Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

NEWS RELEASE

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Strengthening Animal and Plant Health field services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

11 December 2017, Ramallah: In a boost to animal and plant health in Palestine, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) delivered four mobile surveillance and inspection units to the Ministry of Agriculture at a handover ceremony in Ramallah. The mobile units will increase the Ministry's capacity to provide on-site disease surveillance and control, and inspections for animal and plant health.

"These mobile units greatly enhance our capacity to deliver essential animal and plant health services at field level in Palestine, and will enable the Ministry of Agriculture's technicians to help Palestinian farmers and herders towards developing the agricultural sector. This brings a wide range of benefits to the whole of society including disease prevention and control, improved food safety, and livelihood protection for farmers and herders. We appreciate all the efforts by FAO and the Governments of Switzerland and Spain for this important contribution," emphasized Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Dr. Sofian Sultan.

The mobile surveillance and inspection units will expand the reach of plant and animal health services by increasing the mobility of field staff and therefore, their efficacy. The units will play a key role in early disease detection and response in the event of outbreaks or pest incursion. Three mobile units will be used in the West Bank and one mobile unit will be used in the Gaza Strip.

The handover is part of FAO's four year Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) Programme funded by the Governments of the Netherlands, Switzerland and Spain. This programme aims to improve the health of Palestinian consumers and support economic growth through the alignment of Palestinian agri-food products with international standards in Plant Health, Animal Health and Food Safety.

"FAO commends the government's commitment towards improving animal health and plant health, and strengthening food safety, as evident by the approval of the first ever National Food Safety Strategy (2017-2022) in September 2017. FAO, together with our resource partners, stand ready to support the Government as they implement this strategy. Today's handover is one step further towards realizing this goal," highlighted Mr Ciro Fiorillo, Head of Office, FAO West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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