



FAO in Action

Cows for Kosovo

FAO helps get Kosovo's agriculture back on track

When Kosovar farmers and their families returned to their fields after the conflict ended in summer 1999, they were shocked by the devastation they found. Many people lost everything: their houses were demolished and their farm animals killed. The conflict reduced Kosovo's cattle population from 400,000 to 200,000.

"Before the war, I had three cows and there was enough for everybody to eat," says Gani Kadriu, a subsistence farmer who lives with his family of 12 in Likovic, in northern Kosovo, where heavy fighting took place. When he returned after the conflict, his house was damaged and his cows and chickens gone.

On a sunny afternoon in November 2000, a DC-8 airliner arrived in Pristina Airport carrying special freight: around 65 cattle, pregnant heifers from Austria and southern Germany. This was part of an FAO Emergency Farm Reconstruction Project, aimed at ensuring a minimum of income and food security for the households least able to recover from the war. Over 3 800 cows and 45 breeding bulls were flown into Kosovo to re-stock the provincial cattle herd and to help poor farmers like Gani Kadriu.

"The only way to bring poor farmers back to milk production was to give them a cow," says Andrew Friend, the project's livestock specialist. "These people have suffered dramatic losses, and none of them would have had the money to buy a cow."

Non-governmental organizations, such as Action Against Hunger and Mercy Corps International, selected 2 500 poor families, many of which were headed by women. Each family received a cow, while the breeding bulls were distributed to

selected villages. In order to qualify for a cow, the families had to have experience in livestock production and access to at least one hectare of pasture for grazing. The farmers were trained in feeding and fodder conservation, and they were encouraged to breed the imported heifers. They got to keep the first-born calf, but were obliged to give the second-born calf to another needy family or village member.

With the financial support of Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the World Bank, the project also addressed the rehabilitation of veterinary services, ensuring that the families received the help they needed to care for their animals. Veterinary kits including drugs and equipment for artificial insemination were distributed to private veterinarians on a cost recovery basis. In addition, a central veterinary laboratory was equipped for animal disease surveillance.

With each cow producing 3 500 litres of milk on average per year, local dairy production has resumed, and it will be even better in the future, as more than 50 percent of the cows have already had their second calves.

During the conflict, roughly half of all tractors were lost or damaged throughout Kosovo. With support from the FAO project, 2 414 tractors have been repaired and 182 new tractors distributed to plough land for 3 600 farming families.

Since the end of the conflict in July 1999, FAO has been the lead agency in the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in Kosovo, with over US\$40 million being channelled to more than 35 agricultural projects.



Facts and figures

About FAO and emergencies

FAO is a key player in emergencies. Its focus is on food production and agriculture, reflecting its specialization and responsibility within the United Nations family. Assisting in preventing disaster-related emergencies, providing early warning in food emergencies and helping in rehabilitation of food production systems are FAO's roles in humanitarian aid. The main forms of FAO's interventions include needs assessment, provision of agricultural inputs and technical assistance for the planning and management of sustainable recovery and rehabilitation of rural production systems.

Monitoring and early warning: FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System for Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) monitors food supply and demand around the world. It provides policy-makers and analysts with the most up-to-date and accurate information on crop prospects and gives early warning on imminent food crises, so that timely intervention can be planned.

Assessment of impact and needs: To provide the right kind of help in an emergency, it is essential to know the nature and extent of the disaster, how many people are affected and what help is needed. In the immediate aftermath of an emergency involving food and agriculture, FAO works closely with the World Food Programme (WFP) to assess the situation and outlook for crops, food supplies and agricultural inputs and to estimate immediate needs for food and agricultural relief.

In 2001, FAO issued 21 special reports and alerts on countries or sub-regions experiencing particular agricultural and food supply difficulties.

Relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction: FAO's Division for Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation responds to needs for emergency assistance in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors in developing countries affected by exceptional natural or human-induced calamities. Once emergency relief operations are under way, FAO, upon request, helps governments and financing institutions prepare national rehabilitation and reconstruction plans

aimed at restoring agricultural support services and rebuilding essential infrastructure.

FAO has five main functions in relation to relief and rehabilitation:

- Assessment of emergency agricultural relief requirements and related project preparations
- Resource mobilization
- Project implementation, including monitoring and impact assessment
- Advice and support for the preparation of rehabilitation programmes
- Coordination between organizations involved in emergency relief and rehabilitation of agriculture, to prevent duplication of effort and ensure that all needs are addressed

In 2001, FAO was involved in over 175 emergency agricultural relief projects around the world. At present, it is implementing over 210 emergency projects, for total value exceeding US\$109 million.

FAO's emergency relief projects are financed by contributions from governmental and non-governmental agencies, by other United Nations agencies and by FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme. In 2001, donors contributed US\$69 million to initiate new FAO emergency relief projects.

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