

Bananas and mangoes, among other imported fruits, are in shorter supply in Japan as the coronavirus pandemic has caused lockdown-driven delays in harvesting, flight reductions and a subsequent decline in cargo volumes, [The Japan News](#) reports.

This has reportedly prompted some retailers to raise the prices of such products.

In Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo, banana bunches from the Philippines were selling this week for ¥95 (US\$0.90), excluding tax, at the Shinjuku Yaoya fruit and vegetable store. The price is about ¥20 higher than in February and March.

“It is becoming more difficult to get a stock of bananas. Even if we raise the price, we make little profit from them,” Hidetoshi Aramaki, a managing director of the company running the store, was quoted as saying.

According to the Tokyo-based Japan Banana Importers Association, imports of Philippine bananas, which account for about 80% of bananas imported to Japan, fell by about 10% in late April from the same period last year.

This is because of a shortage of workers for harvesting and packing the fruit, following the Philippine government’s move to impose a lockdown mainly in metropolitan areas in mid-March to restrict people’s movement.

The wholesale price of Philippine bananas stood at ¥179 per kilogram in March, up 7% from last March and up 8% from the previous month, according to the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Wholesale Market.

Bananas grown in Ecuador, Peru and Costa Rica are expected to replace Philippine bananas, but availability from those countries has also been unstable.

On the other hand, the demand for the tropical fruit is increasing due to consumers exercising self-restraint and spending more time at home. Sales of bananas at supermarkets in the Tokyo metropolitan area increased by 23% from May 1 to May 10 compared with the same period last year, after rising 18% in April.

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