



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



TRADE AND NUTRITION IN ARAB COUNTRIES



Thursday, 8 May 2025, 14:00 (Cairo Time)



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BACKGROUND

Arab countries are among the world's leading net food importers. This reliance on food imports is largely due to low agricultural productivity, which stems from several challenges, including limited water resources, recurrent droughts caused by harsh climatic conditions, and insufficient arable land.

In this regard, trade plays a crucial role in supplying local markets and ensuring food security and nutrition in the region's countries. Estimates indicate that the share of imports in consumption could reach 64.7 percent by 2031, highlighting the low levels of self-sufficiency for most commodities and the significant dependence of these countries on imports.

The vulnerability of markets in the Near East and North Africa region has increased due to recent trade challenges, particularly those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and global geopolitical tensions.

To better understand the challenges of supplying markets in this region in light of food security objectives, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Office for the Near East and North Africa Region (RNE) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) are organizing a regional webinar on 8 May 2025 at 14.00 (Cairo Time) the [2024 The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets](#) and the [Evolution of global agrifood trade and trade policy and implications for nutrition](#) with a focus on Arab countries.

OBJECTIVES

This seminar aims to:

- examine the role of trade in supplying the Near East and North Africa region with food and micronutrients, highlighting its potential to enhance dietary diversity and improve nutritional outcomes;
- present aspects of import dependency and vulnerability to shocks in the countries of the Near East and North Africa region;
- present examples of trade policy measures that can support nutritional objectives in this region. (For example, lowering trade barriers for nutritious foods, implementing labeling system, and introducing taxes on unhealthy products); and
- explore ways to strengthen value chains' resilience to trade shocks in the region and discuss the role that regional organizations can play.

TARGETED AUDIENCE:

Institutions:

- Ministries in charge of trade and investment
- Chambers of commerce, industry and services
- Trade and investment promotion agencies
- Members of the Technical Network on Nutrition (TNN) and FAO nutrition focal points.
- Interested colleagues from the FAO, including the RNE Office.

Countries:

Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, The Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

ORGANIZERS

FAO RNE and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT).

LANGUAGES

English, French and Arabic (with simultaneous translation).

FORMAT:

Virtual via the registration link:

https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vaoTmgh6ScuNuD4qD3bcxA



DATE AND TIME:

Thursday, 8 May 2025, at 14:00 - 15:00 (Cairo time)

FOCAL POINTS:

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PROGRAMME

Moderator: FAO representative

Time	Item and presenter
14:00 – 14:05	Welcome remarks from FAO and ICDT
14:05 – 14:20	Regional presentation of the 2024 The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets and the Evolution of global agrifood trade and trade policy and implications for nutrition , Tamás Vattai, Nutrition and Food Systems Officer (FAO RNE)
14:20 – 14:30	Presentation of aspects of the vulnerability of regional food value chains in the Arab region and how to increase their resilience, Matthew, Policy Economist (FAO RNE)
14:30 – 14:40	Food market regulation in the Arab region, Moulay Ismail Taqui, Head of Trade Facilitation Department, ICDT
14:40 – 15:00	Q&A and conclusions