




# Farm to folk

An egg's journey from  
producer to consumer

Produced by Dikoda



Eggs are a nutritious food package and are a cost-effective alternative to other high-protein sources for people at the grassroots. They have remained an important source of protein-rich nourishment during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite disruptions to transport, markets and incomes, and shortages that have driven prices higher.

In Myanmar, which is grappling with a devastating COVID-19 third wave, demand for eggs has soared amid panic buying linked to rumours on social media that they can help to build immunity to the coronavirus. The surge in demand has seen prices double and has prompted warnings from doctors against eating more than three eggs a day.

The impact of the pandemic on egg supply chains is highlighted in the following photo journeys from Jakarta, Quezon City and Dhaka, which feature interviews with key actors as eggs make the journey from producer to consumer.

The photo journeys reveal how egg production and prices were affected by factors that include weaker demand and reduced earnings at shops in grassroots areas because of the impact on income of factory closures or reduced job opportunities, higher poultry feed prices, and market restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19.

A common refrain was that government support for businesses could be critical to alleviating the impact of COVID-19.

# Farm to folk: Jakarta



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## The producer 01

Mr Arief, 50, has 9,000 layer hens on his 2,600-hectare farm at Cibinong, in Bogor, West Java, about 40-kilometres from Jakarta. He has 21 years' experience as a poultry farmer and decided to focus on layers three years ago. His farm is small compared to other egg producers.

Mr Arief's layers produce about 30 boxes of eggs a day – or about 450kg (15kg/box) – for sale in Jakarta where his customers include distributors and small business vendors.

COVID-19 has resulted in higher prices for chicken feed, which, coupled with a decline in demand for eggs last year after markets were closed in some areas, resulted in more competition among producers. Overall, however, COVID-19 had little impact on egg production.



**Prices fell last year because markets were closed, and the weaker demand forced chicken vendors to delay selling. At the same time layer farmers avoided buying and the price of chickens dropped. They also had to compete against cheaper eggs from Blitar (a city in East Java, which is the source of most of the eggs sold in Jakarta).**

**Mr Arief**

## The distributor 02

Mr Sudirman

**“Price stability depends on the cost of chicken feed. I hope the government can subsidize the cost of feed bought by farmers so that increases do not lead to higher egg prices. When feed prices go up, egg prices go up.”**

Mr Sudirman, 50, has been operating an egg distribution and wholesale business from his warehouse at the Malaka Sari area of East Jakarta for the past 15 years. His government registered small-to-medium enterprise orders two tons of eggs a day from Mr Arief’s farm at Bogor. His customers include retailers who need to place minimum orders of between 15kg and 50kg to buy at wholesale prices. He also sells orders of between 0.25kg and 0.5kg to members of the surrounding community at retail prices.

Although his earnings plunged by between 10 percent and 20 percent due to COVID-19, Mr Sudirman said deliveries and supply from the farm to his business were never disrupted because the government has classified eggs as essential commodities that have priority for transport.

Mr Sudirman said fluctuations in the cost of chicken feed after COVID-19 affected Indonesia caused egg price volatility, and businesses such as his needed government support.





## The reseller 03

Mrs Nur, 46, has been an egg reseller and retailer at Malaka Sari in East Jakarta for about a year. Her business is unregistered because she does not know how to register it officially. She buys from Mr Sudirman, usually 15kg at a time, which she sells in two or three days. The wholesale cost of 15kg of eggs is Rp320,000, or about Rp23,000/kg, and she resells for Rp25,000/kg to customers in the neighbourhood.

Mrs Nur said COVID-19 did not affect supplies, but it did result in fewer customers, and sales fell by about 20 percent. She said prices usually rose in tandem with increases in the cost of chicken feed.

**COVID-19 did not affect ordering or buying, which remained smooth, because stock was always available, but it did have an impact on sales, which fell by about 20 percent. I am hoping to receive a loan from the government so I can grow my business.**

Mrs Nur

## The informal food vendor 04

Mrs Andini, 40, owns a small food shop in a slum at Malaka Sari in East Jakarta where she sells cakes, rice with meat and eggs, and instant noodles. Mrs Andini buys some of her groceries, including eggs, from Mrs Nur's business. She rarely buys from supermarkets because they are more expensive.

Mrs Andini said that although egg prices have been fairly stable since last year, the pandemic caused a 20 percent decline in revenue because customers preferred to avoid food shops and eat at home.

**Egg sales fell by about 20 percent during the pandemic because there were fewer buyers. This happened because most of my customers live or work nearby, but now they are working from home.**

Mrs Andini



## The consumer 05



Mrs Elisa, 36, a housewife at Malaka Sari in East Jakarta, buys eggs and other groceries from Mrs Nur's shop for family consumption. She prefers to buy from Mrs Nur because her shop is closer and cheaper than a supermarket.

Mrs Elisa said egg prices were fairly stable during the pandemic but a decline in family income and concern about being infected by COVID-19 meant she was spending less time leaving her home to buy food.

**My son likes eggs, but I had to reduce purchases by about 10 percent because of the pandemic for financial reasons because my husband's income declined. The other reason why I rarely bought food outside during the pandemic was because I worried about COVID-19; I can't tell if food is safe or not."**

Mrs Elisa

# From layers to buyers in Quezon City



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## Producers 01

The egg supply chain for Quezon City begins at layer farms, many of which are in the municipalities in Batangas province.

**We were affected by COVID-19, but in a positive way. When the pandemic hit the country and stores were closed, we decided to sell eggs wholesale. The result has been increased sales, because we became the sole seller of eggs in the area.**

## The distributor 02

The wholesaler/distributor operates on Katipunan Street in the Commonwealth area of Quezon City. Most customers are retailers in the area, but the business also make some retail sales to local households. The pandemic enabled the distributor to seize the transformative opportunity to become a wholesaler. The company uses social media, in the form of a Facebook page and a Facebook sellers' group, to sell eggs.





## The Retailer 03

Mr. Nino de los Santos is a small-scale retailer on Kaunlaran Street, Commonwealth, who buys eggs to sell to the local community from a farm at Batangas, about 100km south of Manila. The business was affected by movement and curfew restrictions imposed under community quarantine measures as part of COVID-19 control measures, which resulted in fewer customers and a corresponding decline in earnings.

**“Our business was greatly affected by COVID-19. The transport of food was not affected but restrictions under MECQ (Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine) resulted in fewer customers.”**

**Mr. Nino de los Santos**



**“Our business was greatly affected by the curfew introduced as part of pandemic restrictions. Before CO-VID-19, we had many buyers at 2am, but curfew resulted in fewer buyers and a significant decline in sales.”**

**Ms. Janina Rose Bernal**



## **Informal Retailer** 04

Rose Bernal runs an informal business on Kaunlaran Extension, Commonwealth, that only sells eggs from March to June because they cost less during those months. The business was affected by the curfew and community quarantine measures introduced in response to CO-VID-19, because they resulted in few customers and a corresponding decline in sales.



## Customer 1

Ms. Jiessel Sabando is one-stop short of the end of the supply chain because he/she runs a small food shop that sells hamburgers and sandwiches that have eggs as an ingredient. The business usually buys several trays of eggs twice a day. Although the business remained open during the pandemic, sales slumped, affecting income.

**Ms. Jiessel Sabando** “Sales are really slow now. The number of buyers is significantly less.”

## Customer 2

Mr. Novelito Dealda is a head of household and occasional customer of Ms. Janina Rose Bernal's business on Kaunlaran Extension. He usually buys in the area because it is close to where he lives and prices are cheaper than supermarkets.

**Mr. Novelito Dealda** “I did not buy from (Ms. Janina Rose Bernal) during community quarantine because of the restrictions on leaving home. We bought from the sari-sari (grocery) shops near where we live.”



# Farm to folk: Dhaka



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## The producer 01

Mr Shafi has 20,000 layers on the poultry farm he has operated for 18 years in Savar Upazila, (municipality), about a 2.5 hour drive to the capital, Dhaka.

Savar is one of the centres of egg production in Bangladesh and Mr Shafi is under contract to a wholesaler.

The egg business has been badly affected by COVID-19, which sent prices tumbling to BDT4 to BDT5 an egg, down from BDT6 to BDT7 before the pandemic. The cost of feed, production rates and seasonal poultry diseases are the main factors that affect ex-farm prices for eggs. Layers are regularly checked and vaccinated by veterinarians to reduce disease.

**“The pandemic became a burden for the farm. The closure of all garment factories and food-related businesses, including restaurants and bakeries, coupled with a decline in purchasing power among poor urban dwellers due to job losses or reduced income, led to weaker demand for eggs. I produced the same volume but transport restrictions disrupted the supply chain. The sudden change in supply and demand ultimately affected my revenue, and I took a loan from the Grameen Bank. I was unable to receive support through a government incentives package. The retail prices for eggs are set by wholesalers and a syndicate controls demand and prices. Feed costs rose sharply during the pandemic and many farms face the prospect of closure.”**



Mr Shafi

## The wholesaler 02



the Tejgoan Arat in Dhaka. Wholesalers buy from producers to sell at arats (wholesale markets) in the evenings, and retailers and local distributors buy the eggs by 6am the next day for sale in their communities.

Mr Mashuk Mia has been selling an average of 30,000 to 40,000 eggs a day to the next distributors along the supply chain. Daily sales are common at arats because they usually lack cold storage.

The pandemic badly disrupted the egg business because of transport restrictions during lockdown, reduced demand from the business sector because of the closure of bakeries and restaurants, and reduced demand from poor or middle-class urban residents.

**My business was badly affected during the pandemic last year due to an imbalance between demand and price fluctuations. The supply of eggs was not constant, partly because of transport restrictions. Supply depends on demand and when demand fluctuated last year, so did supply.”**

**Mr Mashuk Mia**



## The retailer 03

Mr Md. Abul Khair has been operating his small shop in Dhaka city and sells about 100 to 150 eggs a day that he receives from a distributor who buys at an arat. He usually buys three days supply at a time. His customers are people living near his shop and small local restaurants and hotels.

Mr Md. Abul Khair said his business was affected by the pandemic. He said retail prices are mainly determined by wholesale prices and carrying costs.

Mr Md. Abul Khair: “During the pandemic many people cut back on buying animal products for what they said were safety reasons, and they also visited markets less frequently because of the fear of infection, resulting in weaker demand. I lost my regular customers and sales went down. The hotels to which I regularly supplied eggs closed and supply chain disruptions also affected by business. The slump in

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**Mr Md. Abul Khair**

## The slum vendor 04

eight years, selling to customers who live nearby. Before the pandemic, he was selling between 160 and 200 eggs a day, which he receives from a local distributor. He can store eggs for a maximum two days. The pandemic affected his business because it reduced in fewer sales. He was also affected by supply chain disruptions and restricted market hours during lockdown.

**Most of my customers are slum dwellers who work in garment factories or for small service providers or are daily wage labourers. I lost regular customers as a result of lockdown due to job losses or reduced income or because they returned to their home towns or villages. It really affected my business; sales were halved. Transportation restrictions disrupted supply chains; sometimes there was demand but limited supply. I borrowed money from a relative to keep my business going, but I had not repaid the loan when the second lockdown began.”**

**Mr Boshier Mia**





## The consumer 05

Mrs Bilkis Akter lives in the Bhasantek slum and most often buys food from a nearby grocery shop whose owner is well known and reliable. She said prices varied a lot last year because of the pandemic. She buys eggs and grocery items from shops but prefers to purchase perishable products such as fish and vegetables from informal vendors because they are cheaper. She is able to buy all her food needs close to home and never has to travel outside her neighbourhood.

**My purchasing capacity declined during the pandemic because my husband is a daily wage labourer who could not always find work. It was very difficult for me to feed my family. I have a growing son and my first priority was to ensure he had enough to eat. Despite the household having little or no income, I tried to buy eggs for my son as often as possible because I know they are very nutritious for a growing child.”**

Mrs Bilkis Akter