



18 August 2014 - The fighting in Gaza has forced farmers and herders to abandon their lands and has paralysed fishing activities, bringing local food production to a halt and severely affecting livelihoods.

Around 64,000 head of small ruminants are in need of animal feed and water in order to avoid further animal deaths.

And as a result of the recent fighting, Gaza has lost half of its population of poultry birds (broilers and layers) either due to direct hits on their shelters or lack of water, feed or care resulting from access restrictions.

The Gaza Strip imports most of what it eats - however locally produced food represents an important source of nutritious and affordable food, and some 28,600 households in Gaza rely on farming (19,000 households), livestock raising (6,000) and fishing (3,600) for their livelihoods.

Recovery in the agriculture sector, once hostilities cease, will require significant external assistance over the long term, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) has warned.

The recent fighting has resulted in substantial direct damage to Gaza's 17,000 hectares of croplands as well as much of its agricultural infrastructure, including greenhouses, irrigation systems, animal farms, fodder stocks and fishing boats.

Volatile food prices



Food prices in Gaza have fluctuated considerably compared with before hostilities began, registering significant increases for certain products such as eggs and many vegetables. Upward spikes have ranged from a 40 percent increase in the price of eggs to a 42 percent increase for potatoes to a 179 percent spike in the price of tomatoes.

With local food production halted and food imports curtailed, virtually the entire population of Gaza (about 1.8 million people) is currently reliant on food aid. The World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), together with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) regularly assists about 1.1 million people. Additionally, about 700 000 people are currently relying on the extraordinary food distribution carried out by the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs, UNRWA, and WFP.

Emergency fodder distribution planned

As soon as a permanent ceasefire is established FAO, with support from Canada, will distribute fodder to feed 55 000 small ruminants throughout Gaza for 45 days. The Organization is also positioned to distribute 4 000, 1-cubic metre water tanks to help herders water their animals.

"We have a programme that supports the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods of Gaza fishermen, herders and farmers," said Abdessalam Ould Ahmed, FAO Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa. "We need to get this back on track as soon as hostilities cease, to promote not just survival of Gaza's people but their self-reliant development."

UNRIC's library backgrounder on [Gaza](#)