

Quarterly Activity Report: April 1st through June 30th 2008
IALC Sustainable Development of Drylands in Asia and the Middle East Project
Jordan Component: “Business and Socioeconomic Assessment of Water and
Products for Community-Based Projects in the Badia Region”

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Quarterly Activities:

The main outcomes from this quarter’s activities are:

- ✓ Final review was completed of a report summarizing the results of the economic and policy analyses of the Mafraq survey data aimed at supporting better informed agricultural water use policy decisions and help farmers improve their irrigation water use efficiency.
- ✓ Continuing with the economic analysis of the willingness of Mafraq farmers to accept compensation for giving up their water pumping “rights”.
- ✓ Completed the analysis of the information for the lamb, honey, sheep, and sun-dried tomato enterprises of the Anaqeed Cooperative for the fiscal year ending on October 31, 2007. A financial feasibility study was completed for this Cooperative’s incipient concrete block manufacturing enterprise. This information was combined and published in June as Report # 3 of the Jordan Project publication series.
- ✓ Collected information on the potential domestic and international markets for fiber art products that might be made by Bedouin women from wool from their sheep using natural dyes. Preliminary results indicated that such an enterprise might have the possibility of significantly increasing income opportunities for women in rural communities.
- ✓ Work continued on the onion-growing project in Al-Mudawara. To date, this project has shown that there is substantial potential for profitably growing high-quality low-pungency onions in Jordan. It also appears that there is a significant market niche for this product. Most of the market analysis and onion variety research was completed by June 30. Shaikh Al Otoun, the Jordanian farmer participating on the onion project, visited New Mexico from June 14 through June 25. He visited with NMSU onion specialists and onion growers, packing sheds and equipment distributors.
- ✓ Continued work to encourage initiation of range restoration activities throughout the Badia region of Jordan. In this regard, contacts were maintained with BRDC, Hashemite Fund for Badia Development, University of Jordan, and Royal Botanical Gardens.
- ✓ Continued with field research to evaluate the impact of controlled grazing and appropriate stocking rates and the economic implications of these treatments.
- ✓ Began evaluation of shrub and perennial grass seedings established during December 2007 at Tal Ramah and Ghraia (Al Muraygha) sites.
- ✓ Published a report on the results of the Tal-Rimah range restoration project in June.
- ✓ Continued to monitor existing rangeland rehabilitation projects and to investigate potential future sites.
- ✓ Continued with the economic feasibility and sustainability analyses of the Wadi farming systems in the Al-Shamia/Ma’an area.

- ✓ Continued to provide advice to M.S. Ismaiel Naser Abuamoud on his doctoral program at NMSU. Progress is being made on selecting the specific topic for Ismaiel's doctoral research.

The NMSU and the BRDC team members responsible for each of these activities were in frequent long-distance communication coordinating and exchanging of information through Skype phone, e-mail and e-mail document attachments.

Activities Planned for Next Quarter:

In accordance to the year-two work plan, the next quarter activities will include:

- ✓ Submitting a paper with the results of the econometric analyses of the Mafraq agricultural water use survey data for publication in a peer-reviewed water resources journal and publishing a summary report of the results of the survey stressing policy implications a Report # 6 in the Jordanian Project publication series.
- ✓ Continuing with the econometric analyses of the data and publish a report on the farmer's willingness to accept compensation for giving up their water rights in the Mafraq aquifer.
- ✓ Disseminate training materials using the A'naqeed Al-Kahir and the Tal-Rimah cooperatives as examples to train individuals involved in similar projects throughout Jordan on how to analyze their economic and financial feasibility and use the results from these analyses to improve a cooperatives' business performance.
- ✓ Continue work on the feasibility study of starting a fiber arts crafts business that is mainly producing handmade products using natural dyes primarily for export markets as a means of providing employment to women in the Badia.
- ✓ Begin the evaluation of growing organic medicinal herbs and natural dye plants as a possible high value but low water use crop by community groups in the Badia.
- ✓ On the basis of the results of the economic analysis of the community based water harvesting and range restoration activity, continue work to encourage others to initiate similar range restoration activities throughout the Badia region of Jordan.
- ✓ Evaluate and identify superior shrub and perennial grass species from seeding evaluation study initiated in December 2007 for use in future restoration activities.
- ✓ Continue with field research to evaluate the impact of controlled grazing and stocking rates on the study site, and the economic implications of these treatments. Continue to monitor existing rangeland rehabilitation project and to investigate potential future sites.
- ✓ Continue with the analysis of data collected through the agricultural water use survey in the Al-Shamia area. Work should be completed in the summer of 2008.
- ✓ Continue to provide technical support for Bedouin onion project in Disi basin via video conferencing with NMSU subject matter expert. The NMSU experts will continue to work until harvest in May 2008, when yield and quality data will be collected.
- ✓ As in the previous quarter, the NMSU team members responsible for the different activities will be in frequent long-distance communication with their BRDC counterparts.
- ✓ Libbin and Bailey will collect data and conduct evaluations of the Tal Ramah and Ghraim (Al Muraygha) sites during their August 5 to 12, 2008 visit. During this visit, Libbin and Bailey plan to meet with BRDC, Hashemite Fund for Badia Development, University of Jordan, and possibly with the Royal Botanical Gardens. Gorman and Kimberly Shifflett, a fiber arts specialist, will be traveling to various regions in Jordan from August 7 through August 17 collection information for the feasibility study on the potential fiber arts business.

