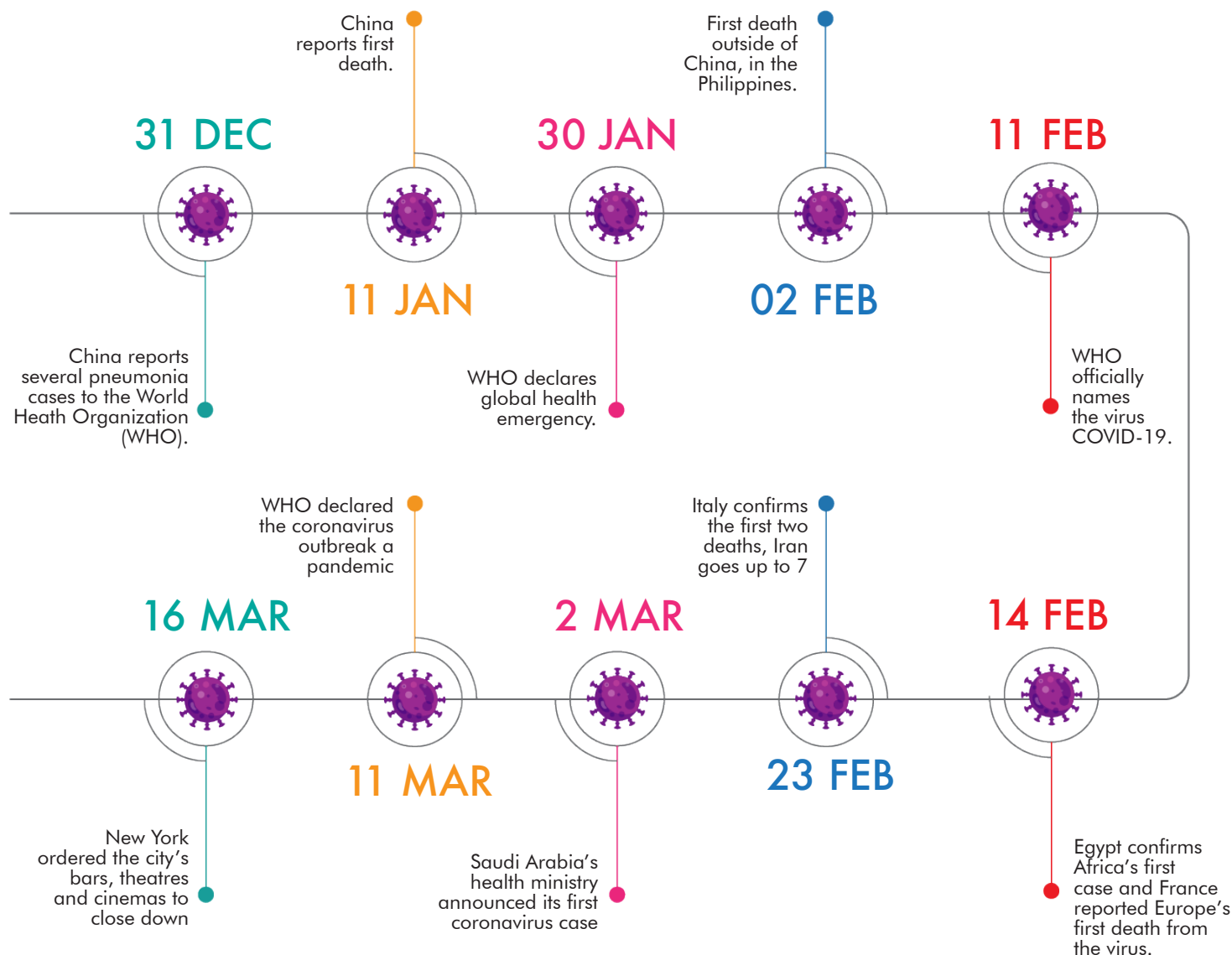


Coronavirus, Impact on Well-Being, Health, Food Access and Food Security

Implications for Food Systems and Policy.
Politicians, Community Leaders and Business Leaders have the power to stop this.

TIMELINE



PANDEMIC

On March 11 WHO declared officially the Pandemic Status. What is it?

An epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, affecting a large number of people.

EPIDEMIC

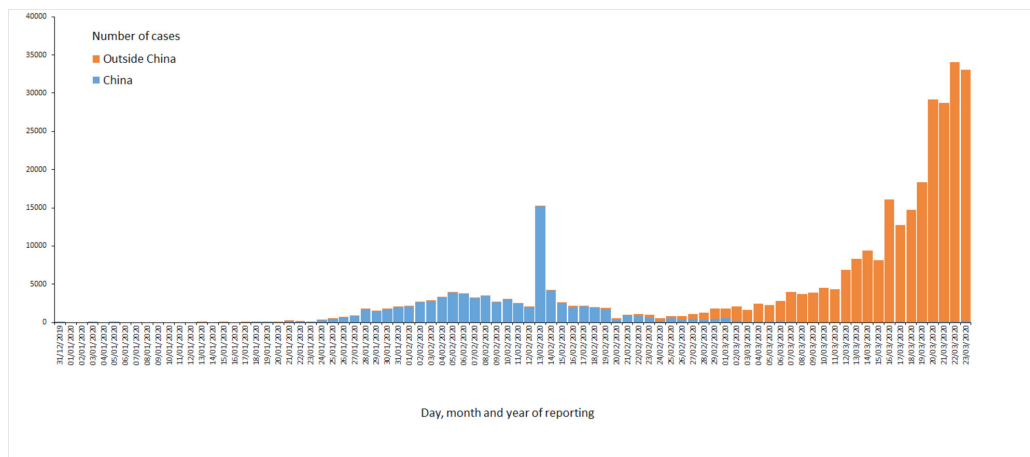
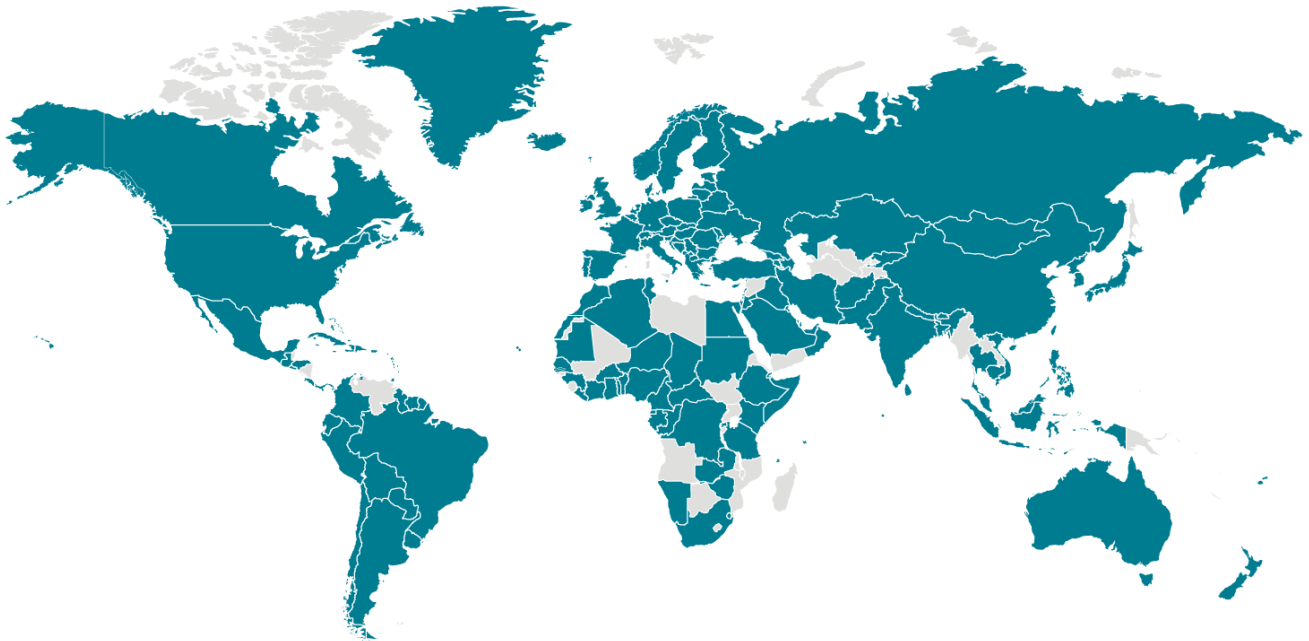
A sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease—more than what's typically expected for the population in that area.

When was the last time a pandemic was declared?

The last official pandemic was in 2009, caused by the commonly called "swine flu". In recent history, HIV/AIDS Pandemic at its peak killed 36 million during 2005-2012. Flu Pandemic killed a million in 1968 and Asian Flu killed two million during 1956-1958.



WORLDWIDE SPREAD



Trend of number of cases of Coronavirus infections globally



Concern for global food security

While epidemiologists are concerned about the rapid spread of the virus, economists are worried about the pandemic's already visible and potential **economic damage**. Global stock markets have reacted nervously. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provides a scenario for 2020 in which economic growth outside China falls by less than in China and that for the world economy is reduced by about half a percentage point relative to previous forecasts.

There are also serious concerns that further spread could **jeopardize food security**. Other pandemics, including SARS, the avian influenza and MERS, led to food price hikes and market panics in affected areas. Fortunately, thus far, we **have not seen major signs that COVID-19 is causing food shortages or price hikes, yet**.

Food distribution channels could face some disruption from transport interruptions and quarantine measures but impacts on staple commodities are less frequent and shorter in duration than for higher valued food items, since such bulk commodities can be loaded, shipped and discharged with minimum human-to-human interaction. Also, global reserves of non-perishable grains such as wheat and rice should be sufficient to meet any surge in demand. Hence, **no major disruptions in production of staple foods have occurred and, for now, the risks of these occurring because of the coronavirus outbreak are minimal**.

SOURCE IFPRI





Can Coronavirus Be Transmitted Through Food?

Researchers are still learning the specifics of how COVID-19 is transmitted, but we do know that the disease can spread through droplets that are released from the nose or mouth when someone coughs, sneezes or exhales.

Disease transmission becomes possible when someone inhales these droplets or touches their eyes, mouth or nose after coming into contact with surfaces where these droplets land.

“There is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus.”

“We are not aware of any reports at this time of human illnesses that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging,” a spokesperson from the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service mentioned in a statement.

The European Food Safety Authority - EFSA’s chief scientist, Marta Hugas, said: “Experiences from previous outbreaks of related coronaviruses, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), show that transmission through food consumption did not occur.

Because the mode of infection is primarily respiratory, **the chance of getting COVID-19 from food is extremely low.** There is no evidence of any respiratory viruses being transmitted through food in the past.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has also released a statement noting there is currently **no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus.**



Implications for Food Systems and Policy

Important is the potential for COVID-19 to impact local and global food systems and their ability to provide safe, affordable, and nutritious food as well as sufficient incomes for people working in food and agriculture sectors. As the COVID-19 pandemic is still evolving, it is difficult to know the geographic reach and degree of impact we can expect to see across food production and distribution systems.

There is still much we don’t know about the particular disease dynamics of COVID-19 and the possible impacts of different policy decisions. The ways that countries, governments, institutions, and communities respond to coronavirus may have profound implications for resilience, food security, nutrition, and food systems policy more broadly. Without adequate preparation, response plans, and resources, second-order impacts on the economy, security, food security, education, and more will be exacerbated by non-data-driven and possibly uncoordinated policy responses.

It is important to note though that the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 virus and the various responses to this pandemic are far more **likely to adversely affect the poor and other marginalized groups with less power and resources** to adapt to unpredictable crisis events. Not only will vulnerable populations and communities have greater difficulty accessing enough food for survival and adequate nutrition, but many also depend upon the food system’s stability for their livelihoods. Shocks to the food chain may disrupt flows of production and trade, which can have volatile market effects and implications on both food prices and agrifood-based incomes. As we learned from the 2007-2008 food commodity crisis, sharp price increases and market changes disproportionately burden the poor. Certain economic impacts will persist beyond the height of the pandemic. These may include increased disabilities in human/cognitive development due to extended lean season and other caloric shortages particularly among those who are already food insecure, which will lead to next-generation reductions in human capital and ensuing economic impacts. Lastly, food system workers rarely have paid sick days and may be forced to work while ill to ensure they can earn enough money, potentially fueling a spiraling pandemic.

SOURCE AGRILINKS



For more info on Coronavirus
visit our website: fscluster.org

