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Organization of the  
United Nations



World Food Programme

# SPECIAL REPORT

## FAO/WFP CROP AND FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT MISSION TO THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

5 September 2019



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**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACB</b>	Agricultural Cooperative Bank
<b>AEZs</b>	Agro-Ecological Zones
<b>AI</b>	Artificial insemination
<b>ASI</b>	Agricultural Stress Index
<b>bbl/d</b>	barrels per day
<b>CCCM</b>	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
<b>CFSAM</b>	Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission
<b>ESCWA</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FAOSTAT</b>	Data programme of FAO Statistics Division
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FSS</b>	Food Security Sector
<b>FMD</b>	Foot-and-Mouth Disease
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GOF</b>	General Organization for Feed
<b>GORS</b>	General Organization for Remote Sensing
<b>GOSM</b>	General Organization for Seed Multiplication
<b>GOT</b>	General Organization of Tobacco
<b>ha</b>	hectare
<b>Hoboob</b>	General Establishment for Cereal Trade and Processing
<b>HTR</b>	Hard-To-Reach
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IS</b>	Islamic State
<b>kg</b>	kilogramme
<b>MAAR</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform
<b>MITCP</b>	Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection
<b>mm</b>	millimetre
<b>MWR</b>	Ministry of Water Resources
<b>mVAM</b>	mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
<b>PLW</b>	pregnant and lactating women
<b>rCSI</b>	reduced Coping Strategy Index
<b>SARC</b>	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
<b>SYP</b>	Syrian Pound
<b>t</b>	tonne
<b>ToT</b>	Terms of Trade
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UN-OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
<b>USD</b>	US Dollar
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WoS</b>	Whole of Syria
<b>XB</b>	cross-border
<b>y-o-y</b>	year-on-year

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Security:** Although pockets of active conflict are still prevalent, much of the country is now more secure than it has been for several years, and significant numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have begun to return to their homes and farms. The Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform estimates that around 800 000 IDPs, mostly farmers, returned to their areas of origin in 2018. Further return estimates by UN-OCHA place IDP returns at an additional 130 000 people in the first half of 2019.
- **Crop production:** Ample and well distributed rainfall in the 2018/19 agricultural season, coupled with improved security, resulted in a significant expansion of the area under cereals. The harvested wheat area (1.26 million hectares) was almost double that of 2018, but it is still 25 percent below the pre-crisis harvested wheat area (2002-2011 average). The harvested barley area (1.34 million hectares) increased by 73 percent from last year and is on par with the pre-crisis average. The yield of wheat, at 1.73 tonnes/hectare, was unexceptional as high temperatures in May had an adverse effect on grain filling, but the yield of barley, at 1.5 tonnes/hectare, was the highest for at least the last ten years. Wheat production is estimated at 2.2 million tonnes, up from 1.2 million in 2018, but still below the pre-crisis level of 4.1 million tonnes (2002-2011). At 2 million tonnes, up from 0.4 million tonnes in 2018, barley production exceeds pre-crisis levels.
- **Fires** in standing cereal crops are not unusual near harvest time in the country, but this year, with high temperatures and strong winds, they were much more frequent and more intense. The Government estimates that 85 000 hectares of crops were burnt this year. Many of the fires may have been started accidentally, but there is evidence to suggest that some were started maliciously.
- **Main agricultural constraints for crop production:** Farmers continue raising concerns about high production costs, high transportation costs and lack of quality inputs. Government initiatives have led to an increase in the availability of farm machinery, but overall availability remains insufficient. Some progress has been made on the rehabilitation of irrigation structures, although illegal drilling over the past years is likely to lower the underground water table in a year of average rains. High rates of wastage were reported in fruit and vegetable production, constrained by low consumer purchasing power, the inability to export and a shortage of processing factories.
- **Livestock:** Nationally, overall livestock numbers stabilized despite a slight reduction in sheep and cattle in 2018/19, as compared to the previous year. While the prevalence of common epizootic diseases remained relatively stable, the incidence of lumpy-skin disease increased in some locations in 2018/19, possibly due to high temperatures and high humidity which favoured the proliferation of the insect vectors. Artificial insemination, although widespread, has often low success rates, possibly due to poor timing and lack of breeder awareness of oestrus. Feed prices remained high, but pasture conditions improved. Prices of animals and meat generally showed an upward trend compared to 2017/18, while milk prices eased.
- **Beekeeping,** which used to be a prolific traditional industry in the country, has suffered similar problems as other sectors during the crisis. Efforts are being made by the Government and international organizations to restore the sector to increase pollination as well as provide livelihood options. However, concerns prevail about mortality resulting from the misuse of pesticides and lack of marketing channels for honey and bee products to guarantee viable livelihoods.
- **Humanitarian access:** The number of people residing in hard-to-reach locations continued to decline in 2018 and 2019. By October 2018 (latest date for which information is available), 1.2 million people were estimated to be residing in hard-to-reach areas, down from 4.1 million

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