



Tropentag, September 9-11, 2020, virtual conference

“Food and nutrition security and its resilience  
to global crises”

## How Covid-19 Pandemic May Affect the Food Security of Rice in Africa and Latin America

ALCIDO ELENOR WANDER<sup>1</sup>, PATRICIO MENDEZ DEL VILLAR<sup>2</sup>, CARLOS MAGRI FERREIRA<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), Brazil*

<sup>2</sup>*Cirad French Agriculture Research for Development,*

<sup>3</sup>*Brazilian Agricultural Research Organization (EMBRAPA), National Rice and Beans Research Center (CNPAP), Brazil*

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it can affect food security of rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) in Africa and Latin America. The analyses were made considering the context that the COVID-19 pandemic is undermining the global economic system and the social isolation have been implemented, as the main strategy to control the pandemic. At the same time, other measures are being taken, such as the provision of resources to minimise the effects of the reduction of economic activities, including financial aid as an income supplement for people who have been left without work. Some African countries are implementing food distribution programs including rice, for the poorest families. Some governments in Latin America have made funding available to the rice sector at low-interest rates to encourage production. Governments of the main rice exporting countries have also provisionally adopted political measures to restrict the marketing of this product. The situation does not guarantee rice food security, considering its four dimensions, availability, access, utilisation, and stability in Latin America and Africa, regions where rice is of fundamental importance in food and much of the population earns income from informal activities. These activities were severely affected by the pandemic. Governments in many countries do not have the means to inject resources into the economy. Therefore, the intensity and impacts vary according to the social and economic conditions of the country. Consequently, in certain countries there will be an increase in poverty and unemployment, generating food insecurity due to the global economic slowdown and the possible general loss of purchasing power of the most vulnerable populations. Restrictions on the market can cause shortages and price increases, generating social tensions in some countries, due to increased demand. Another factor that can contribute to price increases is that, despite the high worldwide stocks, they can decrease more quickly if consumers start buying rice in large quantities, for fear of scarcity. On the other hand, consequences of the pandemic may affect factors of production and reduce the production in some countries.

**Keywords:** Food access, Food availability, food security, Food stability, Food utilisation, Rice