

Ukraine needs immediate support to plant and produce food amid ongoing war

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With the war ongoing, many Ukrainian farmers and rural farming families face limited access to their land due to mines and lack the financial resources to purchase needed agricultural inputs. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) warns that without urgent and sustained support, thousands of rural households may be unable to plant or harvest on time, jeopardising national food security and rural livelihoods. Urgent support is needed to help them safely access their fields and obtain essential production resources like seeds, fertilisers, storage and energy solutions.

Meeting the needs of Ukraine's rural communities requires more than emergency assistance – it demands a sustained, well-coordinated response to support agrifood systems. The coming months will determine whether rural producers can sustain production through the winter and into the next season.

Across the country, rural households – many of them elderly or female-headed – continue to depend on agriculture for their survival. They are growing vegetables, tending to a single cow or a handful of chickens, and cultivating small plots of land, often under shelling, without reliable electricity, and with limited access to markets and supplies. What used to be a routine part of their work is now life-threatening in some regions.

“With the war still affecting millions, rural frontline communities remain among the most vulnerable and the least supported. These families want to be able to provide for themselves. They want to stay on their land. And emergency agricultural support is such an effective means of enabling them to do that,” said Rein Paulsen, Director of Emergencies and Resilience at FAO, during his recent visit to Zaporizka oblast, Ukraine.

According to the Fourth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, conducted by the Government of Ukraine, the World Bank, the EU and the UN, Ukraine's agriculture sector has suffered \$83.9 billion in damages and losses, with an additional \$1.6 billion in the irrigation sector. Rural households and small-scale farmers bear a significant share of this impact and have been

forced to adapt, facing land contamination, labour shortages, rising input costs and power outages. Thousands of families still lack basic tools, inputs and services needed to sustain their production and protect their livelihoods.