



HIGHLIGHTS

	13.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance , with the crisis now in its sixth year.
	6.5 million people are displaced internally , and 4.8 million people are registered refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.
	8.7 million people are food insecure – half of the people remaining in Syria.
	In 2015, FAO reached nearly 1.5 million people inside Syria with agricultural assistance.
	FAO's appeal for Syria in 2016 remains significantly underfunded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD 86.5 million needed under the Humanitarian Response Plan – 6% funded.

CHALLENGES FACING AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

OVERVIEW

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, with an estimated 13.5 million people now in need of humanitarian assistance. A deep economic recession, fluctuating national currency, soaring food and fuel prices, disrupted markets and food insecurity have contributed to Syrians' extreme vulnerability across the country. More than 11 million people – more than half of Syria's population – have fled their homes, including 6.5 million who are internally displaced and 4.8 million who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Agriculture-based livelihoods face severe constraints across the value chain – from production to market. Major constraints include: restricted access to land due to violence; internal population displacement; reduced availability and increased cost of farming inputs (seeds, fertilizers, animal feed, veterinary supplies, etc.); damage to farming equipment and infrastructure (including irrigation, storage and seed processing facilities), and limited veterinary supplies and services.

FOOD INSECURITY

A total of 8.7 million people – around half of the people remaining in Syria – are unable to meet their basic food needs. The crisis has severely limited food production, marketing and imports, reducing the availability of food and causing prices to rise. Many families are reducing the number of meals and opting for cheaper and less nutritious foods. In besieged and hard-to-reach areas – where an estimated 4.5 million people reside – insecurity compromises the availability of basic food commodities and livelihood opportunities.

CROPS

Crop production has been adversely affected by the scarcity and high prices of agricultural inputs and fuel, low-quality inputs, damaged irrigation infrastructure, shortages and high cost of farm labour, and loss of or damage to standing crops. Although cereal production in 2015 was considerably better than in 2014 due to favourable rainfall, it remains 40 percent below the pre-crisis average.

LIVESTOCK

Since 2011, livestock numbers have fallen drastically. Herd and flock numbers of cattle and sheep have fallen by 30 and 40 percent respectively. Poultry flocks – generally one of the main and most affordable sources of animal protein – have shrunk by 50 percent. Security concerns have limited access to pastures, while the cost of animal feed increased by 168 percent in 2015. In addition, the shortage of veterinary supplies (including vaccines and routine veterinary drugs) continue to severely affect livestock owners. As growing numbers of herders move with their livestock across the border from Syria to neighbouring countries, transboundary animal diseases and zoonosis remain a viable threat.

INFRASTRUCTURE

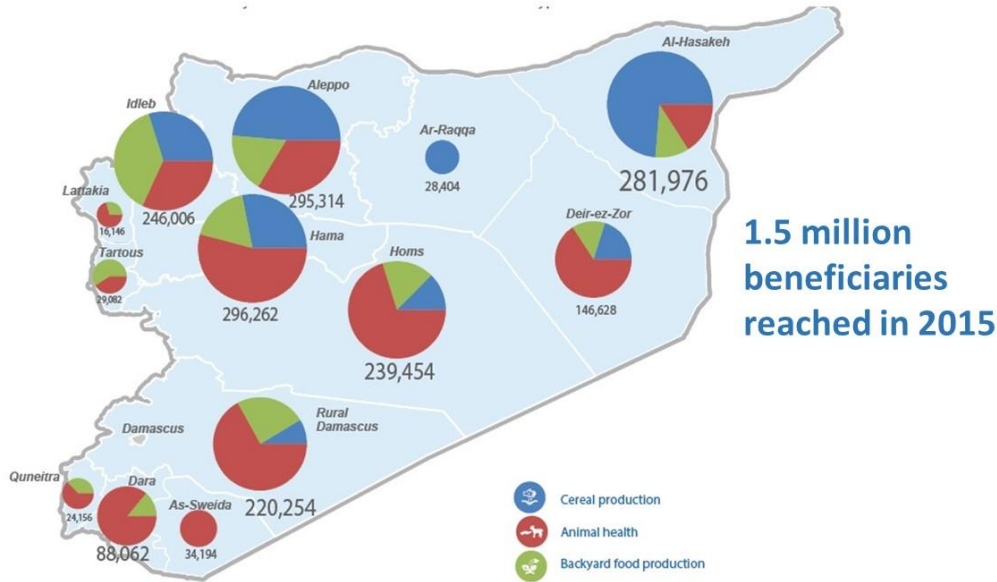
Electricity failures and damage to power lines and stations have incapacitated several pumping stations used for irrigation. Pumps have been damaged and stolen and irrigation canals have been destroyed. In addition, the low availability and high cost of diesel has forced many farmers either to cut back on irrigation or revert to rainfed production. Loss of irrigated crop production is of particular concern considering that 50 percent of the wheat planted in Syria was previously irrigated. Domestic wheat trade flows remain disrupted by insecurity and the associated increased costs of road transportation, leading to reduced movement of wheat from major surplus producing areas to wheat deficit areas.

FAO RESPONSE

FAO is working with its partners to strengthen the food security and resilience of households, communities and institutions in Syria. Support to small-scale household-level production is increasingly important in the country, following the fragmentation of the agriculture sector. In addition to saving livelihoods, agricultural interventions increase local food availability, access and variety. Helping farmers to stay on their land and producing food is also critical to prevent further migration.

Through a “Whole of Syria” approach, FAO is running operations from Damascus (Syria) and Gaziantep (Turkey) to maximize delivery of agricultural support to people in need in 13 of Syria’s 14 governorates, including in hard-to-reach locations. In governorates where the presence of staff is not allowed by United Nations security regulations, FAO operates through Government-seconded officers and Non-governmental Organizations.

Despite enormous challenges in 2015, FAO supported the livelihoods of nearly **1.5 million people**.



Under the **2016 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan**, FAO is appealing for **USD 86.5 million** to assist 2.9 million people through:



Support to staple food production: cereal (wheat, barley) and legume seeds | training on improved cropping methods



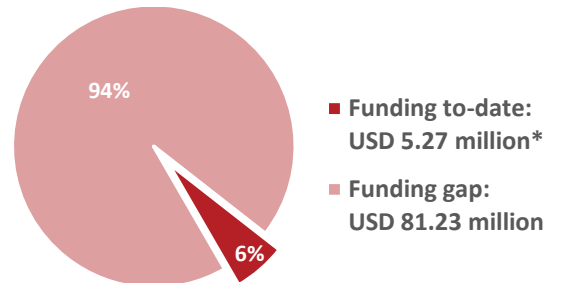
Increasing household nutrition and income: backyard vegetable gardening | poultry and small livestock raising | conditional cash assistance to rehabilitate infrastructure and productive assets



Increasing and protecting livestock assets: animal feed | livestock vaccination and treatment campaigns | veterinary capacity | sheep distribution



Planned, collective response: coordination | drought early warning | needs assessment and monitoring | participatory, community-based approaches | planning and strategy development | data collection, analysis and reporting | capacity building



Donors: European Union, Ireland and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

*This reflects only the 2016 portion (USD 3.8 million) of a USD 6.56 million contribution from the European Union for a two-year resilience project. The remainder will be allocated for 2017.

So far in 2016, FAO has reached 250 344 people (41 724 households) with vegetable kits, animal feed and animal health inputs (treatments against parasites and feed integrators).

FAO also continues to play a leading role in coordination of food security activities, as well as collecting and analysing data. The Regional Food Security Analysis Network – funded by the United States of America and FAO, and jointly implemented by a team from FAO and iMMAP – supports emergency food security interventions by providing timely information and working towards an enhanced early warning system. Together with WFP, FAO is coordinating and co-leading the Food and Agriculture Sector in Damascus and the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster in Gaziantep. Within the Whole of Syria framework, a Food Security and Agriculture Sector coordination mechanism was also established in Amman.

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