

## EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food

### COVID-19 Traditional Market Report Brief

#### Nairobi Metropolitan Area | June 2021 | Issue 3

The quarterly Traditional Market Report (TMR), developed by EatSafe, tracks behaviors and daily decisions made by vendors and consumers in two markets in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area (Marikiti and Madaraka). In addition to summarizing perceptions on COVID-19 and the difficulties faced by market actors in these two traditional markets, the TMR tracks prices of selected nutritious foods every two weeks. The TMR report tracks several accepted indicators that help determine the resilience of market systems as market actors cope with business and food security choices under COVID-19 conditions. The TMR highlights three new surveys from April, May, and June 2021 phone interviews of a panel of vendors (n=30) and consumers (n=30).

#### *Insights from vendor perspective between April and June 2021*

- Share of vendors who reported a decrease in the number of customers in the last 9 months declined from 80% in April to 50% in June, while the share of vendors who reported an increase in the number of customers or no change increased from May to June (20% Apr; 30% May; 37% Jun and 0% Apr; 3% May; 13% Jun, respectively).
- Share of vendors who found it somewhat difficult or very difficult to follow new COVID rules in the market decreased between the months (44% Apr; 17% May; 23% Jun).
- Most of the interviewed vendors (90% Apr; 97% May; 97% Jun) started sharing resources with other vendors including hand washing facilities, transportation, suppliers, sanitizers, and masks.
- Share of vendors that borrowed money due to COVID-19 increased from 30% Apr to 53% May/June. In June, the money borrowed came from informal cooperatives (69%), banks (25%), relatives & friends (6%).

#### *Insights from consumer perspective between April and June 2021*

- Share of consumer households financially impacted by COVID-19 (i.e., loss/ or reduction of income) remained very high throughout the quarter (100% Apr/May/June). Consumers reported engaging in income earning activities (50%), decreasing consumption of food (40%) or borrowing from friends (30%) as coping mechanisms.
- Although the share of consumers that reported doing most of their food shopping at markets declined throughout the quarter, it remained high (90% Apr; 83% May; 80% Jun). Consumers also obtained food from supermarkets, kiosks, or small shops.
- Share of consumers who considered only a few vendors trustworthy increased slightly from April to June (52% Apr; 47% May; 57% Jun). Reasons included not knowing where the products come from, changing quality of products, and changing prices.
- While 10% of interviewed consumers in April were asked for feedback by vendors and/or market officials in the preceding 9 months, none of them were asked for feedback in the subsequent months (0% May/June).

#### *Food prices between January and June 2021*

Between January to June major price changes were observed for vegetables and pulses. While food prices for kale, cabbage, lentils, omena, green gram, and beef increased (46%; 22%; 12%; 6%, 6%, 5% respectively) prices for beans rosecoco, eggs, carrots and milk decreased (13%; 8%; 3%; 3%; respectively).



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# I. BACKGROUND ON THE COVID-19 SITUATION

While the incidence of Kenya’s national COVID-19 cases has been decreasing since April 2021, the number of weekly cases increased again in June 2021 (**Figure 1**).

Between January 3 and June 28, 2021, 185,591 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 3,671 deaths were reported by the Ministry of Health in Kenya. While in mid-April the weekly infection rate was 6,103 (April 22), the rate was down to 3,198 in end-June (June 28). Based on the [June 29 Situation Report](#) the share of confirmed cases were highest in the counties of Nairobi (58%), Mombasa (14%), Kajiado (8%), Kiambu (7%), and Machakos (7%).

Of all confirmed cases in Kenya, the share of males being infected was more than double the share of females being infected (males: 69%; females: 31%).

In March, Kenya started rolling out nationwide COVID-19 vaccines. As of July 1, over 1 million people have received first doses, and 0.4 million people have received second doses of vaccines. In Kiambu and Machakos county that translates to 57% and 30% of people that have received two doses of vaccine, respectively.

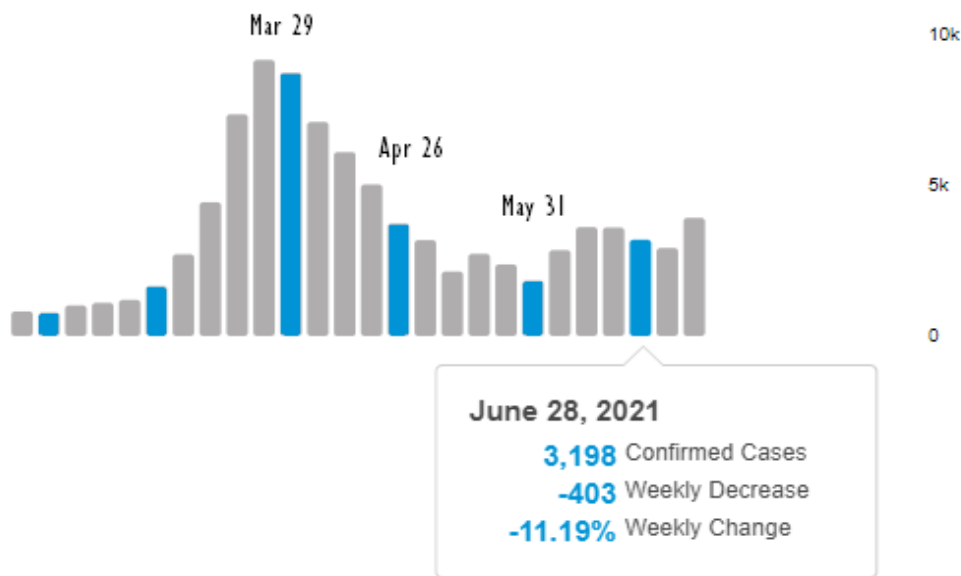


Figure 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kenya, weekly (WHO, 6 September 2021)

## 2. MARKET CHARACTERISTICS AND CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

**Marikiti** and **Madaraka** are informal open-air markets situated respectively in Machakos town (Machakos county) and Thika town (Kiambu county), less than 70 km from Nairobi (**Figure 2**). Thika and Machakos towns have about 250,000 inhabitants. In both markets, the major food items sold are fruits, vegetables, pulses, roots, and tubers. Outside the markets, butcheries, small retailers, and vendors sell meat, fish, eggs, and dairy.

### 2.1 Marikiti Market, Machakos, Machakos county, Kenya

The traditional open-air market is in the urban area of Machakos town, the capital of Machakos county (**Figure 2**). During the pandemic, the Marikiti market noticed a drop of vendors from 1,500 pre-COVID-19 to about 600 in June 2021, according to the market association. The decrease in vendors is likely related to the relocation of

many vendors in the town due to reduced business opportunities, and the lack of vaccines to protect them. Also, the number of consumers decreased from about 4,000 daily consumers pre-COVID-19 (with a high of 10,000 consumers on the market days Monday and Friday) to 2,000 daily consumers and about 8,000 consumers on market days.

Due to COVID-19, the market association installed eight hand washing stations at all entry and exit gates. The county government added two storage water tanks for refilling hand washing stations and maintaining adequate amounts of water. The market association enforced mask wearing for both consumers and vendors, instituting a patrol schedule to ensure compliance. Vendors were instructed to not serve any customer wearing the mask incorrectly. Furthermore, customers were prohibited from touching commodities and were instructed to instead point at what they would like to purchase. The market association also used posters in strategic positions of the market to create awareness on hygiene. During the initial lockdown period, market timing was revised and shortened from 5am to 6am for opening and 7pm to 6pm for closing.



Figure 2. Location of Marikiti market and Madaraka market, close to Nairobi, Kenya.

## 2.2 Madaraka market, Thika, Kiambu county, Kenya

This traditional open-air market is one of the trade corridors to northern counties including Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Machakos and Muranga, as well as Somalia. Most of the commodities traded in this market are sourced from Nyeri, Laikipia, Meru, Narok and Nyandarua counties as well as Tanzania, especially onions. The market is in a peri-urban setting in Thika town, close to the main road.



Figure 3. Vendors in Madaraka market, Thika, Kiambu, Kenya.

It operates 24-hours with Tuesdays and Fridays the busiest days (**Figure 3**). Based on the market association, the number of retailers and wholesalers increased during COVID-19 to about 2,200 and 500, respectively (from about 1,500 and 350, pre-COVID-19). Since many people have lost jobs in other sectors, they became involved in food trade to earn their living. Even after the COVID-19 restrictions eased, traders remain higher than pre-COVID. Based on the increase in vendors and the accompanied increase in competition, profit margins for most vendors have decreased. Market space is decreasing due to the rising number of vendors. While the number of vendors increased, the number of consumers decreased from about 5,000 pre-COVID-19 to about 3,000 (in March 2021) and about 3,500 nowadays. Following national advice, the market is fumigated

on a regular basis and, in collaboration with the county government and support from GAIN, has installed two water tanks and built hand washing stations on two main entrances. Furthermore, the market association has reinforced social behavior change by ensuring strict adherence to COVID-19 prevention protocols within the market including the wear of face masks for vendors and consumers and regular washing of hands.

### 2.3 Bi-Weekly Consumer and Vendor Survey Results under COVID-19

In addition to the resilience assessment, EatSafe continues to conduct rapid COVID-19 market surveys of 40 consumers and 40 vendors from each market. This activity began in September 2020 and has since been repeated every two weeks, with results summarized and published in market-specific bulletins every month. Results below are from both markets including all data rounds between September 2020<sup>1</sup> and June 2021.

#### 2.3.1 Impact of COVID-19 in the markets

Based on the rapid assessment, 73% of consumers reported concerns when shopping in the market in the last couple of weeks. As shown in **Figure 4**, those with concerns identified the following issues: fear of contracting coronavirus (70%), fear of vendors getting sick and not being open (27%), not trusting the market to take appropriate precautions (23%), the food wanted not being available (23%), and the inconvenience of having to take protective measures (21%).

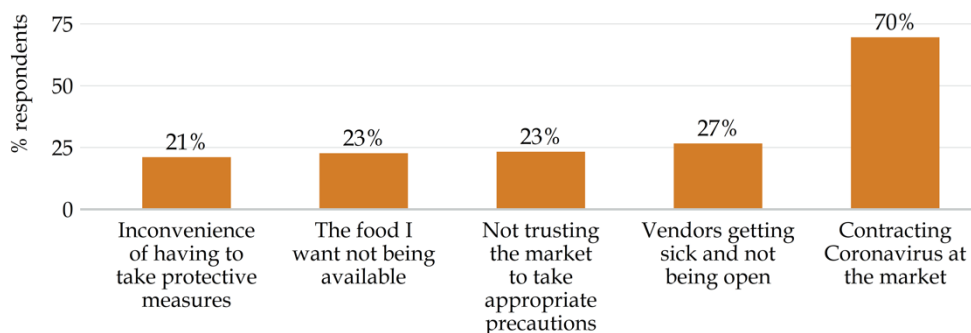


Figure 4. Consumers: Greatest concerns when shopping at the market in the last 2 weeks

Most consumers (82%) observed changes in the markets due to COVID-19 in the last two weeks, mainly reporting the mandate to all vendors (74%) and consumers to wear face masks (74%), the set-up of washing facilities or hand sanitizer (74%), and the mandate for distancing in markets (48%).

Almost all vendors interviewed (97%) in the bi-weekly assessments reported an immediate impact of the pandemic on their business. Most vendors stated that they experienced decreased customers (90%) and sales (82%), while 36% had difficulties accessing

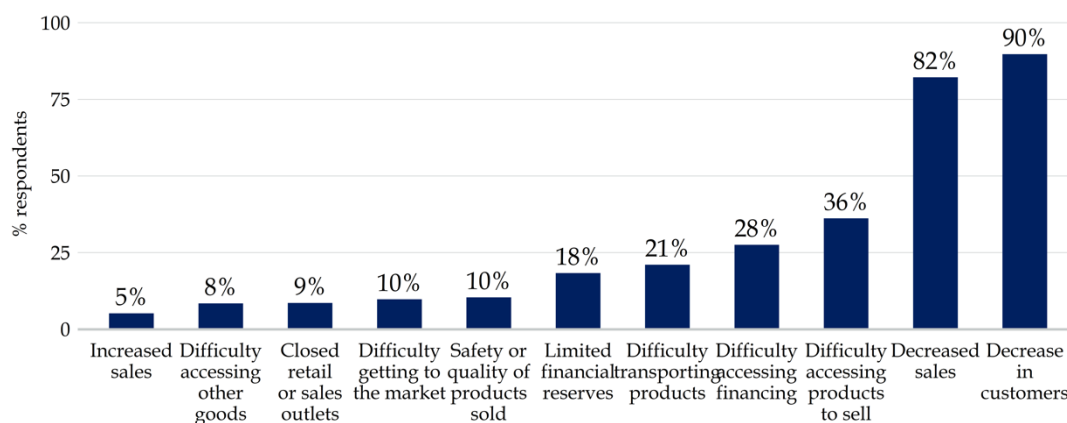


Figure 5. Vendors: Immediate impact on business due to COVID-19

products to sell, difficulty to access financing (28%) or difficulty transporting goods (21%) (**Figure 5**).

<sup>1</sup> Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. 13 September 2021. [COVID-19 Impacts on Traditional Food Markets in Kenya Bulletin Summaries September 2020 – March 2021](#). A USAID EatSafe Project Bulletin.



### 3. MARKET RESILIENCE UNDER COVID-19

This TMR highlights three new data sets from April, May, and June 2021. Data was collected through monthly panel interviews with 30 vendors and 30 consumers from both Marikiti market and Madaraka market. Food prices for this report have been assessed between January 23 and June 18, 2021.

#### 3.1 Connectivity

**Connectivity** includes not only the extent of connections vendors or other market actors might have but also the relationships between connected actors. Too many or too few connections can hamper the capacity to generate or sustain the growth of the market system. In this assessment connectivity is analyzed based on the vendors’ observations regarding the number and changes in customers and suppliers.

Between April to June, the share of vendors who reported a decrease in customers in the last 9 months declined substantially from April to June (80% Apr; 67% May; 50% Jun) and the share of vendors who reported an increase in customers

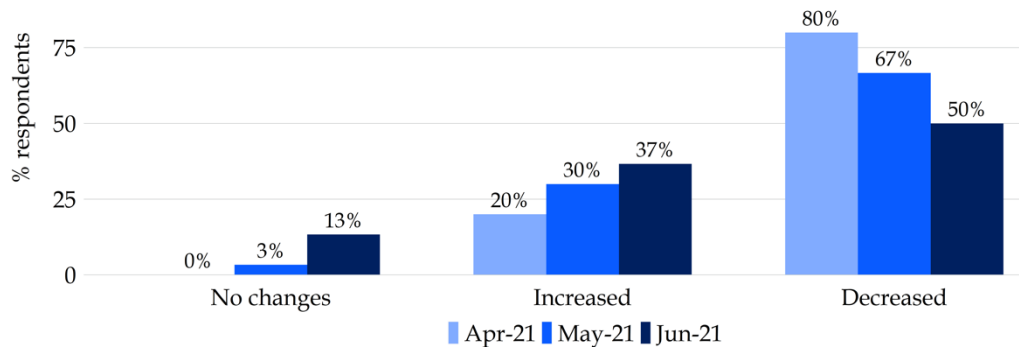


Figure 6. Vendors: Changes in the number of customers, last 9 months

increased from 20% in Apr to 7% Jun (**Figure 6**). However, reports on actual number of customers on a typical day varied slightly across the months. By June, the share of vendors reported to have “6-10 customers” decreased from 23% in April to 17% in June while the share of vendors with “16-25 customers” and those with “35- 50 customers” increased from 20% and 7% in May, respectively to 27% and 13% in June, respectively.

Similarly, the share of vendors who reported an overall change in suppliers varied slightly across the three months (60% Apr; 47% May; 53% Jun).

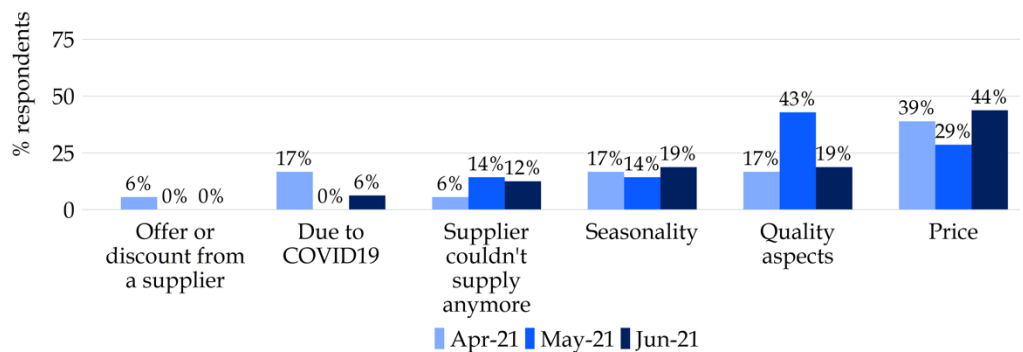


Figure 7. Vendors: Major reason for the change in supplier(s)

**Figure 7** shows the reason for changes in suppliers were similar over time: in June, 44% of vendors

mentioned prices, quality aspects (19%), seasonality (19%) and the inability of suppliers to supply (12%).

#### 3.2 Diversity

**Diversity** has multiple dimensions, including (1) the amount of variation in a system (i.e., the frequency and purpose of visiting the markets from consumer perspective) and (2) the balance between different types (i.e., types of products, firm sizes, marketing channels, or end markets) or (3) market system composition (i.e., how

aspects of a market system are related to each other). In this assessment, diversity is analyzed using vendors' observations regarding number and changes in the commodities sold and consumers' shopping behavior.

Between April and June, the number of different products sold by the vendors did not change substantially

(**Figure 8**). Most vendors sold "2-5" or "6-15" products (80% Apr/May; 87% Jun) while only a few vendors reported selling more than 15 different products in their businesses (7% Apr; 3% May; 3% Jun). The share of vendors who reported a

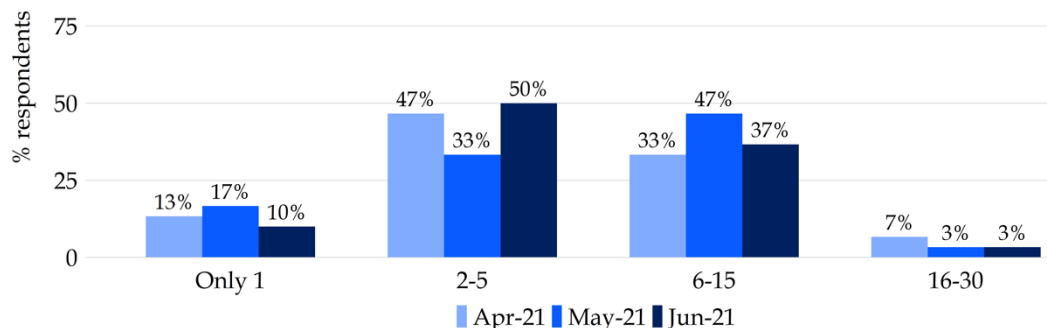


Figure 8. Vendors: Number of different products sold

change in the type of products sold varied within the quarter, from 17% in April to 40% in May and 37% in June. Between April and June, the major reason for changing products was seasonality (40% Apr; 42% May; 45% Jun). However, in April an additional reason included impact by COVID-19 (40%).

Between April and June, the frequency of consumers visiting the markets did not change substantially (**Figure 9**). A quarter to more than half of consumers went shopping every 2-3 days (55% Apr; 50% May/June) or daily (24% Apr; 37% May; 30% Jun). The major reason for

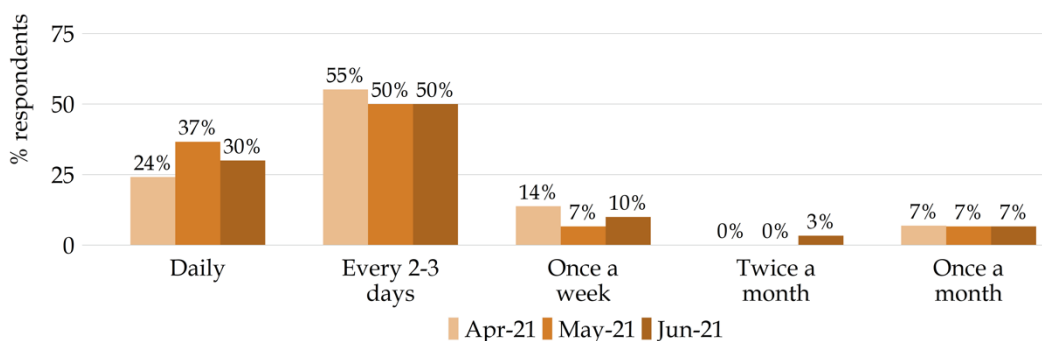


Figure 9. Consumers: Frequency of visiting the markets

consumers visiting the markets was to buy foods or other goods for themselves or their own family (76% Apr; 87% May; 97% Jun). Other reasons included buying food for their own business (28% Apr; 27% May; 17% Jun), working in the markets (21% Apr; 17% May; 33% Jun) or social reasons and visiting of friends and relatives in the markets (10% Apr; 3% May; 7% Jun).

### 3.3 Equity and fairness

From a systems perspective, **equity and fairness** refers to the level or degree of equality and fairness inherent in formal and informal rules and laws. This assessment asked the panel of vendors how difficult it was for them to follow the new rules and regulations put in place due to COVID-19.

Overall, between April and June, the share of vendors who reported difficulties in following new rules and regulations including the mandate to wear face masks, hand washing, and social distancing in the market space decreased. In April, 37% of the vendors found it somewhat difficult to follow new rules and regulations,

the share decreased to 17% in May and increased again slightly to 23% in June. At the same time the share of vendors that found it not very difficult to follow rules and regulations increased from 13% in April, to 37% in May and 33% in June (Figure 10).

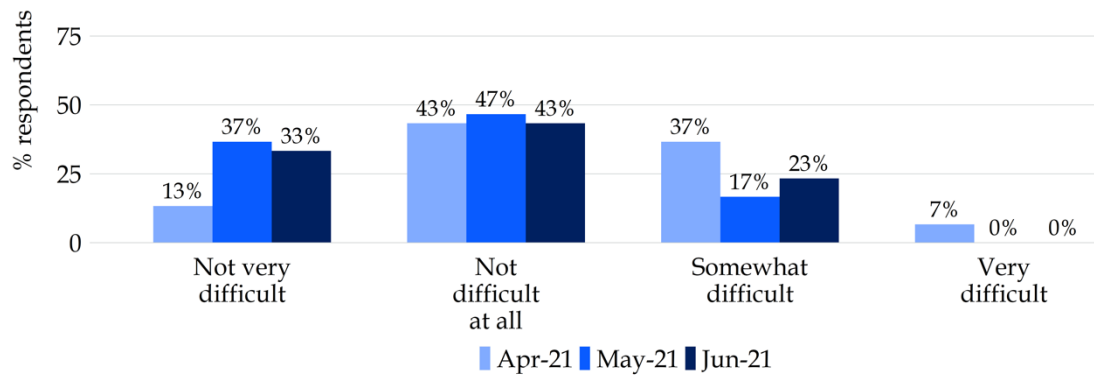


Figure 10. Vendors: Difficulty following COVID-19 rules

### 3.4 Cooperation

**Cooperation** refers to market actors collaborating to achieve a common purpose or function. Cooperation is neither good nor bad and the contribution of cooperation depends on the purpose. Here cooperation was measured asking vendors if they have started sharing resources with other businesses due to COVID-19.

The share of vendors that started sharing resources with other businesses increased by 7 percentage points between April and May/June (90% Apr; 97% May/June). The following resources were shared: new hand washing facilities (96% Apr; 97% May; 100% Jun), transportation (70% Apr; 55% May; 41% Jun), suppliers (56% Apr; 52% May; 48% Jun), sanitizers (11% Apr; 41% May; 62% Jun) and masks (4% Apr; 14% May; 28% Jun) (Figure 11).

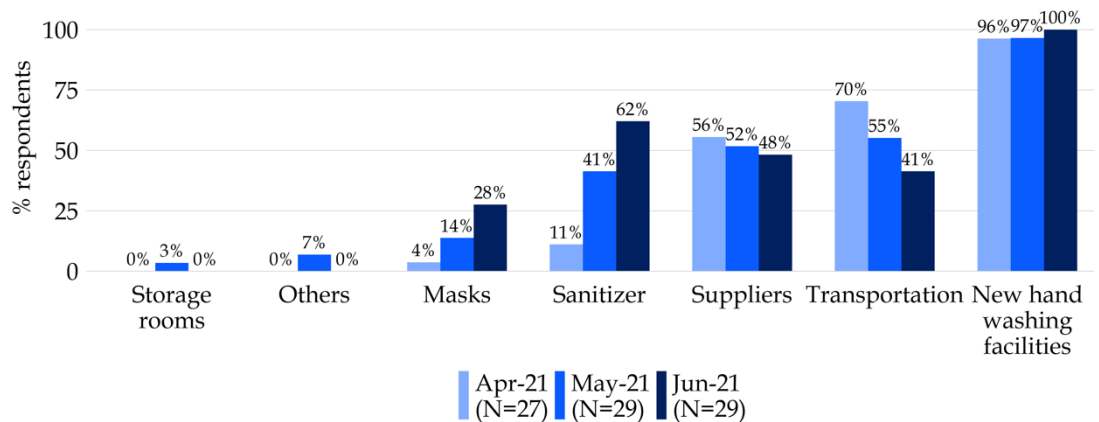


Figure 11. Vendors: Resources shared with other businesses

Apr; 97% May; 100% Jun), transportation (70% Apr; 55% May; 41% Jun), suppliers (56% Apr; 52% May; 48% Jun), sanitizers (11% Apr; 41% May; 62% Jun) and masks (4% Apr; 14% May; 28% Jun) (Figure 11).

### 3.5 Competition

**Competition** is defined as rivalry between two or more entities. Like cooperation, competition can be negative or positive. Its contribution to system resilience capacities depends on how and why the entities are competing. Competition in this assessment was measured based on changing vendors practices based on what they had seen of their competitors and on consumers' reasons, trust, and loyalty in the vendors from where they food.

Between April and June, the share of vendors who reported any changes to their own business practices based on competitors decreased overtime (37% Apr; 17% May; 20% Jun) (Figure 12). In April, vendors that reported a business practice change mainly mentioned changes to their hygiene concept (64%), the layout of their shop (64%), adding the offer of discount (55%) or services (27%). In May, most vendors mentioned changes by the added offer of services (60%), advertisement (40%) and the layout of the shop (40%); in June

most vendors reported changes in regard to advertisement (50%), layout of the shop (17%) and the offer of credit (17%).

Despite a high share of consumers reporting changes to the food items typically bought, the share did not change much over the three months (97% Apr/May; 90% Jun). While the share of consumers who reported a decrease in quantity of some foods remained high (86% Apr; 72% May; 81% Jun) the share of consumers who reported an increase in quantity of some foods declined considerably (36% Apr; 14% May; 11% Jun). At the same time, consumers who reported switching from usual to different foods increased (7% Apr/May; 19% Jun).

The markets under assessment were still the most common places where consumers obtained food. The share of consumers who reported doing most of their food shopping at the markets declined

monthly but remained high within the quarter (90% Apr; 83% May; 80% Jun). Consumers also mentioned obtaining food from supermarkets (52% Apr; 40% May/Jun), kiosks (41% Apr; 40% May; 37% Jun), or small shops (24% Apr; 23% May; 13% Jun) (**Figure 13**).

Reasons for buying food at the two markets were similar between the three rounds (**Figure 14**). Major reasons included good prices (62% Apr; 70% May; 93% Jun), easy access from home (72% Apr; 83% May;

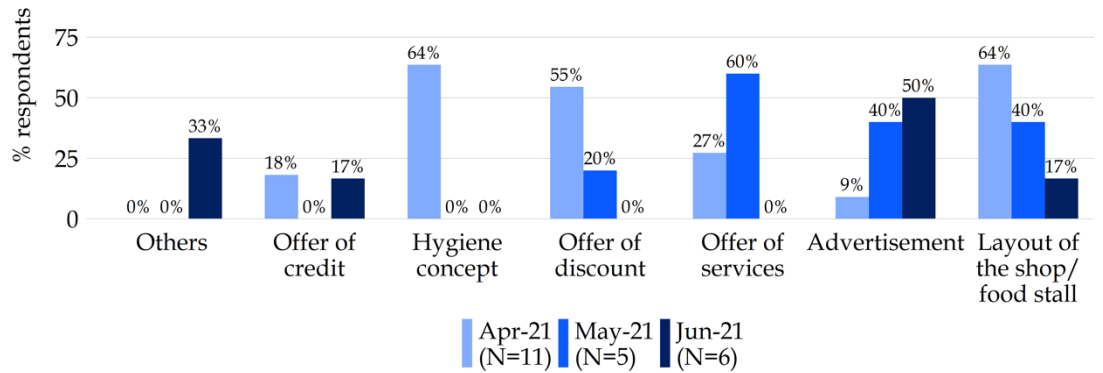


Figure 12. Vendors: Business practices changed due to competitors

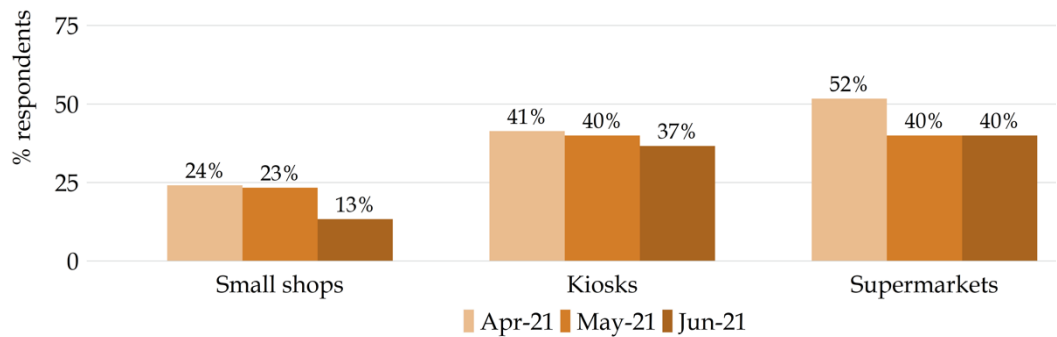


Figure 13. Vendors: Other sources to buy food from

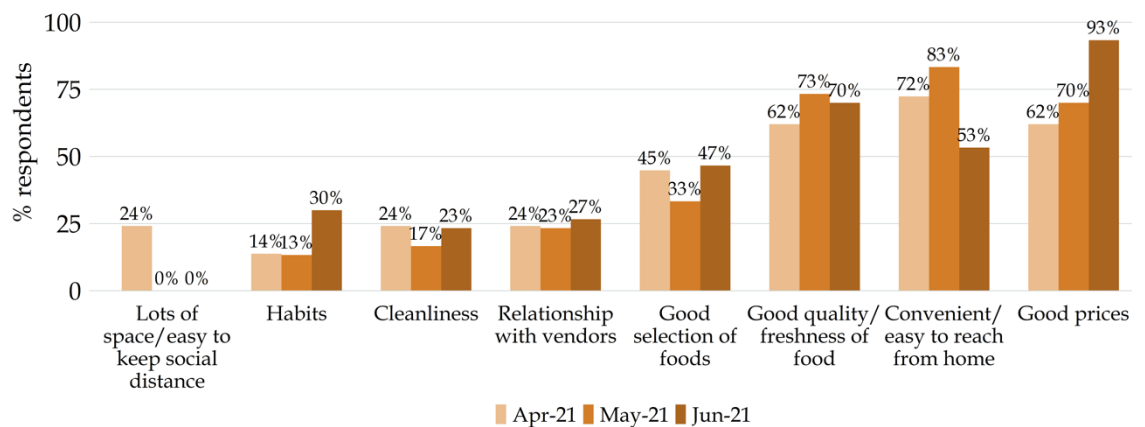


Figure 14. Consumers: Reasons for choosing to buy food at the market



53% Jun), quality/freshness of food (62% Apr; 73% May; 70% Jun), and good selection of foods (45% Apr; 33% May; 47% Jun).

The level of trust for the vendors that consumers bought food from was split between only a few vendors are trustworthy (52% Apr; 47% May; 57% Jun) and majority of vendors are trustworthy (48% Apr; 53% May; 43% Jun) (**Figure 15**).

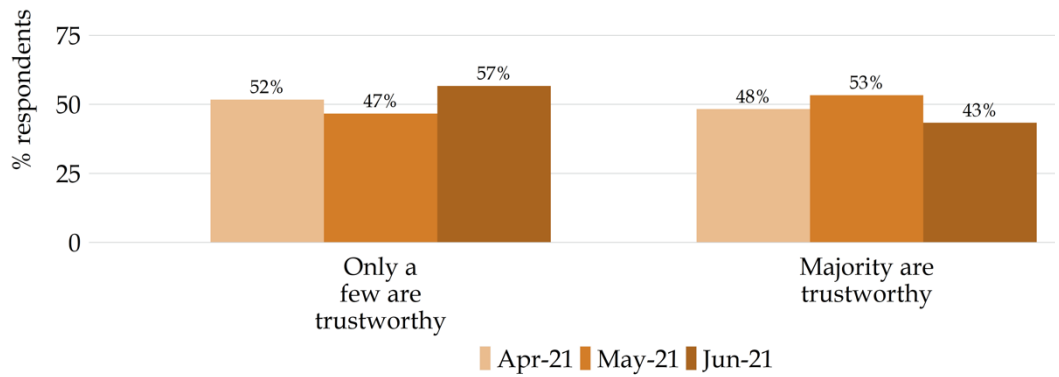


Figure 15. Vendors: Level of trust for the vendors consumers usually buy food from

For those consumers that only described a few vendors as trustworthy, major reasons included not knowing where the products come from (60% Apr; 43% May; 65% Jun), changing quality of products (60% Apr; 79% May; 12% Jun), and changing prices (60% Apr; 21% May; 24% Jun). For those consumers stating that majority of vendors are trustworthy, major reasons included knowing the vendors well/buying regularly from the same vendor (79% Apr; 50% May; 77% Jun), good quality/freshness of foods (36% Apr; 50% May; 62% Jun) and identifying with other customers of the vendor (36% Apr; 69% May; 31% Jun).

Despite the rather low level of trust most consumers displayed a good vendor loyalty (**Figure 16**).

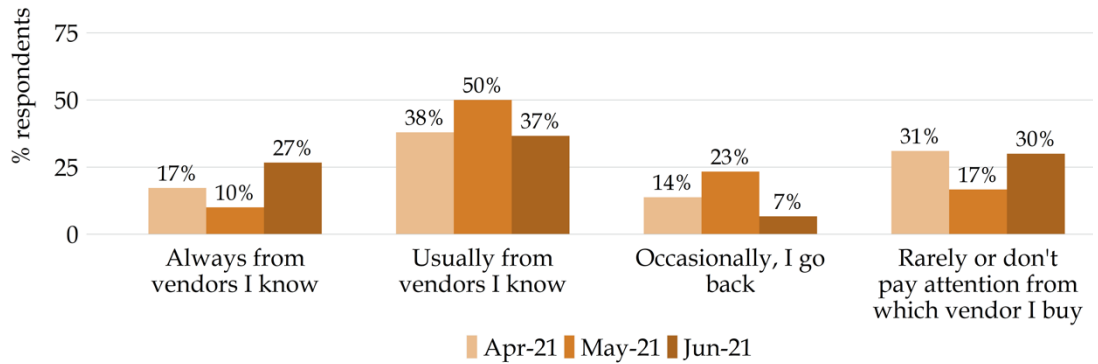


Figure 16. Consumers: Frequency of buying at the same vendor

Between April and June, most consumers stated to always buying from the same vendor or usually (55% Apr; 60% May; 54% Jun). About a third of consumers visited the same vendors rarely/or didn't pay attention (31% Apr; 17% May; 30% Jun).

### 3.6 Business strategy

**Business practices** are oriented toward generating value for customers. They can be investments in understanding customers, in building customer relationships, in tracking customer retention and growth, in investing in staff and firm capacity, and in merit-based hiring. Business strategy in this assessment has been measured based on vendors' business practices, training possibilities and additional funding, as well as consumers' being asked for feedback.

First, between April/May and June the share of vendors who used business strategies to increase the number of customers and sales during the last 9 months decreased from 67% Apr/May to; 53% June. **Figure 17**

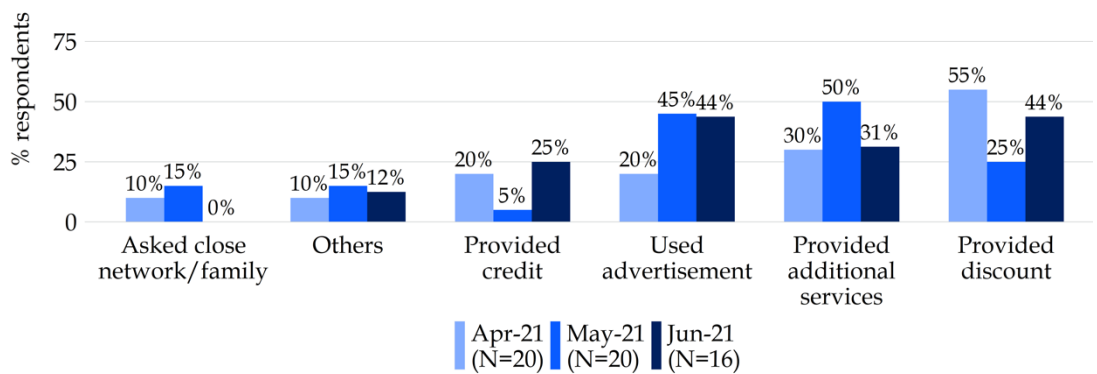


Figure 17. Vendors: Types of business strategies taken, last 9 months

shows the strategies taken varied over the months which included the provision of discount (55% Apr; 25% May; 44% Jun), the provision of additional services (30% Apr; 50% May; 31% Jun), the use of advertisement (20% Apr; 45% May; 44% Jun), and the provision of credit (20% Apr; 5% May; 25% Jun).

Second, the vendors' awareness of business training and support being offered by market authorities due to COVID-19 varied between the months (27% Apr; 23% May; 40% Jun).

Third, the share of vendors who reported borrowing money to pay for unexpected expenses due to COVID-19 increased between April (30%) and May/June (53%).

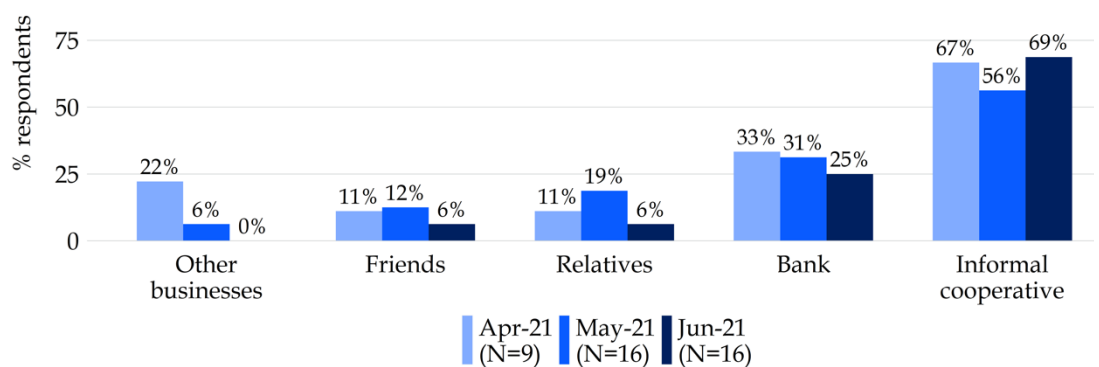


Figure 18. Vendors: Source of borrowed money due to COVID-19

Over the three months, the major sources mentioned were informal cooperatives (67% Apr; 56% May; 69% Jun), banks (33% Apr; 31% May; 25% Jun), relatives (11% Apr; 19% May; 6% Jun), and friends (11% Apr; 12% May; 6% Jun).

Fourth, only very few/none of the consumers (10% Apr; 0% May/June) were asked by market officials or vendors to provide feedback.

## 4. FOOD PRICES

Tracking food prices is of great value to any market system to respond quickly to any dynamics in the food system. In this assessment, prices of different nutritious commodities and food groups have been tracked over time in KES.<sup>2</sup> Between January and June, prices for lentils and green grams increased by 12% and 6%, respectively, while prices for beans rosecoco decreased by 13%. Over the last quarter (Apr-June), prices for both beans rosecoco and lentils decreased by 8% while prices for green grams stayed unchanged (**Figure 19**).

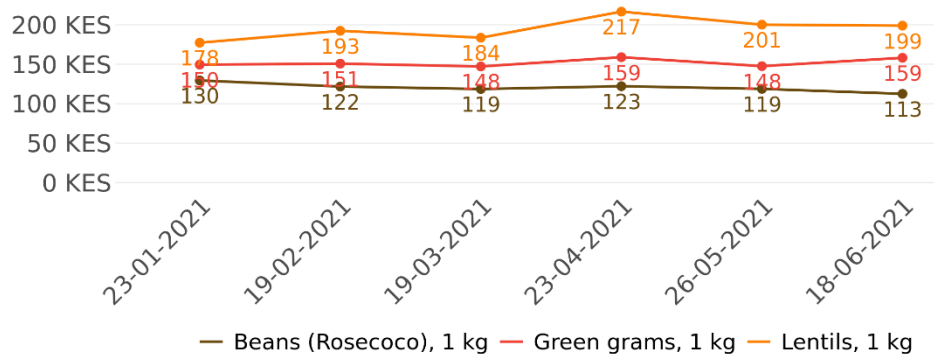


Figure 19. Prices for selected pulses, in KES/kg

Vegetables assessed included kales (sukumawiki), green cabbage, and carrots (**Figure 20**). While between January and June prices for kale and cabbage increased by 46% and 22%, respectively, prices for carrots decreased by 3%. However, over the last quarter (April to June), prices for carrots and kales increased by 53% and 7%, respectively, while prices for cabbage decreased by 20%. The price fluctuation in vegetables was mainly due to seasonality, and varying quality of vegetables also determined the everyday price.

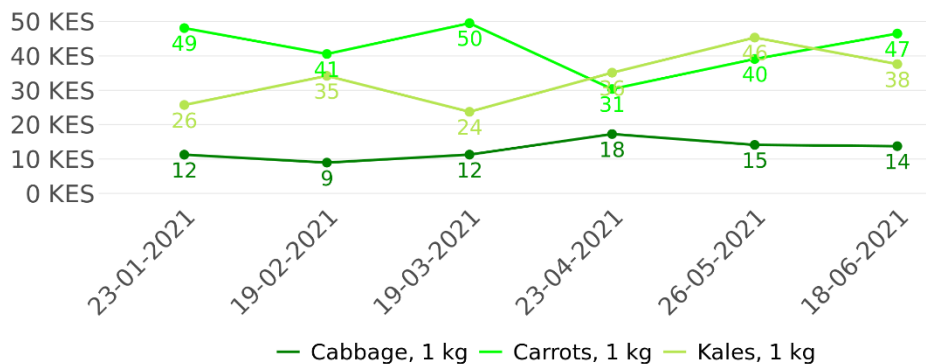


Figure 20. Prices for selected vegetables, in KES/kg

<sup>2</sup> As of June 28, [100 KES  \$\approx\$  0.93 US\\$](#).

Animal source foods assessed included eggs (Kienyeji), milk (raw/unprocessed), dried fish (omena) and beef (with bones) (Figures 21 and 22). While prices for eggs and milk decreased by 8% and 3%, respectively, prices for omena and beef increased by 6% and 5%, respectively, between January to June. Over the last three months (April to June), prices for omena, eggs and milk decreased by 16%, 4% and 1%, respectively, and increased for beef (6%). Prices for omena varied slightly over the months, mainly due to limited supply and long supply chain with competing interests, as omena is also used for animal feed.

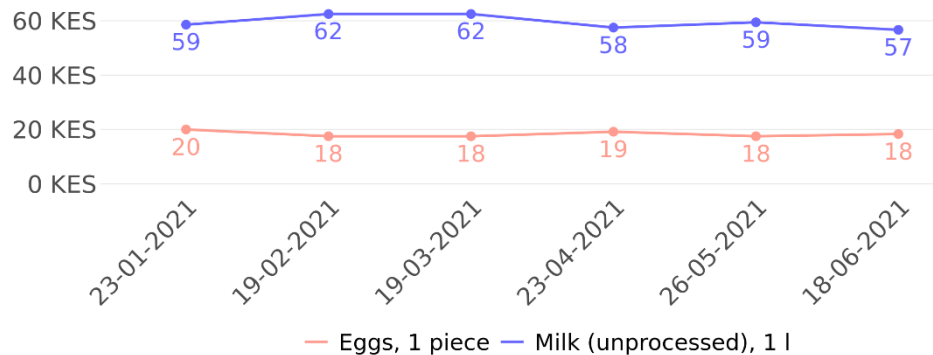


Figure 21. Prices for eggs and milk, in KES

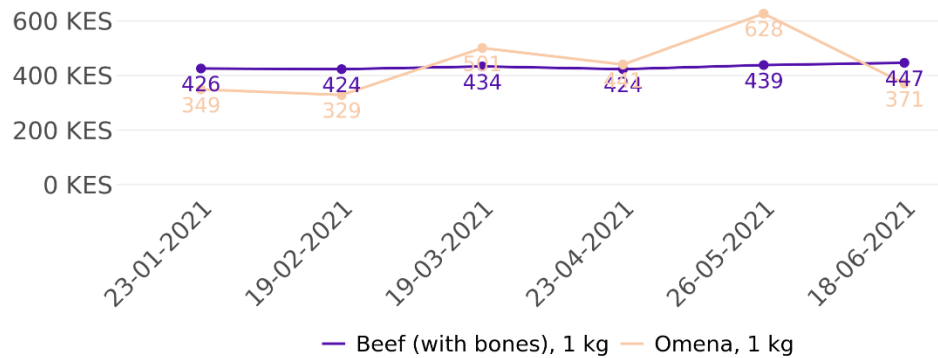


Figure 22. Prices for meat and fish, in KES/kg

## 5. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

VENDOR (n=30)	CONSUMER (n=30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>63% of vendors were female (Tab. 1).</li> <li>57% of the vendors attended primary education.</li> <li>Most vendors in the panel sold vegetables, fruits, grains, legumes, also in the form of pre-packed, fresh fruits (sliced mango, melon, banana) and vegetables (packs of carrots, peas, squash etc.).</li> <li>70% of vendors have been operating in the market for 10 years or longer and 83% of vendors aim to continue with their business even if COVID-19 continues (as of June 2021).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>63% of the consumers in this panel were female.</li> <li>66% of consumers attended secondary education or higher.</li> <li>69% of consumers lived in Machakos or Thika for over 10 years.</li> <li>All consumers have been financially affected by COVID- (100% Apr/May/Jun); 87% of those negatively affected reported a reduced income through fewer business opportunities, 63% reported increased costs of basis (food) items and services; 50% coped by engaging in other income earning activities, 40% by decreasing the consumption of food, or borrowing from friends (30%) (as of June 2021).</li> </ul>

Tab. 1 Characteristics of respondents in this panel (as of June 2021)

	VENDORS (n=30)	CONSUMERS (n=30)
Gender (male   female)	37%   63%	37%   63%
<i>Highest level of school attended</i>		
Primary school	57%	33%
Secondary school	27%	43%
Higher education	17%	23%
<i>Length of operating in the market (vendor)   Length of living in Thika or Machakos (consumer)</i>		
<1 year	10%	3%
1-3 years	7%	7%
3-5 years	10%	3%
5-10 years	3%	17%
>10 years	70%	69%

## 6. METHODS ASSESSING MARKET CHARACTERISTICS UNDER COVID-19, RESILIENCE, AND FOOD PRICES

Insights into **market system resilience** were based on interviews with 30 consumers and 30 vendors from two traditional markets in Machakos and Kiambu county, who were interviewed between 21 April and 21 June 2021.<sup>3</sup> The panel of vendors and consumers was purposefully selected from Marikiti and Madaraka markets in December 2020 and validated in January 2021. The panel was based on the respondent's gender and age profiles, which were previously examined in rapid assessments (see below). The same panel of consumers and vendors are interviewed monthly via phone interviews and following a structured questionnaire.

The [USAID Market System Resilience Framework](#) defines market system resilience as "...the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses

<sup>3</sup> The panel included 30 consumers and vendors. In April, due to attrition the number of consumers was reduced to 29.



in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.” For market systems, resilience further includes the ability to allocate resources, draw on optimal resources, and innovate to solve problems in the face of shocks and stresses. This report uses six of the eight domains highlighted in the USAID framework to characterize resilience capacities (connectivity, diversity, equity and fairness, cooperation, competition, business strategy) with both fast and slow indicators.

In addition to data on market system resilience, this report conducted a **rapid assessment** of 1,801 consumers and 1,810 vendors from Marikiti and Madaraka markets. Approximately every two weeks, 40 consumers and 40 vendors in each market were randomly selected for surveys. All assessments combined responses from the vendors and consumers in both markets, and all surveys were conducted in adherence with global guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and control. Data included in this report (“[Market characteristics and changes due to COVID-19](#)”) were collected between September 7, 2020 and June 18, 2021. All data were collected via Open Data Kit and stored on KoBo Toolbox; Stata version 15.1 was used for data analysis.

**Food prices** for selected nutritious foods (pulses, vegetables, and animal source foods) were collected approximately every two weeks from each market. Prices were assessed on January 23, February 19, March 19, April 23, May 26, and June 18, 2021. Foods were selected based on its nutritive value, availability, and cultural acceptance. Data for foods were collected in standard units (kilogram, liter, or piece), and prices were averaged using the Kenyan Shilling ([100 KES  \$\triangleq\$  0.93 US\\$](#)). For each round and food item, three comparative prices from three vendors in each market were collected by trained enumerators at similar times and days of the week. The weight of pulses, fish, and vegetables were collected together with the price assessment, and average weights for standard units were then calculated. Although a direct comparison between the assessed commodities and the national price statistics by the [Kenya Bureau of Statistics \(KNBS\)](#) is not possible, EatSafe tracked and compared official bi-monthly price data and compared the national assessments to the average monthly prices of this assessment, allowing for validation of these data.

## 7. GAIN’S COVID-19 RESPONSE

The necessary COVID-19 lockdowns have placed a spotlight on the weaknesses of food systems across the world. In the COVID-19 context the single most important thing that can be done for the health and resilience of people and economies is to protect the nutritional status of current and future generations. GAIN has developed the [Keeping Food Markets Working \(KFMW\) program](#) as an emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, providing rapid support to food system workers, to small and medium enterprises supplying nutritious foods, and to keeping fresh food markets open. While disease control responses to the pandemic are essential, they also disrupt food systems, depress income, and put a strain on social protection programs, which can threaten the nutritional status of the most vulnerable. The KFMW program is focused on mitigating those risks and keeping affordable nutritious foods flowing in African and Asian markets to the people who most need it. The KFMW program consists of five workstreams:

1. Building resilience of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
2. Maintaining and reinforcing efforts in Large-Scale Food Fortification
- 3. Ensuring food markets stay open and are operating safely**
4. Investing in nutrition security for key workers in the food system
5. Supporting effective policymaking and coordination during the pandemic

Through KFMW, EatSafe is working to better understand the rapidly changing situation in traditional food markets from the vendor and consumer perspective under workstream 3.

## 8. EATSAFE DATA COLLECTION FOR MUNICIPALITIES

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food, is a five-year project aiming to enable lasting improvements in the safety of nutritious foods in traditional markets by focusing on the consumer. The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the world into an unprecedented global health crisis. Difficult to manage at the best of times, traditional markets are generally crowded with customers and vendors creating ideal conditions for transmission of the virus. When market vendors and other food system workers cannot do their jobs, increased food prices and/or food shortages are likely to result in reducing demand for fresh, nutritious foods and eroding market resilience. Furthermore, real, and perceived risks can undermine consumer trust in the health and safety of food markets.

EatSafe's COVID-19 response is working to better understand the rapidly changing situation in traditional food markets from the vendor and consumer perspective. Through bi-weekly market surveys and monthly key informant interviews, EatSafe is assessing the accessibility of safe nutritious food, availability of health and safety information and the resilience of traditional markets. EatSafe will continue to use and disseminate results to help ensure food markets remain open, that safe, nutritious food is available under COVID-19 and to support future programming for safe and resilient nutritious food markets.

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For more details on EatSafe program activities, visit [gainhealth.org/EatSafe](https://gainhealth.org/EatSafe) or contact [EatSafe@gainhealth.org](mailto:EatSafe@gainhealth.org).



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