

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Food Supply in the Colombian Amazon Impacted By Border Restrictions

Country: Colombia

Post: Bogota

Report Category: Agricultural Situation

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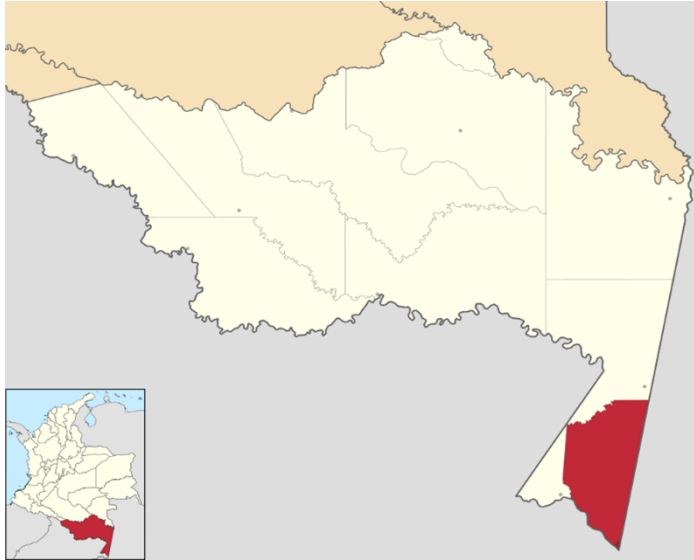
Approved By: Casey Bean

Report Highlights:

People living in Colombia's Amazonas Department are dependent on trade for close to 80% of the food they consume. With Covid-19 border restrictions put in place by local and national governments in Peru, Brazil, and Colombia, contacts report that food is scarcer and more expensive for the population living in this region.

The Colombian Amazon

Colombia's Amazonas Department is a wedge of land between Peru and Brazil in which 76,000 people live. Most of these people live along the Amazon River, and close to half of them live in the Department's capital city, Leticia. Leticia is located at the very tip of the department, next to the Brazilian city of Tabatinga, and across the river from Peru.



Amazonas Department and the municipality of Leticia in red (Wikipedia).

COVID-19 Related Border Restrictions Impacting Food Trade

The Department of Amazonas is highly dependent on border trade with Brazil and Peru as there are no road connections from Leticia to the rest of Colombia. Contacts in the local government estimate that 80 percent of Amazonas food is imported by boat from Brazil and Peru. The remaining 20 percent comes by air from the center of Colombia or from the local production of fruits, fish, and chicken. This local production is either consumed in Colombia or traded with nearby communities in Brazil and Peru. Brazil mostly supplies grains and consumer-oriented products, and Peru is a supplier of fresh produce and live cattle.

To control the spread of Covid-19, Colombian officials closed the main borders with Brazil and Peru. As a result, these measures unintentionally disrupted the supply of food to Amazonas. The border with Brazil was recently re-opened, but only to trade essential items, including food. However, contacts report that the food volume crossing the border is less than before; further, the supply is limited as Brazil is regulating the flow of food due to the pandemic. Additionally, much of the propane gas that people in Leticia use to cook their food comes from Brazil, a product that is also in short supply due to border restrictions. The Colombian Government is allowing more cargo flights from the center of Colombia to Leticia to supply food and other essential items. However, air freight has increased the price of food.

For instance, a kilogram of Brazilian rice costs about \$2,000 COP (about \$0.50) while the same product from Colombia costs \$3,800 COP (about \$0.90).

The Leticia Mayor's office and the Colombian Department of National Planning estimate that 13,061 of Leticia's 48,000 people are considered low income and vulnerable to increases in food prices. Poverty rates are believed to be even higher outside of the municipality of Leticia. To date, the Colombian national government has donated 10,000 food baskets to the Amazonas department.

In addition to the difficulty of securing food, about 40 percent of the local population depends on informal jobs. Contacts report that this means a large part of the population are not following the Colombian Government's decree and sheltering at home. This has reportedly increased the spread of Covid-19 in the population, further disrupting the food supply chain.



Leticia's waterfront for commercial and human transportation

Attachments:

No Attachments.