

BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



Agriculture

OVERVIEW

Conflict and natural disasters, such as drought, floods, and pest infestations, can have devastating impacts on food security and livelihoods. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) supports agricultural interventions that increase livelihood opportunities and help crisis-affected populations meet their basic needs. USAID/BHA works to strengthen local disaster response capacity and increase community resilience to shocks. In the aftermath of disasters, USAID/BHA supports agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation and economic recovery by providing agriculture-based livelihood assistance. USAID/BHA-funded programs also support animal health, livestock and fisheries, pest control initiatives, and provision of agricultural goods to vulnerable households.

USAID/BHA Agriculture
Funding in FY 2022

\$340,031,364

Investing in Improved Crop Diversity and Agricultural Program Effectiveness

In many agricultural communities, reliance on a relatively limited number of staple crops has hindered efforts to improve food security. In an effort to build crop diversity and resilience, USAID/BHA is working to improve the effectiveness of agricultural programs in countries where root, tuber, and banana (RTB) crops are playing an increasingly important role in national agricultural systems. In addition to being highly nutritious and versatile,

USAID/BHA agriculture assistance supports farmers and herders in areas impacted by drought and other extreme weather events, including this community in Kenya's Turkana County. *Photo by Christine Jost, USAID/BHA.*

RTB crops, often under women’s management, produce more food per unit area of land compared to field crops such as grains; additionally, RTB crops are relatively less vulnerable to the impact of climate change. USAID/BHA is promoting the effective use of RTB crops by providing training and technical support to strengthen seed value chains of RTB crops in areas of humanitarian need such as Bangladesh, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as working with partner organizations to share best practices for the cultivation of RTB in order to improve productivity and guide planning.

USAID/BHA also supports agricultural research, with the goal of finding ways for humanitarian organizations and other international stakeholders to partner with farming communities to strengthen local food systems and access to improved and diverse crops. In Mali and Nigeria, where shifting socioeconomic conditions and increased environmental volatility are driving widespread food insecurity in rural areas, USAID/BHA partners are coordinating and sharing best practices to improve access to diverse, high-quality seed for farmers. Through investment in research and coordination, USAID/BHA is catalyzing transitions from dependence on humanitarian aid to more resilient and self-reliant food systems.

As part of its support for research and innovation in agriculture, USAID/BHA is funding the Livestock for Health program, led by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which is studying best practices to build household resilience among pastoralists and other people dependent on livestock herding to meet their basic needs. A previous study conducted under this program in northern Kenya found that distributing livestock fodder to households during the dry season significantly reduced the risk of acute malnutrition among children. In FY 2022, FAO and Tufts University conducted further research on the impact of market-based livestock food security assistance, nutrition counseling, and water management programs among livestock-dependent households in Chad, attempting to replicate the previous study’s results.



In Mongolia, USAID/BHA supports agricultural communities like this one to combat the spread of livestock diseases and build resiliency during extreme weather events through partner World Vision. *Photo by Christine Jost, USAID/BHA.*

Improving the Global Agriculture Assistance Infrastructure

As part of its efforts to improve humanitarian program effectiveness, USAID/BHA is supporting a crop intervention pilot study through September 2025 in collaboration with the Expanding the Reach of Impact Evaluation consortium of research partners, which aims to measure the long-term impact of USAID/BHA agriculture interventions on livelihoods. Additionally, USAID/BHA is funding the development and dissemination of innovative tools to improve communities’ and relief actors’ ability to prepare for and respond to food emergencies. These include the first edition of the Standards for Crop-Related Livelihoods in Emergencies (SEADS) Handbook, published in 2022 by Tufts University with support from humanitarian organizations. The SEADS Handbook—available online for use by community members, aid workers, and other stakeholders—was designed to strengthen community capacity to prepare for and recover from disasters and improve the quality of future aid programs. Relief actors are working with local communities and national governments and agricultural organizations to socialize the use of SEADS to support disaster preparedness and climate change mitigation. USAID/BHA also supported the development of FAO’s online Data in Emergencies Hub, which provides updates on food insecurity to inform response programs, and the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards, which provides evidence-based guidance for programs supporting livestock keepers.

Supporting Innovation in Pest Control

Fall armyworm (FAW) infestations result in massive loss of crops each year, with a 2021 FAO study finding that up to 17.7 million metric tons of maize alone—enough to feed tens of millions of people—could be lost to FAW each year if infestations are not prevented and managed. Native to the Americas, FAW has spread to other areas of the globe in recent years, with highly damaging results; infestations in Africa and the Indian subcontinent began in 2016 and 2018, respectively, according to FAO. Beginning in 2020, in response to the threat posed by FAW, USAID/BHA supported the Community-Based Fall Armyworm Monitoring, Forecasting for Early Warning, and Timely Management (CBFAMFEW II) project, a three-year initiative being implemented by the International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) in Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. Through CBFAMFEW II, ICIPE provided training to agricultural extension agents, crop protection staff, and community members in agricultural areas and strengthened FAW surveillance, monitoring, early warning, and control programs in areas on the front line against the advance of FAW in Africa. CBFAMFEW II also included mass campaigns through media outlets and community meetings to raise awareness of the risk posed by FAW and mitigation and control measures.

USAID/BHA is also supporting FAO and other relief actors to improve monitoring of and response to locust infestations, which consume most of the vegetation in their path—including crops and pastureland—and pose a major risk to food security in affected areas of Africa and Asia. Through a USAID/BHA-funded initiative, FAO worked with national governments in the Caucasus and Central Asia in FY 2022 to strengthen locust surveillance and early warning systems and to develop greater response capacity. In addition to training technical staff and community members, the UN agency developed a geographic information system-based monitoring, surveillance, and reporting platform to track locust outbreaks in the regions.

More information on USAID/BHA sectors can be found at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/what-we-do/humanitarian-sectors](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/what-we-do/humanitarian-sectors)