



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO Response to the Syria Crisis

A call for increased support in agriculture



January 2016

Agriculture cannot be an afterthought

As the conflict in Syria approaches its sixth year, 8.7 million people are food insecure. Against a population of around 17 million, hunger now affects over half of the people remaining in Syria. A further 4.3 million Syrians are refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey as of December 2015, depending primarily on humanitarian aid and host communities to survive.

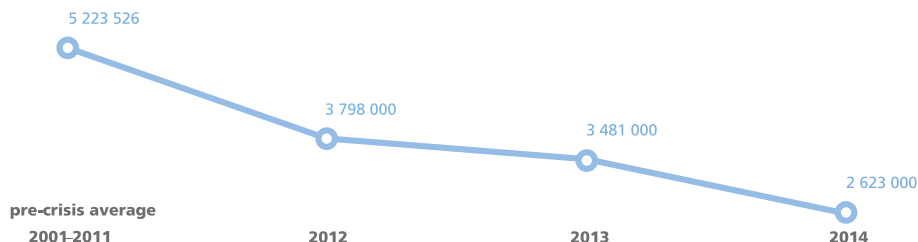
Without additional assistance to the agriculture sector, Syria's food security situation will continue to worsen. Already, Syria has lost half of its livestock. Crop production has declined progressively each year. The 2014-2015 cereal harvest was 40 percent below pre-crisis levels due to a combination 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 have collapsed. 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, resilience agricultural interventions were largely underfunded in 2015. 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 2016 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 and protect 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:

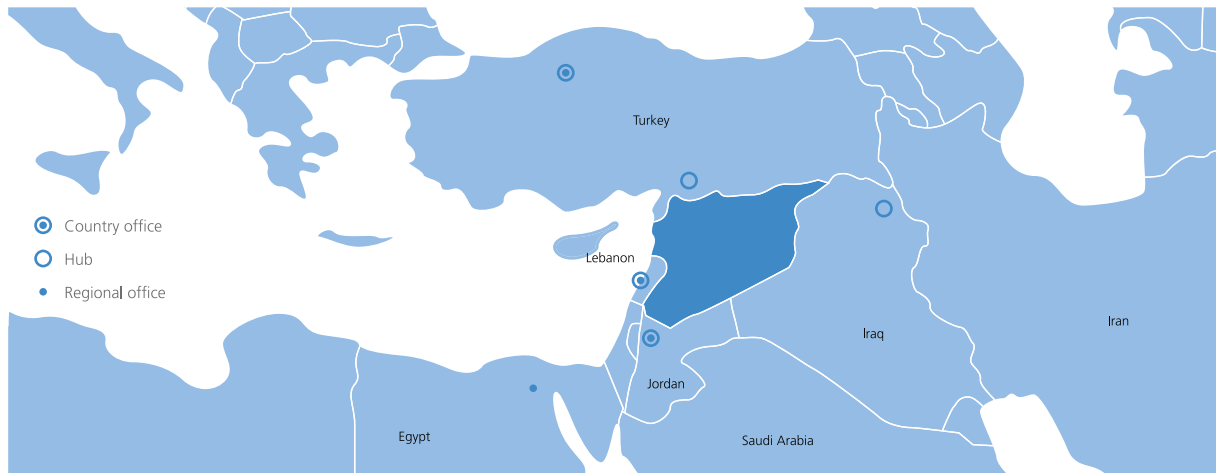
- Seed assistance enables Syrian farmers to harvest sufficient cereals to feed their families for a year.
- Cash-for-work programmes create income opportunities while repairing critical on-farm infrastructure.
- Veterinary support and vaccination campaigns in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria preserve 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.



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 1.9 million Syrians (324 323 families) in rural and peri-urban areas of Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Dara'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Rural Damascus, Sweida and Quinetra.

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
European Union*
Ireland
Italy
OCHA
South Africa
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
United States of America

* Agreement being finalized at the time of printing

8.7 MILLION



FOOD INSECURE



**6.5 MILLION
DISPLACED**

50%



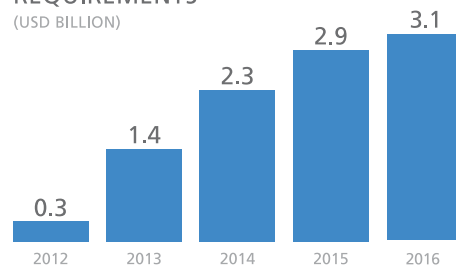
**LIVESTOCK
LOST**

**40% DROP
IN CEREAL
HARVEST**



SYRIA CRISIS TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

(USD BILLION)



Highlights from 2015



70 000 farming families received wheat and barley seeds to produce an estimated 119 000 tonnes of cereal: enough to feed almost half a million people for a year.



11 222 families (67 332 people) received vegetable packages and now have increased access to fresh and nutritious food.



9 000 families received a total of 57 420 hens, which will lay an estimated 10.1 million eggs in one year.



Over 9 million animals were treated for parasites, benefiting some 157 000 livestock-dependent families.



17 500 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 just a few 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 4.3 million Syrian refugees were concentrated in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey by December 2015. Around 89 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 3.2 million Iraqis displaced by internal armed conflict in 2015.

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



Highlights from 2015

Iraq



180 000 people received wheat seeds and fertilizers, sufficient to produce an estimated 67 500 tonnes of wheat.



3.2 million animals were vaccinated against transboundary animal diseases (TADs).



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

5 000 heads of household engaged in cash-for-work, rehabilitating critical agricultural infrastructure.

36 000 small-scale farmers engaged in backyard food production, through the provision of fertilizers and tools to produce an estimated 215 000 tonnes of vegetables.

13 600 families, including Syrian refugees, received animal feed at times of unavailable grazing pastures.



Completed food security assessments in seven governorates, providing detailed information on the food security and livelihoods situation in the country.

Jordan



3 000 people, including vulnerable Jordanian household and Syrian refugees, benefited from improved food security and nutrition through the provision of homestead gardening kits and trainings.

Formulated a serosurveillance methodology for TADs.

Lebanon



Vaccinated the entire national livestock population (some 800 000 cattle, sheep and goats) against three TADs, and strengthened national disease surveillance and control.

500 semi-intensive poultry farms established, and 1 500 beneficiaries were able to either start or improve their egg production.



20 000 people received seeds, tools and food preservation and production kits to improve homestead food production.

Regional



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



Increasing food and income

FAO trained 25 facilitators as part of a poultry farmer field school (FFS) programme and provided support to project beneficiaries by distributing laying hens. Facilitators met regularly with the FFS members (through a total of some 600 meetings) to discuss, experiment with and validate poultry production and disease management techniques suited to the local context. Topics covered within the FFS include design and construction of poultry coops based on biosafety and biosecurity measures in accordance with national requirements.

Syria - FAO funding requirements 2016

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 livelihoods and 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.

Humanitarian RESPONSE PLAN 2016:



FAO requires
USD 86.5 million



to assist
2.9 million people

Syria Regional - FAO funding requirements 2016

FAO IS WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN THE REGION TO:

- support livelihoods and 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 9.2 million

Support to backyard food production and nutrition; Short-term cash-for-work programs in exchange for rehabilitation of affected agricultural infrastructure; Effective food security interventions through sector coordination.

Jordan: USD 7.2 million

Homestead farming; Surveillance and control of transboundary animal disease and plant pests and diseases; Climate-smart agricultural technologies; Natural resource management; Evidence-based programming.

Lebanon: USD 28.5 million

Poultry production (support via electronic vouchers); Water conservation and irrigation; Food preservation and processing; Micro-gardening for Syrian refugees and host communities; Surveillance and control of animal and plant pests and diseases; Financial/technical support to farmers for private agricultural investment; Capacity building.

Turkey: USD 7 million

Micro-gardening for Syrian refugees in camps; Training on good agricultural and nutritional practices, and post-harvest management; Cash assistance for crop and livestock inputs in host communities; Farmer field schools (crop and livestock production, post-harvest technologies, water management, hygiene and food safety).

Regional: USD 1.5 million

Data collection and analysis; Information management and sharing; Technical support; Capacity development.

REGIONAL REFUGEE AND RESILIENCE PLAN 2016-2017:



FAO requires in 2016
USD 53.4 million



to assist host community members,
refugees and other vulnerable groups

Iraq crisis - FAO funding requirements 2016

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 2016:



FAO requires
USD 45 million



to assist
492 000 people



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Take away messages

Syria faces a sixth year of conflict with more than half of its population food insecure, a 40 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 six 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 increased deaths.



More than 4.3 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 and protect livelihoods while helping communities lay the foundations for their own longer-term recovery.