



***Impact of Beirut Blast  
On the Animal Sector in Lebanon***



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# Impact of Beirut Blast on the Animal sector in Lebanon

## *Introduction:*

Lebanon regained the animal production and health status in the few last years in the period between the devastating civil war & before the beginning of the revolution in November 2019. Enhancing livestock & poultry production was seen as contributing significantly to rural livelihoods of the 25 percent of the population in rural areas as well as to the economic wellbeing of the country through import substitution. The business is constrained by the current economic situation & fluctuation of the value of the Lebanese pound. In addition the Capital Controls are restricting the importation of food products, with risk of continuous increase in prices amidst the ongoing economic and political crisis. Half of the Lebanese surveyed in June 2020 by WFP (the United Nations' World Food Program) were already worrying lack of food. The report seeks to show the current situation of the animal sector pre and post Beirut Blast.

## *Background and Justification*

Lebanon is a mountainous country with two main plains, traditionally suitable for agriculture and animal farming. Bordered by Syria, Palestine and the Mediterranean Sea, with a surface area of 10,452 km<sup>2</sup> the country is home to approximately 6 million people (Including the Syrian refugees).

*The animal population is as follows (2019 statistics):*

<b>Species</b>	<b>Total (around)</b>
<b>Dairy</b>	55000
<b>Sheep</b>	450000
<b>Goats</b>	350000
<b>Pigs</b>	20000
<b>Broilers</b>	69 million
<b>Layers</b>	2 million
<b>Parent flocks</b>	1.5 million

To service this population there are in government service 56 veterinarians, 6 animal production engineers and 33 veterinary technicians.

## *Pre explosion food security*

Lebanon imports 80% of its animal origin food needs, & 80% of wheat supply, mostly through Beirut port. Furthermore, Agriculture production has been decreasing even before COVID-19, by 47% for plants and 26% for animals.

As the consequence of the fluctuation of the Lebanese pound during the last 10 months & the lockdown due to COVID 19, the animal sector was affected directly especially that most of the cost of rearing is based on the imported feed & medication which prices are facing continuous increase due to the ongoing economic and political crisis & the unavailability of US dollars except in the black market which took advantage & raised the price of the US\$ from 1500 L.L. to 8000 L.L.

## *Impact of Beirut explosion on food security*

On the 4th of August, Beirut Blast made the situation worse according to the surveys done by international organizations (UN-OCHA; UNICEF; ACTED: WFP; CARE, Qudurat Development Foundation, Strategy & analysis),

- 15,000 metric tons of staple food stored in port warehouses was lost
- Several milling facilities around the port and the silos containing reserves of grains are damaged, with storage capacities being compromised
- Beirut Port, where the majority of the total imports used to be processed, will not be operational for at least a month.
- Sea traffic is shifting to Tripoli which is 85 km north of the capital and has lower logistic capacity, which could result in more upward pressure on staple food prices
- Food shops and markets might not resume operations due to the lack of funds and unavailability of reconstruction material on the market
- ~150,000 individuals are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance as a result of the explosion
- ~300,000 people are targeted for food assistance through UN-OCHA
- A number of NGOs are providing food support with limited coordination on channeling towards most in need
- Majority of individuals in areas around the port require food assistance
- Many Pets were lost due to the explosion, & some lost their owners. Thus the number of the stray animals increased & this might increase the risk of the spread of some animal diseases as rabies in the near future.



## ***Examples of initiated and ongoing food security support***

- Local support networks and NGOs such as WFP, Caritas and Farah Social Institution are providing food parcels to those in need
- Ministry of Social Affairs requested WFP to distribute food parcels to the 5,000 most vulnerable people affected by the explosion
- The private sector is coordinating efforts with Ministry of Economy and International Organizations to ensure sufficient supply of wheat<sup>1</sup>
- WFP already delivered 12K tons of wheat to prevent shortage
- Airlifting of mobile storage units and other equipment is being pursued as a temporary solution for destroyed silos
- Discussions between WFP, Basic Assistance Working Group, and Lebanon Crisis Response Plan underway to provide cash assistance to the affected population
- 105,000 Lebanese currently receive WFP food ecards under National Poverty Targeting Program

## ***Impact of Beirut Blast from the Animal Products Stakeholders' & Customers point of view***

- Live Cattle importers were already suffering before the blast from the high exchange rate of the Lebanese pound. After the blast and in addition to the loss of their offices at the port, some of their employees were injured. Currently, they are suffering from the shortage of space allocated for the unloading of animals & its products on the docks.
- Other animal importers also suffered from the high exchange rate of the Lebanese pound before the blast & they reduced their importation quantity.
- As a result, Prices of the animal goods have risen to a great limit since November 2019 & they continued to rise after the blast reducing the customer's ability to purchase the same quantities & quality they used to buy.
- Many animal Farmers either closed their business or lowered their production since November 2019 & especially after the blast.
- In general & during the first 7 months of this year, the importation of livestock & animal origin products decreased by around 40%

## ***Needed Actions for the animal sector***

- Raising awareness on the Good management practices, Implementation of the biosecurity measures, & animal diseases prevention & control.
- Animal Farmers are in need of support in order to be able to continue in their business especially in the current situation with the increase of the cost of production of animal products & the economic & political situation
- Strengthening the inspection & monitoring capacity of the Animal Resources Directorate Teams at the Ministry of Agriculture (PPEs, equipment, vaccines,.....)
- Strengthening the Governmental Laboratory (Fanar) capacity (equipment, Kits, .....)
- Providing vaccination for stray animals as rabies