



Drought Update in Rural West Bank 2009



Following the droughts in 2006 and 2008, the present shortfall in precipitation for this year is compounding the water shortage situation in the West Bank. This deepening crisis is exasperating the perilous position of many rural communities. Drought is now becoming a chronic event and the response needs to be comprehensive and focused on developing a sustainable solution.

MOA have produced a comparison between the cumulative winter rainfall of this season (2008/09) and that of 2007/08. It demonstrates that in some governorates the level of rainfall is less than half of the previous season, which was significantly below the historical average (see map, overleaf). **The average yearly rainfall for the whole of the West Bank is 537mm; however the average rainfall for the West Bank up until 31 January 2009 is 152mm, more than half way through the rainy season. The overall rainfall for this year is likely to be considerably lower than the historical average.**

Although trucked water is usually purchased for drinking water towards the end of the summer (August) as rainwater harvesting cisterns empty, OCHA have found evidence of some communities using trucked water as early as this January due to the shortage of rainfall recharge.

Learning from previous year's experience, OCHA, FAO and UNICEF have compiled a **Drought Response Strategy**, a framework for the preparation and response to West Bank drought. The proposed plan will

Likely Impacts of the Drought

- Decline in pastures and grazing ranges for herders is increasing demand and the price of fodder, which can lead to herders having to sell their ruminants, which depletes the sustainability of the livelihood.
- Rain fed crops are not receiving enough water, olives and other crops are likely to lose productivity
- Insufficient rain for the recharge of the aquifers, meaning a lower water table and decreasing the pumping capacity of the wells.
- Rainwater harvesting source diminishes, cisterns do not fill contributing to insufficient water reserves for people to survive the summer. Further demand for tankered water occurs.
- Increasing demand by Israeli farmers, Mekorot has less supply of water and the price rises.

focus on areas and communities included in the CAP 2009, where the most vulnerable people have already been identified. The affected population is estimated to be in the region of 250,000-500,000 people.

The plan will target beneficiaries who are paying more than 20 NIS/m³, have no access to the water network or those living in sensitive areas (Area C, seam zones etc.). The emergency response will aim to improve water harvesting infrastructure (rehabilitation of cisterns, water tanks etc.); distribute food, seeds and fodder; and implement water trucking (when no other water is available).

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Comparison of Cumulative Winter Rainfall until 31 January between 2007/08 and 2008/09

