

Background

An estimated 150 000 people in Yemen are displaced as a result of past and renewed conflict between Al Houthi rebels and the Government. Following five rounds of fighting since the onset of hostilities in 2004 and the last ceasefire of 2008, clashes resumed in July 2009 and escalated into open hostilities on 12 August. The violence, affecting 11 out of 15 districts in Sa'ada, as well as Al-Jawf and Amran governorates, has forced tens of thousands to flee their homes, with numerous families suffering multiple displacements. There is great concern also for those unable to escape areas of intense fighting, which lie outside the reach of humanitarian aid.

The current crisis is compounding an already serious situation of poverty and lack of basic services, affecting inhabitants of conflict zones, displaced persons and host communities alike. During years of conflict, they have exhausted their coping strategies and become increasingly vulnerable. Prior to the current crisis, humanitarian agencies were already addressing the needs of 95 000 people affected by previous rounds of fighting.

The intensity of the conflict has curtailed humanitarian access, hindering needs assessments and the delivery of aid. Affected groups lack life-sustaining support, including food, water, sanitation, productive assets, essential domestic items, protection and health care.

Where security conditions have allowed, assessments have been undertaken and in-country stocks of relief items have reached communities in need. The establishment of a High-level Inter-Ministerial Committee for Relief Operations and Relief Coordination Committees at local level in mid-August, followed by the Government's expressed commitment to facilitate humanitarian assistance, have improved prospects for access to affected communities and enhanced coordination.

The Yemen Flash Appeal 2009 was launched on 3 September in coordination with the Government to address the critical needs identified and estimated thus far during the acute phase of emergency. Humanitarian requirements, which will be further assessed and updated in the coming weeks, address food, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and non-food items, emergency education and protection and agriculture.

Challenges facing food security and agriculture

Rural households comprise 80-90 percent of the population in the northern governorates of Yemen. Agriculture provides the primary means of livelihood for the large portion of families in conflict-affected areas. Livestock production, in particular, is a vital source of nutrition and income. Even amidst the struggle to safely flee conflict zones, many families brought their animals on their journey. According to estimates of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 30 percent of displaced households in Haradh arrived with livestock.



Many families fled with their livestock to secure food access

Keeping livestock alive is a time-critical challenge that must be met with urgency. These animals represent a lifeline for a large number of affected families. Without assistance, many risk losing their sole, assured source of food and livelihood.

Concern for animal survival and health is on the rise due to lack of access to natural grazing pastures and feed. Increasing incidence of animal disease – such as Old World Screwworm (OWS) and *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR), among others – is further threatening livestock survival and reducing productivity.

Preventing further loss of productive assets is vital for the capacity of affected populations to survive, access nutrition and provide for their families in a sustainable way, until recovery interventions are possible.



FAO's response

Within the framework of the Yemen Flash Appeal 2009, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is appealing for **USD 700 000** to provide emergency agricultural assistance to affected groups most in need. The assistance aims to maintain the food security status of affected populations, prevent the further loss of productive assets and support the capacity of host communities to absorb displaced groups settling outside of camps.

With donor funding, FAO's activities seek to:

- **provide animal feed** to accessible displaced populations and their host communities that have limited access to pastureland; and
- **supply drugs and medicine to veterinarians and community animal health workers** to prevent the spread of OWS and PPR.





FAO's COMPONENT OF THE YEMEN FLASH APPEAL 2009

Funding requirements: USD 700 000

Project Title: Emergency Provision of Livestock Feed to Host Families of IDPs in Amran Governorate (YEM-09/A01)

Objectives: Maintain essential livestock assets of affected populations.

Beneficiaries: 2 000 households.

Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Funds Requested: USD 400 000

A significant number of conflict-affected households face severe difficulty in feeding their livestock. Access to natural grazing pastures has been hindered by the ongoing violence and the increased strain on natural resources in communities hosting displaced populations. Livestock owners are unable to offset this problem by providing enough feed to sustain their animals. If assistance does not arrive soon, the livelihoods and food security status of conflict-affected populations and their host communities will deteriorate significantly.

The proposed project seeks to safeguard the productive assets of displaced persons and host-community members in Amran governorate through the rapid provision of livestock feed. With donor funding, the assistance will reach 2 000 vulnerable households with limited access to pastureland. Special attention will be dedicated to female-headed households and other vulnerable groups.

Project Title: Provision of Essential Drugs and Medicine in Sa'ada, Hajjah and Amran Governorates (YEM-09/A02)

Objectives: Treat 50 000 livestock in Sa'ada and neighbouring governorates which are prone to transboundary animal diseases, and where the current situation could be conducive to further deterioration of livestock sanitary conditions.

Beneficiaries: 5 000 households.

Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Funds Requested: USD 300 000

Animal health is of great concern in conflict-affected areas due to the increasing prevalence of livestock diseases, including Old World Screwworm (OWS) and *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR). Reduced productivity and livestock losses will have a devastating impact on food availability and income generation of families impacted by the current crisis. Weakened and sick animals require immediate veterinary assistance in order to prevent the further loss of productive assets, which are indispensable to vulnerable groups in both the immediate and longer term.

In response, this project endeavours to equip veterinarians and community animal health workers with drugs and medicine to avert the spread of animal disease. These inputs will enable the vaccination of 50 000 head of cattle and small ruminants against OWS and PPR in the conflict-affected areas of Sa'ada, Hajjah and Amran governorates.



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