



Tropentag, September 11-13, 2024, hybrid conference

“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

Impact of crises on wheat availability in Syria: What are the effects on food security?

RAMMAH ZWAN¹, MIROSLAVA BAVOROVÁ¹, KINDAH IBRAHIM¹, GHAITH ALI²

¹*Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Fac. of Tropical AgriScience - Dept. of Economics and Development, Czech Republic*

²*Tishreen University, Dep. of Agricultural Economics, Syria*

Abstract

Agriculture suffered greatly due to the Syrian conflict that began in 2011 and caused severe social, political, economic, and environmental consequences for the entire country. The study aims to identify the situation of wheat production and food security in Syria and how it evolved between 2011 and 2021. A narrative review approach was used to summarise and evaluate articles from scientific journals. The literature search results are synthesised regarding the factors causing a decline in wheat production during the study period, including water shortages as environmental factors and displacement as social and economic consequences of conflict. Furthermore, quantitative data from secondary resources such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and national statistical abstract were used to evaluate the impact of the mentioned factors on wheat production and food security. The food security indicators employed include per capita wheat consumption (kg/person/year), food gap, self-sufficiency ratio, and import dependency ratio. Results show that the availability of wheat was not constant but decreased from 2013 to record its lowest value in 2016 when the available volume reached only 3,870 thousand tons; between 2013 and 2021, the average growth rate reached about -1.7. The most significant food gap for wheat was in 2021, when it reached about (-2456) thousand tons, due to the lack of production that year due to drought and the blockade, which resulted in the lack of fuel needed for irrigation. The amount of wheat available per capita for food decreased from 172 kg annually in 2011 to 132 kg annually in 2016. The availability of wheat per capita decreased at an average rate of -2.4. The research results have important policy implications as food security issues become crucial in Syria in latest years. Maintaining a stable wheat production, as the main staple food in Syria, is essential to keeping the food security at an acceptable level. This will require massive structural changes in the agricultural sector which needs further research to identify the policies needed to lead that change.

Keywords: Agricultural policies, conflict, food security, Syria, wheat production