



Myanmar floods:

Huge impact on agricultural livelihoods, more international support urgently needed

Torrential monsoonal rains, exacerbated by **Cyclone Komen**, caused widespread **flooding and landslides** in Myanmar from July to October this year. Agriculture bore the brunt of the disaster, with the sector accounting for half of all losses.

The Myanmar Government, FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) led an assessment of the impact on farmers in the six most-affected states or regions of Sagaing, Chin, Ayeyarwady, Rakhine, Bago and Magway.¹ The **Agriculture and Livelihood Flood Impact Assessment**, released in mid-October, shows the floods and landslides had a devastating impact on **food security and agricultural livelihoods**.



Key findings include:

more than
242 000
livestock killed
poultry, cattle, pigs and goats



almost
2 500
hectares of agricultural
land affected by landslides
mostly in Chin state



more than
527 000
hectares of crops affected
mostly paddy rice -
with some areas losing the entire
crop for the monsoon season.



PRICE HIKES
due to increased
transport costs
have impacted heavily
on farmers' ability to
buy and sell produce

almost
30 000
hectares of fish & shrimp ponds lost
as well as fishing equipment such as nets, traps,
boats and engines



seasonal **work**
opportunities have
been significantly
reduced



Why farmers were hit the hardest

Crop production is typically the most important livelihood source for flood-affected households. However, farmers reported extensive crop damage after the floods and many also **lost stored seeds**, which could affect the summer and monsoon cropping seasons. In addition, some areas reported **damage to irrigation systems**. Of the more than 242 000 **livestock killed** in the disaster, more than 223 000 were poultry. This will impact heavily on women, who often rely on small animals to help support their families.

The **agriculture sector** is the backbone of the Myanmar economy, **employing** two-thirds of the population and **generating** 23 percent of gross domestic product. **Casual agricultural labour** is a vital source of income for rural families, including for vulnerable women. However, demand for casual labour has significantly dropped after the loss of crops and livestock in the floods.

¹ With support from partners the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund, UN Women, World Vision, Cooperazione e Sviluppo and CARE.



In addition, **Myanmar** is one of the most **natural disaster-prone** countries in Asia, **vulnerable** to floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides and tsunamis. **Climate change** will exacerbate these risks, posing a greater threat to farmers' livelihoods and food security. The flood response and recovery must include **measures to help** vulnerable farmers become more resilient so they can better cope with future shocks.

More support needed

FAO recognizes its generous early donors: the **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** through its Central Emergency Response Fund and the **Government of Belgium**. FAO has also contributed some of its own funds. However, more **international support is urgently needed**. Under the 2016 **Humanitarian Response Plan**, FAO is urgently seeking USD 12.1 million to help 332 750 flood-affected people.

- If affected farmers are not supported in time to rebuild their livelihoods and resume food production:
- Families could become more dependent on aid;
 - Food availability could fall, leading to greater food insecurity and malnutrition;
 - Farmers could be forced to sell more household assets and sink further into debt.

Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission

The Government of Myanmar has now asked for a joint **Government-FAO -WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission** which will be completed by the end of the year to assess the impact of the floods on the main 2015 crops and identify food security and agriculture needs for the next cropping season.

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