



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Iraq

Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) brief – round 5

Results and recommendations
January 2022

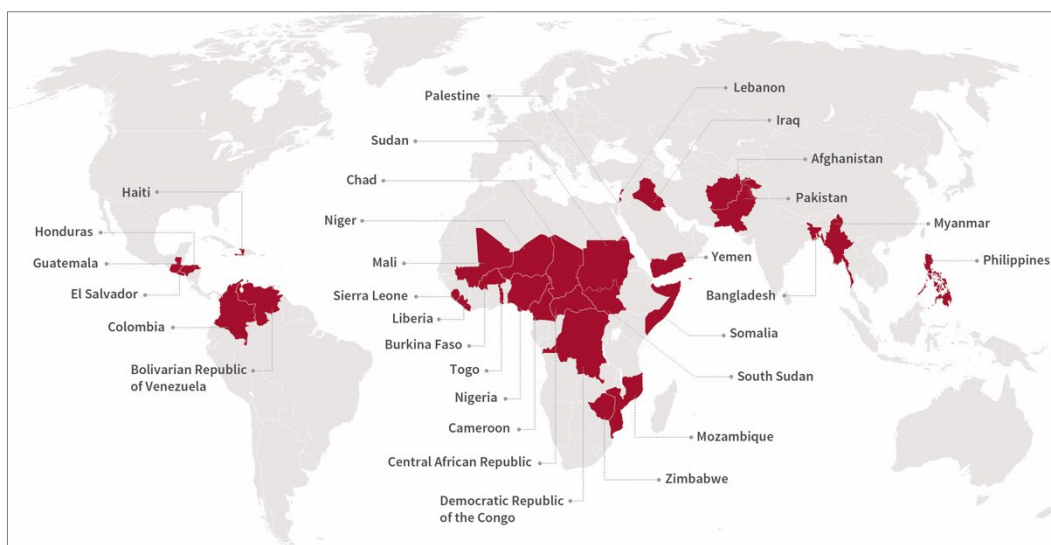
Data collection 14 June to 13 July 2021

Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a fifth-round household survey on 14 June 2021 to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security in Iraq. The sample of 1 354 agricultural households was derived from a list of farmers registered with the Ministry of Agriculture and is therefore not representative of the country's entire population or agricultural population. Using computer-assisted telephone interviews, 385 households per governorate were interviewed across Ninewa, Duhok, Diyala and Maysan governorates, representing Iraq's distinct agro-ecological regions.

Data collection coincided with the harvest season (which lasts from mid-April until July) and followed low rainfall during the planting season (October and November 2020) and drought in the growing season (February to April 2021). The survey also coincided with a rise in COVID-19 cases across the country – with a third wave of infections starting at the beginning of June and peaking at the end of July. Over 99 percent of the targeted sample was reached in all governorates except for Dohuk. Here, only 52 percent of the targeted sampled was interviewed because the team did not have contact information for all farmers.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring System



Source of map: United Nations. 2020. *Map of the World* [online]. [Cited 6 December 2021]. www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO has established the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks, livelihoods and food security in countries prone to multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to inform decision making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks are affecting livelihoods and food security.

At the core of the DIEM-Monitoring System are country-level dashboards. Readers are encouraged to explore these dashboards to gain more insights on the context in Iraq and other countries.

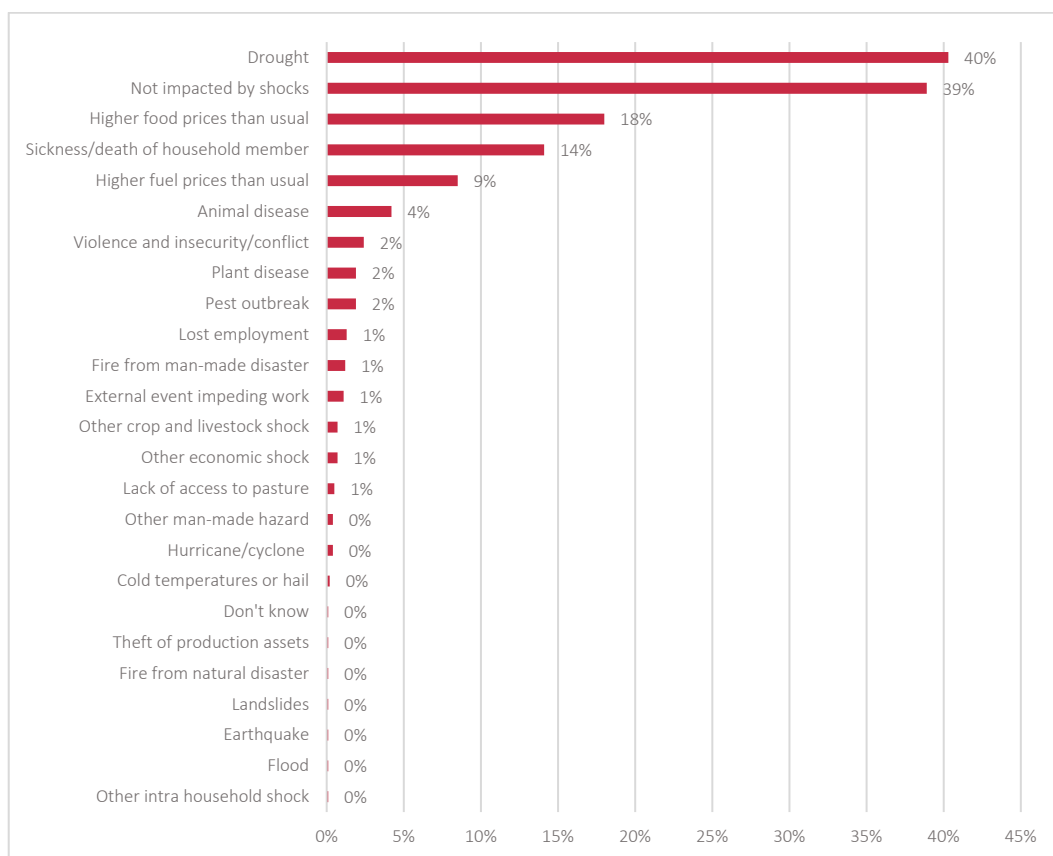
> Learn more at <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring>

Income and shocks

While 78 percent of respondents reported that their main income source was agricultural production, nearly 70 percent reported a decline in their main income source in the past three months, with a marginally higher share of crop producers experiencing an income decline than other farmers. This decline in income was significantly greater for those who owned over 5 hectares than for those who owned smaller plots of land. This may be partly attributed to drought, which affected the harvest, and to the currency devaluation, which may have lowered agricultural incomes through increased costs for agricultural inputs.

In addition, 61 percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced a shock in the last three months that affected their ability to generate income or produce food. Of those experiencing a shock, drought was the most common, comprising 55 percent of responses in Diyala and Dohuk, and nearly 30 percent in Maysan and Ninewa (Figure 2). Nearly one in five respondents reported much higher food prices than usual in the last three months.

Figure 2. Most-reported shocks (percentage of respondents)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Iraq: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (June–July 2021).

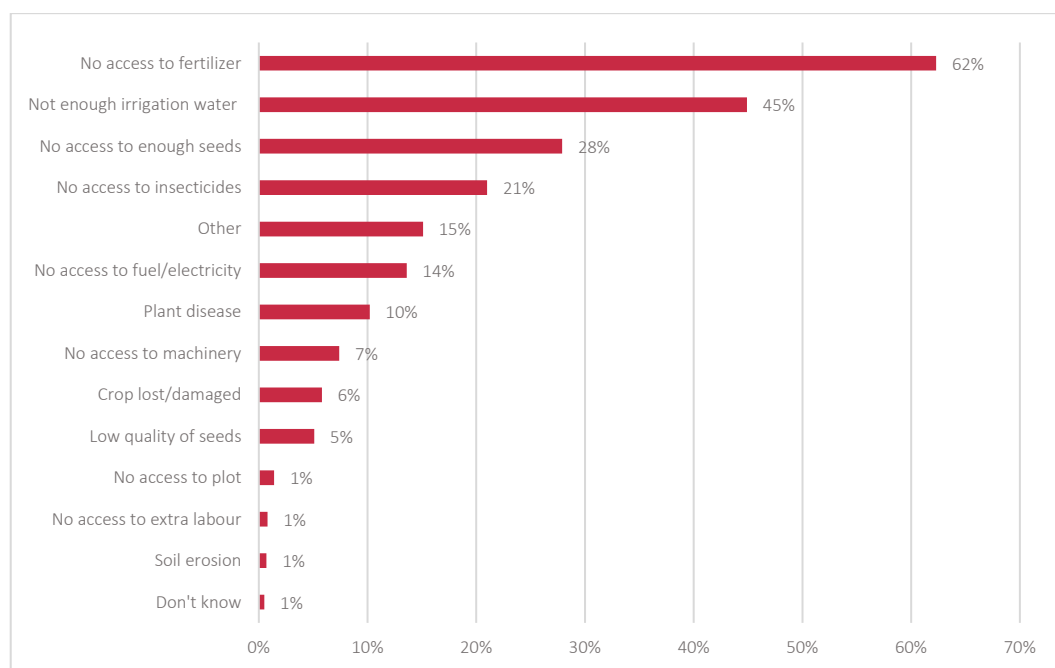
Crops

Among all households surveyed, 85 percent were crop producers. Of these, 74 percent reported experiencing production difficulties in the previous three months. While the primary difficulty cited was lack of access to fertilizers (62 percent), crop producers also reported difficulties accessing seeds (28 percent) and pesticides (21 percent) (Figure 3). This may be

attributable to increasing prices of imported agricultural inputs due to the devaluation of Iraq’s currency. In line with the finding that many respondents reported drought as a shock, 45 percent of crop producers cited a lack of access to irrigation water as a challenge. In addition, 41 percent of crop producers faced difficulties selling their crops – mainly due to low prices and high marketing costs.

Key informant interviews revealed that low prices were partly caused by the low quality of wheat (the main crop for 57 percent of households) and barley in the harvest season, and because farmers were forced to sell their cereals to traders at lower-than-usual prices for cash, instead of selling to the Government at a later date. Of the extension officers interviewed, 22 percent reported lower selling prices and 55 percent reported the same selling prices for crops as the previous year.

Figure 3. Crop-production difficulties (percentage of respondent crop producers)

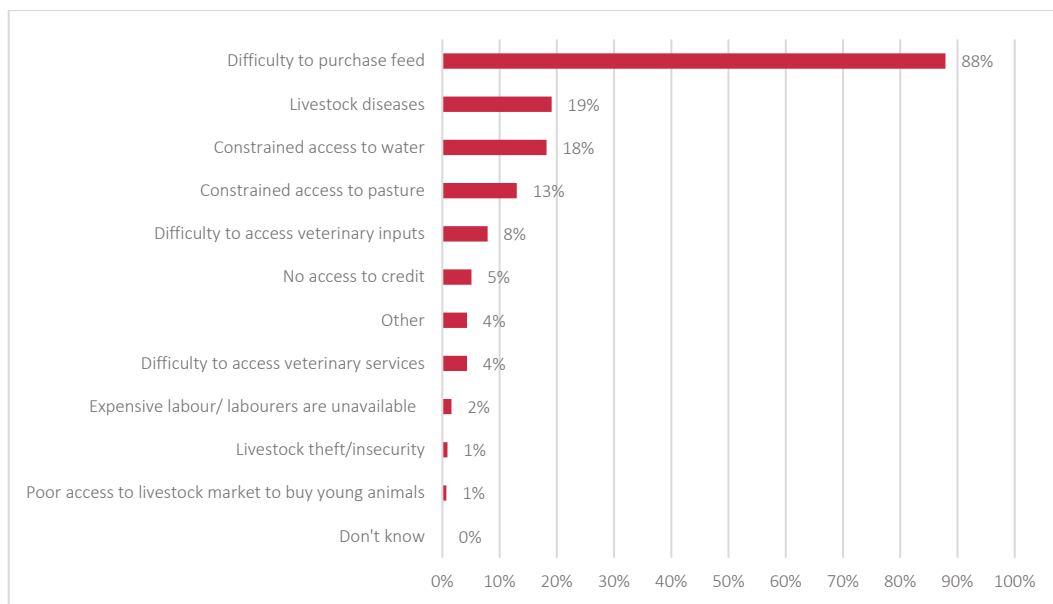


Source of data: FAO. 2021. Iraq: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (June–July 2021).

Livestock

Four out of five livestock producers reported experiencing difficulties that affected their production. Difficulty purchasing feed was by far the most common, cited by 88 percent (Figure 4). Additional difficulties included livestock disease (by 19 percent), and constrained access to water (by 18 percent). These findings might be partly attributed to currency devaluation and drought. Among surveyed livestock producers, 62 percent cited a decline in the number of livestock they owned compared to last year, and 41 percent reported difficulty selling their animals, with most indicating low prices as the main challenge. In addition, 61 percent of respondents reported that the price of livestock had declined compared to last year.

Figure 4. Livestock production difficulties (percent of respondent livestock producers)



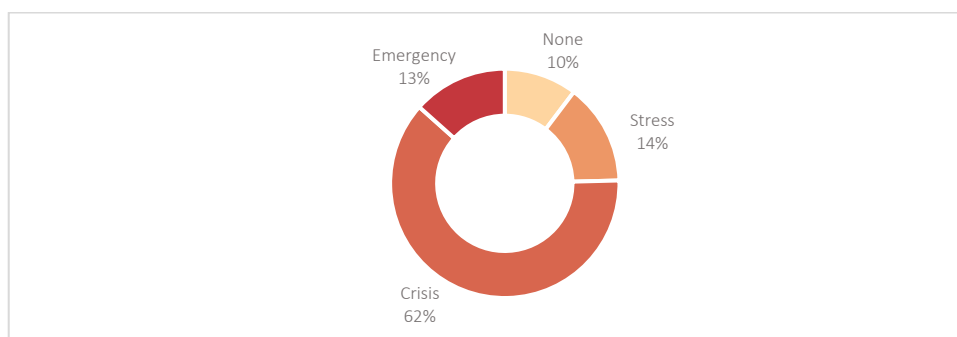
Source of data: FAO. 2021. Iraq: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (June–July 2021).

Food security

Based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), 17 percent of the households experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in the last 30 days. The prevalence of food insecurity was significantly lower for crop-producing households (16 percent) than non-crop producing households (21 percent). Food insecurity was also lower for the largest landowners (14 percent) than for smallholders (17 percent). There was high variation in food insecurity by governorate, with less than 10 percent of households in Dohuk and Diyala reporting moderate to severe insecurity compared to 20 percent in Nainawa and 26 percent in Maysan.

Approximately 90 percent of respondents reported adopting coping strategies to meet their household food needs in the previous 30 days. Three quarters of these households adopted Crisis-level coping strategies (Figure 5); such strategies deplete livelihood assets. The three most commonly adopted livelihood-based coping strategies, based on Livelihood-based Coping Strategies Index (LCSI) results, were decreasing expenditures on agricultural inputs (70 percent), purchasing food on credit or borrowing food (66 percent) and spending savings (40 percent).

Figure 5. Coping strategies employed by respondent households, based on LCSI (percentage of respondents)

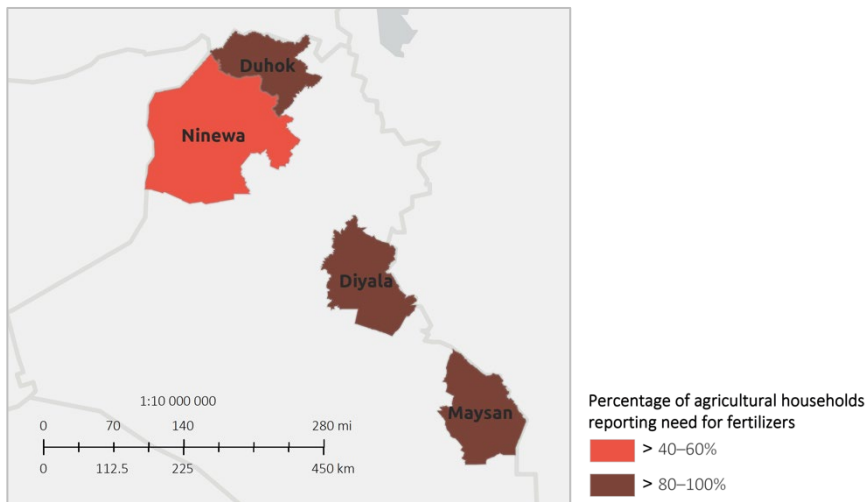


Source of data: FAO. 2021. Iraq: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (June–July 2021).

Needs

Among all respondents, 98 percent expressed the need for assistance in the coming six months. Among crop producers, 91 percent cited the need for fertilizers (Figure 6). This was followed by seeds (71 percent) and irrigation water (48 percent). Among livestock producers, 91 percent indicated a need for support with access to feed (Figure 7). These needs reflect the difficulties reported in crop and livestock production.

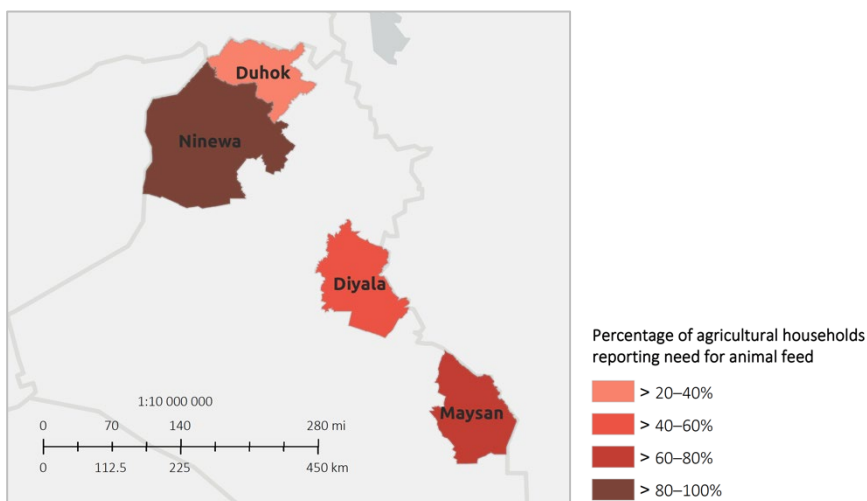
Figure 6. Reported need for fertilizer, by governorate (percentage of respondent crop-producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Iraq: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (June–July 2021).

Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. *Map of Iraq* [online]. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Figure 7. Reported need for animal feed, by governorate (percentage of respondent livestock-producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Iraq: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (June–July 2021).

Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. *Map of Iraq* [online]. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Recommendations

- > A decline in income source in the past three months was reported by a majority of survey respondents – particularly crop producers. In order to alleviate needs in the most vulnerable agricultural households, cash and vouchers should be distributed in coordination with the World Food Programme (WFP).
- > In light of the difficulties reported in accessing essential inputs for agricultural production, it is recommended to distribute: (i) seeds to farmers in need; and (ii) fodder and supplementary animal feed to livestock owners.
- > Vouchers can be distributed when market-based interventions are feasible (after verification that traders to have sufficient stocks). In this case, input or cash-voucher distribution to meet the needs of the most vulnerable agricultural households should be coordinated with WFP.
- > In order to alleviate the impacts of drought and insufficient access to water – and enhance resilience to water scarcity – surface water resources in drylands and rangelands should be developed. The risk of resource-based conflict can be reduced by strengthening agricultural livelihoods among returnees and host communities, and introducing drought-mitigation measures such as soil and water conservation and conservation agriculture.



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