

Farming Under Pressure

Challenges Facing Farmers in Syria



Acknowledgement:

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1. Introduction

Agriculture plays an important role in Syria's economy, providing employment and income for a large share of the population. It supports rural communities, contributes to food security, and is considered the backbone of many households. Prior to the crisis, the agricultural sector employed around 21.9% of Syrians. As of 2022, around 15.5% of the labour force remained engaged in the sector.¹ The Syrian crisis has had a profound impact on the sector, with irrigation systems and production infrastructure damaged, markets disrupted, land contaminated with explosive ordnance (EO), and housing, land, and property (HLP) issues restricting farmers' access to their land. At the same time, recurrent drought, desertification, economic deterioration, and weakened institutions have also affected rural livelihoods. Women, youth, and displaced populations remain among the most vulnerable groups in affected rural communities.²

In 2025, the country experienced one of the worst droughts on record in nearly 36 years, affecting nearly 75% of cultivated areas and resulting in crop failures, poor pasture conditions, and water shortages. The drought is also driving competition over limited water and grazing resources, increasing tensions between farmers and herders, while disease and pest outbreaks threaten the remaining crops and livestock. Furthermore, declining incomes are forcing households to adopt negative coping strategies, such as selling productive assets or potentially migrating, and limiting their ability to access agricultural inputs and irrigation.³

Against the backdrop of challenges facing Syria's agricultural sector, the Ministry of Agriculture launched its National Agriculture Strategy 2026–2030 in February 2026. The strategy underlines improving crop varieties, promoting climate-resilient farming, and ensuring the sustainable use of water and land resources. This comes during ongoing efforts by the ministry to support the sector's production processes, rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure, and inspect damage caused by climatic conditions.⁴ This represents an important step toward supporting the sector, addressing farmers' needs, and climate-related challenges.

Building on the need to better understand the challenges facing farmers in Syria amid ongoing, multifaceted pressures, including those related to climate change, this briefing report draws on farmers' lived experiences to examine how these challenges affect their ability to sustain their livelihoods within the agriculture sector. It analyses farmers' coping strategies and identifies gaps that limit their resilience.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-labour-market-assessment-report>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-emergency-and-resilience-plan-2026-2028>

³ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/bf52f354-c8f3-4f3f-9367-4d5347016c7b>

⁴ <https://moaar.gov.sy/article/417325>

Additionally, it aims to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders about farmers' needs and adaptive capacities, while highlighting the impacts on the most vulnerable groups, including women, youth, children, and returnees. It provides key recommendations in relation to the farmers' identification of priority challenges, needs, and actions. The brief targets decision-makers, donors, and humanitarian and development actors engaged in Syria's agricultural sector by informing policies, programming, and resource allocation. It emphasises farmers' experiences, challenges, and capacities to ensure a more effective and inclusive response that strengthens livelihoods and resilience, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

2. Methodology

This briefing report is based on qualitative data, presenting farmers' voices and perspectives on the challenges they face, along with their own analysis of the issues affecting their livelihoods. Data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with a range of stakeholders, including male and female farmers and representatives from local institutions. This approach ensured that the findings reflect diverse experiences and provide insight into constraints, coping mechanisms, and priorities identified by the farming communities themselves. Data collection took place throughout November and December 2025 in 3 governorates, Daraa, Rural Damascus, and Homs, covering 7 locations⁵, with 7 FGDs with male farmers, 7 FGDs with female farmers, and 11 KIIs with members of municipalities, farmers' associations, community representatives, and directors of agriculture.

3. Farming Under Pressure

Throughout data collection, farmers emphasised agriculture as the primary income source for their communities and households, underscoring its central role in their livelihoods and how the practice and experience are passed down through generations. Farming in these communities is not only an economic activity but also a social and cultural foundation that shapes daily life and families' realities. Despite its central role in supporting households and local economies, agriculture and farmers face a range of challenges that require them to constantly adapt and navigate an uncertain environment shaped by almost 15 years of crises, economic constraints, and escalating climate pressures.

“If we farm, we eat; if we don't farm, we don't eat.” Woman FGD participant, Al Zabadani.

⁵ Rural Damascus: Bait Sawa- Al Nashabyia - Al Zabadani. Daraa: Alma, Nawa, Tafas. Homs: Talbeesa

- **Challenges Related to Agricultural Inputs, High Operational Costs, and Access to Markets**

One of the major challenges reported by farmers is access to agricultural inputs, including seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides, which are available in the local market but are sold at high prices, beyond the financial abilities of most farmers. As a result, farmers are often forced to purchase inputs on credit, increasing their debt and affecting their finances. In many cases, farmers reported having no option but to obtain agricultural inputs from traders (also called brokers) in exchange for selling their crops at lower prices than in the open market. This arrangement enables those traders to resell the crops at higher prices, while farmers are left with smaller profits or, in some instances, incur losses. Additionally, farmers indicated that the quality of inputs available in the markets is often poor, worsening these difficulties, especially given the lack of effective market monitoring. Those findings were similar to those of DRC's Labour Market Assessment Report, which noted that unaffordable agricultural inputs are affecting farmers and agricultural productivity. The report further indicated that farmers in Hama and Homs reported challenges related to counterfeit fertilisers and low-quality pesticides, with weak regulation and limited inspection by authorities.⁶

Another key challenge is the high operational costs, including wages for daily workers, renting machinery such as tractors, and purchasing fuel needed to operate water wells. In terms of infrastructure, in areas affected by the conflict, water wells and irrigation networks have been damaged or destroyed. As a result, some farmers have been forced to invest heavily in rehabilitating their water wells and farmland, often selling assets such as gold to cover these expenses, while many lack the financial means to do the same and leave their land uncultivated.

“The whole family works on the land: the husband, the wife, and the children, so they can save the cost of daily workers.” Male FGD participant, Al Nashabyia.

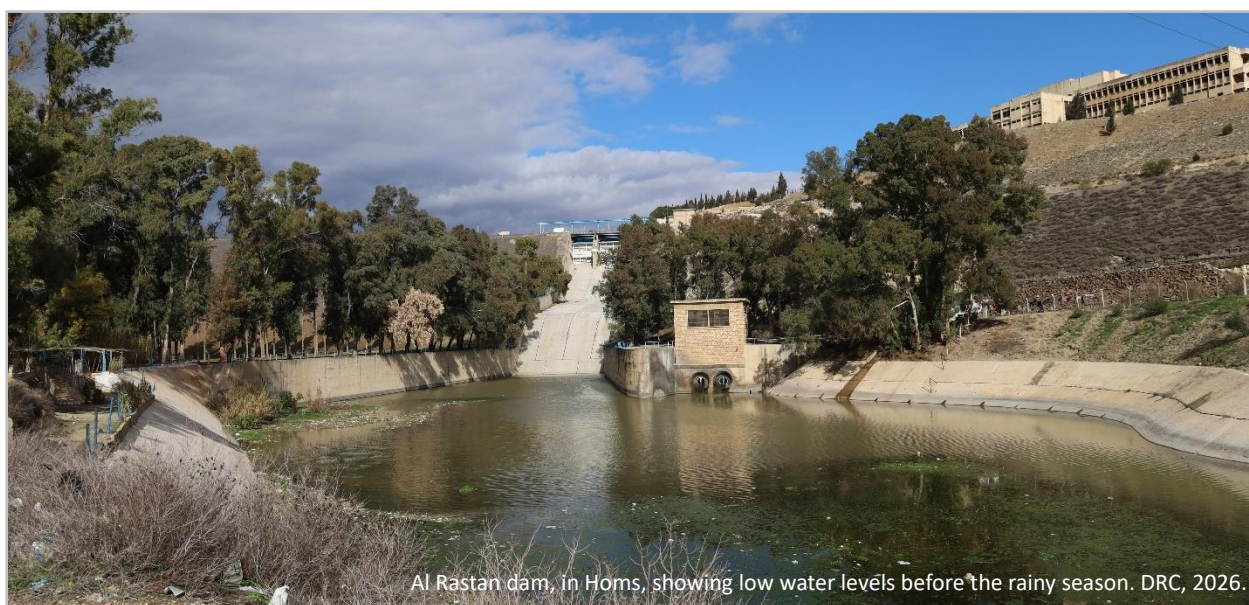
Additionally, farmers bear high transportation costs to reach markets and their land. In some cases, farmers are forced to sell their produce to traders at lower prices because farmers cannot cover transportation costs. In certain locations, farmers have even reported having to dump their crops because transportation costs would exceed the profits from selling the produce. In addition to these challenges, farmers are struggling with volatile market prices, resulting in low profit margins. Competition from

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-labour-market-assessment-report>

imported products was noted in some areas⁷, especially for products such as potatoes, which are sold at lower prices than local produce. In the rest of the areas, this issue was less frequently mentioned, with respondents noting that local products are cheaper and of better quality, and citing the need to support farmers' ability to export their products. One of the strategies farmers mentioned for tackling climate change related issues was using greenhouses, but they were unable to do so due to the high associated cost.

These factors make it increasingly difficult for agriculture to remain profitable. This situation is worsened by limited access to finance, with many farmers struggling to secure loans or other forms of financial support. Farmers have indicated that they are investing more in their land than they are receiving in return, making the situation frustrating and exhausting. As a result, many are being forced to sell their land, abandon farming, and shift to other sources of income, such as working as daily workers for landowners who can still afford to farm their land or in construction or other sectors.

- **Challenges Related to Water Scarcity and Climate Change**



Al Rastan dam, in Homs, showing low water levels before the rainy season. DRC, 2026.

Another main challenge facing farmers is water scarcity. In 2025, the sector faced one of the worst droughts, devastating the wheat harvest, a staple for Syrian households. It is estimated that production will fall to between 900,000 and 1.1 million tons, among the lowest harvests ever recorded in Syria.⁸

⁷ This was mentioned in Talbeesa in Homs (Men FGD) and Nawa in Daraa (Men FGD). Al Nashabyia in Rural Damascus (Female FGD)

⁸ <https://www.fao.org/syria/news/details/the-syrian-arab-republic--farmers-struggle-amid-worst-agricultural-crisis-in-decades/en>

According to a drought assessment carried out by the DRC-led Syria Community Consortium⁹ in Nashabiyeh, Hosh Nasri, and Rural Damascus, more than 95% of farming households experienced crop losses in 2025, with 14% losing nearly their entire harvest. Wheat and barley yields declined by as much as 75%, and severe water shortages combined with unaffordable agricultural inputs forced many farmers to stop farming. 98% of surveyed households reported a reduction in their income.¹⁰

Reduced precipitation has forced many farmers to depend heavily on groundwater for irrigation, often requiring them to dig deeper wells to access water. This process is frequently unregulated, leading to unsustainable water extraction, groundwater depletion, and increased salinity. Furthermore, the growing dependence on water wells increases operational costs, creating an additional financial constraint for farmers. During the FGDs, farmers repeatedly cited using solar energy to operate water wells as a key factor in enhancing their adaptability to challenges related to water scarcity and increasing operational costs. Farmers have reported shifting to crops that require less water, such as cultivating barley instead of wheat, or growing summer crops instead of winter crops to better align with prevailing weather conditions. Furthermore, extreme weather events, including droughts, low temperatures, heatwaves, and frost, are affecting crop production and causing substantial losses for farmers. These impacts often result in the loss of an entire season's harvest, thereby limiting farmers' ability to prepare for subsequent seasons and meet their basic needs. In cases where agricultural production is credit-financed, reduced production affects farmers' ability to repay debts, leading to major financial burdens.

“One night of frost and the whole crop is lost.” Woman FGD participant, Al Zabadani.

- **Lack of Sufficient Support and Access to Information**

While some farmers reported receiving assistance from various organizations or subsidized inputs, such as seeds, from the government, the majority indicated that they do not receive adequate support and that the assistance they do receive is often insufficient and inconsistent. They highlighted the need for more comprehensive support, including effective agricultural training in climate change adaptation and consistent extension services, to enhance their resilience and adaptability. On the other hand, while they acknowledged the importance of training and raising awareness, they indicated that awareness alone is

⁹ The Syria Community Consortium consists of the Danish Refugee Council, the International Medical Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Oxfam.

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-community-consortium-drought-assessment-report-2025-2026-enar>

insufficient; an integrated approach is important. They stressed that financial assistance is also crucial to enable farmers to apply the knowledge they gain, build their capacity to adapt to changing conditions, including climate change, and support their ability to rehabilitate and farm their lands.

Farmers also stressed the importance of extension services and the government's monitoring role in overseeing markets to ensure that agricultural inputs are of good quality and not expired. In an interview, a member of the Directorate of Agriculture in one of the governorates explained that during the transition period, there was a major disruption in regulatory oversight and that market monitoring was largely absent. He added that the government is now taking steps to address this.

Farmers further emphasised the need for reliable, timely information as part of early warning mechanisms to help them prepare for extreme weather events. Access to accurate weather forecasts and early alerts enables them to adjust planting and irrigation schedules and other farming practices, allowing them to prepare and protect their crops. Farmers reported receiving weather forecast information from relevant government institutions; however, they noted that this information is not always reliable. In addition to official sources, they also access weather updates online to support their preparation and decision-making.

- **Explosive Ordnance Contamination**

Syria remains one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world, with EO posing not only a severe life-threatening and protection risk but also a major structural barrier to recovery, investment in the agriculture sector, rural livelihoods, and safe return. Agricultural and grazing lands are some of the most contaminated areas. According to the Syria Mine Action Area of Responsibility, around 63% of EO-related incidents since December 2024 have taken place in agricultural or grazing areas.¹¹ These incidents are largely linked to civilians pursuing livelihood activities, such as farming and livestock grazing, which have become among the most dangerous activities for Syrians. Furthermore, EO contamination undermines security, restricts access to grazing land, farming areas, and water points, prevents the reconstruction of buildings and sanitation facilities, and disrupts livelihoods. Insecurity increases with high-risk behaviours such as self-clearance, scrap collection, grazing, or farming in suspected areas.¹² This highlights how EO contamination is a major constraint on the agricultural sector, creating barriers to

¹¹ As of 03 April 2026.

¹² DRC Multi-Sectorial Needs Assessment, December 2025.

agricultural recovery, the restoration of rural livelihoods, and the safe return of individuals seeking to reclaim their land and resume farming activities.

During the FGDs, farmers reported that EO contamination is a major constraint on agricultural production, limiting their ability to cultivate their land and preventing livestock owners from accessing grazing areas. Many communities have reported casualties among farmers and other community members, including children, caused by EO, as well as the loss of livestock. As a result, the majority of farmers in areas suspected of contamination are choosing not to cultivate their land due to fear and increased risk. However, some continue to take these risks to sustain their livelihoods, particularly in the absence of alternative income sources. In some cases, farmers said they avoided land that had been on the front lines or where armed groups were present, as it could potentially be contaminated. In other cases, farmers assessed risks based on livestock grazing; if animals could graze without incidents, the land was considered likely to be safe. These practices highlight the urgent need to increase awareness and allocate resources to identify and clear contaminated land. Some of the examples shared by the farmers highlight the hidden dangers that persist even on land considered safe. For instance, farmers might cultivate their land without incident, only for an EO incident to happen during harvest. In another case, an incident occurred only when heavy machinery was used, rather than manual labour, triggering an EO explosion. These examples highlight the unpredictable risks and the importance of systematic clearance and ongoing awareness efforts.

Regarding awareness, farmers reported receiving information about the dangers of EO via text messages, brochures, and awareness sessions in schools. However, they stressed that further and sustained awareness efforts are still needed, particularly for children, who remain among the most vulnerable groups.

- **Loss of Documentation and Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) Challenges**

The loss of civil documentation and HLP challenges, particularly among returnees, were other key issues reported by farmers. Land tenure insecurity poses a significant obstacle in the agricultural sector, especially in conflict-affected areas. Displacement, loss of property records, and informal land occupation have impacted returnees' ability to access their land. Moreover, unclear boundaries and conflicting claims hinder investment, limit access to credit, and escalate social tensions, with ineffective dispute resolution remaining a significant challenge¹³.

¹³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-labour-market-assessment-report>

Many farmers indicated that they face difficulties proving land ownership due to lost, damaged, or inaccessible documentation. This directly limits their ability to access loans and agricultural support provided by various actors, as proof of ownership is often required to qualify for assistance. Without such support, farmers struggle to cultivate their land, leaving them in a cycle of vulnerability and dependence on negative or unsustainable coping mechanisms. This issue also contributes to disputes and tensions over land ownership, especially in areas where land registration and documentation systems are weak and no longer function effectively. This increases conflicts between community members and limits farmers' abilities to safely access and use their land. According to farmers, resolving disputes and tensions mainly relies on local resolution mechanisms. These include mediation by community leaders, local authorities, and community-based reconciliation committees, which serve as the main avenues for dispute resolution.

- **Lack of Spaces to Share Farmers' Voices**

Farmers often discussed the role of farmers' associations and local agriculture directorates as important platforms for raising concerns and accessing support. While they acknowledged that these institutions provide some assistance, they also noted that their capacities are limited and that a stronger, more proactive role is needed to effectively support farmers' needs. Some farmers emphasised that their voices are not always heard, highlighting the importance of being consulted by both governmental and non-governmental actors, especially in designing assistance programs. For example, as mentioned by farmers, their input can guide assistance programs by identifying the type and quality of agricultural inputs needed, ensuring that responses are aligned with farmers' priorities, scheduling support to align with the farming season, and involving them in the design phase to help create integrated approaches that combine providing agricultural inputs, training, and other support in a coordinated way. Effective inclusion in decision-making processes could help ensure that agricultural interventions are better tailored to local needs and realities, improving the effectiveness of support and strengthening community resilience. At the same time, support should aim to increase farmers' independence through sustainable and capacity-building assistance to decrease dependency on assistance.

4. Women, Youth, and Children's Participation in the Sector



A female farmer working in an agricultural field in Daraa, DRC, 2025.

Women play a key role in agriculture in Syria, although their responsibilities are often focused on specific tasks. Their recent participation in the sector has been shaped by the displacement, detention, or unemployment of men, with women taking on activities such as sowing, harvesting, herding, and processing. Despite their essential role, their contributions remain informal and undervalued; for example, women in the wheat and olive sectors report earning 20–50% less than men. A study by the Directorate of Rural Women’s Development at the Ministry of Agriculture found that women perform 70% of manual tasks, such as picking and sorting, and nearly 50% of harvesting, packing, and packaging. This emphasises that even when undervalued, women form the backbone of agricultural work in Syria.¹⁴ It is worth noting that given women’s roles in agriculture, particularly in harvesting and grazing, they are among the groups facing risks of EO contamination while performing these activities.

During the FGDs, both male and female farmers reported that men typically handle planning, decision-making, purchasing agricultural inputs, and selling crops. Strategic decisions, including crop selection, access to finance, and marketing, are primarily made by the male head of household. While most farmers noted that women are usually consulted, they said that final decisions are made by men, who are perceived as having more experience and therefore better able to make them. In contrast, women are heavily involved in labour-intensive tasks such as weeding, planting, harvesting, and applying pesticides.

¹⁴ <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2121909/N2429576.pdf>

They also participate in sorting, packing, and preparing produce for transport to markets. Additionally, women carry out these agricultural tasks alongside household responsibilities, creating a dual burden that places more pressure on them, especially when working on family farms to reduce labour costs, which can limit women's access to education, paid employment, and other opportunities.

Youth also play a key role in the agricultural sector, contributing to various farming activities. However, many farmers report that young people often earn low incomes from agricultural work, making it difficult to sustain their livelihoods and build their futures. As a result, some youth seek alternative sources of income outside agriculture. Children also play a key role in farming. Many begin working on family farms or other agricultural land at an early age, around 10 or 12, providing labour to support their families. Like women, they often work without pay on family land, which in many cases forces them to leave school to support their families, especially when they can't afford education.

“People are leaving schools because they need to eat. I have a worker who is 10 years old. I hired him because they are in need.” Male FGD participant, Al Zabadani.

When farmers were asked about the most vulnerable groups in their communities, responses varied, but there was broad agreement that women, youth, and children are among the most vulnerable. Women were found to be particularly vulnerable because they often depend on male family members for their needs and usually lack an independent source of income, leaving them especially exposed if the person they rely on is absent. Youth were identified as vulnerable due to limited job opportunities, which can force some to drop out of school and engage in low-income activities. Farmers also highlighted the mental and emotional burden on youth, who face significant challenges in planning their futures and obtaining stable employment. Children were also identified as vulnerable, as many had to leave school at a young age to work and support their families. Returnees were also identified as among the most vulnerable, particularly those returning to homes and farmland that were damaged or destroyed, and with limited financial resources, they are unable to invest in their land and restore their livelihoods. As a result, some returnees abandon agriculture, looking for alternative livelihoods or relocating to other areas in search of better income opportunities.

“Some returnees came back to find their houses unsuitable to live in, dire living conditions in the community, climate challenges such as drought, a lack of job opportunities, and high costs of goods. They were also unable to farm their land, so they left for other areas in search of income.” Male FGD participant, Daraa.

5. Farmers’ coping mechanisms

In the face of several challenges, farmers often adopt coping mechanisms that provide short-term relief but could have negative long-term consequences, threatening their livelihoods and limiting their ability to adapt sustainably and build resilience. Many farmers are forced to reduce the size of the land they cultivate or abandon farming altogether. Others sell their land or turn to daily labour or alternative income sources, such as trade or construction, leaving their fields unfarmed. Some have shifted to low-cost, low-yield crops to minimise expenses, even though this reduces their income. The financial burden also pushes farmers to rely on debt, even when market prices and high operational costs cannot cover these expenses. In many cases, farmers are migrating to other areas in search of better income opportunities as farming becomes increasingly unsustainable and unprofitable, while some continue working on their lands despite being suspected of EO contamination.

To manage labour shortages and reduce costs, women and children, who often drop out of school, often work on the lands owned by their families as unpaid workers to support their families financially. Child marriage was also mentioned, mainly due to norms and traditions, but also as a coping strategy to reduce the economic burden on their families.

“I chose to get married at the age of 16 because I didn’t want to go to the land with my father and work in agriculture. I am 31 years old now, and I regret marrying at an early age.” Woman FGD participant, Bait Sawa.

Despite the farmers’ strong commitment to their land and desire to continue farming, the continuous adoption of short-term coping strategies comes at a high cost. These strategies focus on survival rather than long-term prosperity, particularly in the absence of sufficient assistance. As a result, many farmers remain vulnerable, placing their future and the role of agriculture as a key sector of Syria’s economy at risk. Farmers reported the need to adopt climate-smart farming practices, but a lack of financial capacity to do so. They stated that support is particularly necessary because adopting these practices takes time

and requires consistent assistance for farmers who cannot afford to go without income during the transition to new methods. Some of the mentioned climate-smart practices included shifting to drought-resistant crops, using solar energy, and installing drip irrigation networks.

6. Access to information

Many farmers indicated that they rely on the knowledge and skills inherited from their parents and gained through years of farming experience. They also exchange information and experience among themselves and often seek guidance from farmers' associations or agriculture directorates. Typically, they request information on crop diseases, quality assurance of agricultural inputs available in the market, and issues related to climate change and weather forecasts to prepare for extreme conditions. Farmers also look for information on available support programs.

While farmers acknowledge they have good experience, they emphasised the need for up-to-date information on climate change adaptation and crop disease management, particularly for drought-related conditions. They mentioned multiple channels for receiving information, including TV, radio, social media, and the internet. However, they noted that not all farmers have access to the internet or can afford the associated costs. Some regions also suffer from limited network coverage. Mosques/Friday prayers, schools, brochures, and seminars were also mentioned as sources of information.



Mohammed is showing their abandoned water well. DRC, 2025.

“We come from a family where everyone works in agriculture; we don’t know anything else to do,” said Mohamed, 59, and Thanaa, 56, from the Al Nashabyia area. Both have worked in agriculture alongside their families since childhood. They are part of an extended family consisting of seven family units who live close to each other and rely mainly on agriculture for their income. The family said that water is the most essential factor for farming. **“Water is everything; without water, we cannot farm,”** they explained. The families depended on a well on their land for irrigation, but it has been dry for almost a year. The well is 15 meters deep and currently contains no water. To restore access, the well would need to be dug deeper or a new one constructed, but in both cases, the costs are high and unaffordable.

For now, the families rely on water trucking and obtaining some water from their neighbours. Their farming activities are limited by the available water, so they cannot operate at full capacity.

Despite these challenges, the family remains hopeful about their future in agriculture: **“Agriculture is important for us and for Syria. We just need water and support to continue.”**

7. Conclusion

The agricultural sector in Syria remains the backbone of the country's economy and rural communities. Years of conflict, economic deterioration, and displacement have left farmers facing complex, overlapping challenges that affect productivity and long-term resilience. Gender inequalities persist, with women playing a key role in the sector but facing barriers to full participation and economic empowerment. Despite efforts by various actors, major gaps remain in women's access to financial support, timely information, climate-smart guidance, and meaningful participation in decision-making spaces.

Insights shared by farmers highlight the vulnerabilities affecting their livelihoods and their ability to sustain productive participation in the sector. In addition to high operational costs, limited access to quality agricultural inputs, damaged infrastructure, and restricted market participation, drought and water scarcity worsen these challenges, forcing shifts in agricultural practices and limiting productivity. Many farmers resort to short-term or negative coping strategies, which undermine long-term resilience. Furthermore, EO contamination, loss of documentation, and HLP issues add another layer of vulnerability, particularly for returnees, restricting access to land and safe farming practices.

Among vulnerable groups, returnees are among the most affected by the compounded impacts of crisis and climate change. Many already face multiple challenges upon return, including damaged infrastructure, limited access to services, and the loss of assets essential to rebuilding their livelihoods. These challenges are exacerbated by climate change, which adds another layer of vulnerability and exposes them to shocks that hinder their ability to adapt and recover. Addressing these intersecting risks is essential to advancing durable solutions to displacement, allowing returnees not only to rebuild their lives but also to strengthen their resilience and support long-term recovery.

Despite women's key role in the sector, their contributions are still undervalued. They bear a double burden of household responsibilities and labour-intensive agricultural activities, while facing restricted access to decision-making spaces and independent farming opportunities. In the FGDs, women expressed the need for finance to start small businesses to support their economic independence and their families' needs. Young people also experience limited educational and job opportunities and low incomes, trapping them in cycles of vulnerability and increasing their adoption of negative coping mechanisms. Children are often forced to leave school for work, which not only reduces their future prospects but also exposes them to protection risks and exploitation.

Climate change has been, and will continue to be, a significant risk multiplier in Syria, interacting with conflict and economic decline. Recurrent droughts, rising temperatures, and water scarcity have affected agricultural livelihoods, pushing many individuals to seek alternative income opportunities through migration.

The impact of climate change on farmers must be understood in the context of these pre-existing vulnerabilities. Damaged infrastructure, limited access to resources, and barriers to market participation make adaptation to climate change difficult. Overlapping stresses trap farmers in a cycle of vulnerability, where climate change threatens their ability to secure stable incomes, affecting households and the sector as a whole. Addressing climate change, therefore, requires more than environmental solutions; it demands a comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic context in which farmers operate. An integrated approach is needed to address these vulnerabilities, including increased support for women and youth, enhanced access to resources and information, and investments in long-term resilience strategies.

Access to timely, reliable information, early warning systems, and technical guidance on climate-smart practices remains limited. Local institutions, such as farmers' associations and agriculture directorates, provide some support, but their capacity is insufficient. Inclusive spaces are needed to ensure that farmers' voices are included in the planning and decision-making processes. Additionally, improved access to capital and resources are essential for farmers' sustainability and resilience. Furthermore, effective market monitoring is essential to ensure the quality of agricultural inputs and to track price fluctuations, allowing farmers to access reliable, affordable supplies and make informed, cost-effective decisions. With access to finance and active participation in markets, farmers can invest in their land, reduce reliance on negative coping strategies, and strengthen the overall sustainability of their livelihoods.

Addressing EO contamination is critical, as agricultural lands are among the most affected areas and farmers are among the most impacted groups. Mine action should be systematically integrated into agricultural recovery, rural infrastructure rehabilitation, and climate adaptation programs to ensure investments are safe, sustainable, and accessible to communities. Clearance should be recognized as a prerequisite for both climate adaptation and agricultural investments, serving not only to protect lives but also as an enabler for agricultural investment, climate resilience, and broader rural development.

8. Recommendations:

Strengthen Agricultural Livelihoods, Access, and Climate-Resilient Farming

These recommendations primarily target national and local government institutions responsible for agricultural policy, regulation, and service delivery, with a focus on strengthening the enabling environment and regulatory frameworks. They also target donors, development actors, and civil society organisations, which can provide financial and technical support to strengthen government implementation capacity, strengthen farmers' skills, and deliver targeted financial inclusion and livelihood support initiatives, while also promoting community engagement and accountability.

- Enhance access to affordable credit, targeted input support, and inclusive financial services, while improving market monitoring and regulatory systems to ensure the availability of high-quality and affordable agricultural inputs, supporting productivity, resilience, and climate-adaptive investment.
- Promote climate-smart agriculture by strengthening technical and extension services to improve production systems and practices, advance resource management and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- Support the rehabilitation and restoration of agricultural infrastructure, including rural roads, irrigation systems, and water resources, to enhance climate resilience and ensure sustained access to agricultural land and markets.
- Strengthen the capacity of local institutions, including municipalities and farmers' associations, to support inclusive agricultural planning and service delivery, and to facilitate farmer participation in decision-making on resilience-building and climate adaptation.
- Improve farmers' access to timely and reliable information systems, including market data, climate forecasts, and early warning mechanisms, to support informed decision-making and reduce climate and market risks.

Enhancing Opportunities and Protection for Vulnerable Groups in the Agricultural Sector

These recommendations primarily target national and local government institutions, with an emphasis on strengthening integrated policy frameworks that promote inclusive rural development and address structural inequalities in the agricultural sector affecting women, youth, and children. They also target civil society organisations, which play a key role in implementation and advocacy at the community level, delivering programmes that support livelihoods, capacity development, social inclusion, protection, and

representation, while strengthening outreach to marginalised groups and participation in local decision-making processes.

- Promote equitable participation of women in agricultural decision-making by strengthening institutional and community awareness of women's roles in the sector and expanding access to economic opportunities that enable meaningful and independent participation in agricultural activities.
- Strengthen women's participation in networks, farmers' groups, and cooperatives to enhance peer support, knowledge exchange, and collective capacity, while improving access to finance and skills development opportunities to strengthen their economic empowerment.
- Protect children from exploitation and safeguard access to education by reducing underlying household economic vulnerability through integrated social protection and livelihood support measures.
- Enhance youth engagement in the agricultural sector by expanding access to investment, skills development, and entrepreneurship opportunities, positioning agriculture as a viable pathway for employment, economic advancement, and sustainable income generation.
- Undertake targeted assessments of structural and socio-economic barriers faced by women, youth, and children in the agricultural sector to inform evidence-based programming and strengthen inclusive, responsive, and context-specific interventions.

Cross-Sectoral Approaches to Safe Access and Sustainable Recovery:

These recommendations primarily target mine action actors, relevant authorities, and community stakeholders, with a focus on strengthening coordination and enabling safe access to resources and sustainable recovery. In addition, civil society actors are key stakeholders in inclusive risk management, supporting resource mobilisation and information dissemination, while contributing to participatory approaches that inform more responsive, context-appropriate policy and programming. Donors and development partners also play an enabling role by supporting coordination, financing, capacity strengthening, and the integration of mine action within broader recovery and resilience frameworks.

- Integrate mine action interventions and agricultural recovery programming through coordinated planning and implementation, with mine action positioned as a cross-sectoral enabler of safe

returns, productive land use, and rural resilience, ensuring a coherent approach that enhances recovery outcomes and long-term sustainability.

- Prioritise EO clearance in agricultural land, grazing areas, and water resources to enable safe access, restore productive livelihoods, and support agricultural recovery as part of broader rural resilience efforts.
- Strengthen access to HLP rights by advancing clear and enforceable legal and administrative frameworks that enable equitable restitution, secure tenure, and productive use of land.
- Enhance community and farmer capacity to manage EO risks through targeted risk education, promotion of safe behaviours, and systematic integration of EO risk awareness into agricultural extension and livelihood support services.





Founded in 1956, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is Denmark's largest international NGO, with a specific expertise in forced displacement. DRC is present in close to 40 countries and employs 7,500 staff globally.

DRC advocates for the rights of and solutions for displacement-affected communities, and provides assistance during all stages of displacement: In acute crisis, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return. DRC supports displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies. DRC works with civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and inclusion.

Our 6,200 volunteers in Denmark make an invaluable difference in integration activities throughout the country.

DRC's code of conduct sits at the core of our organizational mission, and DRC aims at the highest ethical and professional standards. DRC has been certified as meeting the highest quality standards according to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

HRH Crown Princess Mary is DRC's patron.

To read more about what we do, see: www.drc.ngo

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• We are there