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“Can agroecological farming feed the world?  
Farmers’ and academia’s views”

## Responses of the local food system during the first wave of COVID-19 from Honduras

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### Abstract

The lockdowns in consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted livelihoods and food security of households around the globe but most severely vulnerable households in developing countries. While evidence is available about how COVID-19 generally affected low-income countries, the specific dynamics of local food system responses and effects on food security in rural areas has not been addressed. This research seeks to understand a) how the local food system changed under COVID-19-related mobility restrictions, b) how coffee farmers’ households coped with food insecurity and, c) what the role of coffee cooperatives could be in supporting households to cope with food insecurity and to increase their resilience.

The study approaches food security through four components, which are food security as an outcome, food system activities with actors and factors, resilience capacities, and shocks and stressors. It is based on a mixed-methods approach, combining a structured household survey with semi-structured qualitative interviews with households, representatives of cooperatives as well as other food system actors.

We found that during mobility restrictions, 50% of coffee producing households were forced to reduce the quality and quantity of food consumed compared to the previous year. Although food suppliers changed their strategies to procure fresh food, and hence played a key role in maintaining the availability of fresh food at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, more than half of households were not confident how to ensure their food security given rising food prices and local shortages. Coffee cooperatives supported their members by providing food assistance and cash transfers as well as credits. A better integration between the needs of member households and the goals of cooperatives, e.g. through adjusting cooperative statutes to include other crops than vegetables or including a mandate to be also a consumer cooperative, could play a key role in boosting local food security.

**Keywords:** Food security, food system, households, resilience capacity

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