

# Price Monitoring for Food Security in the Kyrgyz Republic

Monthly monitoring and outlook of basic food prices in the Kyrgyz Republic



## Highlights

- ◆ Domestic prices of wheat flour have been stable throughout 2015 with no significant fluctuations in all monitored markets. The prices have remained almost unchanged in January 2016. However, the national average price level of wheat flour is at a near-record level being only 2% lower than the record high in December 2014.
- ◆ In January 2016, the export price of wheat in Kazakhstan decreased by 7% on a month-on-month basis. Similarly, the export price of wheat in the Russian Federation decreased by 4% on a month-on-month basis. Both prices reached their lowest level in three years.
- ◆ Contrary to the normal upward trend of prices in the winter season, potato prices in January 2016 remained unchanged or decreased in most areas. This trend is likely to continue over the next few months, given a significant increase in domestic supply from the 2015 harvest.
- ◆ The national average price of sunflower oil and sugar continued to rise reflecting high prices on the international market and the depreciated national currency.
- ◆ According to the latest update by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the current El Nino event is one of the strongest on record and will probably continue into the second quarter of 2016. Based on 30 years of global historical data, during a strong El Nino event the Central Asia region usually receives above-normal precipitation. At the country level, seasonal precipitation from October 2015 to January 2016 was estimated to be near the historical average in most areas of the country.
- ◆ The net inflow of remittances for the period January to December 2015 decreased by 26% in US dollar terms compared to the same period last year according to data provided by the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, it increased by 10% in Russian ruble terms according to the calculations of TWG PMFS.

### Trends of retail prices of main food security commodities<sup>1</sup>

	Dec 2015	Oct 2015	Jan2014		Dec 2015	Oct 2015	Jan 2014
Wheat flour (1st grade)	0%	-1%	-2%	Vegetable (carrot)	-6%	-8%	-19%
Rice	0%	-2%	1%	Vegetable (potato)	0%	-5%	-44%
Meat (beef)	-4%	-8%	-12%	Vegetable (cabbage)	6%	19%	-25%
Meat (mutton)	-2%	-7%	-12%	Fruit (apple)	0%	-1%	-28%
Milk	2%	15%	-10%	Sugar	1%	3%	9%
Egg	3%	9%	-5%	Sunflower oil	1%	6%	10%

## Outlook for the next few months

- ◆ Seasonal precipitation between October 2015 and January 2016 was estimated to be near the historical average in most areas of the country. Precipitation could increase over the next few months due to the current El Nino event which is forecast to continue into the second quarter of 2016. While high precipitation during winter and spring will increase water availability for the vegetation season, it could also increase the frequency and severity of floods and mudflows. This could have a localized impact on crop production particularly in the disaster prone southern and western parts of the country.
- ◆ Contrary to the seasonal upward trend during winter of the last decade, potato prices in January 2016 remained unchanged or decreased in most areas. This trend is likely to continue for the next few months due to the significant increase in domestic supply from the 2015 harvest, which reached its highest level over the last decade. While the decrease in prices of potatoes will benefit poor consumers, it could reduce producers' income.

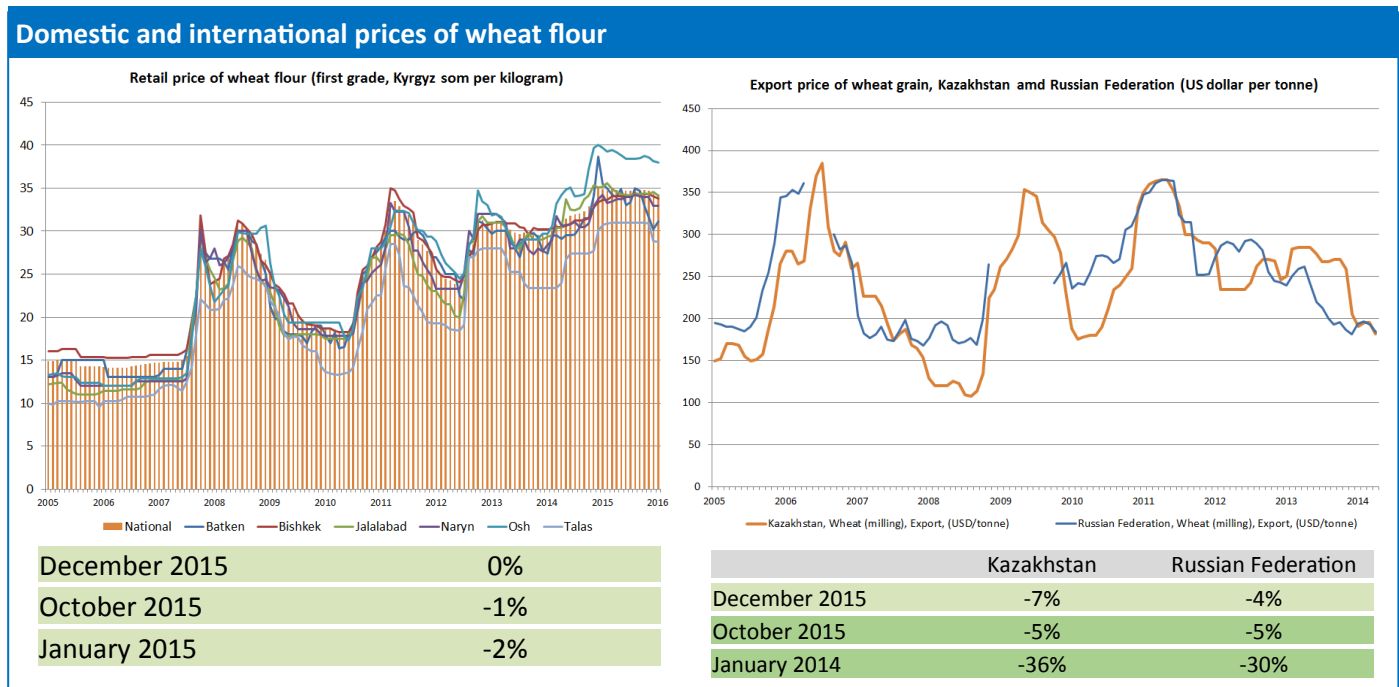
# Wheat flour

## Domestic prices (January 2016)

Domestic prices of wheat flour have been stable throughout 2015 with no significant fluctuations in all monitored markets. The prices remained almost unchanged in January 2016. However, the national average price level is at a near-record level being only 2% lower than the record high of December 2014. The price was consistently lower in Talas and higher in Osh.

## International prices (January 2016)

In January 2016, the export price of wheat in Kazakhstan (Free on Board [FOB] rate)<sup>2</sup> decreased by 7% on a month-on-month basis. Similarly, the export price of wheat in the Russian Federation (FOB rate) was decreased by 4% on a month-on-month basis. Both prices reached their lowest level in the last three years.

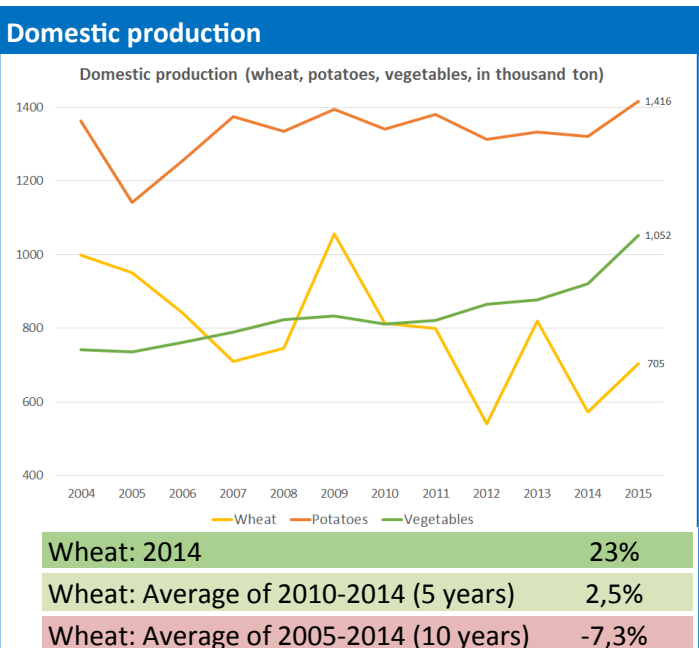
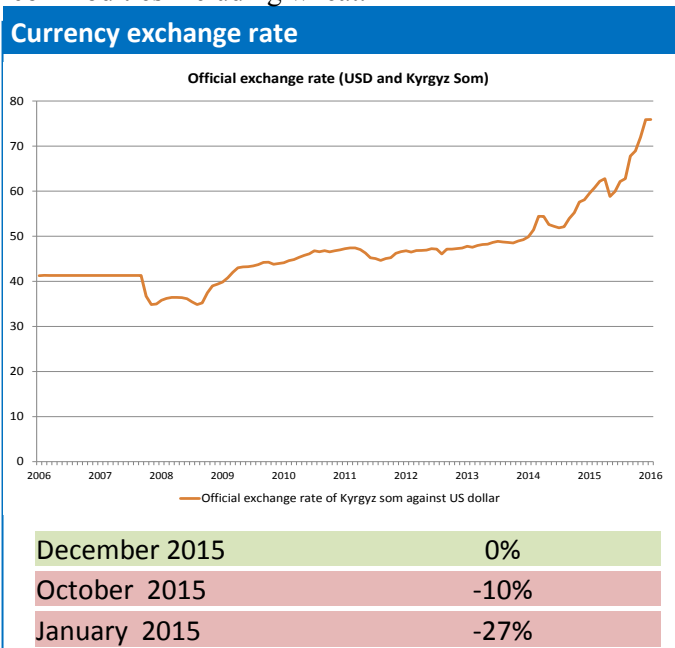


## Currency exchange rate (January 2016)

The exchange rate for Kyrgyz som and US dollar remained unchanged in January 2016 but was depreciated by 27% when compared to the same month last year<sup>3</sup>. Currency movements are among the main driving forces of retail prices of imported food commodities including wheat.

## Domestic production (2015)

The estimated aggregate output of wheat was 704,601 tons in 2015, 23% higher than in 2014 but 7,3 % below the ten-year average<sup>4</sup>. The production of potatoes and vegetables reached their highest level in the last decade.



## Other basic food commodities

### Meat (beef and mutton)

The prices of beef and mutton have been on a downward trend since autumn 2015 in all markets, reflecting seasonal trends. In January 2016, the national average prices of beef and mutton were lower compared to the same month in 2015 by 12%.

### Cooking oil

The national average price of cooking oil (sunflower oil) has increased for seven consecutive months since June 2015. The price in January 2016 was 10% higher compared to the same month in 2015. The prices tend to be higher in Batken and Naryn likely due to high transportation costs.

### Vegetables (potatoes)

Historical data shows a seasonal price increase in potatoes during winter and early spring. In 2015 and 2016, however, prices continued to decrease in most areas, reflecting higher supply from the 2015 harvest. The national average price in January 2016 was 44% lower compared to the same month in 2015.

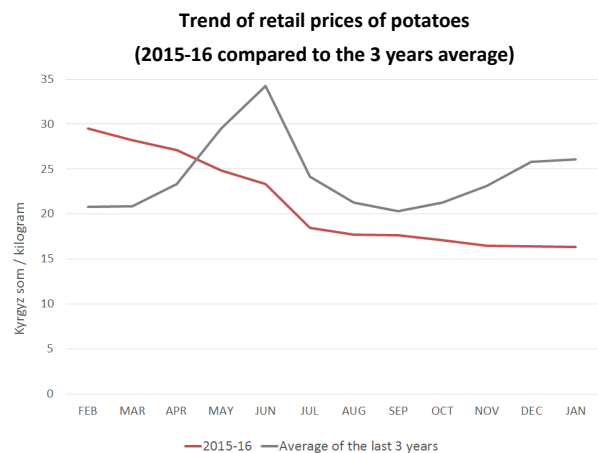
### Sugar

The price of sugar has also increased for six consecutive months since July 2015 in most areas, in conjunction with increased international prices<sup>5</sup> and the depreciated national currency. The national average price in January 2016 was 9% higher compared to the same month in 2015.

### Potatoes - seasonal price changes

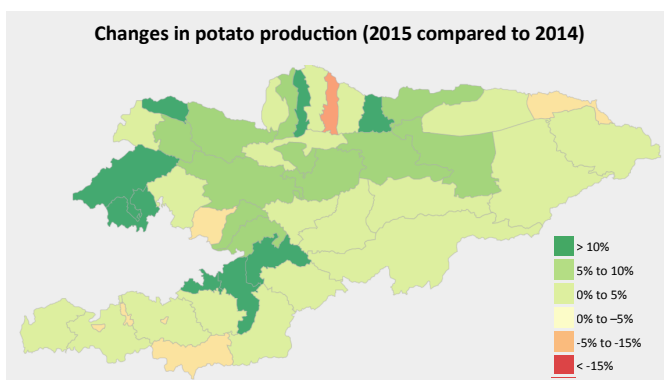
Potatoes are one of the important items in the average Kyrgyz diet, providing around 7% of total energy intake. Market prices of potatoes present marked seasonal changes, with prices being at a lower level during summer and autumn and higher in winter and spring.

Historical data shows a **seasonal increase in potato prices from October to January in normal years**. On average, the prices increased by 27% in October-January during 2012-14. In 2015-16, however, the price **decreased** by 5% during the same period. This is likely due to a higher supply from the 2015 harvest. The domestic production of potatoes reached 1.4 million tons, the highest level in the last decade.



### Potatoes - production in 2015

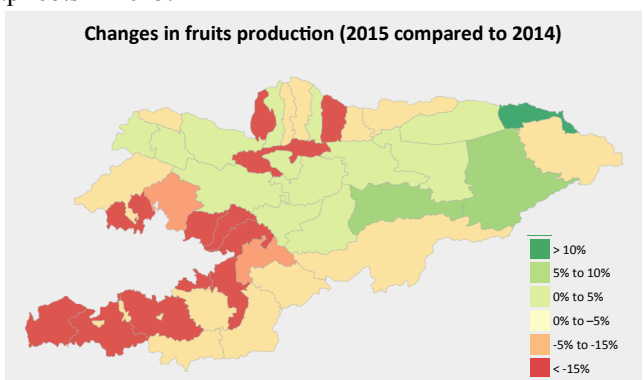
Due to overall increase in yield amid favourable weather and water availability throughout the year, the overall crop harvest in the country was successful in 2015, particularly for potatoes, wheat and vegetables. The estimated aggregate output of potatoes for 2015 was 7% higher than in 2014, reaching the highest level over the last decade. Figure 4 illustrates increases in potato production in different areas across the country.



Data source: National Statistics Committee, Map produced by WFP

### Fruits - production in 2015

The domestic production of fruits and berries decreased significantly in 2015, particularly in Batken, Jalalabad and Osh provinces due to frost in the spring of 2015. The decrease was most notable in the lowland areas of these provinces such as Leilek district (60%), Nooken district (48%), Aravan district (36%) and Kara-suu district (33%). The estimated national aggregate output was 12% lower than in 2014. This has led to a sharp increase in the price of apricots in 2015.



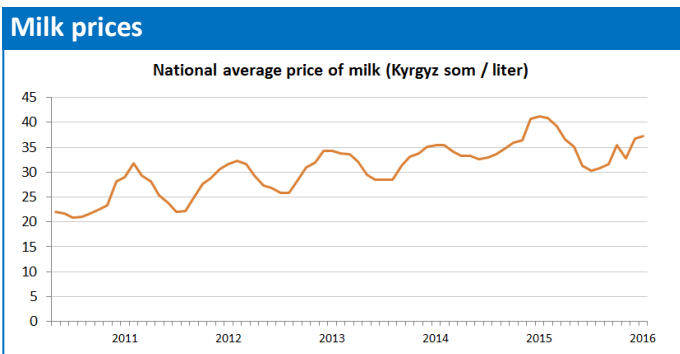
Data source: National Statistics Committee, Map produced by WFP

## Other basic food commodities

### Milk

After a sharp increase in late 2014, the national average price of milk decreased for six consecutive months since February 2015, reflecting an increased seasonal supply in 2015. The prices reached their lowest level in last two years in most markets across the country.

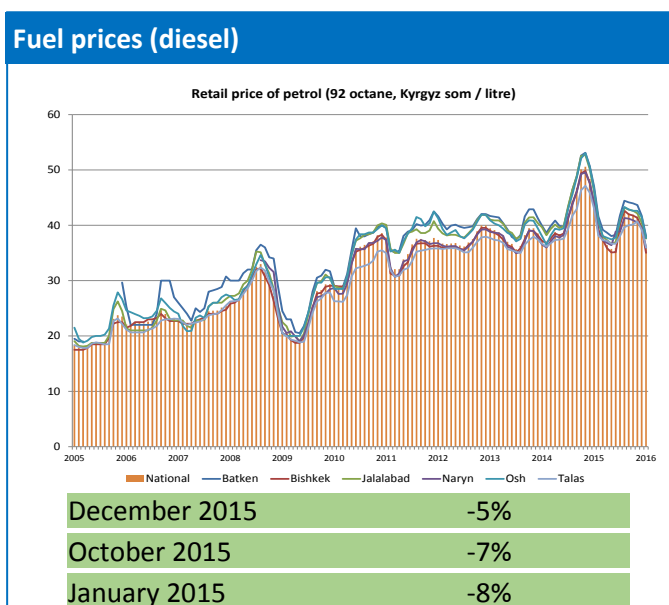
However the price trend turned sharply upward since summer 2015. The highest increase was observed in Osh (increased by 61% during October 2015 - January 2016). The increase was moderate in Talas and Bishkek during the same period (8% and 9% respectively). The deviation from estimated seasonal prices was insignificant<sup>6</sup>.



### Fuel prices

#### Domestic prices

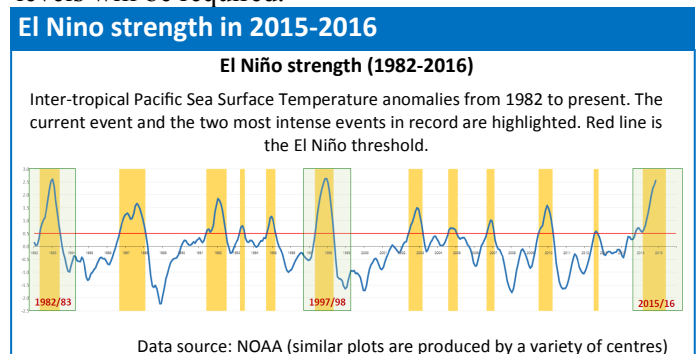
The national average price of diesel<sup>9</sup> decreased for five consecutive months since September 2015. In January 2016, the national average price was 8% lower than in the same month in 2015, and reached its lowest level in the last five years. The national average price of gasoline (92 octane) also decreased for five consecutive months since September 2015.



## Agro-climatic context

### Precipitation

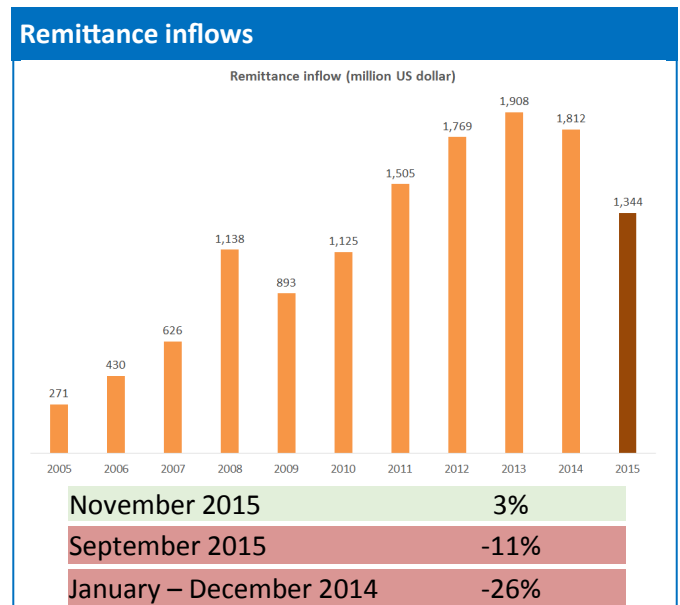
According to the latest update by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the current El Niño<sup>7</sup> is one of the strongest on record and it will probably extended into the second quarter of 2016. Global historical data indicates that in a strong El Niño year the Central Asia region usually receives above-normal precipitation<sup>8</sup>. At the country level, seasonal precipitation from October 2015 to January 2016 was estimated to be near the historical average in most areas of the country. A higher precipitation will increase water availability, which is a positive factor for agriculture. However, a higher level of precipitation could also lead to a higher risk of floods and mudflows during the spring. A close monitoring of precipitation levels will be required.



### Remittances

#### Remittance inflows

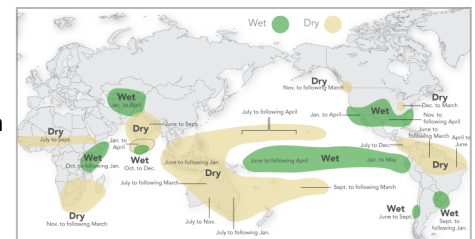
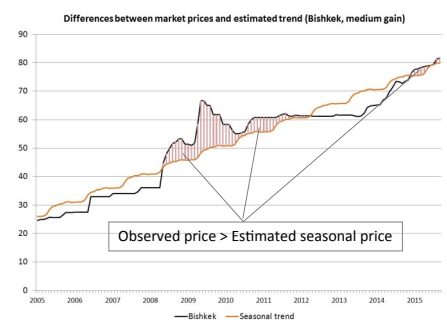
The net inflow of remittances for the period January to December 2015 decreased by 26% in US dollar terms compared to the same period last year according to data provided by the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic<sup>10</sup>. However, it increased by 10% in Russian ruble terms.





# Data sources and methodologies

- 1 **Data for retail prices of 9 food security commodities** are collected by the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic on a daily basis from 10 markets across the country (Bishkek, Osh, Tokmok, Kara-balta, Talas, Karakol, Naryn, Kara-suu, Kyzylkiya and Batken).
- 2 **Data for export price of wheat in Kazakhstan** is Free on Board [FOB] price for milled wheat at Aktau port. The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) updates this data on a monthly basis. Methodological details are available online at <http://www.fao.org/giews/pricetool/>
- 3 **Currency exchange rate** used is the official daily exchange rate provided by the National Bank of Kyrgyz Republic. The monthly average rate was calculated for the bulletin.
- 4 **Domestic production of wheat for 2005 - 2015** is provided by the National Statistics Committee.
- 5 **International price of sugar** refers to the International Sugar Agreement (ISA) daily price for raw sugar, obtained from the International Sugar Organization. The price data is widely used by global market monitoring publications such as the World Bank's Commodity Markets Outlook (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/commodity-markets>).
- 6 **The deviation of the observed prices and estimated seasonal prices** are provided by WFP's Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) in units of standard deviations. In July 2015, for example, the standard deviation of observed prices of wheat flour price and estimated seasonal prices was 0.74 in Osh, indicating that the market experienced unusually high price levels during this month. Seasonal prices were estimated using the price data for the last 10 years. Methodological guidance is available online at [http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual\\_guide\\_proced/wfp264186.pdf](http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp264186.pdf)
- 7 **El Nino** refers to the large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate phenomenon linked to a periodic warming in sea-surface temperatures across the central and east-central equatorial Pacific. Typical effects of El Nino include dry weather in Australasia and heavy rain in South America.
- 8 **Typical rainfall patterns during El Nino events.** Such patterns are likely during El Nino events, but not certain. Sources: Ropelewski, C. F., and M. S. Halpert, 1987: Global and regional scale precipitation patterns associated with the El Nino Southern Oscillation. *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, 115, 1606-1626; Mason and Goddard, 2001. Probabilistic precipitation anomalies associated with ENSO. *Bull. Am. Meteorol. Soc.* 82. 619-638
- 9 **Data for fuel prices** are provided by the National Statistics Committee on a monthly basis for 95-octane petrol, 92-octane petrol, 80-octane petrol and diesel. This bulletin reports the prices of 92-octane petrol and diesel which are the most commonly used for food transportation and agricultural machinery.
- 10 **Data for remittance inflow** is provided by the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic. The amount includes remittances received from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, the United States, Germany and other countries, using money transfer systems.



Source: International Research Institute for Climate and Society

This bulletin is prepared by the Technical Working Group on Price Monitoring for Food Security (TWG-PMFS) which is chaired by the Ministry of Economy and attended by the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration, the National Bank, the National Statistics Committee and the National Institute for Strategic Study, with the technical support of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The bulletin aims to provide timely information and analysis on the domestic prices of basic food and non-food items, complemented by analysis of international markets. It also provides early warning on high food prices. This is the third issue of the bulletin for November 2015.

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<https://www.wfp.org/content/kyrgyz-republic-monthly-price-and-food-security-update-2015> (WFP)