Due to increased armed clashes between government and anti-government forces in Farah at the end of October, WFP conducted a rapid phone survey on 30–31 October, 2016 to assess the food security situation. Thirty four community focal points in 10 of the province’s 11 districts were called (we were unable to obtain valid focal point phone numbers for Gulestan district). This was WFP Afghanistan’s second remote emergency flash update, following the Kunduz assessment released in late October.

**KEY MESSAGES**

- **Security and access** are a significant concern throughout Farah province—especially in Bala Buluk and Farah districts. While people are generally able to go to work, both households and traders face security concerns when accessing the market.

- **Food security**: Prices have increased in all districts, and some food shortages (mostly fruits and vegetables, as well as meat and poultry) have been reported in Farah and Bala Buluk, as well as Lash-e-Juwayn and Khak-e-Safed (though for these last two, this is based on one interview only).

**ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND**

Due to increased armed clashes between government and anti-government forces in Farah at the end of October, WFP conducted a rapid phone survey on 30–31 October, 2016 to assess the food security situation. Thirty four community focal points in 10 of the province’s 11 districts were called (we were unable to obtain valid focal point phone numbers for Gulestan district). This was WFP Afghanistan’s second remote emergency flash update, following the Kunduz assessment released in late October.

**FOOD PRICES**

Food prices have increased in all districts since last month. However, the average price of wheat flour remained slightly lower than the national average for the last week of October (AFN 27.8/kg) in all surveyed districts—except Farah and Pur Chaman districts, where it was slightly higher (AFN 31/kg).

**OVERALL SECURITY AND FOOD SECURITY SITUATION**

The food security situation in Shib Koh, Lash-e-Juwan, Bakwa, Khok-e-Safed and Pusht Rod is worrying, with reports of increased prices, limited casual labor opportunities, and insecurity—as well as a few reports of food shortages.

The situation seems most severe in Farah and Bala Buluk: casual labor opportunities are very scarce, food prices have increased, and both insecurity and food shortages (fruits, vegetables and meat/poultry) were widely reported.
**FOOD SHORTAGES**

The terms of trade (ToT) between wheat flour and casual labor is a proxy indicator used to measure household purchasing power, by showing the quantity of wheat flour that can be purchased with the wage earned from one day of casual unskilled labor. The survey found significant differences in ToT across the surveyed districts. It was similar to the national average for the last week of October (12.8 kgs/day), in eight of the surveyed districts—ranging from 12 to 15 kg/day. In Bala Buluk, Farah and Pusht Rod, however, it was significantly lower—especially in Bala Buluk (6kg/day) and Farah (9kg/day). In both of these, this was due to a combination of higher wheat prices and lower wage rates. While the higher prices are likely due to insecurity leading to decreased wheat flour supply on the local markets, it is unclear why the wage rates are so low.

Apart from Anar Dara, Bakwa and Pur Chaman districts, where people generally buy food with cash, most households in the rest of the province buy food on credit from traders—suggesting very limited household cash reserves. This is particularly worrying given that respondents in all districts reported that casual labor opportunities are currently very scarce—which will only exacerbate the situation, and could push households into adopting negative coping strategies.

Four districts reported both increased prices and food shortages (primarily fruits and vegetables, as well as meat and poultry) - in particular Bala Buluk and Farah. Fruit and vegetable are typically produced locally within the province, and it is unclear whether shortages are due to farmers’ inability to bring in food to the district markets due to insecurity, or to normal seasonal shortages.

**HOUSEHOLD ABILITY TO BUY FOOD**

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