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Assessment of Small Ruminant Breeders in Rural Hebron, Jericho,
Bethlehem and Ramallah Region.

Final Project Report

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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OBJECTIVES

Main Objective: Conduct a detailed assessment of the needs and problems faced by small ruminant breeders in rural areas of the Hebron, Jericho, Bethlehem and Ramallah area.

Specific Objective:

1. Identify general patterns of needs and problems faced by the small ruminant breeder community in the target area.
2. Identify any patterns or differences, according to lifestyle or geography.

METHODOLOGY

For purposes of this assessment, a series of personal interviews were conducted with a random sample of 204 small ruminant breeders across the West Bank governorates of Hebron, Jericho, Bethlehem and Ramallah. Interviews were conducted between 18 January 2009 and 15 February 2009 by ACTED field monitors and trained representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture. In total, ACTED field monitors conducted 184 questionnaires, while the MoA conducted a total of 27 questionnaires.¹ The following sections outline in more detail how this process was undertaken, (photographs detailing this can be seen in Annex 4).

I. Interview Locations:

Target locations were selected in coordination with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), which provided assistance during the selection of target clusters, villages and households. Following a central meeting with MoA representatives in Ramallah, ACTED, accompanied by MoA Ramallah staff, met with representatives of the MoA in each of the four governorates to explain the project and to gain their insight into the different communities in each target district. This led to the creation of a total of ten clusters which were delineated according to general geographic and community differences. The MoA also provided lists of breeders to ACTED for some of the governorates which were used in selection of target households, as well as some general information about the small ruminant breeder community. Please see below for maps and tables specifying the precise locations in which the assessment was conducted.

¹ Of the 27 total questionnaires conducted by MoA representatives, only 20 were included in the data used for the Final Assessment Report, as not all representatives were able to attend the Training Workshop.

Image 1. Jericho and Ramallah Governorates

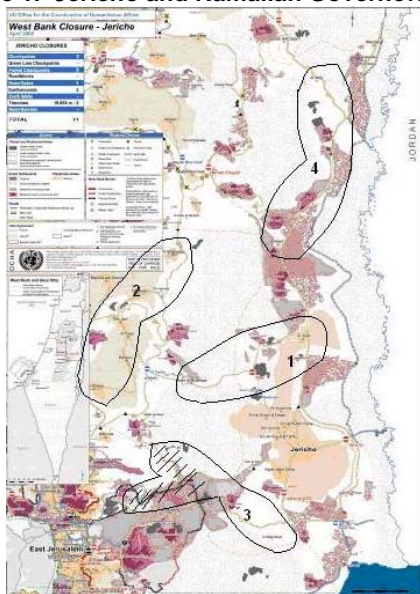


Image 2. Bethlehem Governorate

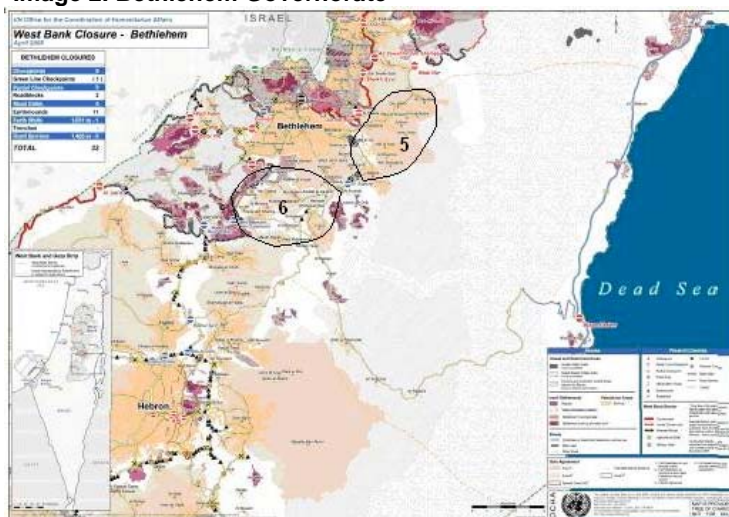
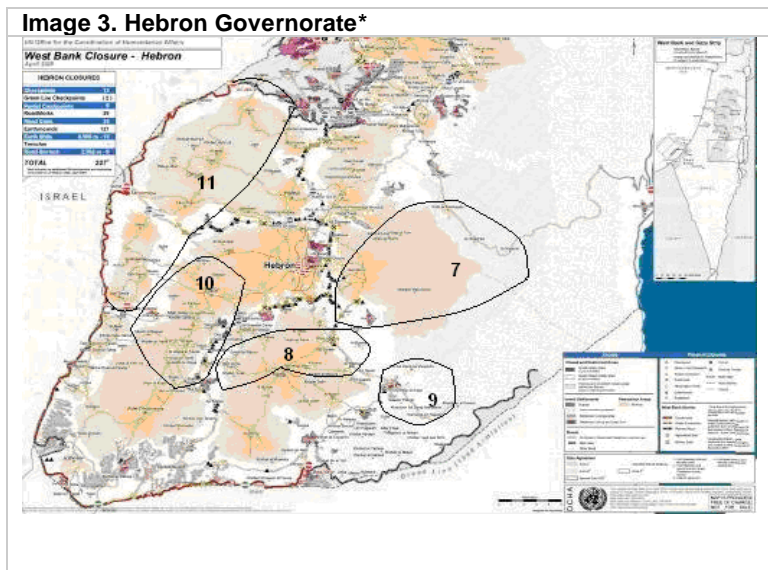


Image 3. Hebron Governorate*



* Cluster 11 represents the area covered in June 2008 by ACTED during a preliminary needs assessment (see paragraph IV below for more detail). In addition a few locations in Cluster 10 were also covered during the preliminary assessment.

II. Questionnaire Development:

A standard questionnaire was developed through careful editing and review by ACTED and FAO staff members (Annex 1). To help ensure the quality and homogeneity of the data collected a questionnaire Training Workshop was conducted for all field monitors and MoA representatives. Participants were introduced to the concept of the assessment, survey questions were reviewed one by one, practiced in pairs and any ambiguities or potential problem areas were discussed. In addition, a pilot survey was conducted on 18 January 2009 in the village of Kureise to test timing and make any final adjustments to the questionnaire.

III. Data Collection:

A detailed schedule for data collection was developed and revised as needed over the course of data collection (see Table 1 below for the final schedule). Field interviews were conducted by ACTED Field Monitors. These were accompanied in the field and assisted in data collection by the ACTED Field Supervisor no fewer than three times a week. The ACTED Reporting Department conducted a total of three field visits during data collection.

Table 1: Village Table of Questionnaires Completed Jan – Feb 2009

Nb	Governorate	Cluster Nb.	Village	Date	Nb. Questionnaires Completed	
					ACTED	MOA
1	Dura	10	Kureise	1/18/2009	4	0
2	Dura	10	Khursa	1/20/2009	6	1
3	Dura	10	Al Serra	1/21/2009	5	1
4	Dura	10	Al Tabaqa	1/22/2009	4	2
5	Dura	10	Wad Ash Shajina		4	2
6	Hebron	8	Al Hileh	1/25/2009	5	1
7	Hebron	8	Zif		8	2
8	Hebron	8	Beit Amra	1/26/2009	4	0
9	Hebron	8	Um Lasafa		5	0
10	Hebron	8	El Bweib		5	1
11	Hebron	9	Al Hathaleen	1/27/2009	8	2
12	Hebron	9	Al Zuweidin		3	1
13	Hebron	9	Isolated communities in area		6	0
14	Hebron	7	Bani Na'im	1/28/2009	5	3
15	Hebron	7	Birin		4	2
16	Hebron	7	Ar Rawa'in + neighboring communities	2/5/2009	8	
17	Bethlehem	5	Za'tara (Um Salman)	2/1/2009	4	0
18	Bethlehem	5	Al Haddadieh		5	2
19	Bethlehem	5	Ras Al Wad		4	0
20	Bethlehem	6	Taqqou'	2/2/2009	5	2
21	Bethlehem	6	Marah Rabah		4	2
22	Bethlehem	6	Abu Nujeim	2/3/2009	4	0
23	Bethlehem	6	Marah Al Ma'alah		4	2
24	Bethlehem	6	Al Manshieh	2/4/2009	4	1
25	Jericho	4	Fasaiei	2/8/2009	6	0
26	Jericho	4	Jiftlek		6	0
27	Jericho	3	Tariq Al Khan	2/9/2009	0	0
28	Jericho	3	Al Nabi Mousa		2	0
29	Jericho	3	Bedouin communities along road to Ramallah		0	0
30	Ramallah	1	Al Mu'arajat (Ramallah side)	2/10/2009	3	0
31	Jericho	1	Al Auja		4	0
32	Jericho	1	Al Mu'arajat (Jericho side)		12	0
33	Ramallah	2	Al Muhgayer	2/11/2009	4	0
34	Ramallah	2	Deir Jrir		4	0
35	Ramallah	2	Taibeh		6	
36	Ramallah	2	Deir Debwan	2/12/2009	4	0
37	Ramallah	2	Kufur Malek		6	0
38	Ramallah	2	Rammoun	2/15/2009	4	0
39	Ramallah	2	Kherbet Abu Falah		5	0
T	4	10	39		184	27

To help ensure the accuracy and efficiency of data collection, data was entered into the database at the end of each day by ACTED’s Field Monitors, and verified by ACTED’s Field Supervisor. The database was also cross-checked at the end of every week by either the AME Manager or the ACTED Reporting Department.

IV. Additional Data Used

As agreed by ACTED and FAO, in addition to the data collected within the timeframe detailed above, a further 39 questionnaires were used in the Final Assessment Report, which were gathered through a preliminary needs assessment conducted by ACTED in June 2008 across the North-Western part of the Hebron Governorate. The area covered extends from Beit Awwa up to Surif, including Jab’a and Nahhalin villages, located within the Gush Etzion Israeli settlements block (see Cluster 11 above). The assessment used a preliminary version of the attached questionnaire and targeted breeders’ households with herd size of 50 heads or more. An additional 6 non-structured interviews were also carried out in isolated communities living near to the Separation Barrier.

Although the data gathered in the preliminary survey does not exactly match that gathered in the survey conducted during January and February 2009 due to the questionnaire being an earlier version, was ACTED and FAO agreed that these communities should not be re-visited to avoid beneficiary dissatisfaction. This data was therefore integrated into the overall answers where possible. All findings in the Final Assessment Report which include data from the preliminary assessment were clearly identified as such in the report in order to ensure accuracy of reporting.

V. Data Analysis:

Following the completion of data collection, an internal workshop was conducted on 15 February 2009 by the AME Unit to present preliminary findings and observations to the Reporting Department. During this workshop, impressions of the Field Monitors regarding the accuracy of data collected and potential areas of error were also explored. Thereafter, ACTED’s Reporting Officer was responsible for data analysis and the production of the Final Assessment Report. The Final Assessment Report was reviewed by the AME Unit, ACTED’s regional office and headquarters before final submission to FAO.

VI. Timeline of Activities:

Activity	December			January			February		
Finalization of Terms of Reference (ToRs, questionnaire and database)									
Meeting with MoA to discuss cooperation/coordination									
Conduction of training workshop for Field Monitors									
Collection of data and enter into database									
Drafting, finalization and printing of final report									
Submission of final report									

IV. Staffing:

The assessment fell under the responsibility of ACTED’s Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (AME). ACTED’s AME Manager supervised the project as a whole, in addition to being responsible for coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, finalization of the questionnaire and the training of ACTED Field Monitors and MoA representatives for the interviews.

ACTED’s Field Supervisor oversaw the collection of data and data entry into the database, as well as any data schedule revisions, the coordination of field visits, and the facilitation of MoA data collection. Two ACTED Field Monitors were responsible for daily data collection and data entry into the database.

ACTED’s Reporting Officer was responsible for data analysis and the production of the Final Assessment Report. The Final Assessment Report was reviewed by the AME Unit, ACTED’s regional office and headquarters before final submission to FAO.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The final report created as a result of ACTED assessments of 243 small ruminant breeder households living in rural and marginalized parts of the Hebron, Jericho, Bethlehem and Ramallah governorates aimed to produce a comprehensive outline of the problems and vulnerabilities facing these households. As such the following areas were included and highlighted: Socioeconomic Information; Flock Characteristics; Animal Health; Feeding System; Herd Management and Reproduction; Meat and Dairy Production; Water Availability.

Results:

As a result of this survey it was found that Bedouin families appear to be more vulnerable than village farmer households. Although herd sizes are on average higher among Bedouin families, herd depletion rates (sale of adult females) is also higher and more Bedouin families than village farmers rely on breeding as their primary source of income. Furthermore, many Bedouin families have not had access to MoA services, nor are they connected to the PWA water network - more than half do not own a water cistern.

Overall, the drought and rising input prices were identified as the two factors with the strongest negative impact on both farmer and Bedouin breeder households in these communities. Due to the effect of these factors in particular, both Bedouin and village farmer families are currently facing a crisis, with high rates of herd depletion due to lack of sustainability and decreasing levels of production. Despite this crisis, the survey found that a number of aspects spanning the areas of health, feeding, management, reproduction, production and water availability of these small ruminant breeder livelihoods can be improved.

Key Recommendations:

Based on these findings, key recommendations for future interventions include the following:

- Targeting families whose primary source of income is breeding and who are located in remote locations, in particular Bedouins
- Encouraging cultivation of drought tolerant feed crops and other alternatives to purchased feed and fodder, such as agricultural by-products or silage.
- Introduce a more accurate measurement of feeding portions (weighing).
- Building basic knowledge of common diseases which are easily avoided through better management, e.g. sanitation of sheds, and/or which can be easily cured if identified in the early stages.
- Increasing cistern capacity, particularly in villages not connected to the water network through rehabilitation and expansion of water collecting surface or distributing water tanks to households where cistern rehabilitation is untenable
- Build basic knowledge amongst breeders e.g. conduct trainings on better reproduction practices, management, health (provision of basic medicines & coordination with MoA to extend/complement vaccination services), feeding practices and shed upkeep and sanitation.
- Improve reproduction practices through a pilot project designed to show impact of practices such as checking rams for venereal diseases

Through making these improvements future interventions can better help to ensure the strengthening and sustainability of small ruminant breeding as a reliable source of livelihood for vulnerable families.