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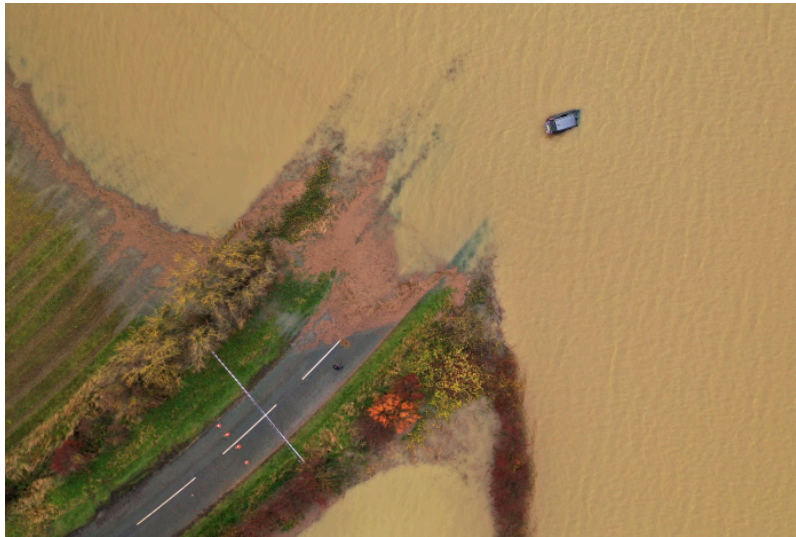
## SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

# Extreme Weather Is Driving Global Food-Price Spikes, Report Says

Last year was the hottest year on record

By [Joseph Hoppe](#) [Follow](#)

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A car is seen part submerged in floodwater, in England. Potato prices in the U.K. jumped 22% in the 13 months to February 2024 after extreme rainfall. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Extreme weather events are driving short-term surges in food prices around the world.

Staple foods—including potatoes, rice, onions, lettuce and fruit—are being hit by price shocks, according to a study led by the Barcelona Supercomputing Center, Spain. The spikes are linked to heat, drought and heavy rainfall conditions, the report said.

“Until we get to net-zero emissions, extreme weather will only get worse, but it’s already damaging crops and pushing up the price of food all over the world,” said Maximillian Kotz, a research fellow at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center.



Vegetable prices in California and Arizona jumped 80% on year in November, 2022 after extreme drought, while Ethiopian food prices rose 40% in March 2023 following a drought the year prior.

Potato prices in the U.K. jumped 22% in the 13 months to February 2024 after extreme rainfall in the winter. Unprecedented monthly temperatures across cocoa production powerhouses Ivory Coast and Ghana in February 2024—combined with prolonged drought the year before—led to a supply crunch, with cocoa more than tripling in price in the year to April 2024.

Rising food prices are the second-largest effect of climate change that people see in their day-to-day lives, only exceeded by extreme heat, said Kotz, who led the report.

“While the 2023-2024 El Nino [weather system] likely played a role in amplifying a number of these extremes, their increased intensity and frequency is in line with the expected and observed effects of climate change,” the report said.

Last year was the hottest year on record, with global temperatures exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial climate conditions for the first time and high temperature records broken across much of the globe. With further warming to between 2.2 degrees and 3.4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels likely by the end of the century, according to the United Nations Environment Programme, unprecedented weather conditions and further price shocks are to be expected, the report adds.

The knock-on effects of food-price spikes muddy the outlook for central banks, as increased costs raise headline inflation and make it more challenging to deliver monetary stability. Price shocks could also exacerbate a range of health outcomes as low-income households cut back, from malnutrition to diabetes and many types of cancers.

The study assessed reports on food prices from national and international media from a range of countries, along with governmental or other official statistics.

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