

Monthly Report on the European Commission's Milk Contribution to Syria

March 2017

1. Background

WFP Syria has been implementing a school meals programme since 2014, and it has gradually been scaled up in different parts of the country. The assistance has traditionally consisted of providing a fortified date bar to children in supported schools, which were selected based on a high prevalence of food insecurity, high number of IDPs and low education indicators.

In 2016, the European Commission made a contribution to WFP's school meal programme in Syria that allows WFP to procure 17,500 mt of UHT milk produced in the EU. The milk will be used in combination with fortified date bars, and will be distributed across two academic years (2016-17 and 2017-18) to children in schools across Syria.

Each child will receive 200 ml of UHT milk (120 kcal), as well as 80 gram of fortified date bars (340 kcal), bringing the total kcal delivery to almost 500 kcal; 30 percent of the daily energy requirement for school children. To ensure delivery of a comprehensive assistance, WFP targets schools already assisted by UNICEF through trainings, teaching material and school supplies.

In January 2017, WFP made the decision to include a quantity of the procured milk into the general food assistance (GFA) programme targeting children from 5 to 12 years of age. This decision was necessitated by operational factors mainly linked to the short shelf life of the milk. Following a modification request in March 2017, WFP and ECHO agreed that the amount of milk reallocated to GFA will not exceed a total of ten percent, or five percent per each academic year, of the total milk tonnage to be procured and distributed under this action (17,500 mt). Any milk reallocated to the GFA programme will be distributed in areas with a high concentration of IDPs and may also be used for inter-agency convoys to hard-to-reach and besieged areas. There are currently no plans to distribute milk in areas covered by cross-border operations from Jordan and Turkey, as WFP and UNICEF are currently not supporting schools in these areas.

2. General Accomplishments

During the month of March, WFP dispatched 1,173.193 MT of milk to schools under WFP's school feeding programme, benefitting 258,868 children across Syria. No milk was distributed under the GFA programme in March.



In total, 4,153.394 MT of milk has been dispatched since the beginning of the programme in late 2016, of which 3,670.577 MT has been dispatched under the School Feeding programme and 482.697 MT under the GFA programme.

Dispatches of Milk in March 2017		
	Dispatched to Schools	Allocated to GFA
Quantity of milk dispatched in March	1,173.193 MT	0
Number of children benefitting from the dispatched milk in March	258,868	0
Cumulative quantity dispatched since the beginning of the programme	3,670.577 MT	482.697 MT

2. Challenges

Bureaucratic hurdles and operational constraints remained the biggest challenge that WFP faced during the reporting period. Due to the absence of facilitation letters to dispatch milk to schools in Rural Damascus governorate, WFP was able to dispatch for only half of the caseload of the planned caseload of approximately 200,000 children in the governorate. Likewise, in As-Sweida governorate, WFP was unable to commence with the planned expansion of the School Meals programme for a total of 60,000 children due to a lack of facilitation letters. Lastly, in Tartous, logistical constraints resulted in a delay in dispatches in the governorate.

3. Any Other Updates

WFP conducted trainings in both Dar'a and As-Sweida governorates to sensitize school principals and teachers in storage and handling of milk at school level. This training is part of WFP's standard capacity building module that is repeated bi-annually in each targeted governorate on storage, handling, implementation, orientation of the programme and reporting requirements.