



Background

The people of Tajikistan are in urgent need of assistance to restore food security following two years of unrelenting economic, environmental and social shocks. Reduced agricultural yields combined with the global rise in food costs have left 2.2 million people food insecure. This situation has further eroded the asset base of already impoverished families. Currently, 53 percent of the population lives on less than USD 1.33 per day.

Only 7 percent of the land in Tajikistan is arable. Already limited harvests have been affected by hail and reduced precipitation in 2006, drought through the spring and summer of 2007, and a severe cold wave, record-high temperatures and locust infestation in 2008.

Lower harvests resulted in reduced food and income levels in rural households. Further exacerbating the crisis, global fuel prices began to rise in late-2007, causing food prices to soar throughout the country. The cost of bread, the mainstay of the Tajik diet, has tripled, with rural households spending as much as 80 percent of their income on food.

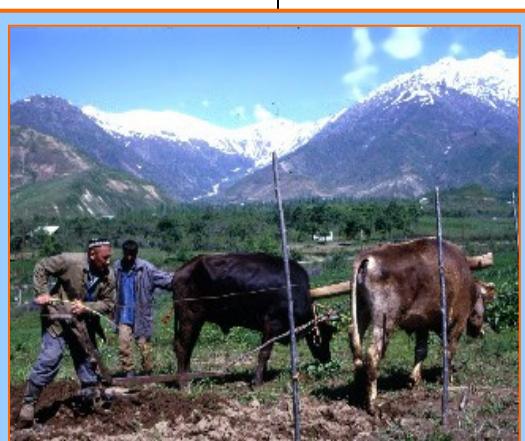
The 2008/2009 Humanitarian Food Security Appeal for Tajikistan was launched on 25 September to provide assistance over a 15-month timeframe to 800 000 people severely affected by food insecurity through the provision of food and cash, while averting long-term dependency on prolonged assistance through rehabilitation of the agriculture sector and key infrastructure.

Challenges facing food security and livelihoods

More than two-thirds of Tajikistan's population depends on agriculture for its livelihood and primarily to meet nutrition requirements at household level. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) estimate a 40 percent reduction in agricultural production due to the impact of severe natural hazards throughout the course of 2008. Projected losses include 30 percent of wheat production, 35 percent of both potato and fruit crops and 14 percent of vegetables.

According to a joint assessment carried out by FAO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and MoA in May 2008,

one-third of severely food-insecure households reported to have consumed their seed stock, while 15 percent sold much-needed livestock for cash in order to meet basic needs. Inadequate storage facilities caused preventable losses to key productive assets, including over 50 percent of potato seeds. Without assistance, farmers will be unable to purchase the basic inputs they need to ensure an adequate harvest, and increased food security, by spring 2009.



FAO livestock interventions improve animal productivity

Further, there is a lack of animal feed owing to the impact of the severe winter weather, drought and locust infestation on fodder production. Many livestock, already manifesting signs of wasting and near-starvation, are unlikely to survive without increased fodder. For many rural poor, this means the loss of both a primary asset and their main food safety-net in times of hardship.

Tajikistan is prone to frequent natural disasters – such as earthquakes, floods, avalanches, and drought – which increasingly erode the food production capacity, purchasing power

and food security of the country's most vulnerable and resource-poor communities. Thousands of households risk long-term destitution and heightened vulnerability to future shocks if assistance is not provided to restore food production and livelihoods in a way that is conducive to lasting recovery.



FAO in Tajikistan

Within the framework of the 2008/2009 Humanitarian Food Security Appeal for Tajikistan, FAO has requested **USD 6.25 million** to assist in restoring food production and self-reliance among Tajikistan's most food-insecure families.

With donor support, FAO activities will:

- **ensure late-autumn sowing** through provision of quality potato seed and fertilizer;
- **increase animal feed production** and improve the productivity of natural pastures in livestock farming areas through distribution of fodder seed and fertilizer;
- **reduce seed and crop losses** through establishing improved preservation and storage facilities; and
- **build capacity to enhance locust management** and reduce the occurrence of outbreaks.





FAO'S COMPONENT OF THE 2008/2009 HUMANITARIAN FOOD SECURITY APPEAL FOR TAJIKISTAN

Total Funding Requirements: USD 6.25 million

Project Title: Emergency provision of potato seeds for vulnerable households of food insecure districts in Khatlon region of Tajikistan (TJK-08-1/A06)

Objectives: (i) improve the nutrition basis, food security and maintain livelihoods by providing quality inputs (seeds of adapted varieties and fertilizer) for the late autumn sowing and early spring harvesting; (ii) provide technical assistance on enhancing the productivity of traditional kitchen gardens.

Beneficiaries: 50 000 people (7 000 households), including at least 14 000 children and 16 000 women of Shaartuz, Qabodiyon, Jomi, Pyanj, Vakhsh, and Bokhtar districts of Khatlon.

Implementing Partners: Seeds Association 'Tukhmiiparvar' and NGOs.

Project Duration: October 2008 to December 2009.

Funds Requested: **USD 2 500 000**

Potato is among the most important staple foods in Tajikistan. Resuming production in time for autumn sowing will be paramount to boosting food security among rural households. Thirty percent of potato seed and crop froze during the cold wave. With increased levels of poverty and soaring input prices, Tajikistan's most resource-poor families are unable to purchase the seed and fertilizer needed to ensure a harvest in spring.

With donor funding, FAO aims to provide 7 000 food-insecure households with 1 050 tonnes of potato seed and 350 tonnes of fertilizer. Training in improved potato production and proper seed preparation and sowing techniques will maximize the efforts and yields of farmers during this critical time.

Project Title: Emergency assistance to increase fodder production and maintain healthy livestock during critical periods (TJK-08-1/A07)

Objectives: (i) improve food security and livelihoods by stabilizing and expanding the feed base for livestock and preserve normal milk and production during critical periods; (ii) expand the areas under high-energy fodder crops in livestock farming areas in order to ensure adequate supply of fodder.

Beneficiaries: 70 000 people (individual livestock owners), including at least 20 000 children and 30 000 women.

Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and NGOs.

Project Duration: October 2008 to December 2009.

Funds Requested: **USD 1 000 000**

Severe winter, drought and locust infestation have severely degraded 40 percent of natural pastures, leaving thousands of animals at risk of starvation. Increased livestock losses will cause further deterioration to the nutrition and food security of households that depend on animal productivity as a vital source of income and nourishment for their families.

The proposed project seeks to stabilize and expand fodder production through the provision of 80 tonnes of adapted fodder seeds and 300 tonnes of fertilizer to 10 000 households. These efforts will reduce animal morbidity and increase livestock production (dairy and meat), income generation and food security.

Project Title: Emergency assistance in food security by providing storage facilities and preservation to food insecure districts in Tajikistan (TJK-08-1/A08)

Objectives: Improve food security by providing storage facilities for potato and other seeds for early spring planting season, and provide technical assistance on preservation and expanding best national practices.

Beneficiaries: 18 000 people (3 000 households), including at least 8 000 children and 2 000 women, of Faizabad, Jirgital, Tojikobod (or Nurobod, Tojikobod and Tavildara).

Implementing Partners: National and international NGOs.

Project Duration: October 2008 to March 2009.

Funds Requested: **USD 1 000 000**

This project aims to reduce losses to stored seed and crops through establishing agro-storage facilities and improving existing structures. Training in preservation practices will prevent farmers from selling their produce during season peaks when market prices fall below cost recovery. Further, building capacity in proper storage techniques will avert losses to seeds and crops, particularly during harsh weather conditions, leaving farming households better stocked to meet supply and demand. With funding, FAO will establish new preservation and storage facilities for 500 households and improve the existing facilities of 3 000 households, which is expected to reduce losses by 15 percent.

Project Title: Animal feed production and pasture rehabilitation (TJK-08-1/A09)

Objectives: (i) Improve productivity of natural pastures through fertilization of pasture lands and introduction of improved pasture management, and thereby (ii) improve food security and livelihoods in Tajikistan by stabilizing and expanding the feed base for livestock.

Beneficiaries: 5 000 households, including at least 10 000 children and 5 000 women in Khatlon region.

Implementing Partners: MoA, Pasture Improvement Trusts, and NGOs.

Project Duration: October 2008 to December 2009.

Funds Requested: **USD 1 000 000**

The proposed intervention will improve the productivity of 5 000 hectares of pastureland. To achieve this, FAO seeks to provide fertilizer to boost fodder production, and conduct awareness campaigns and training on improved pasture management at household and community levels.

The productivity of pastures will begin to increase two weeks after fertilizer application and will have an impact on yields for four consecutive years. The intervention will directly benefit 5 000 households through increased income from livestock production (meat and milk) and improved household nutrition.

Project Title: Emergency assistance for the preparation of 2009 locust campaign in Tajikistan (TJK-08-1/A10)

Objectives: Improve food security and livelihoods among rural households through enhanced locust management and reduced occurrence and intensity of locust outbreaks.

Beneficiaries: Approximately 2 million people, including at least 500 000 children and 800 000 women.

Implementing Partners: State Unitary Enterprise 'Locust Control' under MoA.

Project Duration: October 2008 to December 2009.

Funds Requested: **USD 750 000**

Improving locust management and reducing the occurrence of outbreaks are crucial to safeguarding food production and livelihoods in Tajikistan. This proposal seeks funding to promote regional, national and local coordination to implement effective survey and control plans along and across common borders. The project also aims to provide upgraded survey tools and equipment and organize a training programme covering control methods, survey operations, information management, proper use of pesticides and environmentally sound spraying methods, among other topics, with focus on the environment and human health.

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