



United States
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FACT SHEET

U.S.-IRAQ AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION REVITALIZATION PROJECT APRIL 2009

Agriculture serves as the foundation on which many countries build their economies. For Iraq, agriculture has traditionally been the second largest employer, after the oil sector. Agriculture is the second largest component of Iraq's Gross Domestic Product and an important part of the social structure of rural communities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is involved in a variety of trade capacity building and technical assistance activities to help Iraq revitalize its agricultural sector so it can become an engine for economic growth and strengthen U.S. market share.

Iraq's agricultural extension system is one USDA focus. Agricultural extension links the research and education resources and activities of government agencies with colleges and universities. These institutions reach out to interested individuals in rural, urban, or suburban communities with information about current agricultural practices, technologies, and research in an effort to address problems and increase production.

In December 2008, the second phase of the U.S.-Iraq Agricultural Extension Revitalization (IAER) Project was initiated in Baghdad, Iraq. The IAER project is intended to facilitate Iraqi rural economic

development by revitalizing its agricultural extension system so that a private-sector-driven agricultural sector can emerge.

Phase One of IAER

From December 2006 through July 2008, phase one of the IAER project trained nearly 500 Iraqi nationals through 22 agricultural extension courses provided by a consortium of five U.S. land-grant universities working in partnership with Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MOWRI), and related institutions. The five land-grant universities are Texas A&M University, Washington State University, Utah State University, University of California at Davis, and New Mexico State University.

The courses were held in Middle Eastern countries near Iraq. Courses ranged from a few days to 3 weeks and included topics such as arid crop production development, livestock production and animal health, and water resources management and irrigation technology. Staff from the U.S. land-grant universities taught the courses to MOA officials, agriculture university faculty and students, and extension personnel to enhance the capacity of small- and medium-sized farmers' and producers' production, marketing, and management skills.

A component of the first phase of the IAER project was a small grants program that provided more than \$250,000 to 25 participants. Grants were awarded based on the merit of the proposal and the feasibility of implementing lessons learned in an IAER workshop. In addition, some trainees were provided with laptops, camera equipment, and soil kits to use in demonstrating the knowledge and skills gained to local farmers and other extension professionals.

Accomplishments of Phase One

Below are some highlights of Phase One:

- Vevian Sh. Yaqo from Dohuk, Kurdistan, attended a 5-day poultry seminar in Amman, Jordan, conducted by Texas A&M University in 2008. As a result of this training, Ms. Yaqo and other poultry seminar attendees applied for and received a technology transfer grant and met with 204 farmers in 11 different villages to discuss what they learned. They worked with the Ministry of Agriculture in Kurdistan to reestablish the Province's broiler production after it had been destroyed by the Avian Influenza virus.
- Yousif Kh. Khdir from Erbil, Kurdistan, attended the general course at the Desert Development Center (DDC), American University, Cairo, Egypt, in 2007 and a field cropping demonstration course conducted by Washington State University in Aleppo, Syria, at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in 2008. As a result of this training, he applied for and received a grant to demonstrate his alfalfa cultivation and silage making project. Mr. Khdir met with 18 farmers in four different villages to discuss his project. He also wrote an article and hosted a local television extension program about this topic.
- Mohammed Abodi Kareem from Karbala in Baghdad Province attended the general course at the DDC, American University, Cairo, Egypt, in 2007 and two irrigation courses conducted by Utah State University in Amman, Jordan, in 2007 and 2008. As a result, Mr. Kareem applied for and received a grant to raise a variety of crops, including tomatoes, in a joint greenhouse project with the Ministry of Agriculture. He also demonstrated greenhouse construction and irrigation techniques to farmers and other extension agents.
- Jalal Sh. Younis from Erbil, Kurdistan, attended the general course and an advanced horticulture course conducted by the University of California at Davis (UCD) at the DDC, American University, Cairo, Egypt, in 2007; a field cropping demonstration course conducted by Washington State University in Aleppo, Syria, at ICARDA in 2008; and a post-harvest course conducted by UCD in Amman, Jordan, in 2008. As a result, he applied for and received a grant to demonstrate composting techniques to other extension professionals in his province and met with 27 farmers in seven villages.
- Treefa Kamal from Sulymanya, Kurdistan, attended a poultry course conducted by Texas A&M University in Amman, Jordan, in 2008. As a result, she applied for and received a grant to demonstrate a project on small poultry farming for egg production. She trained 200 farmers in one village, focusing on women.

Phase Two of IAER

The second phase of the IAER project will be conducted in two stages. During the first stage, 60-70 Iraqi extension specialists will receive up to 8 weeks of advanced extension training at the five U.S. land-grant universities. The U.S.-based training will use highly specialized, science-based technology and current extension methodology in areas such as aquaculture, animal health, dry-land field crops, horticulture, soil and water management, greenhouse production, and agribusiness and youth training.

Groups of 10-12 Iraqis will receive the training at one of the five U.S land-grant universities. The Iraqis will be shown how to develop instruction materials and curricula. This training will begin in the late spring of 2009.

The next stage of phase two will begin when the Iraqi extension specialists return home. They will use the extension skills, knowledge, and materials that they developed in the United States to train other extension agents and provide advice to farmers and producers in their communities. The knowledge gained will improve teaching, research, and extension at Iraq's agricultural institutions, and bolster the delivery of agricultural extension programs at the national and local levels. Iraqis can then establish up-to-date extension research

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and training facilities and provide efficient agricultural extension services that will promote sustainable economic development for Iraqi farmers and rural communities. Phase two will conclude in September 2010.

Background

The U.S. Department of State has provided \$12.2 million for phases one and two of the IAER project. Staff from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Cooperative State Research, Extension, and Education Service are managing and implementing the project in close collaboration with Iraqi officials at the MOA, MOWRI, and MOHE.

General information about FAS programs, resources, and services is available on the Internet at the FAS home page:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov>