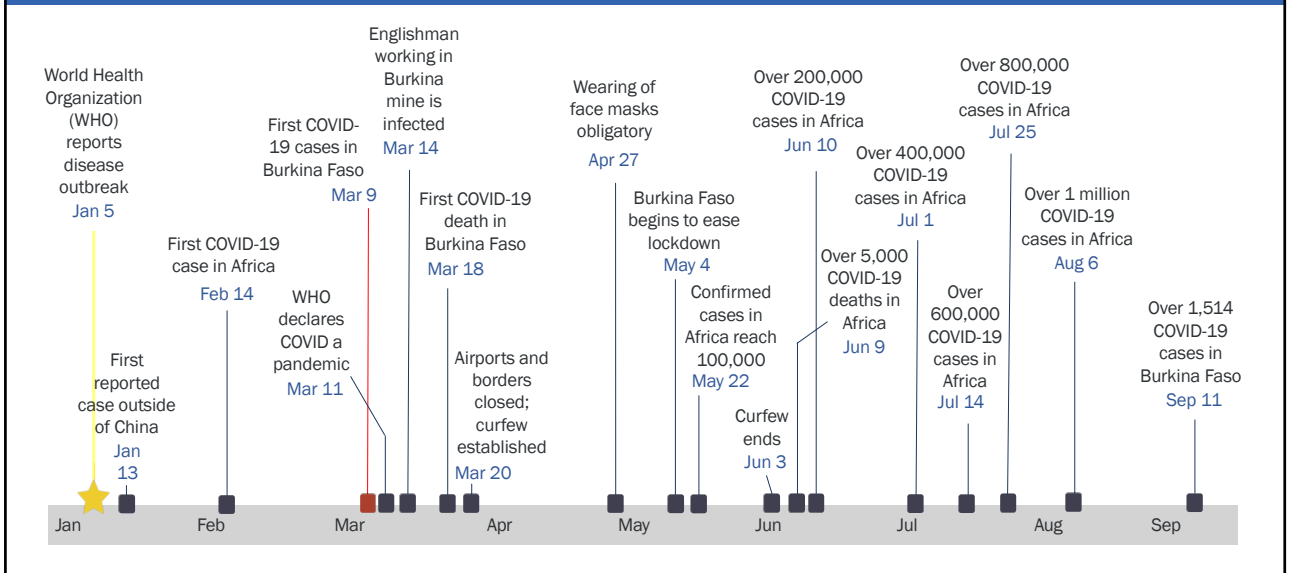
This slide deck was developed in conjunction with a “Nowcast” that assessed the economic impact of COVID-19 on the economy of Burkina Faso.

Objectives of the Presentation

- Review the current status of COVID-19 globally, regionally, and in Burkina Faso
- Identify how Burkina Faso is and will be affected economically by the spread of COVID-19 by focusing on specific critical sectors:
 - ✓ Cotton
 - ✓ Mining
 - ✓ Food Security
- Assess policy options for minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in the future

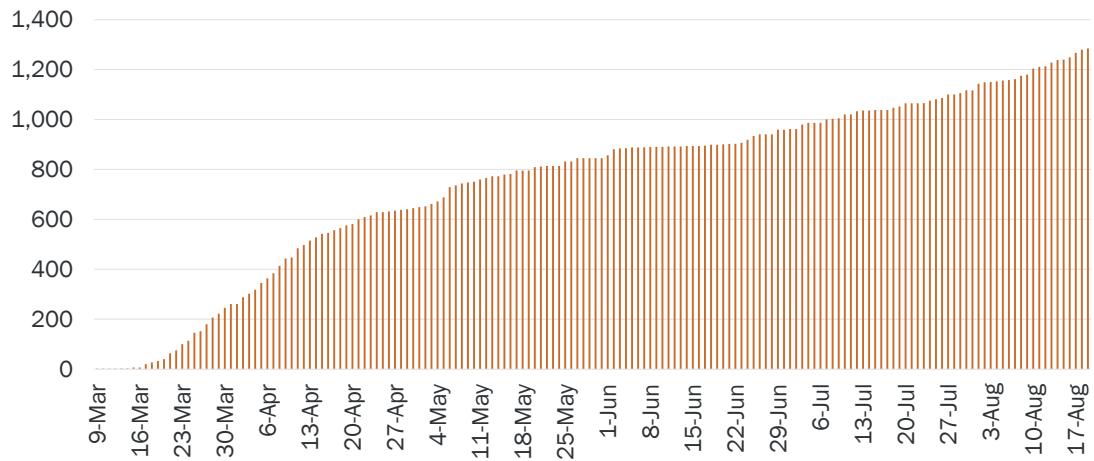
The objective of the following slide deck is to review the current status of COVID-19 globally, regionally, and in Burkina Faso. The second objective is to focus on the economic impact of COVID-19 in Burkina Faso, with a focus on the cotton and mining sectors, as well as discuss how COVID-19 may affect food security in the country. Finally, this slide deck and the associated Nowcast assess policy options for minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in the future.

COVID-19 Timeline



On December 31, 2019, the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Wuhan China. By January 13, there was the first case of COVID-19 outside of China (Thailand). In mid-February, there was the first case of COVID-19 in Africa (Egypt). By early March, Burkina Faso had its first two infections. On March 14, a British national who worked in the Endeavour Hounde gold mine in Burkina Faso was found to be infected, following a vacation in Liverpool. He was the first miner found to be infected in all of Africa. Burkina Faso closed its borders on March 20 and established curfews; by April 27 masks became mandatory in the country. The lockdown was subsequently eased in early May and the curfew ended in early June. Meanwhile cases in Africa have increased from 100,000 in May to 200,000 in June to 400,000 in early July, doubling again to 800,000 by late July. Earlier in August, the total infections in Africa exceeded 1 million.

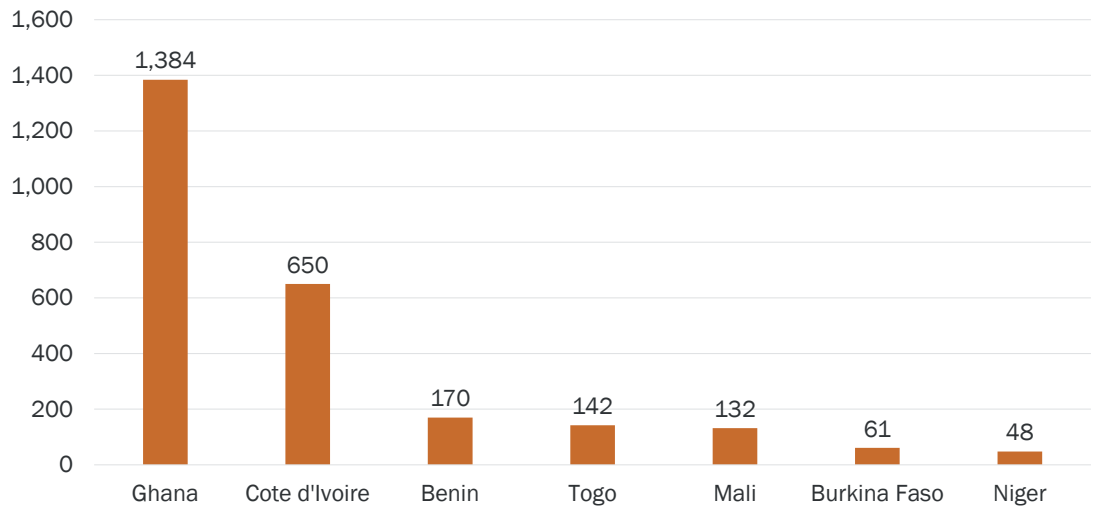
Cumulative Infections in Burkina Faso



Source: Ministère de la Santé, 2020

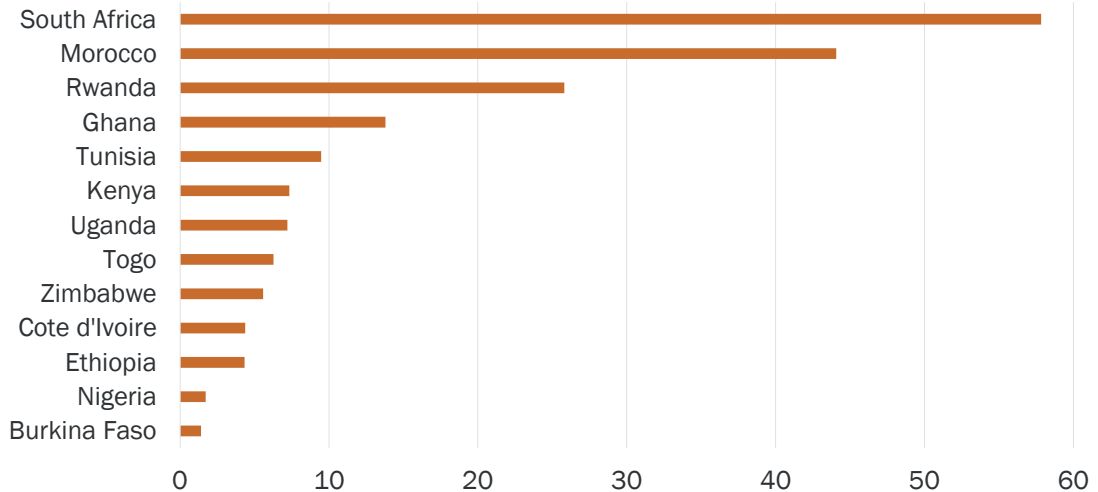
This figure shows the cumulative (daily) number of infections in Burkina Faso from March 9, 2020, to August 17, 2020.

Cases per Million People



To put Burkina Faso's cases into perspective, this figure shows the number of reported COVID-19 cases per million people in different neighboring countries. Of the neighboring countries, only Niger has fewer reported cases per capita. Ghana has approximately 10 times as many cases as Burkina Faso, which suggests that if there is a next wave of infections, Burkina Faso may be particularly vulnerable given the larger impact in neighboring countries.

Cumulative Tests per 1,000 People (Aug 18, 2020)



The number of reported cases is influenced by the number of tests that are performed. Not all countries report the cumulative number of people tested, and therefore this figure shows only a subset of African countries where data is available. Countries like South Africa are generally recognized to be a leader in terms of testing, with almost 60 tests performed per 1,000 people. One of the reasons why Ghana has a large number of reported cases is the relatively large number of tests performed. On the other hand, Burkina Faso has a relatively small number of COVID-19 tests performed since the beginning of the year.

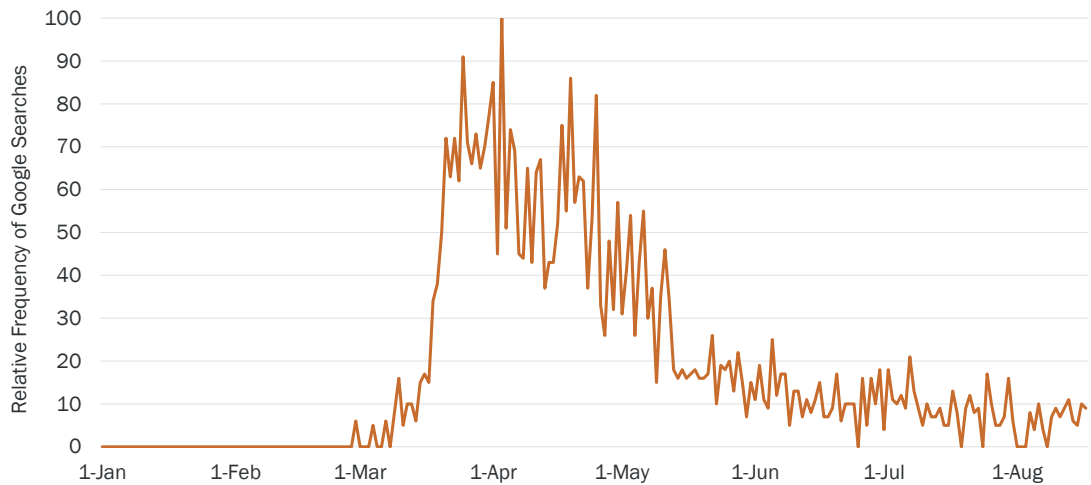
Decrease in Time Spent at Work (Feb 15 – Aug 16)



Source: Google LLC, 2020a
Excludes weekends and holidays.

One way to assess how countries are impacted economically by COVID-19 is to observe the amount of time they spend at work, when compared to a comparable day of the week before the outbreak occurred (in this case, January and early February). The data shows that people reduced their time at work by the most on April 1, 2020, with a decrease of 24%. After April 1, people tended to spend more time back at work and less time at home.

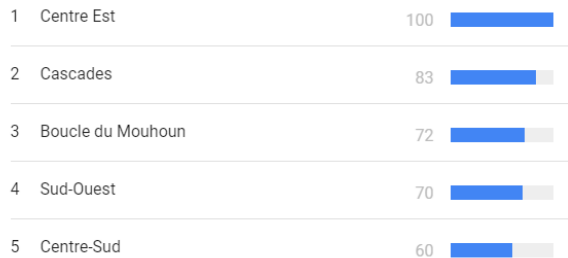
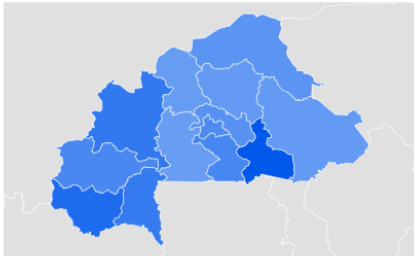
Google Searches for “COVID” in Burkina Faso



Source: Google LLC, 2020b

Google trend data indicates how searches for particular words vary over time. In this case, 100 on the Y-axis represents the time when searches for the word “COVID” were most frequent. On April 3, 2020, the number of google searches for “COVID” peaked, after increasing sharply in March.

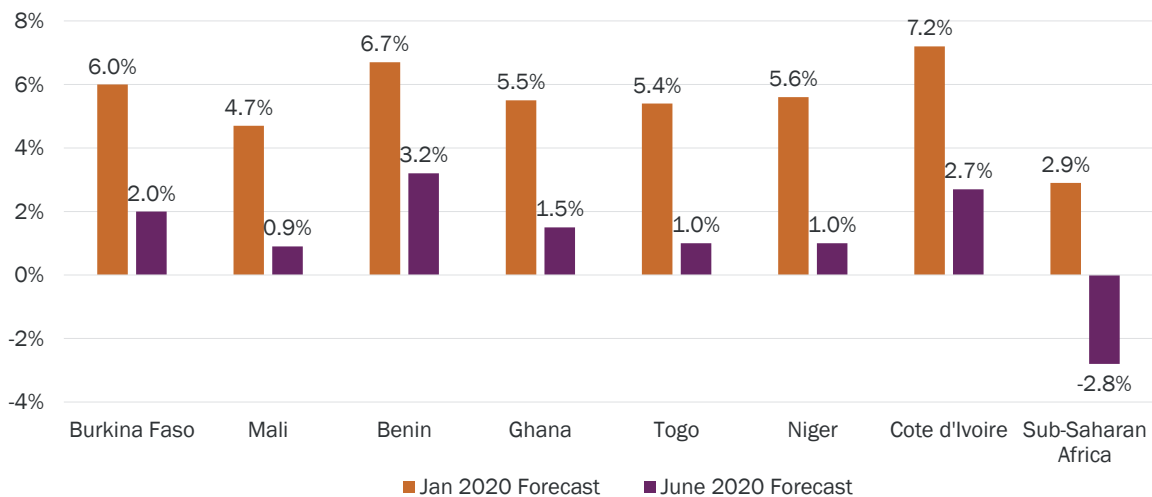
Relative Google Searches for “COVID” in Burkina Faso



Source: Google LLC, 2020b

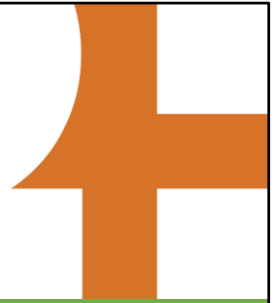
This slide provides a further breakdown of google trend data, presenting how google searches around the word “COVID,” relative to other search terms, varied throughout the country. As shown in this map, google searches for the word “COVID” were greatest in the “Centre Est” region of the country.

Change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth Projections Before and After COVID-19



Source: World Bank, Global Economic Prospects

This slide represents how projected growth in GDP by the World Bank changed from January to June of this year. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, pre-COVID-19 estimates indicated that the economy would grow at 2.9%. However, by June of this year, those projections had been revised downwards to -2.8%. Pre-COVID-19 projections of economic growth in Burkina Faso indicated that the economy would grow by 6.0%. This was subsequently revised downwards to only 2.0% once it was clear that COVID-19 would have significant economic impacts on Burkina Faso's economy.



Impact of COVID-19 on Burkina Faso's Cotton Sector

One of the most important export-driven sectors of Burkina Faso's economy is cotton. About 54% of Burkina Faso's labor force is directly or indirectly involved in the cotton industry. Most cotton production has been in the Western part of the country, which has been less affected by COVID-19. However, the impact of having closed borders and reduced international trade is projected to impact cotton production.

Reasons for Projected Slowing of Cotton Production in Burkina Faso in 2020

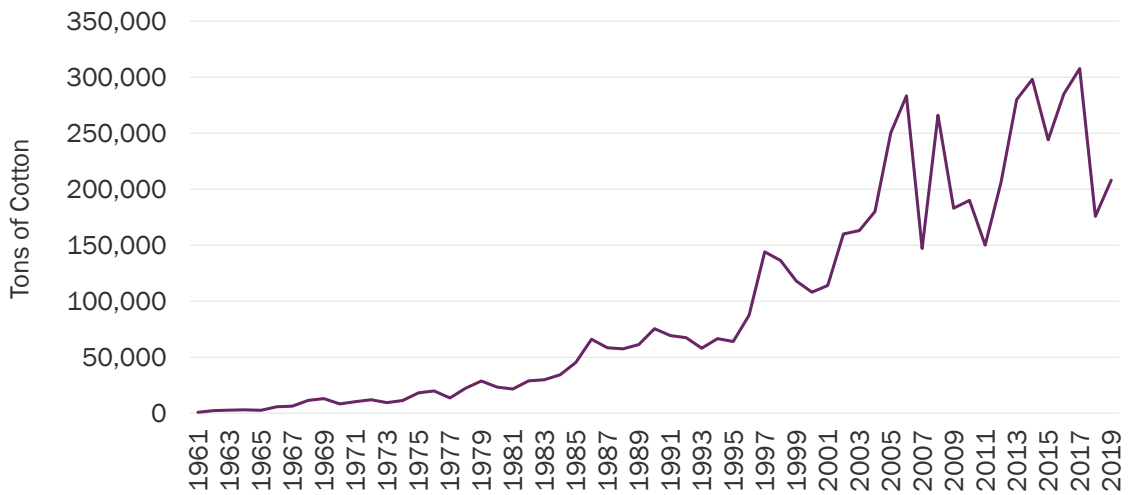
- Ginning companies have enforced social distancing measures, forcing them to change staffing patterns.
- Production of cotton has been reduced, largely due to terrorism-related factors.
- There has been a reduction in access to seedlings due to COVID-19.
- The global price of cotton has collapsed due to COVID-19. Some contracts have already been revised downwards by 10%, while others have been cancelled.
- The loss is projected to be FCFA 20 billion (US\$36 million).

Source: Interview with Mr. Yves Toe from SOCOMA, August 4, 2020.

An interview with cotton producer, SOCOMA, revealed that cotton production is projected to be affected by several factors. First, interventions designed to enforce social distancing have caused ginning companies to reorganize their workforce, including their shifts and the way that workers are able to carry out their functions. They also note that terrorism, especially in the north of the country, have hurt cotton farmers. In addition, it was noted that production of cotton is being hampered by an inability to access seeds and fertilizer.

The collapse of the global price of cotton was also noted as a major limitation in Burkina Faso. Ginning companies have already indicated that they will reduce payments to farmers by 9% from the 2019/20 farming season prices. Overall, SOCOMA projects that the loss of revenue for Burkina Faso's cotton sector will reach US\$36 million.

Cotton Production in Burkina Faso



Source: FAOSTAT, 2020a

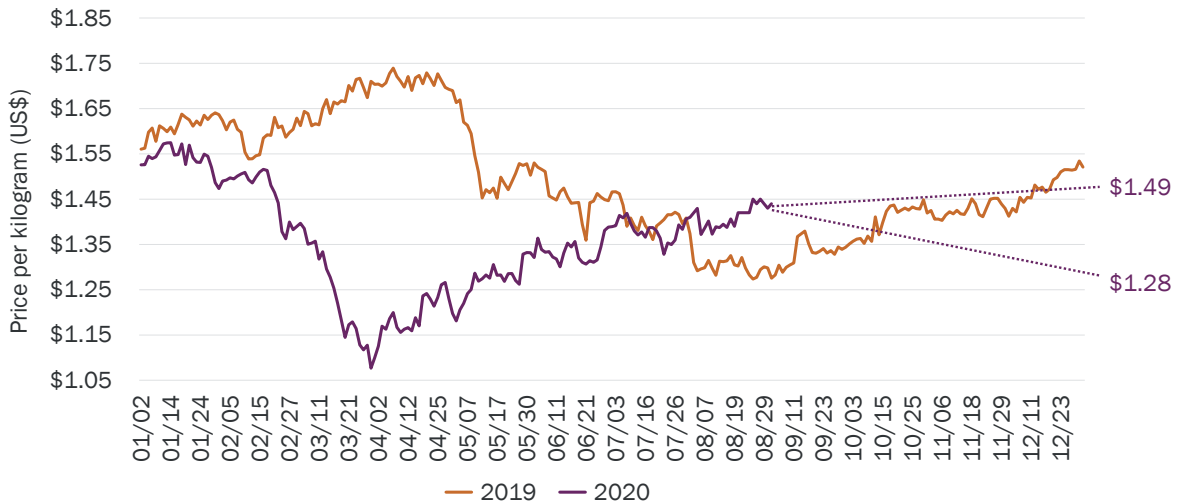
Cotton production in Burkina Faso varies significantly from year to year, although the trend has generally been upwards for the last 60 years. The size of the cotton harvest has a direct impact on the country's growth in GDP. In addition, global cotton prices tends to have a large and direct impact on growth in GDP, with GDP tending to grow more slowly when prices are low and GDP tending to grow more rapidly when prices are high. Burkina Faso was once the largest cotton producing country in Africa, but it has fallen to fourth place behind Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Benin. Cotton, along with gold mining, are the two largest drivers of Burkina Faso's GDP.

Possible Scenarios for Cotton Exports in Burkina Faso

Scenario	Global Cotton Prices	Burkina Faso Cotton Production in 2020
Baseline (without COVID)	Prices remain at average price for 2019 (US\$1.49/kg) throughout 2020	925,000 bales
1. Global Prices Recover/Small Loss in Production (most optimistic)	Prices to return to 2019 levels (US\$1.49/kg) from current levels (US\$1.41/kg) by December 2020	875,000 bales
2. Global Prices Recover/Large Loss in Production	Prices to return to 2019 levels (US\$1.49/kg) from current levels (US\$1.41/kg) by December 2020	740,000 bales
3. Global Prices Decline/Small Loss in Production	Prices continue to decline through the end of 2020, falling to US\$1.28/kg by the end of December 2020	875,000 bales
4. Global Prices Decline/Large Loss in Production (most pessimistic)	Prices continue to decline through the end of 2020, falling to US\$1.28/kg by the end of December	740,000 bales

This table illustrates the scenarios that were analyzed for cotton through the end of 2020. In the baseline scenario, cotton production in Burkina Faso was assumed to drop by 7.5% relative to the previous year, based on projections that were made at the beginning of the year, before COVID-19 became relevant. In Scenario 1, the most optimistic scenario, production would drop only by 5% relative to the baseline and prices would return to the levels seen at the start of January. Scenario 2 also sees prices return to January 2020 levels by the end of the year, but predicts a much larger (20%) reduction in cotton production. In scenario 3, global cotton prices were assumed to drop to \$1.28 per kg, but cotton production would only decline by 5%. Finally, in scenario 4, the most pessimistic scenario, global cotton prices would drop to \$1.28 per kg and there would be a 20% reduction in cotton production in Burkina Faso.

Global Cotton Prices in 2019 and 2020



Source: Investing.com, 2020a

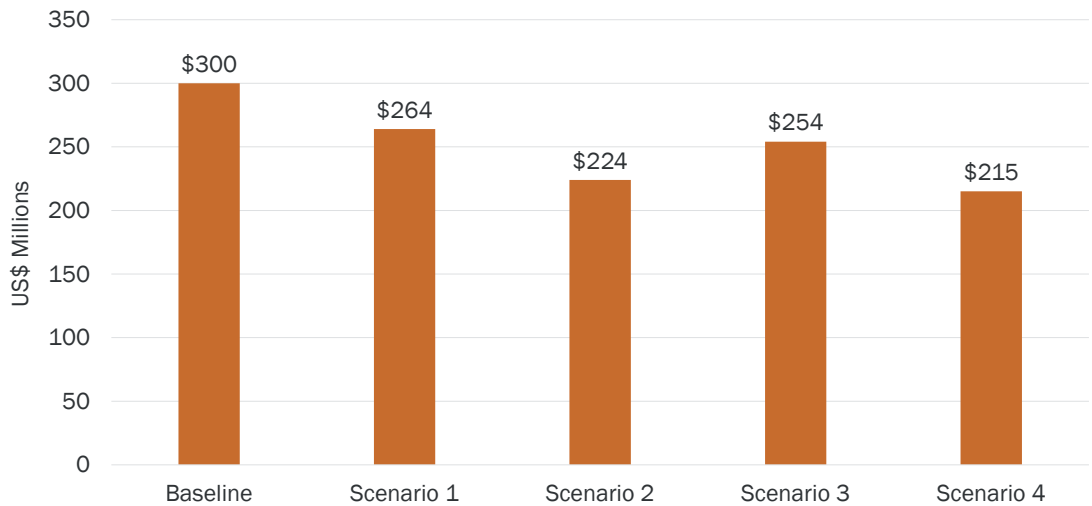
The global price of cotton declined significantly during the first few months of the pandemic, dropping most precipitously in late February through early April. This was in sharp contrast to the trend for 2019 when prices increased during this same time of year. The drop in price for cotton was largely due to decreased demand for clothing purchases, especially in Europe and the United States, as they slipped into a recession and retail shopping options became limited to online vendors. In April 2020, demand for cotton declined by 6.4%, the largest decrease in demand for any single month ever recorded. Demand for all of 2020 has been estimated to decline by 8% compared to 2019. Since early April there has been a gradual increase in cotton prices, due in part to reductions in supplies from the United States and Brazil. It remains uncertain how cotton pricing will change through the rest of the year. As shown in this figure, projections are that by the end of the year, the price could rise to \$1.49 per kg or fall as low as \$1.28 per kg.

Projected Change in Cotton Export Revenue

Scenario	Export Revenue	Difference from Baseline
Baseline	US\$300 million	-
Global Prices Recover/Small Loss in Production	US\$264 million	US\$36 million
Global Prices Recover/Large Loss in Production	US\$224 million	US\$76 million
Global Prices Decline/Small Loss in Production	US\$254 million	US\$46 million
Global Prices Decline/Large Loss in Production	US\$215 million	US\$85 million

The results in terms of export revenue are illustrated in this table. In the baseline scenario, where cotton prices remain at 2019 levels and Burkina Faso production is 925,000 bales, revenue received is estimated to be US\$300 million. In a scenario where cotton prices recover to 2019 levels and there is only a 5% reduction in production, revenue would only reach US\$264 million. If instead of a 5% reduction in production, there was a 20% reduction in production, then revenue would drop to US\$224 million. If global prices continue to decline but there is only a small loss in production, then revenue would reach US\$254 million. In the most pessimistic scenarios, in which there are large losses in production and cotton prices continue to decline, revenue would only reach US\$215 million, a loss of US\$85 million to Burkina Faso's economy.

Projected Change in Cotton Export Revenue

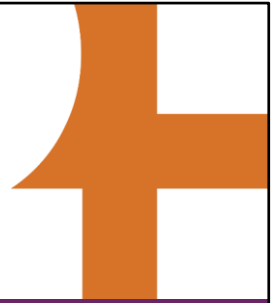


This figure shows the different scenarios. The losses for Burkina Faso's economy may be as high as US\$85 million.

Impact of Cotton Losses on Overall Economic Growth in Burkina Faso

Scenario	GDP Growth
Growth in GDP without COVID-19	US\$945 million
Growth in GDP with COVID-19	US\$315 million
Loss in growth due to COVID-19	US\$630 million
Cotton loss as a percentage of overall GDP loss attributable to COVID-19	6% – 13%

In January 2020, the World Bank projected that Burkina Faso's economy would grow by US\$945 million in 2020. By June 2020, the World Bank revised their projections based on the impact of COVID-19, indicating the economy would grow by only US\$315 million. In other words, COVID-19 was projected to result in a loss of US\$630 million in 2020. Depending on the scenario assumed, losses in the cotton farming sector are projected to account for between 6% and 13% of this loss.



Impact of COVID-19 on Burkina Faso's Gold Mining Sector

Background

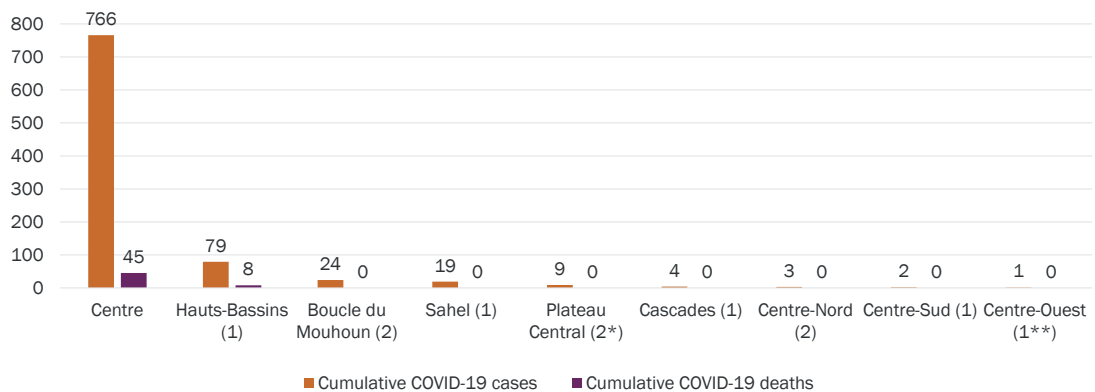
- On March 14, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported; the patient was an English miner working in the country in Burkina Faso.
- The spread of COVID-19 could substantially impact and disrupt Burkina Faso's economy, including the mining sector.

Personnel	Mining workers paid for technical layoff
	Financial stress on miners and mining communities
Extraction/Production	Reduced mining extraction/production. Only minimal essential personnel working (→ workers' fatigue)
Exports	Additional expenses for chartered flights. Gold price increase since Jan 2020
	Reduced mining export due to COVID-19

In other parts of the world, mining has been particularly hard hit by COVID-19. Chile, for example, has incurred significant outbreaks in its mines, with severe economic consequences for the country (Cambero, 2020). Reduced mining of gold due to COVID-19 in Burkina Faso could potentially translate into reduced export revenue and revenue from taxes, which could have severe consequences on the country's economy and on the government's ability to meet its obligations if the pandemic persists.

Mine Locations and Cumulative COVID-19 Cases and Deaths

Industrial mining is concentrated in three regions—Sahel, the Centre-North, and the Boucle du Mouhoun—which account for 5% of COVID-19 cases in the country.



Number of mines in each region is in parenthesis : *gold mine in construction, **zinc mine

There seems to be no direct correlation between the number of mines in a locality and the number of COVID-19 cases.

Mining in Burkina Faso

- Mineral mining in Burkina Faso is dominated by gold mining, which is one of the most dynamic economic sectors.
- The mining industry employs a considerable workforce, with many more people indirectly benefiting from mining.
- Artisanal and small-scale gold mining is the primary source of income for a large proportion of the country's population.
- Gold has been the country's leading export commodity since 2009.

COVID-19 Interventions

- Beginning in March 2020, the government of Burkina Faso initiated a series of preventive measures, including:
 - Physical distancing
 - Mandatory wearing of face masks
 - Ban on grouping of more than 50 people
 - Closing of academic institutions, air travel, and borders
 - Night curfews
- These preventive measures to curb the spread of the virus have significant effects on socioeconomic activities.

Like most governments in the Sahel region, Burkina Faso quickly reacted to the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing non-pharmaceutical interventions such as physical distancing; closures of academic institutions, workplaces, air travel, and borders; night curfews; mandatory wearing of face masks; hand washing; etc.

Approach

- Review of available sources; secondary data and informant interviews with key stakeholders.
- Considered a baseline (*status quo*) in which gold exports and price in 2020 remain the same as in 2019, compared to three scenarios in which gold prices remain the same from August to December 2020 levels with mining exports decreasing by 5%, 10%, and 20%, respectively.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been security (terrorism) concerns in some parts of the country, especially in the mining regions of the country, that have greatly affected gold extraction and production. This led to a 5% decrease of mining exports from 52.6 tons in 2018 to 50 tons in 2019.

Possible Scenarios for Gold Exports in Burkina Faso

Scenario	Global Gold Prices	Burkina Faso Gold Exports
Baseline (without COVID-19)	Prices remain at 2019 average price (US\$50,583/kg) throughout 2020	50 tons (same as 2019 production)
Global Prices (with COVID-19), Small Loss in Exports (most optimistic)	Prices remain the same from August to December 2020 levels (yearly average US\$64,118/kg)	47.5 tons (5% less than baseline)
Global Prices (with COVID-19), Large Loss in Exports	Prices remain the same from August to December 2020 levels (yearly average US\$64,118/kg)	45 tons (10% less than baseline)
Global Prices (with COVID-19), Very Large Loss in Exports (most pessimistic)	Prices remain the same from August to December 2020 levels (yearly average US\$64,118/kg)	40 tons (20% less than baseline)

This table illustrates the scenarios that were analyzed for gold through the end of 2020. In the baseline scenario, gold exports in Burkina Faso were assumed to be the same as in 2019, based on projections that were made at the beginning of the year, before COVID-19 became relevant. In scenario 1, the most optimistic scenario, exports would drop only by 5% relative to the baseline and prices per kg would remain the same from August to December 2020. Scenario 2 also sees exports decline by 10% and prices per kg remaining the same from August to December 2020. Scenario 3 is the most pessimistic with exports decreasing by 20% and prices remaining the same as in the previous two scenarios.

Gold Prices in 2020



Source: Investing.com, 2020b

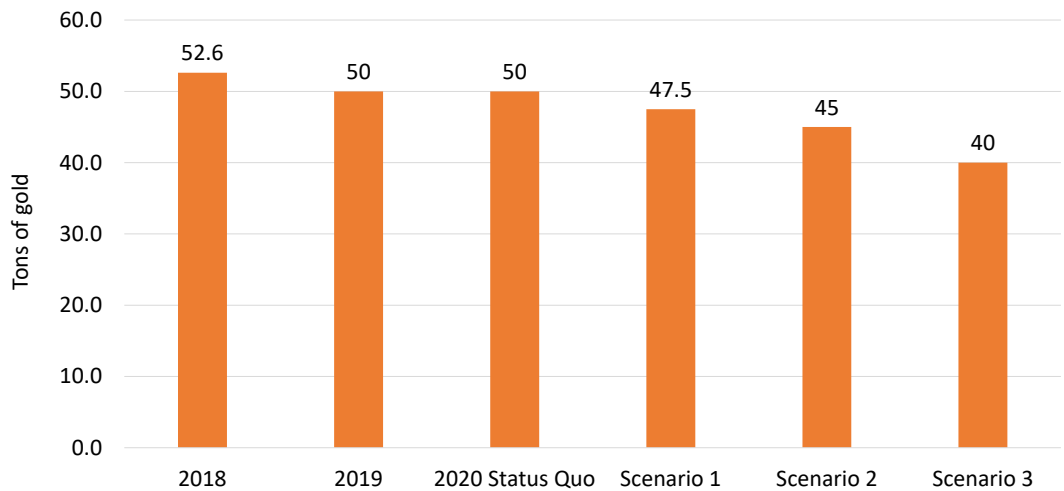
Gold prices have been on the increase since the beginning of 2020. There is an expectation that revenue from gold mining would increase if export levels do not decrease substantially. This could help boost the country economy and economic recovery.

Projected Change in Gold Export Revenue

Scenario	Export Revenue	Difference from Baseline
Baseline (without COVID-19)	US\$2.29 billion	-
Global Prices (with COVID-19), Small Loss in Exports (most optimistic)	US\$2.76 billion	US\$469 million
Global Prices (with COVID-19), Large Loss in Exports	US\$2.62 billion	US\$323 million
Global Prices (with COVID-19), Very Large Loss in Exports (most pessimistic)	US\$2.33 billion	US\$32.3 million

The results in terms of export revenue are illustrated in this table. In the baseline scenario, in which gold prices remain at 2019 levels and Burkina Faso exports are 50 tons, revenue received is estimated to be US\$2.29 billion. In a scenario in which gold prices recover to 2019 levels and there is only a 5% reduction in exports, revenue would reach US\$2.76 billion. If instead of a 5% reduction in productivity, there was a 10% reduction in productivity, then revenue would drop to US\$2.62 billion. In the most pessimistic case, in which exports drop by 20%, then revenue would reach US\$2.33 billion.

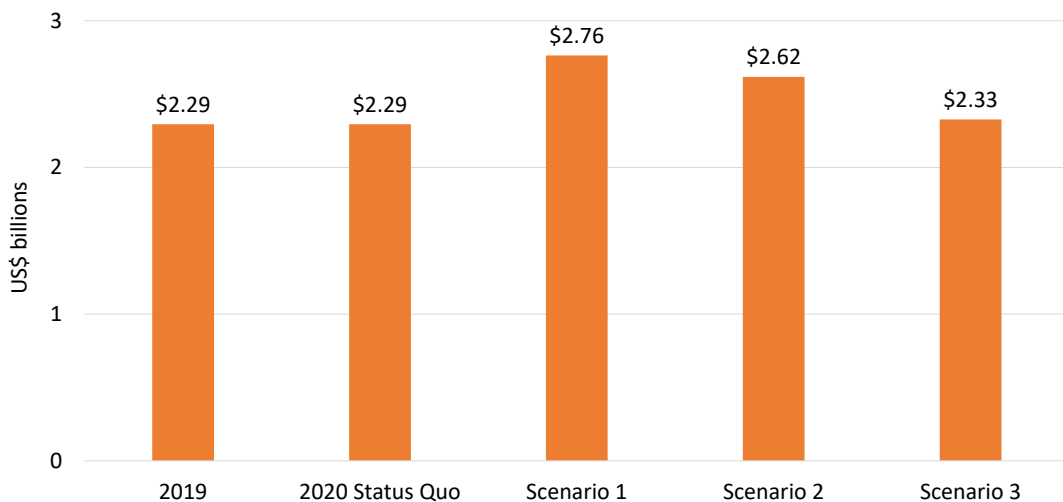
Projected Gold Exports



An interview with a mining company, SEMAFO, revealed that gold production is projected to be affected by several factors. First, interventions designed to enforce social distancing have caused mining companies to reorganize their workforce, including their shifts and the way that workers are able to carry out their functions. They also note that terrorism, especially in the mining regions of the country, have affected gold extraction and production, and hence gold export quantity.

Due to increasing insecurity in the country's mining regions, mining exports slightly decrease by 5% from 52.6 tons in 2018 to 50 tons in 2019. The status quo scenario assumes this level of export is attained in 2020 while scenario 1 assumes a 5% decrease in gold export (to 47.5 tons), scenario 2 a 10% decrease (to 45 tons), and scenario 3, the most pessimistic, assumes a 20% decrease (to 40 tons).

Mining Export Revenue under Different Scenarios



Baseline (*status quo; no COVID-19*): Gold export is kept at the same level as in 2019 (50 tons), and at the 2019 price (US\$50,583 per kg), would generate about US\$2.29 billion in revenue.

For comparison scenarios, the yearly expected export quantity is equally spread over a 12-month period and the monthly gold price applied. Gold prices from August to December 2020 are assumed to be the same as in August 2020.

Scenario 1: 5% decrease in gold exports, from 50 tons to 47.5 tons. Total expected export revenue from mining would increase from US\$2.39 billion (baseline) to US\$2.76 billion (representing 17.5% of the country's GDP), an increase of US\$468.5 million compared to the baseline.

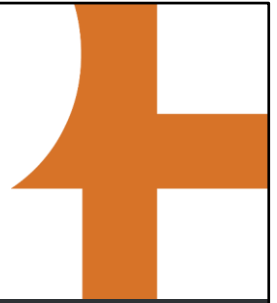
Scenario 2: 10% decrease in gold exports, from 50 tons to 45 tons. Total expected export revenue from mining would reach US\$2.62 billion (representing 16.6% of the country's GDP), a gain of US\$332 million compared to the baseline.

Scenario 3: 20% decrease in gold exports, from 50 to 40 tons. Total expected export revenue from mining would reach US\$2.33 billion (representing 14.8% of the country's GDP), an increase US\$32.3 million compared to the baseline.

Conclusions

- Due to COVID-19, Burkina Faso's GDP is projected by the World Bank to drop from 6% to 2% in 2020; economic growth will decrease by US\$630 million.
- Decrease of socioeconomic growth has direct consequences, including:
 - Loss of important financial resources
 - Unemployment and severe hardship in mining communities
- As a result of the recent gold price increase on the international market, gold export revenue alone could help to compensate the projected loss between 5% and 74% (US\$32.3–US\$468.5 million).
- However, as the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, it is difficult at this stage to determine the full extent of the economic consequences on Burkina Faso's mining economy.

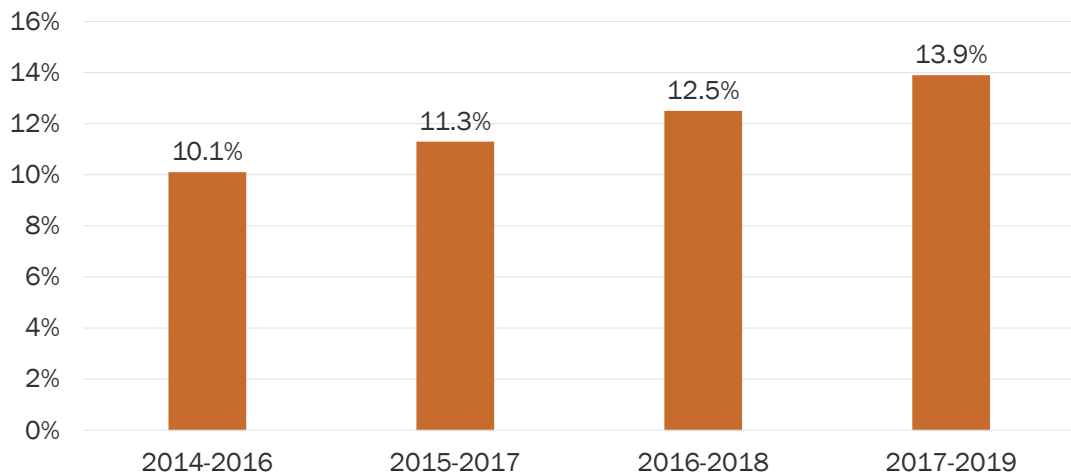
Burkina Faso will undoubtedly lose important financial resources from most sectors of its economy because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2020, the World Bank revised Burkina Faso's projected January 2020 6% GDP growth to 2% implying the economic growth will decrease by US\$630 million. With the 2020 increase of gold prices, gold export revenue alone could help compensate this projected loss between 5% and 74% (US\$32.3–\$468.5 million). Thus, Burkina Faso's government should continue to assure open and safe access to mining inputs (including labor), continue to aggressively address new outbreaks, and coordinate with the mining sector to assure that gold exportation is not completely interrupted despite decreased shipping logistics.



Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security in Burkina Faso

The next section focuses on food security and the ways in which food security are likely to be affected by COVID-19.

Prevalence of Severe Food Insecurity in the Total Population



Source: FAO, 2020a

The percentage of the population that is severely food insecure has been rising over time, with approximately 1 in 7 people in Burkina Faso being severely food insecure.

How COVID-19 Can Affect Food Security

Potential impacts on:

- Food access through reduced household purchasing power
- Availability of food, agricultural production, and food supply chains
- Government capacities to protect vulnerable populations
- Political stability
- Conflict dynamics

Source: Reliefweb, 2020

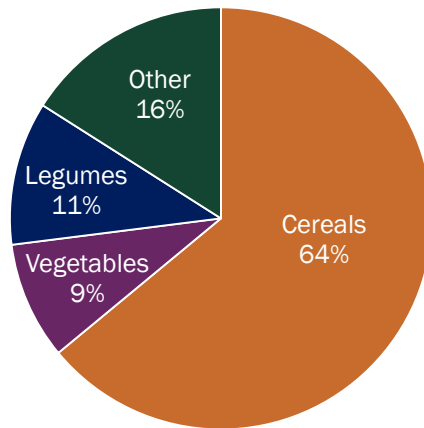
The FAO notes that food security can be affected in a number of ways. These include reducing the purchasing power of households and thus reducing their access to food. COVID-19 may also impact the availability of food, by reducing agricultural production and disrupting food supply chains. COVID-19 may also limit the ability of governments to protect vulnerable populations, given other financial commitments and increasing levels of debt. Next, COVID-19 can lead to political stability and impact on conflict dynamics.

Estimates of Food Insecurity

- 5.9 million people are employed in the food economy in Burkina Faso—about 80% of the labor force (OECD, 2018).
- Approximately 30% of household expenditures in Burkina Faso are for the consumption of sorghum, millet, and maize (FAO, 2020a).
- The impact of COVID-19 on food production has reportedly been focused on perishable vegetables, which have been harder to sell due to curfews and limits on travel.
- From June to September 2020, the level of food insecurity during the lean season is projected to triple in comparison to 2019 (UN News, 2020).

Nearly 80% of Burkina Faso's labor force is employed in the food economy (5.9 million). The most significant food products produced in the country are cereals, including millet, sorghum, and maize. The purchase of these cereals account for 30% of household expenditures. When Burkina Faso closed markets, there was a significant impact on perishable vegetables, including lettuce, cabbage, and spinach. The impacts were less significant for tubers and cereals.

Main Sources of Calories



Source: MAFAP, 2013

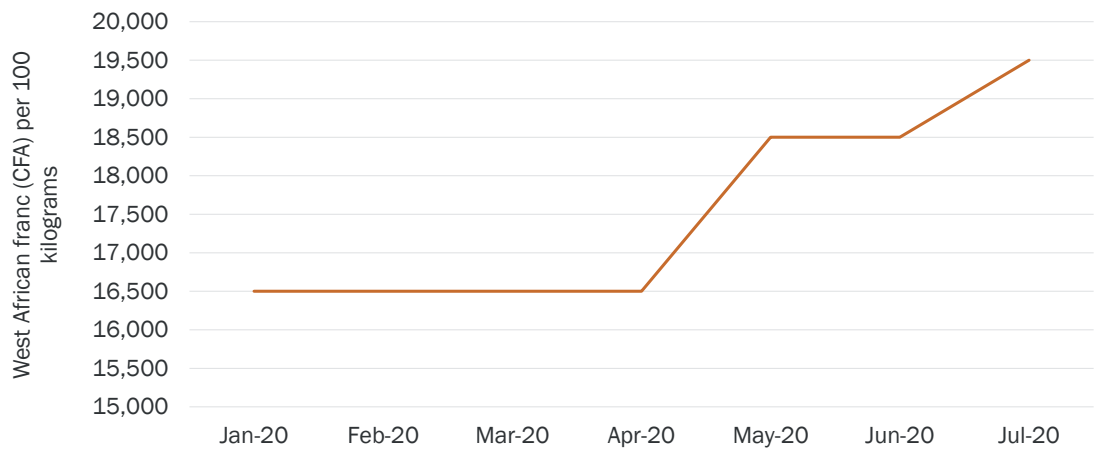
Food consumption in Burkina Faso is heavily focused on cereals (especially sorghum, millet, and maize), which account for 64% of all calories consumed. This makes households particularly sensitive to increases in the prices of cereals.

Grain Prices

- Grain prices have been highly uneven
- Since January:
 - Millet prices have increased by 18%
 - Sorghum prices have increased by 4%
 - White maize prices have increased by 31%

Prices for cereals have been increasing with the spread of COVID-19.

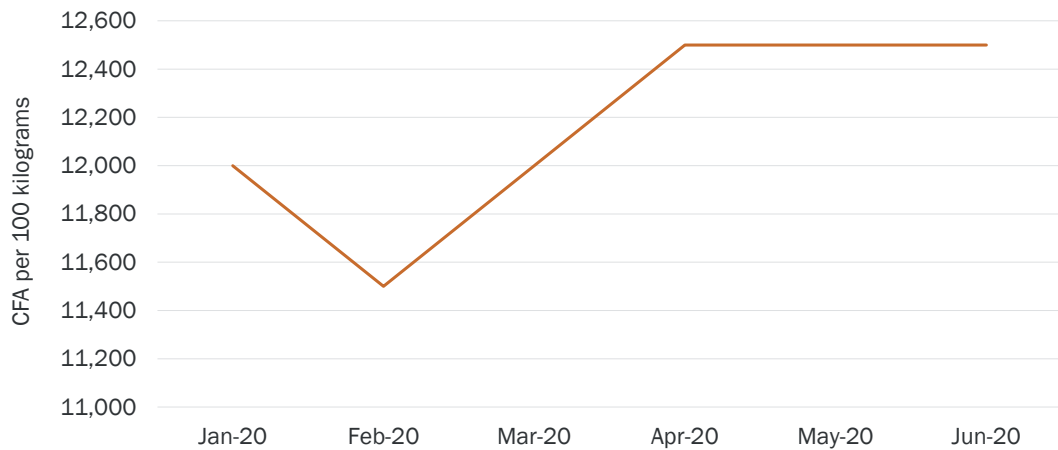
Millet Prices



Source: FAO, 2020b

Millet prices have increased sharply since January 2020 in Burkina Faso, rising from CFA 16,500 in January to CFA 19,500 in July.

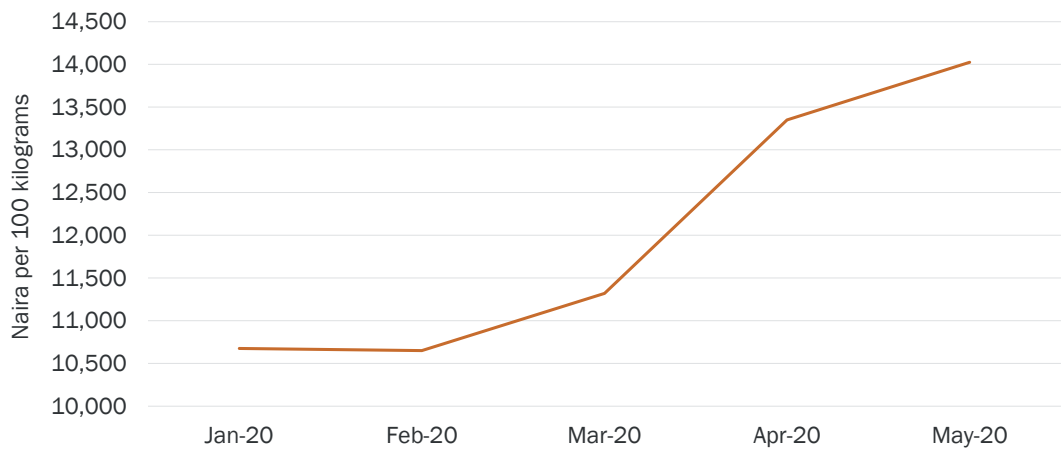
Sorghum Prices



Source: FAO, 2020b

This figure shows how sorghum prices have changed since the beginning of the year. Between January and February, they declined. However, in March and April the price for sorghum increased, making this essential cereal significantly more expensive for households in Burkina Faso.

White Maize Prices (Nigeria)



Source: FAO, 2020b

The figure shown here is from Nigeria. It shows a similar upward trend in prices from January to May.

Food Security in Burkina Faso

The extent to which COVID-19 will increase food insecurity depends on:

- ✓ How much prices for food products (especially cereals) further increase
- ✓ How COVID-19 affects the cost and availability of agricultural inputs
- ✓ How future lockdowns and curfews limit access to food and food supply chains
- ✓ How COVID-related illnesses affect farmers
- ✓ How political instability compounds the problems of COVID-19 in affected farmers and food supply chains

For the purpose of this analysis, it was not possible to determine the extent to which COVID-19 would specifically increase food insecurity. However, the authors identified several significant concerns, including rising food prices, a lack of access to seeds and other agricultural inputs, and the extent to which future curfews and/or lockdowns will affect access to food and food supply chains. While the number of COVID-19 cases have been limited in Burkina Faso, any outbreak among farmers has the potential of severely affecting agricultural supplies. In addition, the political instability in the north of the country is likely to compound the problems that are occurring with COVID-19.

Conclusion

- In Burkina Faso, COVID-19 has already reduced the price of cotton and may further reduce cotton production. This impact could be between US\$36 and US\$85 million.
- The increased price of gold may counteract some of the negative consequences from other sectors of the economy. Revenues from gold mining may increase by between \$40 million and \$470 million.
- One in seven Burkinabe are already severely food insecure. Rising food prices, along with political instability, may significantly worsen this situation over the next few months.

In conclusion, the impact of COVID-19 may decrease cotton revenue from between US\$36 million and US\$85 million. On the other hand, gold exports may increase due to the higher price of gold, adding additional revenue of between US\$40 million and US\$470 million, depending on whether the mines are able to retain current levels of production. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, COVID-19 runs a risk of contributing to food insecurity in the country. While the extent to which this food insecurity is worsened remains unknown, there are warning signs that suggest the situation could become much worse in the near future.

Call to Action: Infection Control

- Monitor all new outbreaks of COVID-19 and maintain transparency in reporting new infections.
- Identify areas of the country that may be particularly vulnerable to new infections (e.g., border with Ghana.)
- Expand COVID-19 testing.
- Increase contact tracing.
- Improve treatment services for those who become ill.

Burkina Faso's effectiveness in mitigating economic impacts depend first and foremost on its ability to control the epidemic. Unlike other countries, Burkina Faso has generally been transparent in reporting cases and new infections. Maintaining this practice should help in ensuring trust with the population and designing responses that target those parts of the country in which the pandemic may be the worst. As noted, the number of infections per capita are 10 times greater in Ghana than in Burkina Faso. This suggests that any second wave of new infections could have a severe impact on Burkina Faso. The authors also noted that COVID-19 testing in Burkina Faso has been much lower than in other African countries. Therefore, increasing testing should support efforts to identify any new outbreaks of infection. The country also needs to expand contact tracing, especially while the number of infections appears to be relatively manageable. Finally, for those who do become ill, it is critical to access the best available and affordable treatments.

Call to Action: Cotton Production

- Assure that cotton farmers have access to necessary inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, equipment, etc.
- If a new wave of COVID-19 infections occurs, determine how to retain open trade borders while limiting further epidemic spread.

In terms of cotton farming, it is critical for Burkina Faso to maintain access to necessary inputs. Key informant interviews revealed, for example, that farmers were not able to access seeds. There were also reports of limited access to fertilizers, equipment, etc. from other countries. Assuring that these barriers are removed will be essential in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on cotton farming. Next, it is essential that Burkina Faso retain open trade with neighboring countries in order to ensure that exports of cotton products can reach their destination.

Call to Action: Mining

- Reduce mining tax.
- Waive mineral exploration license obligations.
- Ensure that export of gold is not completely halted despite reduced shipping logistics.
- Assure open and safe access to mining inputs (including labor).

Key informant interviews with the gold mining sector revealed a number of important recommendations. Some recommendations were to reduce mining taxes, waive mineral exploration license obligations, ensure continued exports of gold, and assure open access to mining inputs, including labor.

Call to Action: Food Security

- Implement programs to identify and support those most vulnerable to severe food insecurity.
- Monitor food prices and, where possible, encourage food imports to supplement existing production.

Finally in terms of food security, Burkina Faso must be able to accurately predict where food insecurity is occurring and design interventions to target those parts of the country where severe hunger is likely to occur. The government must also monitor food price increases, supplementing existing supplies in order to prevent any further large increases in cereal prices.

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