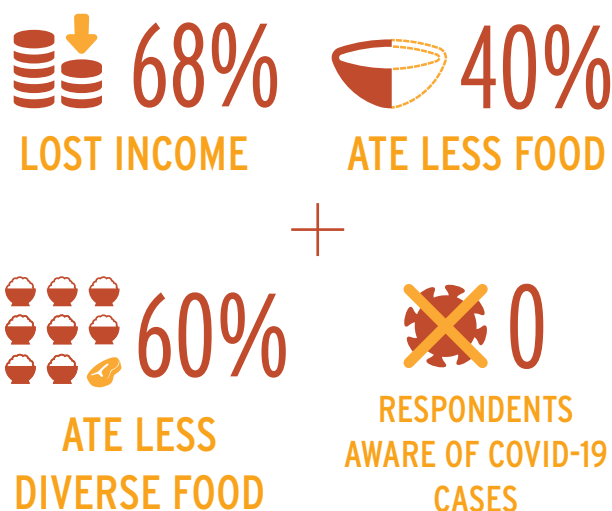


COVID-19 AND SMALLHOLDER FARMERS: impacts during the first wave in NW Vietnam, Mai Son

In September 2020, 304 smallholder farmers were interviewed in the Mai Son district of North West Vietnam. They were asked about the impacts of COVID-19 over the previous month and during April 2020 (the peak of Vietnam's first wave).

No respondents were aware of any confirmed or suspected cases in their area, but over two thirds of households surveyed reported substantial income losses as result of COVID-19 related restrictions, and 40% of households had to reduce the amount of food they ate. In order to cope, assets and farm produce were sold at very low prices.

While the restrictions were effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19, they also increased the vulnerability of already poor households. Stabilising sale prices of agricultural commodities would help, and a more nuanced approach to travel restrictions would support value chains and non-farm work.



Outcomes



92%

of households with decreased incomes from farm sales said it was due to **price crashes**.



80%

of households with decreased off-farm incomes said it was due to **mobility restrictions**.



90%

of households who experienced difficulty purchasing foods said it was due to **social distancing**; 30% said it was due to **lack of cash**.

90%



of households had to **change their behaviour to cope**.

Common strategies were:

70% sold livestock (chicken and pigs)

49% depleted savings

32% incurred debts

Five months after the first peak, many households had not recovered.

50%

STILL HAD
TO APPLY COPING
STRATEGIES

32%

STILL HAD
LOWER INCOMES
THAN USUAL

28%

WERE STILL CONSUMING
LESS FOOD AND/OR LESS DIVERSE
FOOD THAN USUAL



The households more deeply impacted were slower to recover - sucked into a poverty trap?

ZOOMING IN: comparison of impacts in four communities

