Food and Agriculture Organization
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GIEWS Country Brief
The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

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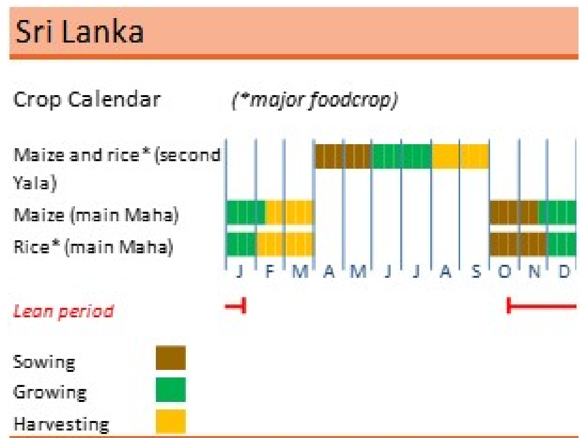
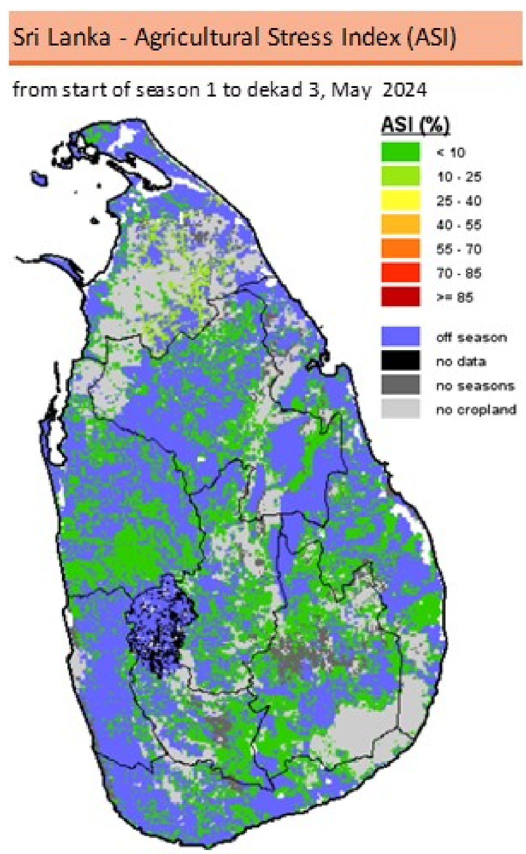
FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- **Below-average 2024 main paddy output due to localized floods, pests and diseases**
- **Cereal import requirements forecast at below-average level in 2024**
- **Domestic prices of rice higher year-on-year in May 2024**





Below-average 2024 main paddy output due to localized floods, pests and diseases

Harvesting of the 2024 main *Maha* paddy crop, which accounts for about 65 percent of the annual output, finalized in March 2024 and production is officially estimated at 2.6 million tonnes, 6 percent below the five-year average. Despite above-average sowings, production was constrained by floods, pests and diseases that caused crop losses, especially in paddy-producing districts of Batticaloa and Ampara. The decline in yields was also attributed to the suboptimal amount of fertilizers used. Planting of the 2024, mostly irrigated, second *Yala* paddy crop, which accounts for about 35 percent of the annual output, finalized in May 2024 and harvesting is expected to start in August. Sowings are estimated to be above average, mostly due to the improved availability of agrochemicals with the gradual recovery of economic activities following the 2021-2022 financial crisis. To encourage paddy sowing, the government announced in March that farmers cultivating paddy during the current Y*ala* season will receive LKR 15 000/hectare (about USD 50), for up to 2 hectares per farmer, to purchase agricultural inputs. As of late May 2024, remote sensing data indicated good vegetation conditions in most of the country (ASI map). However, localized crop losses occurred in northern areas due to dry weather conditions in April and in southern areas due to heavy rains and floods in May. The 2024 main *Maha* maize crop, which accounts for about 90 percent of the annual output, was harvested in March 2024, with production estimated at a bumper 300 000 tonnes due to large sowings driven by strong demand from the local feed industry. The 2024 second *Yala* maize crop, which accounts for of the bulk of the annual output, is currently at vegetative and flowering stages, and crop conditions are generally favourable. Overall, the aggregate cereal production in 2024 is forecast at an average level of 4.8 million tonnes, and above the previous year's reduced level.

Weather forecasts point to above-average precipitation amounts from June to August 2024 over most of the country, likely providing conducive conditions for crop development. However, excessive rains could trigger localized floods and affect crops at maturing or harvesting stages, with negative effects on the final production. In addition, hotter-than-average temperatures are forecast in some areas, elevating risks for pest and disease outbreaks.

Cereal import requirements forecast below-average in 2024

Cereal import requirements in the 2024 calendar year are forecast at 1.4 million tonnes, significantly lower than the high level of 2023. As wheat is not produced in the country, local consumption is fully covered by imports that are forecast at a near-average level of 1.1 million tonnes. Imports of rice in calendar year 2024 are forecast at 100 000 tonnes.

Domestic prices of rice higher year-on-year in May 2024

After sharply declining from August 2022 to July 2023, domestic prices of rice, a key staple food, have been on the rise since August 2023, due to increasing fuel prices leading to higher transport costs, compounded by the below-average 2024 main output. In May 2024, rice prices were 10 percent higher year-on-year and 15 percent below the July 2022 peak, which was due to the financial crisis causing acute shortages of basic food items and disrupting economic and agricultural activities. Domestic prices of wheat flour, another key staple food, declined between November 2022 and October 2023, and remained generally stable since then, reflecting trends in the international market. Appreciation of the national currency since late 2023 made wheat imports cheaper, offsetting increased transport costs. in May prices were 10 percent lower year-on-year and half the high level of September 2022.

Sri Lanka

Cereal Production

	2019-2023 average	2023	2024 forecast	change 2024/2023
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	4 520	4 346	4 450	2.4
Maize	317	263	335	27.4
Millet	6	6	6	0.0
Total	4 844	4 615	4 791	3.8

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

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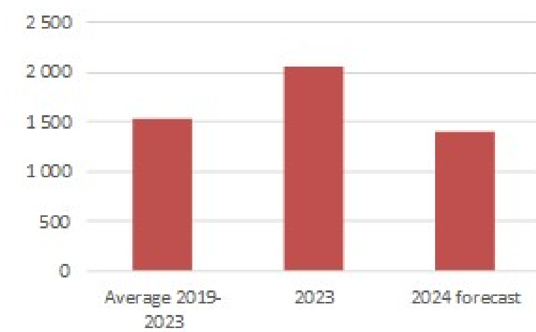
Cereals Imports

000 tonnes

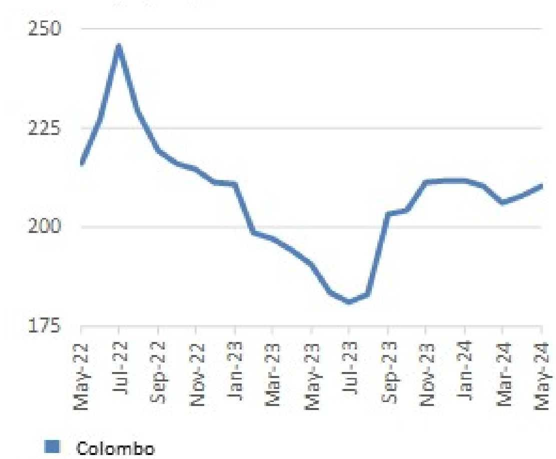


Notes: Includes rice in milled terms. Split years refer to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

Sri Lanka

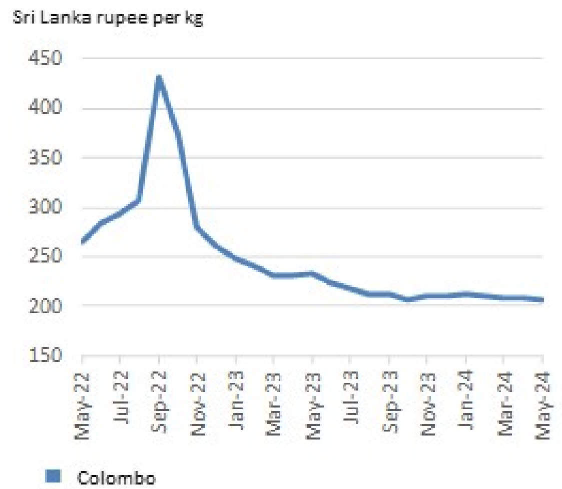
Retail prices of rice

Sri Lanka rupee per kg



Sri Lanka

Retail prices of wheat flour



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This brief was prepared using the following data/tools:
FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS) *https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/*.
FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool *https://fpma.fao.org/*.
FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring *https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/*.
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) *https://www.ipcinfo.org/*.