



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Crisis overview

Following 14 years of conflict, economic decline, climatic shocks and weakened state institutions, the Syrian Arab Republic is facing one of the world's largest food security crises.¹ Nearly two in every five Syrians are acutely food insecure.¹ Agriculture – the main source of livelihood for half the population – has been devastated by the destruction of critical infrastructure, widespread displacement and limited access to inputs and extension services.²

Against this already dire backdrop, the Syrian Arab Republic is now experiencing its most severe drought in 36 years.³ From November 2024 to April 2025, rainfall was 54 percent below average, with some areas facing deficits of up to 69 percent.³ Nearly 75 percent of rainfed areas are under stress, particularly in key food-producing governorates such as Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa.³ Moreover, only 40 percent of planned farmland was cultivated – and much of it failed – resulting in a projected wheat deficit of 2.73 million tonnes, enough to feed 16 million people for one year.³

Pastoral systems are also collapsing. Dry rangelands, water scarcity and rising feed prices have forced herders to reduce rations, sell livestock or abandon transhumance.³ As a result, milk and meat production are declining, prices are rising and nutrition is worsening.³ Many rural families have exhausted their coping strategies and risk irreversible livelihood loss.³

With the 2025/26 planting season approaching and global humanitarian funding under mounting pressure, time-critical agricultural assistance offers a cost-effective way to prevent further deterioration. For example, a wheat production package (200 kg of certified wheat seed, 300 kg of fertilizer and 530 litres of diesel) can enable a family to produce up to 3 tonnes of wheat – enough to feed a family of six for one year. For livestock-keeping families, vaccinating 20 small ruminants against major animal diseases at a cost of just USD 1 per head helps protect animals worth up to USD 3 000, while supporting household food and income. Despite these sustainable and cost-effective benefits, only 2.2 percent of food sector funding was allocated to emergency agricultural assistance between 2016 and 2023.⁴



Syrian Arab Republic

Drought and widespread
crop failure

Urgent call for assistance



FAO requires
USD 66.61 million



To assist
**123 400 households
(617 000 people)**



Period
June 2025–March 2026



In numbers



9.1 million people facing acute food insecurity



54% drop in cumulative rainfall (November 2024–April 2025) compared with the long-term average



75% of cropped areas affected by drought conditions



2.73 million tonnes projected wheat deficit in 2025 – enough to feed 16 million people for a year



Only **2.2%** of humanitarian assistance to food sectors allocated to emergency agricultural assistance (2016–2023)


Since December 2024, more than 1.2 million internally displaced persons and 860 000 refugees have returned to their areas of origin in the Syrian Arab Republic.⁵ Restoring agricultural livelihoods is essential to support their reintegration and reduce the risk of renewed displacement. Agricultural assistance not only costs far less than food aid, it also supports markets and enables returnees to rebuild with dignity.

The window of opportunity to support rural households ahead of the 2025/26 planting season is narrow and closing fast. Missing it would mean forfeiting a critical opportunity to prevent further deterioration in food security, safeguard livelihoods and lay the groundwork for recovery.

What investments in agriculture can achieve

USD 1 060 = 200 kg of certified wheat seed, 300 kg of fertilizer and 530 litres of diesel =  **Enables a household of six to produce up to 3 tonnes of wheat (worth USD 1 360 on the local market), enough to meet their dietary needs for a year and earn an extra income**

USD 350 = 100 g of vegetable seeds (e.g. eggplant, pepper, tomato, zucchini) and 50 kg of fertilizer =  **Enables a household to produce up to 3 tonnes of vegetables in 2.5–4 months (worth USD 1 700 on the local market), improving their nutrition and income**

USD 20 = Vaccination of about 20 small ruminants (USD 1 per head) against contagious animal diseases =  **Protects vital livestock assets (worth up to USD 150 per head), keeps productive animals alive and ensures families have access to food and income**

Objective

In response to the deepening food security crisis and widespread livelihood loss, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) aims to enable the most vulnerable drought-affected farming and livestock-keeping communities in the Syrian Arab Republic to protect their livelihoods, improve food security and strengthen their resilience to future climatic shocks.

Planned interventions

FAO's priority drought-response interventions are fully aligned with its **Emergency and Recovery Plan of Action (ERPA) 2025–2027 for the Syrian Arab Republic**, which provides a strategic framework for protecting livelihoods and accelerating recovery in crisis-affected rural areas.²

FAO's drought-response strategy is centred on three key priorities:

- Enabling farming households to protect their livelihoods and resume agricultural production;
- Supporting livestock-keeping households to safeguard their productive assets and maintain food production; and
- Rehabilitating small-scale water and irrigation infrastructure to sustain crop and livestock production in drought-affected areas.

These priorities guide a set of time-critical interventions tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable rural communities, as outlined in Table 1.



Table 1. Scope and funding requirements of FAO's drought-response interventions (2025/26 season)

FAO priority	Type of assistance to be provided/content of assistance package	Target areas	Cost per household (USD)	Number of beneficiary households	Total cost (USD)	Funds needed by	Planned implementation period
Enable farming households to protect their livelihoods and resume agricultural production	Wheat production package: 200 kg of certified wheat seed, 300 kg of fertilizer and 530 litres of diesel	Al Hassakeh, As-Asweida, Daraa, Deir Ez-Zour, Hama, Homs and Rural Damascus	1 060	26 000	27 560 000	As soon as possible	As soon as possible
	Vegetable production package: 100 g of hybrid vegetable seeds (e.g. eggplant, pepper, tomato, zucchini) and 50 kg of fertilizer		350	10 400	3 640 000	As soon as possible	As soon as possible
Enable livestock-keeping households to protect their productive assets and food production capacities	1 tonne of fodder for livestock-keeping households	All governorates	350	75 000	26 250 000	August 2025	November–December 2025
	Vaccination of up to 20 animals per household against foot-and-mouth disease		20		1 500 000	August 2025	December–January 2025

FAO Priority	Type of assistance to be provided/content of assistance package	Target areas	Cost per household (USD)	Number of beneficiary households	Total cost (USD)	Funds needed by	Planned implementation period
Rehabilitate small-scale water and irrigation infrastructure to enable sustained crop and livestock production in drought-affected areas	Rehabilitation of 100 groundwater wells for herders, benefiting 50 000 heads of livestock	Hama and Homs	1 500	500	750 000	July 2025	November 2025–January 2026
	Rehabilitation of ten damaged groundwater wells for livestock use, operated with solar-powered systems, benefiting 200 000 heads of livestock	As-Swaida, Daraa, Deir EzZor, Hama, Homs and Idlib	782	1 600	1 250 000	August 2025	December 2025–March 2026
	Rehabilitation of 20 macro-rainwater harvesting structures for livestock and small-scale agriculture, benefiting 200 000 heads of livestock	Deir EzZor, Hama, and Homs	1 429	700	1 000 000	July 2025	November 2025–January 2026
	Construction of ten small-scale macro-rainwater harvesting dams for agriculture and livestock	Al-Hasakah and Idlib	1 000	800	800 000	July 2025	November 2025–February 2026
	Rehabilitation of ten irrigation pumping sets and linked canals with solar-powered systems	Al-Hasakah, Ar-Raqqqa and Deir Ez-Zour	695	1 800	1 250 000	August 2025	December 2025–March 2026
	Enhancing resilience to water scarcity in rainfed areas by implementing rooftop rainwater harvesting systems, combined with technical training		500	2 000	1 000 000	July 2025	November 2025–February 2026
	Enhancing resilience to water scarcity in rainfed areas through micro-catchment rainwater harvesting, supported by the distribution of tools, awareness-raising campaigns and on-site training for targeted farming households	As-Swaida, Hama, Homs and Idlib	312	2 600	810 000	July 2025	November 2025–January 2026
	Rehabilitation of two damaged groundwater wells and springs used by public and private fish farms, including associated canals, basins and solar-powered systems	Al Ghab (Hama)	400	2 000	800 000	August 2025	December 2025–March 2026

Coordination

As co-leads of the Food Security Sector, FAO and the World Food Programme work closely with local and international partners, in collaboration with institutional counterparts, to ensure a needs-based, coordinated and effective response.



Notes

- 1 **WFP (World Food Programme) and FAO.** 2025. *Hunger Hotspots. FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: June to October 2025 outlook.* Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd5684en>
- 2 **FAO.** 2025. *Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency and Recovery Plan of Action 2025–2027 – Living document (as of 1 March 2025).* Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd4683en>
- 3 **FAO.** 2025. *Syrian Arab Republic: Drought Alert – Widespread crop failure to impact the food security of millions of people due to failed 2024/2025 winter rain.* Damascus. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd5629en>
- 4 **GNAFC (Global Network Against Food Crises).** 2025. 2024 Financing Flows and Food Crises Analysis: Analysis of Humanitarian and Development Flows to Food Sectors in Food Crisis Countries. [Accessed on 11 March 2025]. In: *GNAFC*. Rome. <https://app.powerbi.com/view>
- 5 **UNHCR (United Nations Refugee Agency).** 2025. *Syria situation: Crisis Regional Flash Update #28.* Damascus. <https://www.unhcr.org/media/syria-situation-crisis-regional-flash-update-28>

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