



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# FAO Response to the Syria Crisis

A call for increased support in agriculture





## Agriculture cannot be an afterthought

Syria faces a fifth year of conflict with 9.8 million people food insecure. Against a population of around 18 million, hunger now affects over half of the people remaining in Syria. A further 3.8 million Syrians are refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey as of March 2015, depending primarily on humanitarian aid and host communities to survive.

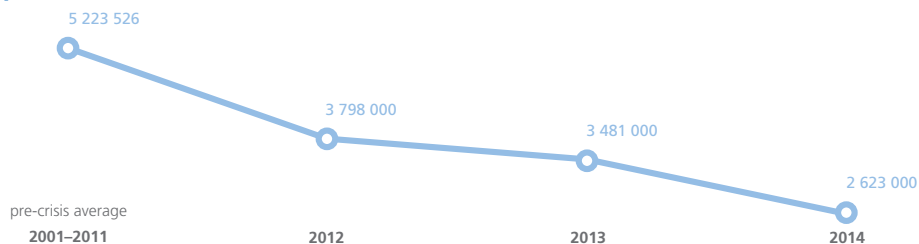
Without additional assistance to the agriculture sector, Syria's food security situation will continue to worsen. Already, Syria has lost half of its livestock. Crop production has declined progressively each year. The 2014 cereal harvest was 50 percent below pre-crisis levels due to a combination of reduced planting and drought conditions. The violence has destroyed agricultural infrastructure, displaced farmers and disrupted regional food and agricultural input trade. In neighbouring countries, the massive influx of refugees continues to strain scarce natural resources, increase competition for labour and drive down local farm wages.

Agricultural production is possible in many parts of Syria. However, many farmers cannot access or afford once-subsidized inputs that have soared in price. Herders similarly lack animal feed, and veterinary services are no longer functioning. As a result, much of Syria's livestock are unvaccinated and therefore risk carrying diseases into neighbouring countries. Limited and costly production is increasing food prices, with serious implications for the three-quarters of Syrians currently living in poverty. Many of them are farmers.

In the face of enormous challenges, agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods and sustains food supply in Syria. Despite the sector's importance, emergency agricultural interventions were 75 percent underfunded in 2014. Much more must be done to increase food availability in Syria and to strengthen the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods across Syria and the affected subregion.

This publication provides a snapshot of the efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the Syria crisis response, and the funding needed to improve the food security landscape for families in 2015 and beyond.

### Syria cereal production (tonnes)



## FAO's role and presence

FAO is working with partners to strengthen food security and build the resilience of households, communities and institutions in Syria and neighbouring Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. By integrating relief and development activities, FAO's resilience building efforts save livelihoods while helping communities lay the foundations for their own longer-term recovery.

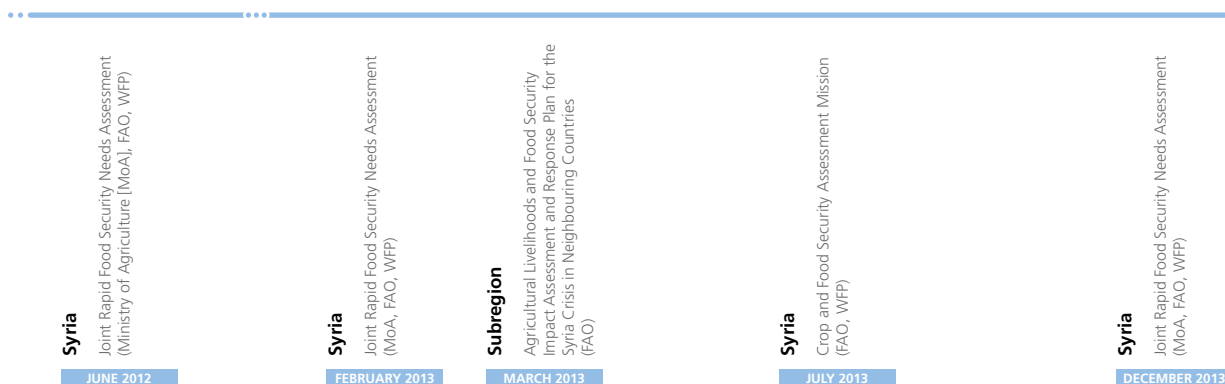
Agriculture has a pivotal role to play in addressing many facets of the crisis. This includes protecting and restoring food security, employment, economic growth, natural resources and social cohesion. FAO's top priority is to help the most vulnerable families improve their access to food, nutrition and income.

For example:

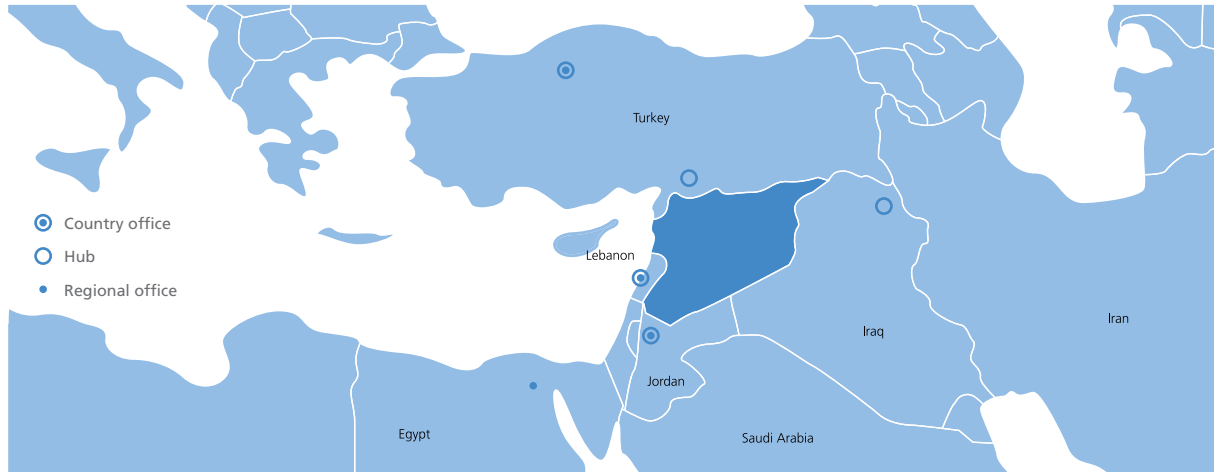
- Seed assistance enables Syrian farmers to harvest sufficient cereals to feed their families for a year.
- Cash-for-work programmes create income opportunities while repairing critical on-farm infrastructure.
- Veterinary support and vaccination campaigns in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria preserve livestock health and vital sources of nutrition.
- Backyard food production kits give displaced and host families the means to produce nutrient-rich foods, such as eggs, milk and vegetables, with quick turnaround.

### Understanding the needs

To ensure an evidence-based and coordinated response, FAO monitors the impact of the crisis through regular food security data collection and analysis, undertakes assessments with partners, and coordinates humanitarian response in the Food Security and Agriculture Sector with the World Food Programme (WFP) in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.



## FAO offices in the subregion



FAO has been present in Syria since 1979 and active throughout the crisis. Currently, FAO is running operations in Syria from Damascus and a hub in Gaziantep, Turkey, established as a result of Security Council Resolution 2165 of 2014. In close synergy, FAO offices in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are responding to the regional impacts of the Syria crisis, supported by FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo, Egypt.

### Lebanon

FAO Plan of Action for Resilient Livelihoods: Addressing the Impact of the Syria Crisis and Food Security Response and Stabilization of Rural Livelihoods

JANUARY 2014

### Jordan

FAO Plan of Action: Resilient Livelihoods for Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in Areas Affected by the Syria Crisis (Revised November 2014)

JANUARY 2014

### Subregion

FAO Strategy and Action Plan: Resilient Livelihoods for Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in Areas affected by the Syria crisis

FEBRUARY 2014

### Jordan

Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment of Jordanian Households in Central and Northern Governorates (FAO)

AUGUST 2014

### Iraq

FAO Plan of Action: Resilient Livelihoods for Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

NOVEMBER 2014

### Lebanon

Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment of Host Communities (FAO)

DECEMBER 2014

## FAO response in Syria

Maintaining food production amidst conflict is critical. In Syria, where the agriculture sector has been fragmented by violence, support to small-scale family-level production is increasingly important. In addition to saving livelihoods, agricultural interventions increase local food availability, access and variety, while boosting incomes and reducing dependence on external aid.

Since 2011, FAO has supported the livelihoods of more than 942 000 Syrians (134 670 families) in rural and peri-urban areas of Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Dara'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Rural Damascus and Tartous.

Main areas of support include:

- ✓ Wheat and barley seeds for winter cereal production
- ✓ Vegetable production kits
- ✓ Micro-gardens for displaced families
- ✓ Poultry production packages
- ✓ Animal feed, sheep restocking and veterinary services
- ✓ Rehabilitation of solar-powered irrigation networks
- ✓ Food security and agriculture sector needs analysis and coordination

### Donors:

Belgium  
Italy  
OCHA  
South Africa  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
United Kingdom  
United States of America

**9.8 MILLION**



**FOOD INSECURE**



**7.6 MILLION  
DISPLACED**

**50%**



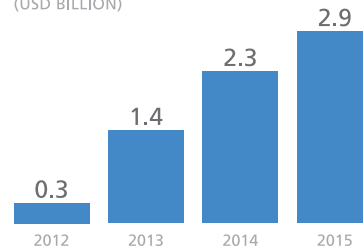
**LIVESTOCK  
LOST**

**50% DROP  
IN CEREAL  
HARVEST**



### SYRIA CRISIS TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

(USD BILLION)



## Highlights from 2014



34 000 farming families (238 000 people) received wheat and barley seeds to produce an estimated 61 000 tonnes of cereals: enough to feed more than 420 000 people for a year.



3 500 families (24 500 people) received vegetable packages and now have increased access to fresh foods.



3 000 families received a total of 45 000 hens, which will lay an estimated 8.7 million eggs in one year.



Over 1 million animals were treated for parasites, benefiting around 9 600 livestock-dependent families.



7 600 small livestock keepers received feed for their animals.



### Focus on nutrition

FAO is helping displaced families grow nutritious food, wherever they are and without the use of land, through micro-gardens. The self-contained plots allow people to intensively cultivate vegetables, roots, tubers and herbs in small spaces. In weeks, families can add key nutrients to their diets, and sell the surplus for income. These gardens have great potential to improve nutrition and ease increasing pressures on host communities, especially where food supplies and markets are severely strained.

## FAO response in neighbouring countries

With no end in sight, Syria's conflict continues to generate refugees who face long-term displacement. More than 3.8 million Syrian refugees were concentrated in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey by March 2015. Around 85 percent are settled outside of camps – many in rural areas where agriculture is the mainstay of the poorest families. Iraq faces overlapping refugee and internal displacement crises, with 2.1 million Iraqis displaced by internal armed conflict in 2014 alone.

The threats to agriculture are immense and could have long-term repercussions if unaddressed. There is increasing pressure on scarce natural resources, such as water, pastures and forests, and the uncontrolled entry of diseased plants and animals from Syria could devastate the region's food chain. In addition, the surplus of Syrian labour is reducing local employment and wages, and increasing social tensions. Farmers have also lost cross-border trading opportunities, face rising production costs and cannot access farmland along the border due to violence.

FAO is supporting the resilience of agricultural livelihood systems through:

- ✓ Emergency livestock vaccination, feeding and dairy sector support
- ✓ National veterinary disease surveillance and control
- ✓ Small-scale and semi-intensive poultry raising
- ✓ Vegetable production
- ✓ Rehabilitation of infrastructure through cash-for-work
- ✓ Food security and agriculture information collection and analysis

### Donors:

Belgium  
Ireland  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Lebanese Recovery Fund  
OCHA  
United Kingdom  
United States of America





# Highlights from 2014



## Iraq

20 000 farming families (120 000 people) received wheat seeds and fertilizers to produce an estimated 44 480 tonnes of wheat (worth over USD 29 million).



550 000 livestock were vaccinated against transboundary animal diseases.

17 000 families received hens, to produce an estimated 7.5 million eggs per year.



5 000 people engaged in cash-for-work, rehabilitating critical on-farm infrastructure.

5 000 families (30 000 people) received seeds and tools to produce 52 000 tonnes of vegetables.



## Jordan

Strengthened national capacity for surveillance and reporting of transboundary animal diseases.



## Lebanon

800 000 animals (entire national herd of cattle, sheep and goats) were vaccinated, and national disease surveillance and control strengthened.



5 229 livestock-raising households received animal feed.

3 500 smallholder milk producers in host communities benefited from dairy sector support.



500 semi-intensive poultry farms improved their production through farmer field schools and 1 000 households improved their backyard poultry production.



## Regional

A regional food security information network being established for improved programming and targeting of food security interventions in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Kurdistan Region of Iraq.



## Increasing food and income

Refugees now equal a quarter of Lebanon's population and unemployment has doubled. To help meet the increased demand for food and income, FAO is equipping vulnerable local farmers to set up semi-intensive poultry units through farmer field schools. The 1 500 farming families, scattered in the most-affected regions, will be able to consume and market an estimated 1 million eggs per month. Much of the production is expected to be sold in shops participating in WFP food aid schemes which help refugees purchase food. Activities like these promote social cohesion and maximize the use of aid money by rechanneling it into the local economy.

# Syria - FAO funding requirements 2015

## **FAO IS WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THE FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND THE EARLY RECOVERY AND LIVELIHOOD SECTOR TO:**

- strengthen the resilience of crisis-affected communities;
- protect and strengthen the agricultural asset base, support income-generating activities and increase food production;
- enhance the capacity of national partners to deliver food security and agriculture initiatives; and
- coordinate the work of Sector partners within the Whole-of-Syria Framework.

## **FAO SEEKS FUNDING TO:**

### **Support staple food production**

Wheat and barley seeds, where cultivation is possible • Fertilizer • Training on improved cropping methods.

### **Increase household nutrition and income**

Backyard gardening • Orchard and horticulture production • Poultry and small livestock raising • Cash-for-work to rehabilitate productive assets and infrastructure • Agricultural vouchers • Vocational training.

### **Protect livestock assets**

Animal feed • Livestock vaccination and treatment campaigns • Strengthening veterinary capacity.

### **Plan and respond collectively**

Coordination • Capacity development • Drought monitoring and early warning • Community-based approaches • Needs assessment and monitoring • Data collection, analysis and reporting.

## **STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN 2015:**



FAO requires  
**USD 59.1 million**



to assist  
**1 506 000 people**

# Syria Regional - FAO funding requirements 2015

## FAO IS WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THE REGION TO:

- enhance the capacity of affected communities to use their resources and assets to increase agricultural production and incomes in more effective and sustainable ways; and
- monitor closely and analyse data on the food and nutrition security situation of vulnerable households to inform decision-making and resilience-based programming.

## FAO SEEKS FUNDING FOR:

### Iraq: USD 10.4 million

Improved food production and marketing • Support to backyard food production and nutrition • Improved animal health • Effective coordination of agriculture sector responses.

### Jordan: USD 9.6 million

Homestead farming • Climate-smart livelihood diversification • Transboundary animal disease, and plant pest and disease control • Natural resource management • Sectoral response coordination and evidence-based programming.

### Lebanon: USD 32 million

Agricultural production and value chain development • Food safety control • Surveillance and control of plant and animal diseases and pests • Natural resource management • Climate change adaptation • Food security and agricultural livelihoods coordination and policy development.

### Turkey: USD 10 million

Micro-gardening for refugees within and outside of camps • Training on good nutritional practices • Short-term cash support for agricultural inputs in host communities • Farmer field schools (crop and livestock production, post-harvest technologies, water management).

## REGIONAL REFUGEE AND RESILIENCE PLAN 2015 – 2016:



FAO requires  
**USD 62 million**



to assist host community members,  
refugees and other vulnerable groups

# Iraq crisis - FAO funding requirements 2015

## **IN RESPONSE TO HUMANITARIAN NEEDS RESULTING FROM THE CONFLICT IN IRAQ, FAO IS ALSO WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THE FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER TO:**

- increase food availability and income by maintaining and diversifying urban and rural livelihoods, and developing income-generating activities; and
- ensure an effective, accountable and coordinated food security response.

### **FAO SEEKS FUNDING TO:**

#### **Secure food production and incomes**

Winter cereal campaign • Quick-impact backyard food production, including vegetables and poultry • Home food processing • Female agricultural extension networks.

#### **Protect livestock health and production**

Animal feed • Urgent disease surveillance, diagnosis and reporting • Quarantine facilities • Vaccination • Veterinary supplies • Training field veterinarians • Policy • Awareness raising.

#### **Increase employment for displaced and host communities**

Cash-for-work to rehabilitate productive assets • Cottage and micro-industries • Producers' groups • Market linkages • Vocational trainings, tailored to women, men and youth.

#### **Coordinate an effective, needs-based response**

Cluster coordination • Food security and livelihoods assessment • Situation and response analysis • Monitoring systems • Information management • Capacity development.

## **STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN 2014–2015:**



FAO requires  
**USD 38.5 million**



to assist  
**258 000 people in 2015**



# Contacts

## Regional Office

**Mr Abdessalam Ould Ahmed**

Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative  
for the Near East and North Africa

[Abdessalam.OuldAhmed@fao.org](mailto:Abdessalam.OuldAhmed@fao.org)

## Iraq

**Mr Fadel Mohammed El-Zubi**

FAO Representative

[Fadel.ElZubi@fao.org](mailto:Fadel.ElZubi@fao.org)

## Lebanon

**Mr Maurice Saade**

FAO Representative

[Maurice.Saade@fao.org](mailto:Maurice.Saade@fao.org)

## Syria

**Ms Eriko Hibi**

FAO Representative

[Eriko.Hibi@fao.org](mailto:Eriko.Hibi@fao.org)

## FAO Headquarters

**Mr Dominique Burgeon**

Coordinator of Resilience  
Director Emergency and Rehabilitation Division

[TCE-Director@fao.org](mailto:TCE-Director@fao.org)

## Jordan

**Mr Nasredin A Hag Elamin**

FAO Representative

[Nasredin.HagElamin@fao.org](mailto:Nasredin.HagElamin@fao.org)

## Turkey

**Ms Yuriko Shoji**

FAO Representative

[Yuriko.Shoji@fao.org](mailto:Yuriko.Shoji@fao.org)

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## Take away messages

Syria faces a fifth year of conflict with more than half of its population food insecure, a 50 percent decline in cereal production and 50 percent livestock losses.



Syria's food security outlook depends greatly on increased international commitment to reverse these alarming trends and help Syrians produce, access and afford much-needed food.



Agriculture in Syria represents one of the main pillars of the economy, contributing to nearly one-quarter of the country's gross domestic product. It has a decisive role to play in restoring food security, fostering economic growth and employment and protecting natural resources.



Timely support is needed to empower families to continue farming their land and producing their own food, ultimately reducing prolonged aid dependence.



With USD 150 in seeds, sufficient to plant 1 hectare, a farmer can produce on average 1.7 tonnes of wheat, feed a family of 7 for over a year and generate income from surplus production. Vaccinating one animal at around USD 2 saves at least USD 100 in losses from decreased livestock production and deaths.



More than 3.8 million Syrians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries. As conflict and displacements continue, these countries need sustained support to protect their agricultural production systems, natural resource base and promote social cohesion.



FAO's resilience building efforts save livelihoods while helping communities lay the foundations for their own longer-term recovery.