

Monthly Update on Milk for WFP Syria's School Meal Programme

November 2017

Background

Since August 2014, WFP Syria, in cooperation with UNICEF and the Syrian Ministry of Education, has been implementing a school meals programme aimed at encouraging enrolment and regular attendance among pre-primary and primary school children in Syria. Initially providing fortified date bars only, thanks to a generous contribution from the European Commission, starting in the 2016-17 school year, WFP introduced UHT milk of European Union origin as part of the nutritious snacks provided to children.

Due to operational challenges linked to the nature of the commodity as well as the challenging context in Syria, WFP maintains the possibility of reallocating part of the milk quantities to the General Food Assistance (GFA) programme as a contingency measure.

Implementation to date

November arrivals

Following the challenges encountered with the procurement process (outlined in last month's update), by the end of October all 19,500 mt of milk planned to be distributed during the 2017-18 academic year were under procurement. Quantities were procured in different packaging sizes, according with the production capacity of the selected European suppliers. The breakdown by packaging size is as follows: 4,000 mt of 1 litre packaging; 2,500 mt of 330 ml packaging; 13,000 mt of 200 ml packaging.

The first batches starting arriving in Syria on 5 November. By the end of November, some 1,374 mt of milk have arrived at the Syrian port of Lattakia. Of these, approximately 912 mt have already been inspected at the port and transported to WFP warehouses in Aleppo and Rural Damascus. The remaining 462 mt are still at the port and will be transported to WFP warehouses as soon as the inspection procedures are completed. The quantities will be stored in WFP's warehouses until the lab tests on the samples are finalised and the relevant authorities provide approval to start dispatching the cleared batches to schools for distributions.

Other activities

In order to enhance the coordination between WFP and the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the local Departments of Education (DoEs), WFP requested the partner to assign a logistic focal point from the DoE in each governorate, who would coordinate directly with WFP for dispatches and other logistic related issues. During the month of November, WFP conducted a logistics training for the DoE logistic focal points, with the objective to ensure preparedness for the transportation, storage and handling of the milk and enable timely dispatches to schools once all clearance procedures are completed. As part of its efforts to enhance coordination and ensure a smooth implementation of the project WFP plans to conduct regular logistic workshops on a quarterly basis.

In addition, during November a second workshop was conducted by WFP to sensitize GFA Cooperating Partners (CPs) on milk reallocations to the GFA programme, in order to facilitate the process and minimise the risk of misuse of the commodities. The topics covered included distribution modalities, milk ration size per household, intended target groups, awareness raising on the objectives of milk distribution and correct use of the commodity, and reporting requirements. The workshop served as a preparedness measure, for WFP to react quickly and efficiently should the need arise to distribute milk as part of GFA.

Plans for December

Lab tests take a minimum of 21 days to be completed. Accordingly, the results of the tests on the first batches that arrived in early November are expected to be received in the early days of December. As batches obtain clearance, WFP will start dispatching the available quantities to the targeted schools.

The quantities received in November are planned to be distributed during December and part of January, reaching approximately 207,000 children in five governorates including Damascus, Quneitra, Dar'a, Aleppo and As-Sweida, subject to all necessary dispatch approvals to be in place.

An additional 1,470.209 mt of UHT milk are scheduled to arrive at Syrian ports during the month of December. These quantities will undergo the same clearance and transport procedures described above, and will be available for delivery to schools and distribution starting in January.

Milk Shipments, November 2017	
	QTY-MT
Milk received in country	1,374.267
Milk expected in December	1,470.209