

Agriculture in the times of COVID-19 - How can Digital Solutions Help?

The Colombian experience

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National lockdown

- Ag sector is considered an essential activity
- From day one we continued to operate
- All Ag-related activities were permitted (packaging, technical assistance, distribution, veterinary services, transportation, etc)
- 2020 Food production estimates for a country under normal circumstances
- Most economic (consumers) activities under lockdown
- Lack of coordination from Governors and Mayors with national government

Initial effects

- Colombian labor force: 22 million - occupied / 11 million informal - most of them under lockdown
- Traditional distribution channels were closed: restaurants, hotels, schools, universities, etc.
- Consumer behavior changed: saving money due to uncertainty, informal activities did not have any income, fear to get infected
- Dramatic reduction in local consumption: perishables (fruits, tomatoes, lettuce, onion, potatoes), chicken, pork, fish
- Increase in consumption of non expensive and nutritional products: eggs and rice
- Non vertically integrated producers – lack of economies of scale

Consolidation of economic impact

- Colombian labor force: 22 million - occupied / 11 million informal - most of them under lockdown
- In March 1.5 million Colombians lost their income
- Traditional distribution channels were closed: restaurants, hotels, schools, universities, etc.
- Consumer behavior: saving money due to uncertainty, informal activities did not have any income, fear to get infected at the retail
- Dramatic reduction in local consumption: perishables (fruits, tomatoes, lettuce, onion, potatoes), chicken, pork, fish
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success stories during the crisis

- Social networks for trading fruits and vegetables
- Whatsapp business account for selling animal protein
- Technical assistance through webinars

Post – pandemic scenario

- Producers' health
- We need our consumers back!
- Changes in patterns of consumption – social distancing
- Technical assistance for producers
- From farm to fork
- New market opportunities (local and foreign): economic sectors that require food (construction, catering)

Digital solutions and ag sector

- Getting the producer closer to the consumer – connecting the dots
- Market information
- Education in rural areas
- Technical assistance