



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Afghanistan

DIEM – Data in Emergencies Monitoring brief, round 6

Results and recommendations
May 2023

Data collection 19 January to 15 February 2023

Key highlights

- > The frequency of individual shocks indicates an improving trend, except for the cold wave that affected the country in January 2023. However, economic shocks are still predominant. Economic and intrahousehold shocks were more frequent among female-headed households. Nine out of ten households declared a reduction in their main income source in the three months preceding the assessment.
- > More than two-thirds of crop producers planted less area compared to a typical year. Lack of water, access to inputs (seeds and fertilizer), land availability and less marketing opportunities were associated with planting decisions.
- > Plant disease, low quality seeds, difficulty accessing fertilizer, seeds and insecticides, not enough irrigation water and lower selling prices were the most frequently reported difficulties by producers.
- > Nine out of ten crop producers harvested less compared to a typical year. Difficulty accessing fertilizer, pesticides and seeds, lack of water, land sale, reduced crop expenses and less area planted were associated with the reduction of harvest.
- > Poor pastures, animal diseases, ability to purchase feed due to higher prices, and access to veterinary services and inputs were the reported livestock production challenges.
- > Livestock producers reported fewer animals compared to the same month last year. For more than half, distress sales (due to the inability to feed animals and the need for money urgently for household basic needs), animal death and pasture conditions were the cited reasons.
- > Food security has deteriorated since the previous round. The prevalence of severe recent food insecurity (RFI) increased from 17 percent in August 2022 to 21 percent in February 2023. Depletion of productive assets (such as land and productive animals), consuming seeds held for the next season, and decreased investment in farming and livestock are cited coping mechanisms that households resorted to in order to obtain food.

- > Cash or food assistance, fertilizer, seeds, access to irrigation water, tools, pesticides, animal feed and veterinary services were the needs cited by respondents.
- > Urgent humanitarian response at scale to protect the lives of farmers, herders and landless people in rural areas, particularly women, is recommended.

Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a household survey in Afghanistan through the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security. This sixth-round survey reached a random sample of 6 082 rural households in 26 provinces, representative at administrative level 1. The survey targeted the provinces of: Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Bamyan, Daykundi, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Ghor, Hilmand, Hirat, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Kunduz, Maidan Wardak, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Nuristan, Paktika, Parwan, Samangan, Takhar and Uruzgan.

Face to face interviews were conducted from 19 January to 15 February 2023. Targeted households were randomly selected using two-step cluster sampling and data were weighted by demographics. Twenty-nine clusters were selected at administrative level 1 and then eight households were selected in each cluster. A high proportion of the households (86 percent) were involved in the agriculture sector.

The fifth round, which reached 6 019 households, took place from 23 July to 26 August 2022; the fourth round, which reached 5 971 households, took place from 12 March to 4 April 2022; and the third round, which reached 7 144 households, took place from 1 August to 24 September 2021. These rounds have been drawn from to make comparisons throughout this brief.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring Systems



Source of data: FAO. 2023. DIEM-Monitoring. In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 3 November 2022. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

Source of map: United Nations. 2023. *Map of the World*. Cited 3 November 2022. un.org/geospatial/content/map-world

The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined. The dotted line represents, approximately, the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO established the 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.

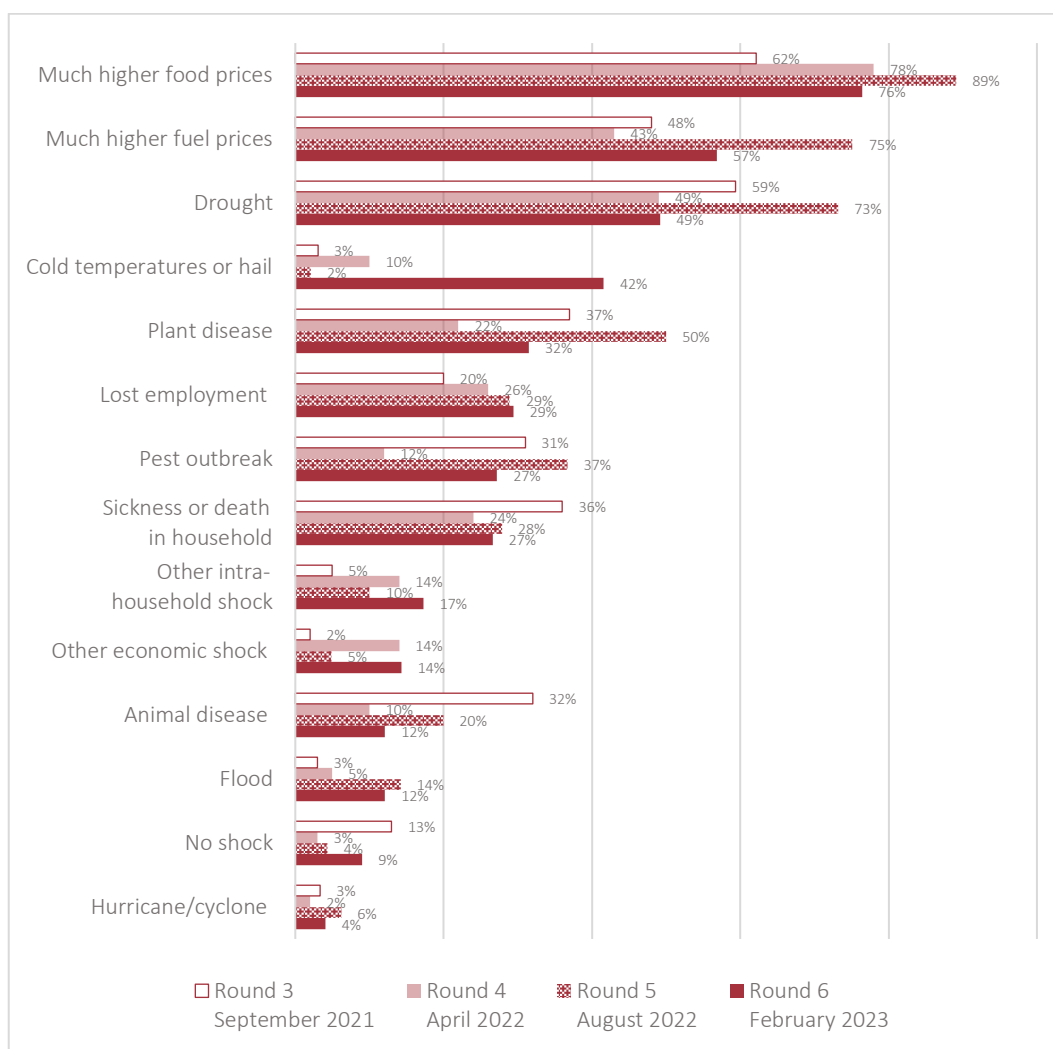
At the core of the DIEM-Monitoring System are country-level dashboards. Readers are encouraged to explore these dashboards to gain more insight into the context of Afghanistan and other countries.

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

Income and shocks

The frequency of individual shocks indicates some improvement compared to the fifth round, except for the cold wave that affected the country in January 2023. However, economic shocks were still predominant, and affected 78 percent of households (Figure 2). Floods were concentrated in the west, and drought in the northwest and south. Natural hazards were particularly frequent in the provinces of Daykundi, Jawzjan, Paktika and Parwan. Prevalence of much higher food prices, cold temperature, lost employment and sickness or death in the household were more frequent among female-headed households (80 percent, 51 percent, 32 percent and 34 percent, respectively). Ninety percent of households reported a decrease in their main income source in the three months preceding the survey.

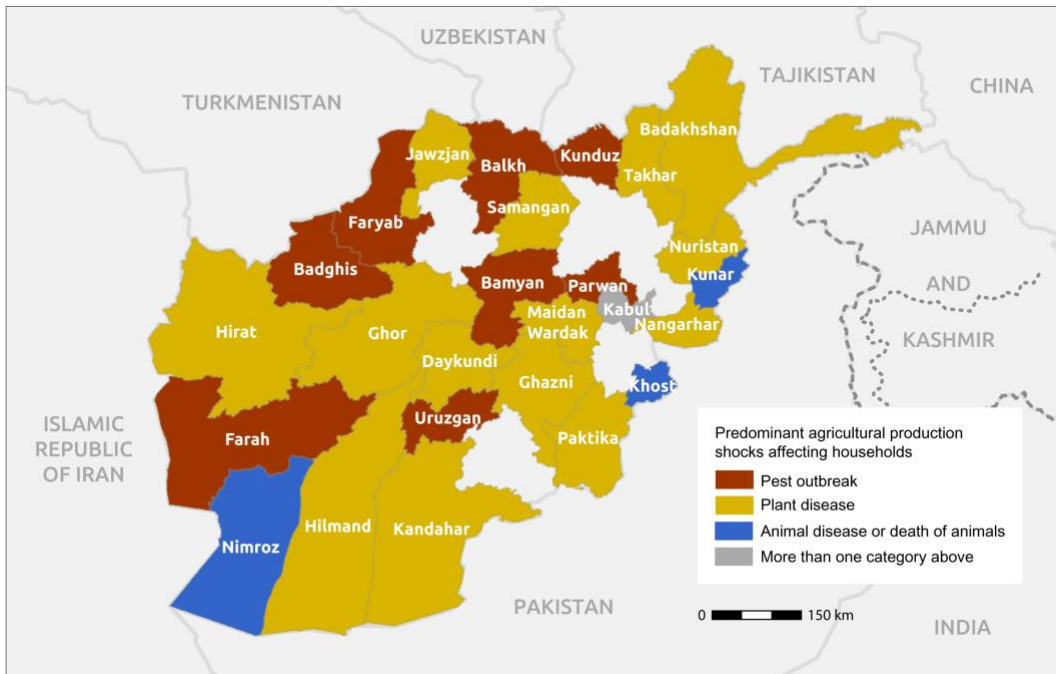
Figure 2. Main shocks reported (percentage of households)



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

Forty-three percent of households reported agricultural shocks. Plant diseases and pest outbreaks were frequently cited but there were differences across the provinces (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Predominant agricultural shocks

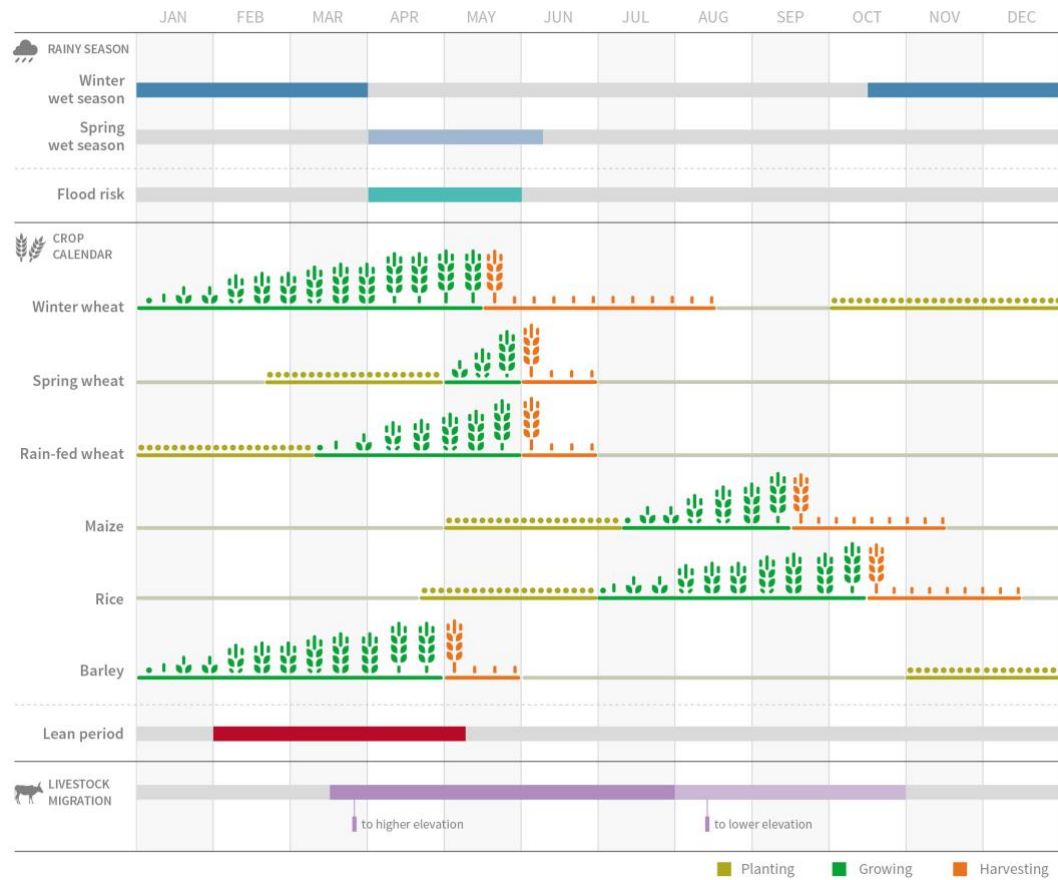


Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*, Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org
Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. Map of Afghanistan. Cited 13.04.2023. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

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Crops

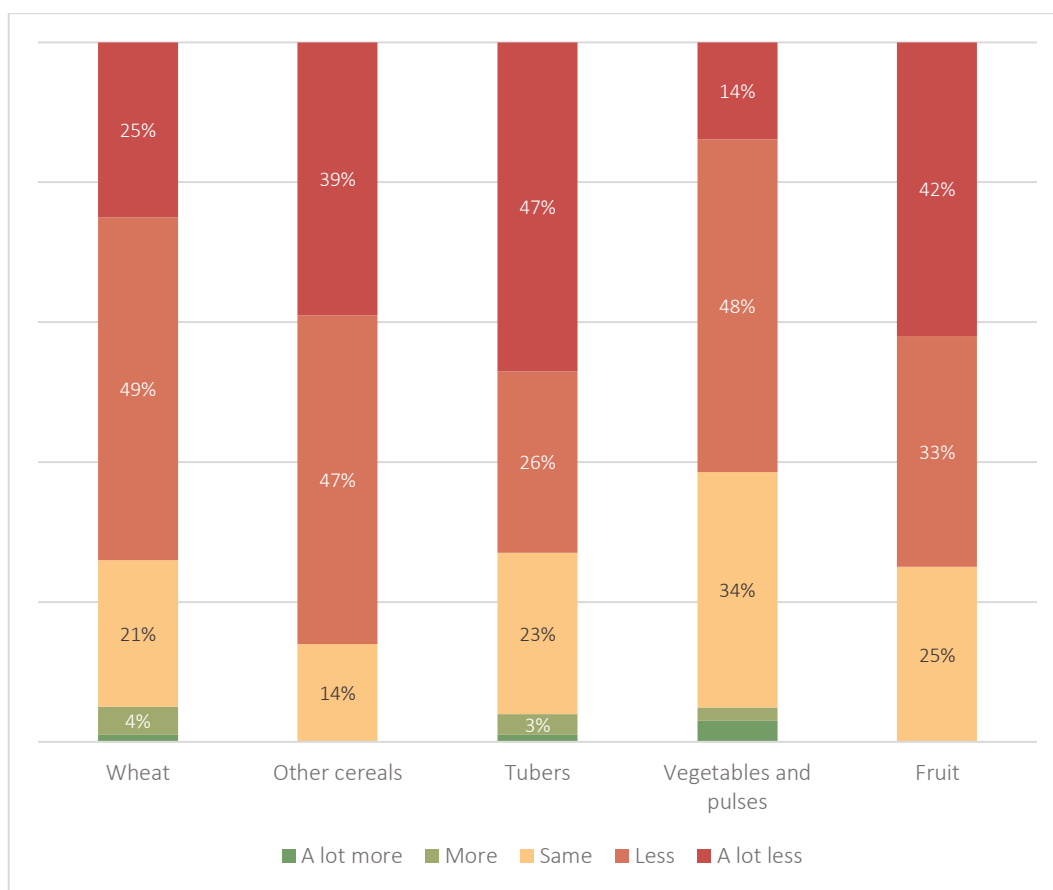
Figure 4. Afghanistan agricultural calendar



Source of data: FAO. 2021. GIEWS – Global Information and Early Warning System: Country briefs – Afghanistan. In: *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Rome. Cited 15 March 2022. www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=AFG.

Seventy-six percent of farmers reported a reduction in the area planted. This is particularly concerning for wheat farmers, as more than 70 percent of them planted less or a lot less (Figure 5). Shocks have been associated with this decrease in area planted, but the most common reason for the decrease was lack of water. Access to inputs was the second most frequent reason for the reduction, due to price and affordability. The decrease in planted area, due to lack of available land, was most common in Ghazni, Kunduz and Nuristan; lack of labour in Faryab, Kunduz and Nangarhar; and lack of marketing opportunities in Kandahar, Parwan and Takhar.

Figure 5. Area planted by crop (percentage of crop producers)

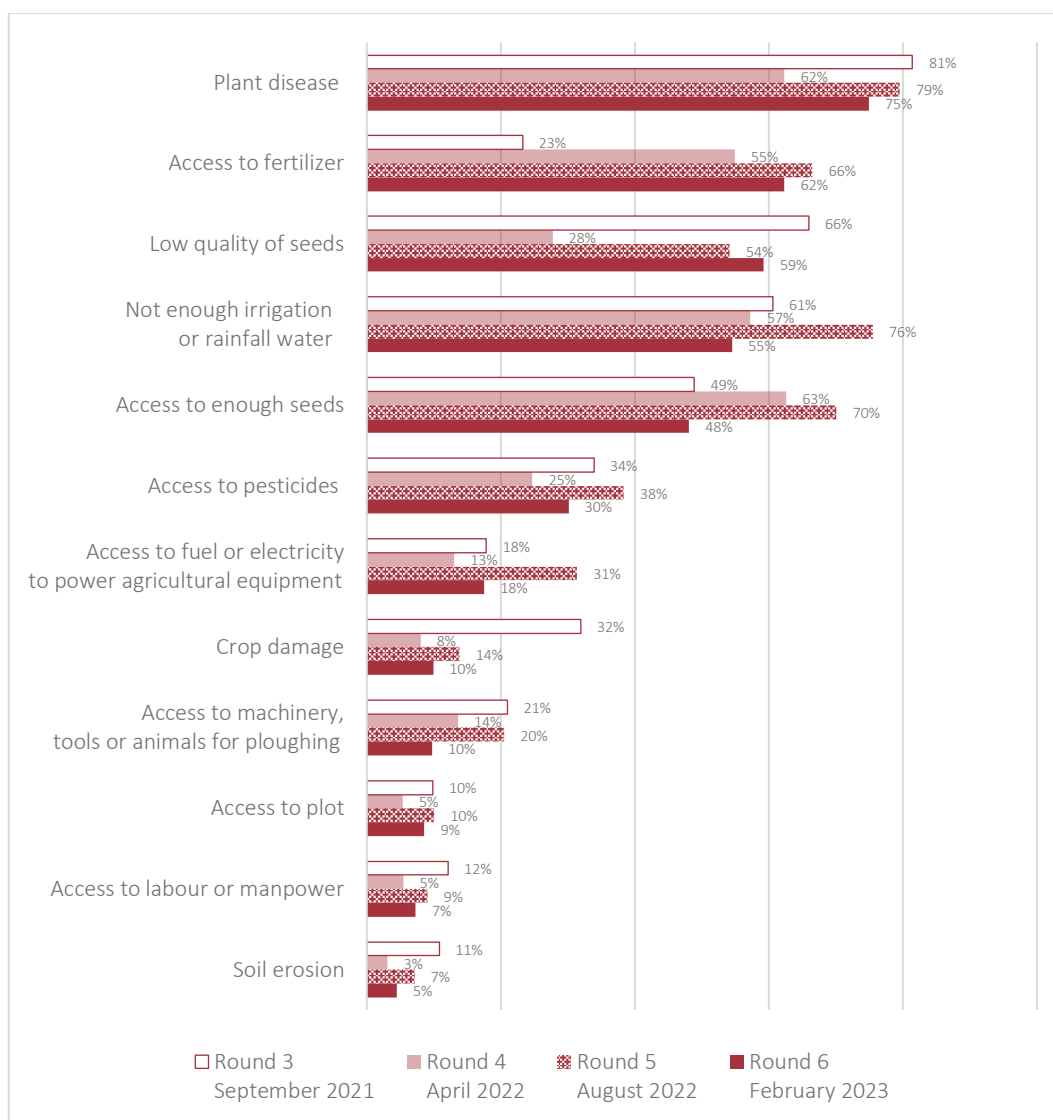


Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

These results suggest the possible effects of decapitalization on planting decisions. The farmers that reported a drop in area planted could have done so because they could not afford to plant more land. The adoption of coping strategies that deplete farming assets (the consumption of immature crops, sale of land and reducing investment in crop production) is associated with it.

Almost all crop producers faced difficulties. Plant disease, low quality seeds, access to fertilizer, due to lack of availability in the markets and increased prices, not enough irrigation water, access to seeds and access to insecticides were the most frequently reported difficulties (Figure 6). This pattern depends on the crop. Plant disease and lack of water affected all crops, but access to pesticides was mostly mentioned by fruit and vegetable farmers. Access to seeds was less important for tubers.

Figure 6. Crop production difficulties (percentage of crop producers)

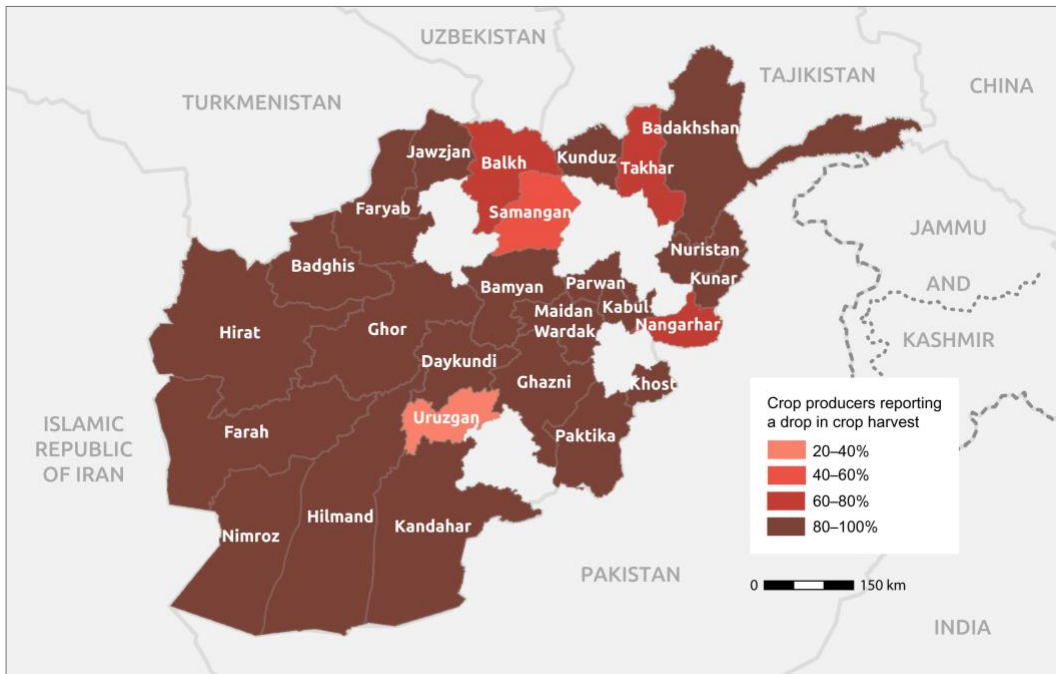


Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

Harvest prospects appear bad for all crops, although less so for vegetables. Ninety-one percent of crop producers reported less and a lot less harvest compared to a typical year – this proportion was eighty-eight percent among wheat producers. Productive assets were strongly associated with harvest estimations. Lack of water and difficulties accessing fertilizer and seeds was associated with poor cereal production; access to fertilizer, seeds and pesticides to poor vegetable production; and lack of water to poor fruit production. Ninety-two percent of farmers who had less than 1 hectare of land harvested less.

Eighty-seven percent of farmers selling wheat reported difficulties, a much higher frequency than other crops (47 percent of fruit farmers reported difficulties and 44 percent of vegetable and pulse farmers reported difficulties).

Figure 7. Share of farmers reporting a drop in production



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023).

In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*, Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

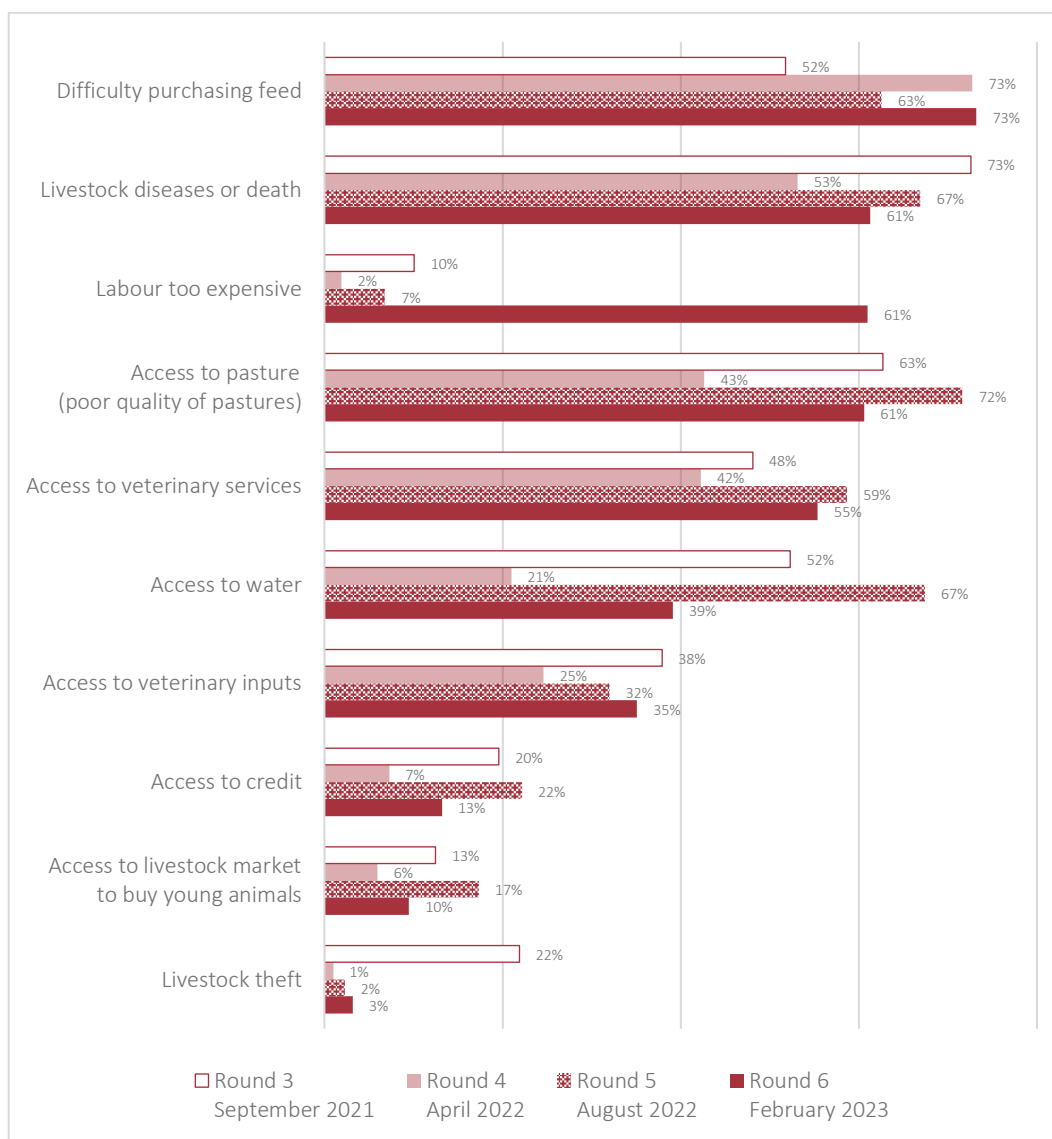
Source of map: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. 2018. Map of Afghanistan. Cited 29 March 2023. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/explore>

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Livestock

The majority of surveyed households owned cattle and small ruminants. Among the livestock producers that were interviewed, almost all of them (95 percent) reported difficulties raising livestock during the survey period. Difficulties purchasing feed due to prices, livestock disease or death, access to pasture due to poor quality, access to veterinary services and inputs, and access to water were the most frequent challenges reported (Figure 8).

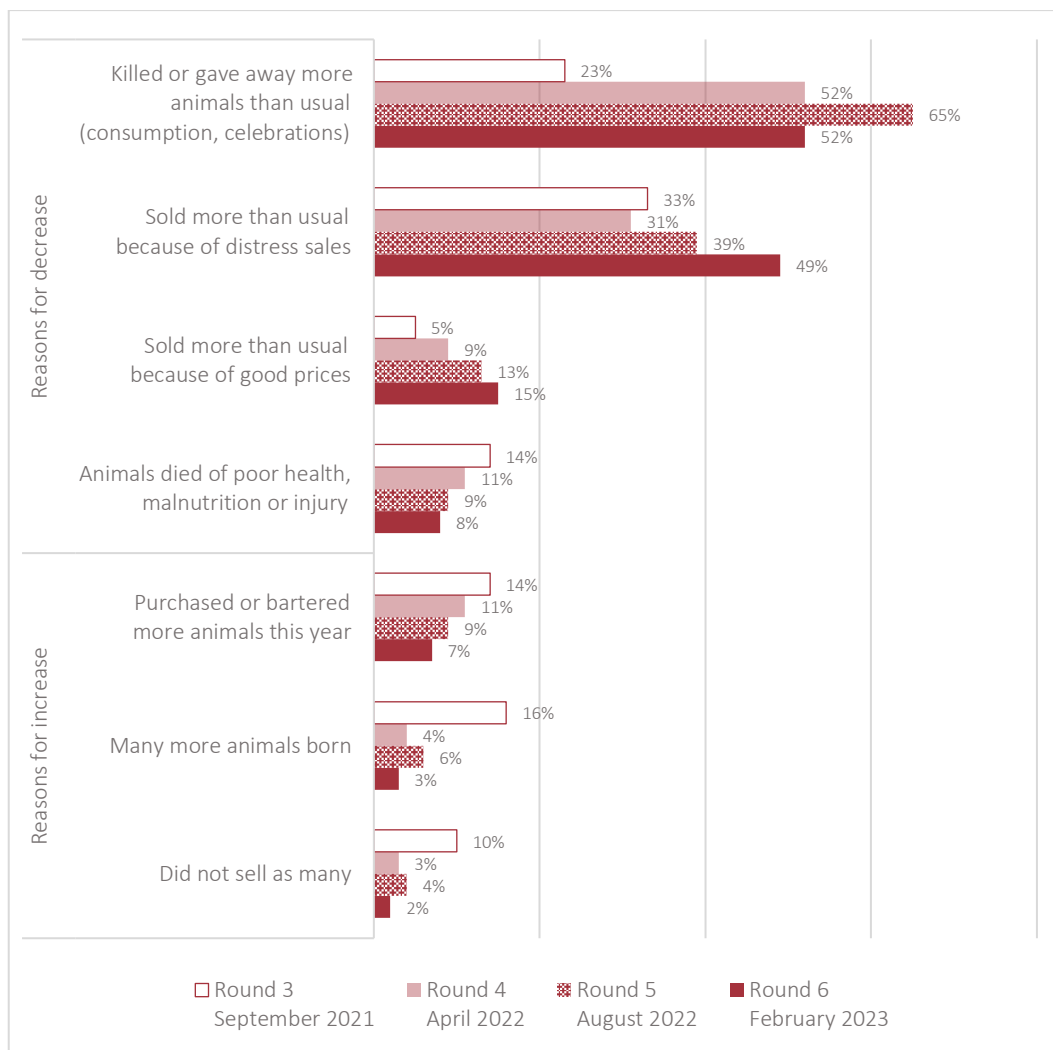
Figure 8. Livestock production difficulties (percentage of livestock producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

Overall, 79 percent of livestock producers reported having fewer animals compared to the same month last year. Distress sales explain this reduction in most cases, as producers were unable to feed the animals, and needed money to pay for basic household needs. Other reasons for the reduction include animal death due to poor health, malnutrition or injury, and killing or giving away more animals than usual for household consumption (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Reported reasons for the increase and decrease in the number of livestock (percentage of livestock producers)



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

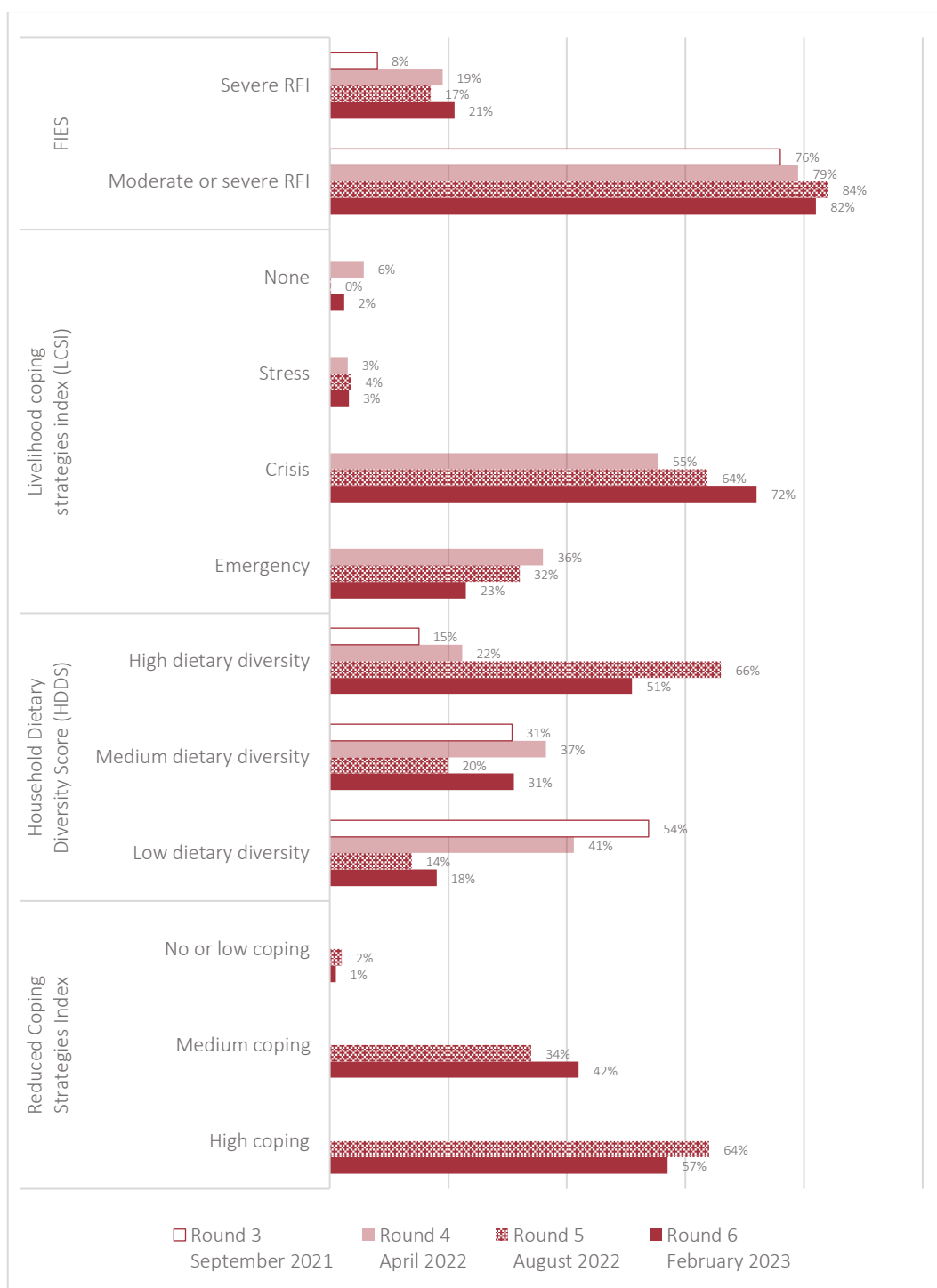
Animal death and distress sales were two problems for all species. Access to feed can be linked to difficulties maintaining the same number of animals, and pasture conditions were bad impacting the ability to keep animals.

Food security

All food security indicators have deteriorated since the previous round during the lean season. The prevalence of recent moderate and severe food insecurity improved slightly but remained very high (82 percent). Severe RFI, as measured with the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), increased from 17 percent in August 2022 to 21 percent in February 2023 (Figure 11).¹

¹ FIES results are subject to change. The country scale will continue to evolve over additional rounds of data collection allowing for more consistent comparability across rounds.

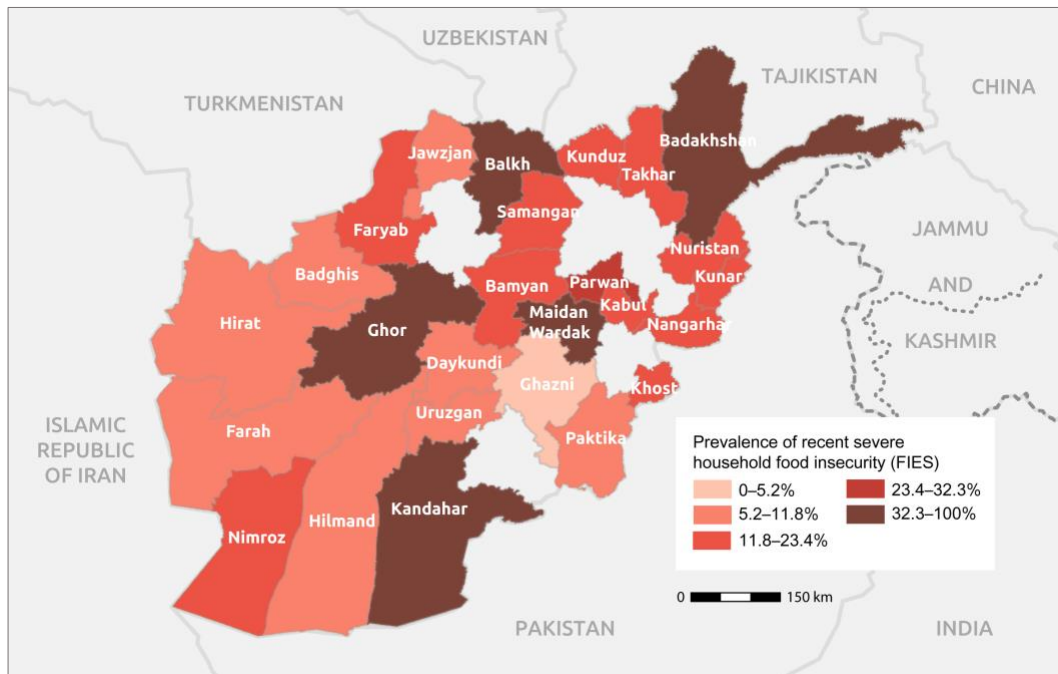
Figure 10. Food security measures



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

The prevalence of food insecurity is high in all provinces, but particularly in Maidan Wardak (Figure 12). In some provinces, such as Kabul and Kandahar, the indicators measuring dietary diversity (HDDS and the food consumption score) are better than in other areas. However, this is not complemented by the LCSi nor the prevalence of RFI suggesting probable gaps in consumption in these areas until the next harvest.

Figure 11. Prevalence of severe RFI by province



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023).

In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

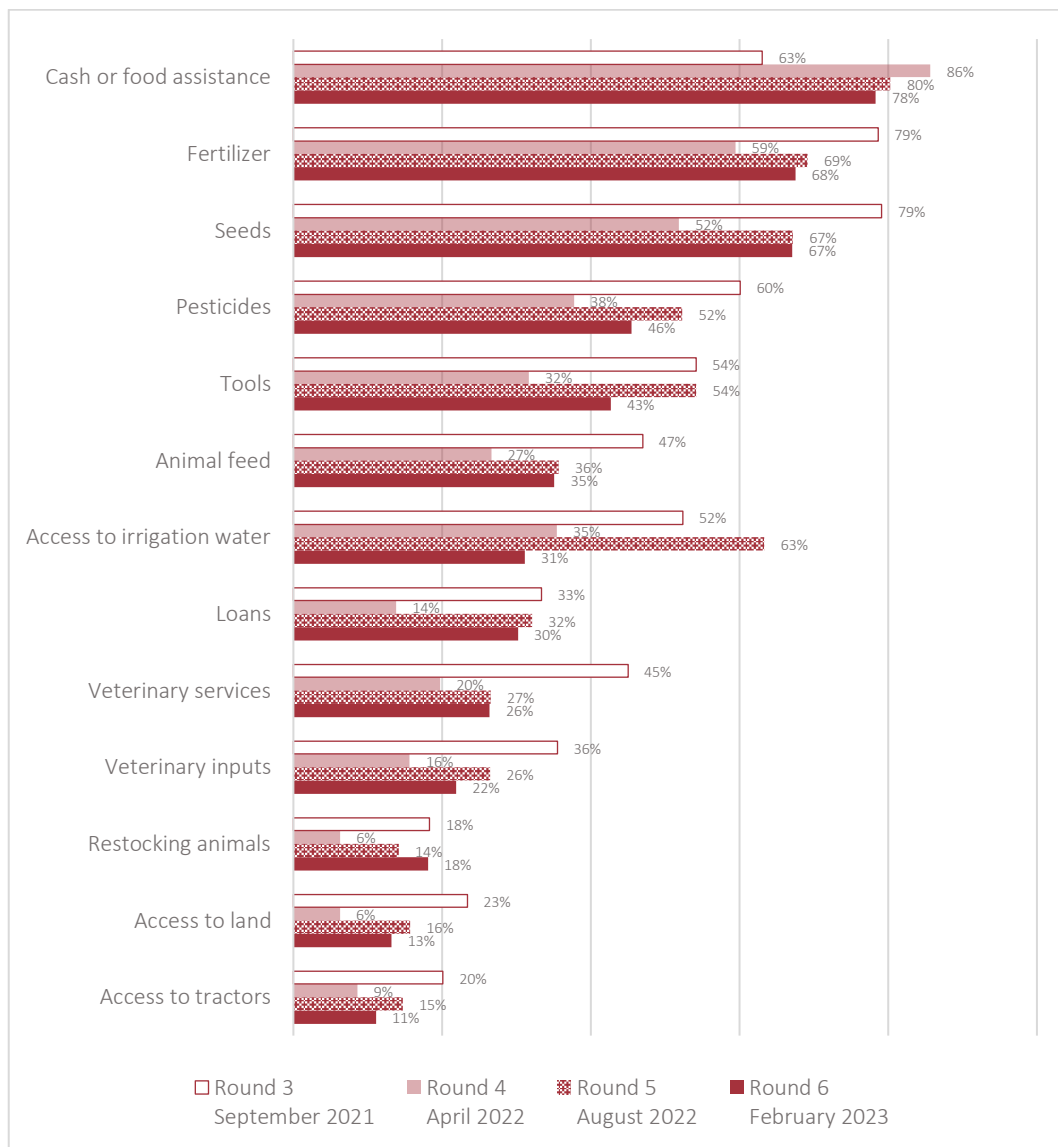
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Needs

All surveyed households reported a need for assistance (Figure 16). Cash or food assistance were the most frequently reported needs among non-agricultural households. Fertilizer, seeds, access to irrigation water and tools were most frequently cited among crop producers. The need for pesticides was reported by both crop producers and livestock herders, and animal feed and veterinary services were the most frequently cited needs by livestock herders. Land rehabilitation was a declared need for the provinces affected by the June 22 earthquake (Khost and Paktika) and in Maidan Wardak.

Figure 12. Most frequent needs



Source of data: FAO. 2023. Afghanistan: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (September 2021, April and August 2022, and February 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. Cited 29 March 2023. data-in-emergencies.fao.org

Recommendations

Short-term recommendations (1–6 months)

- > Scaling up urgent humanitarian response and livelihood protection programmes to protect the lives of farmers, herders and landless people in rural areas, particularly female-headed households. Households experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity require food and cash assistance (where feasible) in order to prevent further deterioration of food security.
- > Preservation of water and improvement of water availability in pastures through the establishment of natural resource management and pasture management associations, and increasing their capacity for water preservation and natural resource management.
- > Scaling up support for livestock keepers and herders, especially those who have decapitalized with livestock protection packages that include deworming services, vaccination, drugs, trainings and linkages to local extension services. Distribution of improved fodder (alfalfa, berseem, sorghum, maize, etc.) and introduction of methods for making hay, silage, urea treatment and concentrated feed.

Long-term recommendations (6 months and beyond)

- > Development of policies to diversify and improve crop production of high-value crops and job creation. During the upcoming planting season, support crop producers with high-value summer crops. High-value crop farms provide equal employment opportunities for women who often take on roles like sowing, weeding, fertilizer application and picking, ensuring equal decision-making at farm level.
- > Scaling up pest control campaigns and long-term strategies to minimize pest and disease outbreaks by using disease and pest-resistant crops, practicing crop rotation and using adequate cultivation techniques to allow for pest and disease management.
- > Improving local availability, affordability and access to quality agricultural inputs and ensuring productivity growth. The use of high-quality seeds ensures that seeds can withstand different climatic, environmental and/or pest-specific stresses allowing for fewer pesticides.
- > Linking farmers to markets through continued market practices and improving agricultural value chains. Providing and maintaining the continuity of supply

chains by emphasizing market information systems and post-harvest practices including conservation, storage, drying, and processing of grains, fresh fruit, vegetables and animal products.

- > Enhancing programming that focuses on linking humanitarian assistance to development, and the expansion of irrigation facilities to minimize dependence on rain-fed agriculture and sustain the economy of rural communities.



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