

Vulnerable populations

Victims of environmental disaster

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A shepherd with his flock of sheep searches dry lands for forage in Syria

Many environmental factors – both natural and the consequence of human actions – can limit agricultural potential and make people vulnerable to food shortages. In 1999, severe flooding in much of East and Southeast Asia and drought in the Near East increased the vulnerability of rural households in areas already at risk of food shortages. In the Near East region as a whole, cereal production this year is expected to fall 16 percent below the previous harvest. Rural farmers and herders in Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Syria, where the drought is the worst in decades, face the greatest losses.