



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Afghanistan

Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) brief

Results and recommendations
January 2022

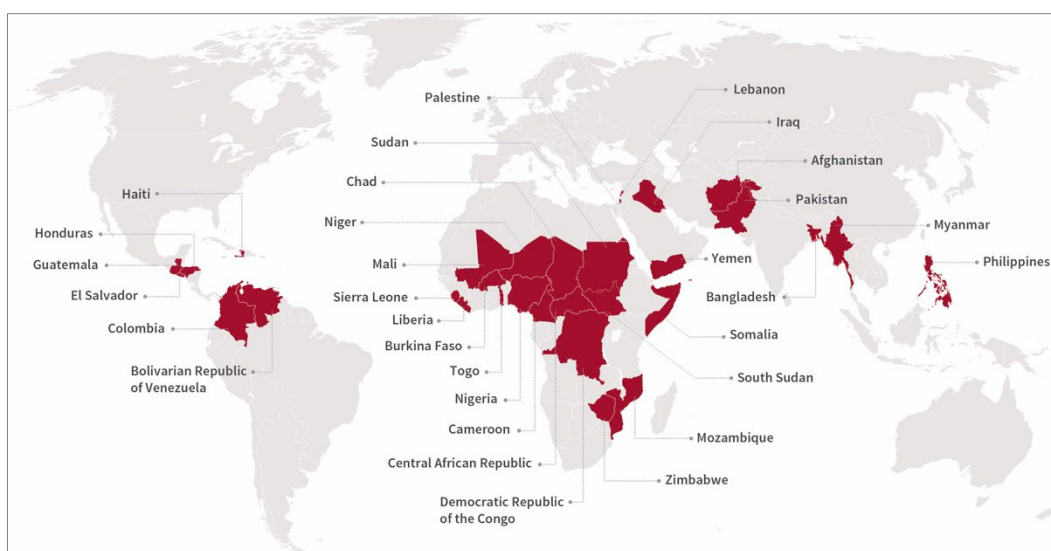
Data collection 1 August to 23 September 2021

Methodology

This brief presents the results of a household survey conducted in Afghanistan by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System on agricultural livelihoods and food security. Data collection began on 1 August 2021 but was abruptly halted by the events of mid-August 2021. It resumed in September however and was completed in that month.

The random sample of 7 155 active crop and livestock producers was representative at the provincial level for 20 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring System



Source of map: United Nations. 2020. *Map of the World*. [online]. [Cited 6 December 2021]. www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO has established the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks and livelihoods in countries prone to multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to inform decision making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks are affecting the livelihoods and food security of agricultural populations.

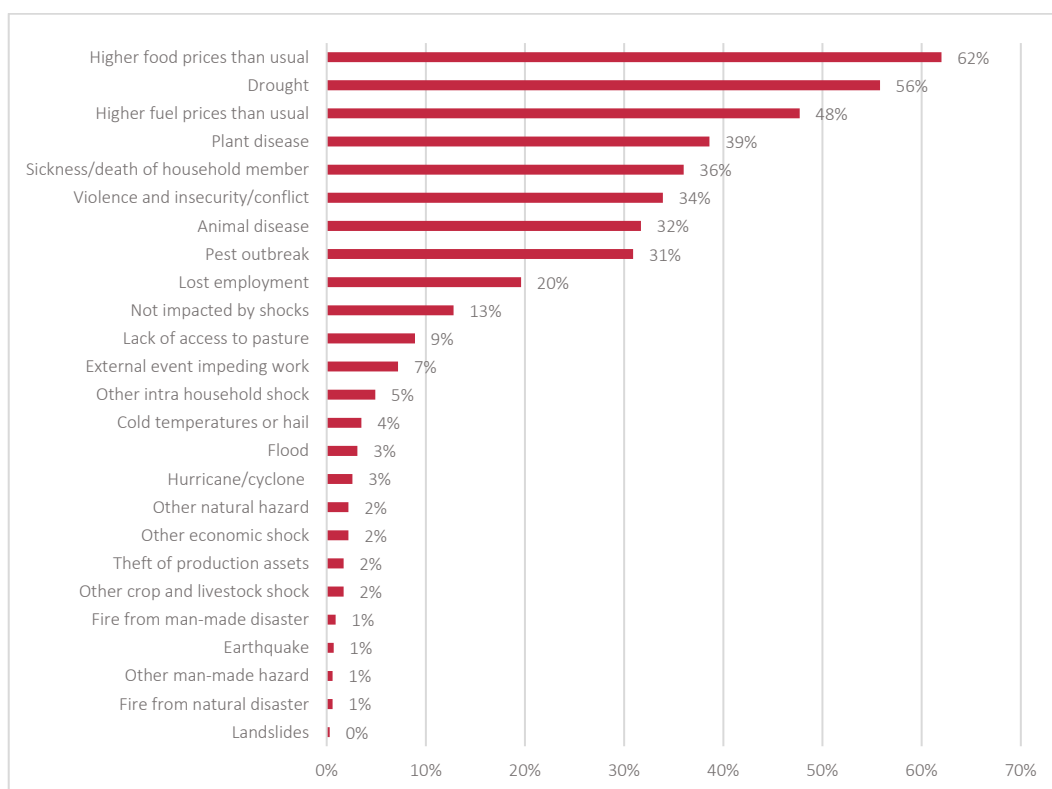
> Learn more at <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring>

Income and shocks

Multiple, compounding shocks hit rural Afghanistan during the span of a few months in 2021. Following four decades of conflict, the intensification of localized conflict during the spring and summer had debilitating impacts on rural livelihoods and the country's smallholder farmers and livestock keepers. At the same time, Afghanistan's farmers and herders were struggling with ongoing drought, the continuing impacts of COVID-19, price increases and economic crisis. Together, these events have severely eroded smallholder crop and livestock producers' coping capacities.

In the survey, the most-frequently reported shocks were drought and soaring food prices (Figure 2). On deeper analysis, the survey results suggest that drought and conflict compounded the impacts of other shocks including high food and input prices, and animal disease.

Figure 2. Most-reported shocks (percentage of respondents)



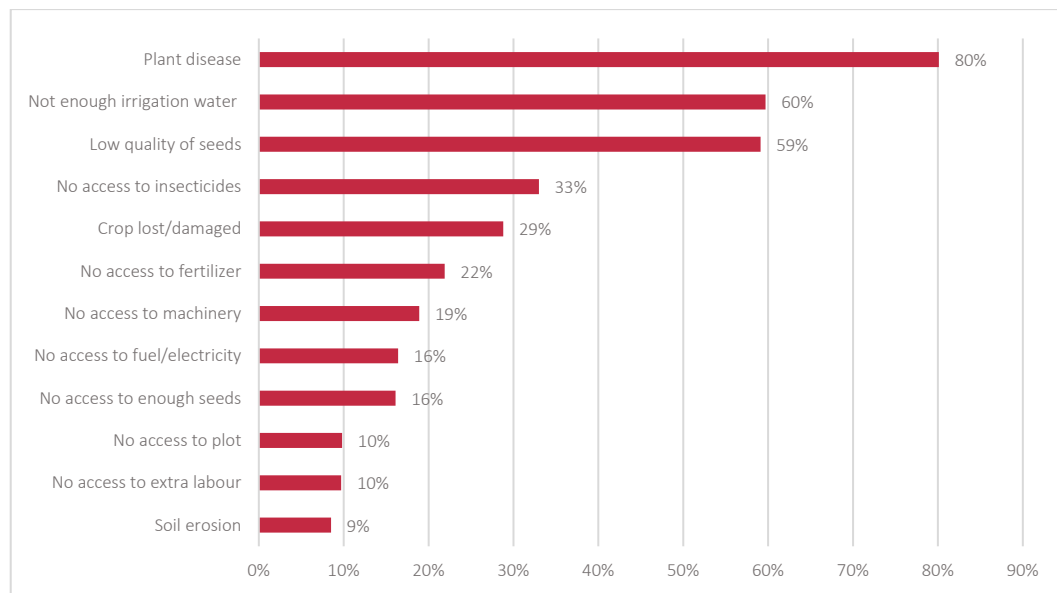
Source of data: FAO. 2021. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

Crops

The 2021 harvest was well below normal: overall, 57 percent of crop producers reported that their yields had decreased by at least 50 percent compared to normal. In some provinces, the numbers were much higher. For example, 91 percent of wheat producers in Bamyan province and 74 percent of maize farmers in Helmand province reported yield reductions of half or more. Only in one province (Parwan) was wheat production at or above normal.

A key reason for the reported decreases in yields was a lack of water due to well-below-normal precipitation, coupled with a lack of access to irrigation. Disruptions in the supply chain for agricultural inputs constituted another difficulty: a lack of access to quality seeds was reported by half of farmers surveyed, and many reported an increase in the price of high-quality seeds. Crop disease was very frequently cited and was associated with low seed quality and lack of water (Figure 3). These difficulties were consistently reported across all areas.

Figure 3. Crop-production difficulties (percentage of respondent crop producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

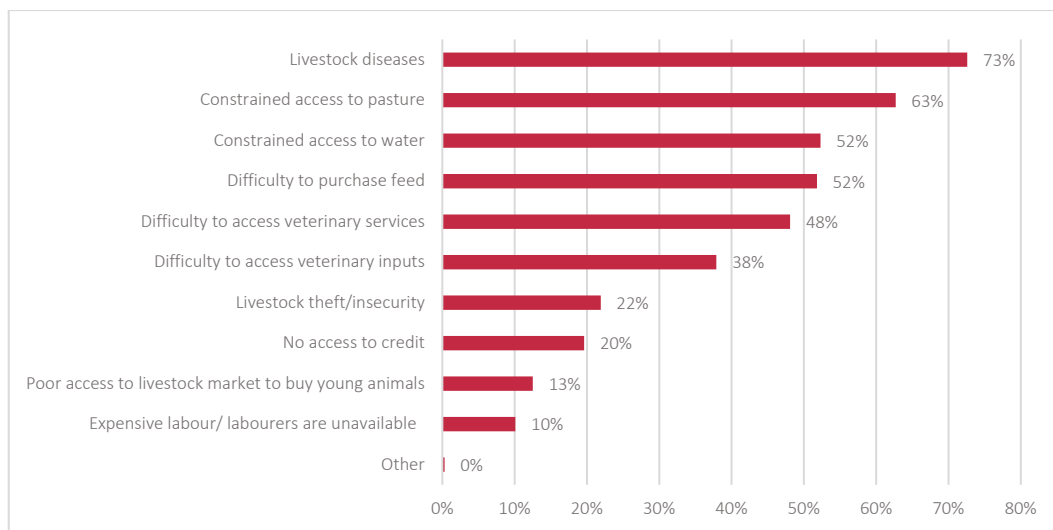
In the three months prior to data collection, 66 percent of crop producers faced significant difficulties selling crops. The reported reasons included: higher marketing costs (including transportation), as reported by 74 percent of crop producers; lower prices; and disruption of usual trading patterns. In addition, 54 percent reported damage and loss due to delays or an inability to physically access markets. Conflict was associated with these marketing difficulties.

Livestock

Among livestock-producing households surveyed, 76 percent reported difficulties raising livestock during the three months prior to the survey. Of these, very high proportions cited animal diseases, constrained access to pasture and constrained access to water (Figure 4). Drought and dry conditions were again centrally important: livestock keepers citing drought were more likely than others to report problems like animal disease, poor pasture conditions and decreased herd size.

The results are consistent with a generalized deterioration in pasturelands and degradation of veterinary services. Only 16 percent of producers purchased food or fodder on the market: the majority relied on pastures that had been degraded. Across all areas, 71 percent of producers reported poor conditions in pastures, and pasture conditions were so poor that 6 percent had to migrate. This challenge was mentioned more frequently by respondents impacted by conflict than by those who did not cite conflict as a shock.

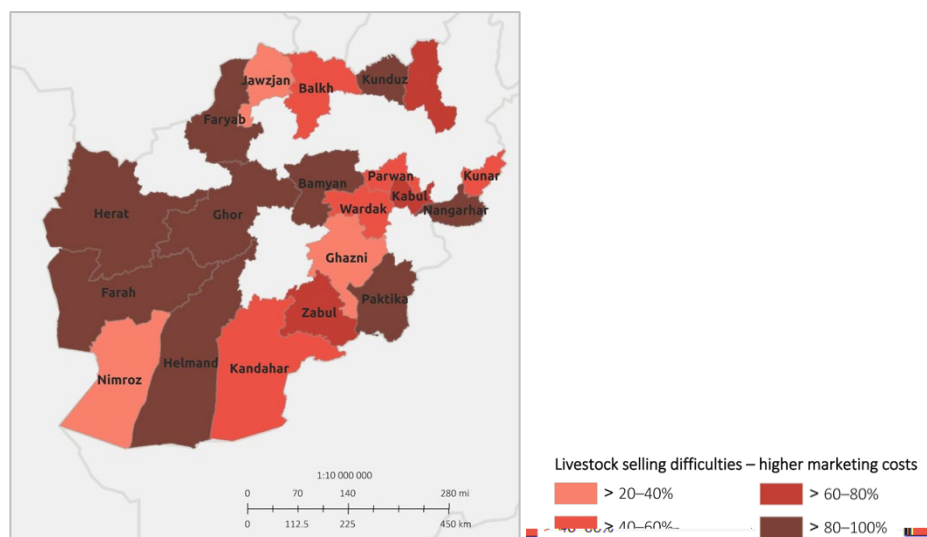
Figure 4. Livestock-production difficulties (percentage of respondent livestock producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

In relation to the marketing of livestock, high marketing costs were the most frequently reported difficulty in selling livestock and livestock products – cited by 67 percent of producers surveyed (Figure 5), while low selling prices were reported by 56 percent. Similar to the marketing of crops, conflict was associated with difficulties selling livestock.

Figure 5. Livestock producers reporting high marketing costs as a difficulty with sales, by province (percentage of respondent livestock producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. Map of Afghanistan [online]. [Cited 13 January 2022]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Food security

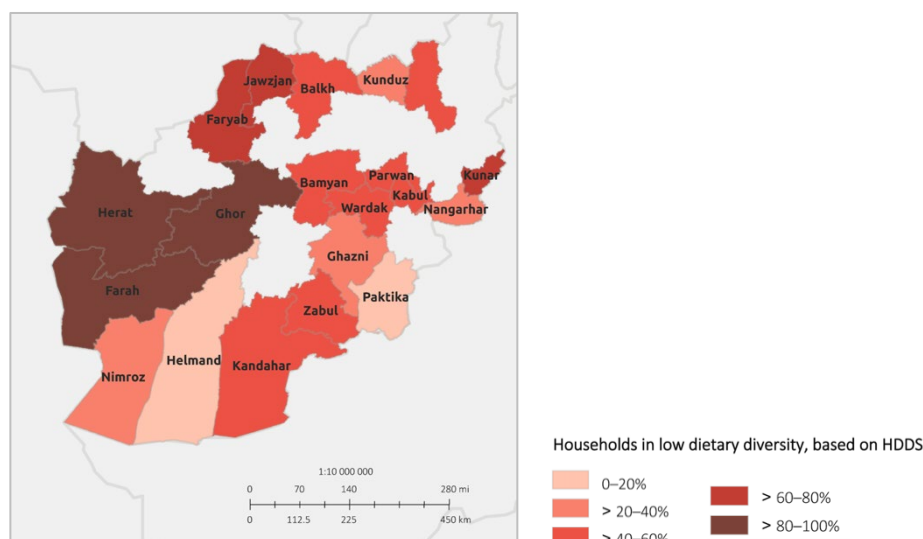
The majority of surveyed households had adopted unsustainable coping strategies in the previous three months that were depleting their productive assets, including migration and the sale of assets like land and households’ last animals. In Bamyan, Farah, Faryab, Helmand and

Nimroz provinces, four out of five respondents had resorted to Emergency-level coping strategies, implying an irreversible loss of livelihood capital, and thus affecting future productivity.

While in the first round of data collection (July–October 2020), 41 percent of households had experienced moderate or severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), the data collected in August and September 2021 show that 75 percent of households faced moderate or severe recent food insecurity. In Farah, Ghor, Helmand and Kandahar provinces, the prevalence was more than 90 percent.

Household Dietary Diversity Scores (HDDS) revealed notable food consumption gaps: 51 percent of respondents had consumed less than 4 out of 12 food groups in the past 24 hours. Only a small proportion had consumed protein-rich meals (11 percent had consumed meat, 18 percent pulses and 19 percent eggs). Just 12 percent had consumed fruit (Figure 6). These numbers underscore the urgent need for assistance to safeguard agricultural livelihoods.

Figure 6. Prevalence of low dietary diversity, based on HDDS, by province (percentage of respondents)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

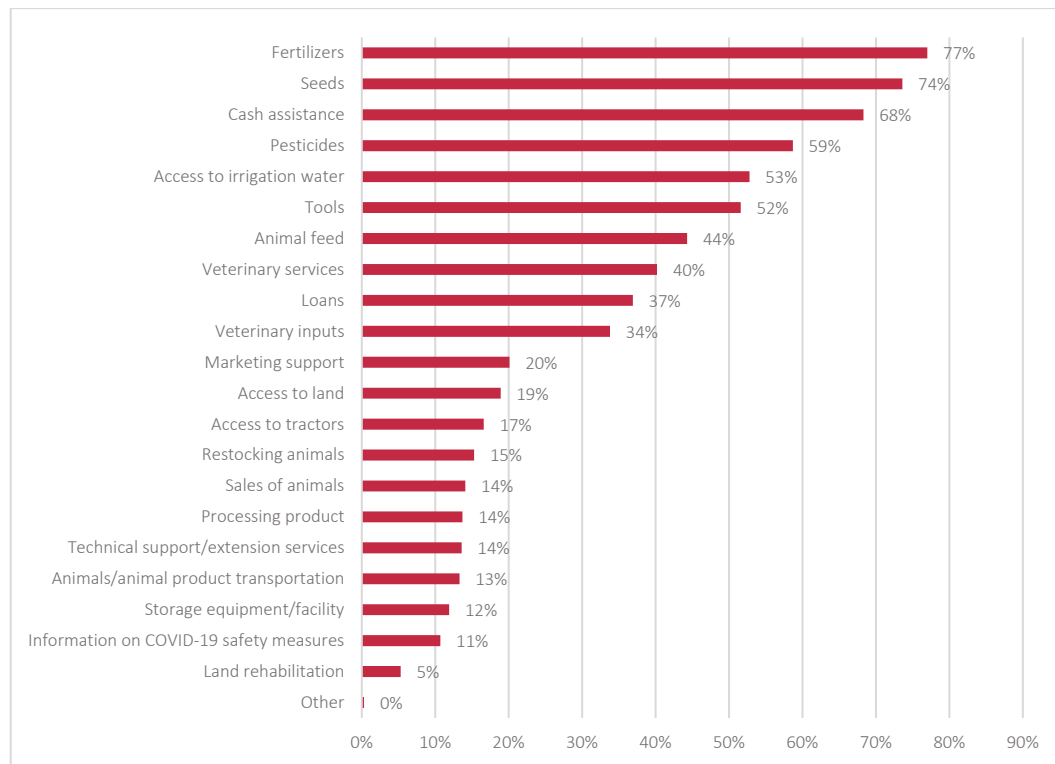
Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. Map of Afghanistan [online]. [Cited 13 January 2022]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

Needs

Following multiple livelihood shocks, farmers and livestock producers have not had the time or resources to recover. Given the limited window before the next agricultural season, the most critical needs reported by crop producers in the next six months were for agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizer.

In September 2021, FAO was already calling for urgent assistance for livestock keepers to protect their livestock assets, re-establish productive capacity and build their resilience. This included restocking of animals and access to feed and veterinary services before the onset of winter.

Figure 7. Most-reported needs for assistance (percentage of respondents)



Source of data: FAO. 2021. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (August–September 2021).

Recommendations

- > The data support the need for ongoing and urgent livelihood-saving humanitarian response targeted at farmers, herders and landless people in rural areas.
- > Emergency distribution of animal feed and veterinary services, as well as crop inputs (including seeds and fertilizers) should continue to be a key element of response where access is possible.
- > Resilience-strengthening activities would help households affected by shocks to rebuild their productive assets and should continue throughout 2022.
- > The regular monitoring at scale of shocks and their impacts on rural areas, with a focus on smallholders and ecosystems, is highly recommended. It is critical that real-time analysis of shocks is made available to inform policy and programming.



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