

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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September's Morsels of Jordan

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Approved By:

Orestes Vasquez

Prepared By:

Mohamed Khraishy

Report Highlights:

This report covers major agricultural developments in Jordan during September 2015.

General Information:

No Cheap Sheep during Eid al-Adha

Hijazi and Ghosheh (H&G), a UAE company that trades meat and livestock, purchased 65,000 head of Australian sheep to be sold in Libya, however, as the political situation deteriorated delivery was not possible. H&G plans were to re-route the cargo to Jordan to meet the country's upcoming demand for sheep meat during the Eid al-Adha season in the month of September. Initially, Jordan's Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) agreed to issue an import permit with a stipulation that the sheep were to be slaughtered in a certified Egyptian slaughter house, and the chilled carcass imported without viscera, a procedure in compliance with OIE guidelines. However, rumors of impropriety regarding the issuance of the permit ran rampant, forcing MoA to rescind the permit.

H&G, a UAE company with ties to a member of the UAE royal family, has sizable investments in Jordan, and has vowed that it will shut down its operations if the issue is not resolved. The MoA has been summoned to Parliament to defend its position. The issue is still unresolved, becoming a political football as sheep prices escalated during Eid al-Adha festivities.

This situation prompted the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT) to issue regulations on livestock sales at the onset of Eid –al Adha, requiring livestock merchants to display the prices of the animals being sold. Despite these efforts, sheep prices remained high during Eid al-Adha.

MIT estimates that sheep demand leading to Eid al-Adha is around 850,000 head of sheep, of which 650,000 are imported and 200,000 are domestic. Many charities actively buy, slaughter, and distribute the carcass meat to the needy. Additionally, al Adha sacrifice supports the needy in the Palestinian territories that were once part of Jordan; the practice is now extended to support Syrian refugees.

Water Reforms

On September 8, 2015, the Council of Ministers reviewed a report submitted by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI) on the status of water thefts during August of 2015.

According to the report, MWI has effectively implemented a campaign against water theft in collaboration with government enforcement authorities. In August, MWI's efforts registered 1202 violations these include: the seizure of an excavator, the closure of 11 unlicensed wells, 655 violations against water delivery systems, removal of 51 violators farming on lands owned by the Jordan Valley Authority, and 484 violations of water misuse on the King Abdullah Canal.

The Council of Ministers renewed their support of the MWI campaign, vowing to crack down on those infringing on water theft.

Figure 1: A Government of Jordan employee disabling an illegal pipeline.



Unseasonal Sandstorm Blankets the Middle East

On September 8, an unseasonal sandstorm hit the Middle East, blanketing the Region with dust, sending hundreds of people to hospitals suffering from respiratory afflictions.

The storm affected the summer vegetables crops that are about to be harvested, and was accentuated by a heat wave that increased mortality in broilers and layers, sending egg prices up five percent two days after the storm.

No estimate yet on the losses of the agricultural sector, however, farmers believe that it would reduce crop yields significantly.