Algeria

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ALGERIA

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The role of agriculture in the national economy

The contribution of agriculture to national economy is largely insufficient. Over the past few years, agriculture has contributed 15% to GDP. With reference to employment, agriculture currently accounts for 25% of total jobs, mostly in the rural districts.

Despite its considerable potential (40 million hectares, 8 of which of farmland) agricultural production hardly meets the domestic food demand (32% of cereals, 30% of dried pulses and 39% of dairy products). Fresh vegetables, fruit and poultry meat are fully produced nationally.

The country features an adverse trade balance. Food imports represent on average US$2.2 billion against US$70 million exports. However, there might be scope for the export of out-of-season produce (early and very early fruit and vegetables) and traditionally exported products (dates and wines).

The development of agri-industrial units may pave the way for the exports of some other products, such as olive oil, fruit and vegetable juice, meat and game. The fresh impetus given to these exports is most likely to significantly lessen the food trade balance deficit.

Agricultural policy

Over the past decades (from 1962 to 1997) Algerian agriculture has shifted from self- (1962/3) to semiprivate management (from 1987 onward). Following the sweeping changes in the sector and the

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events occurred between 1992 and 1997, agricultural production has sharply dropped.

Aware of the need to proceed to a fast-paced revitalisation of the sector, the Algerian government has given top priority to the development of agriculture.

An action plan has been approved. Its mainstays are: the rationalisation of resources to boost large-scale and profitable productions, the fuelling of the producing potential, the promotion of a participatory policy and the participation in international co-operation programmes to back up development endeavours.

A number of support programmes funded by the National Fund for Agricultural Development (FNDA) have been launched for some strategic crops, such as cereals, potatoes, vines, citrus and olive trees. These planting, seed and seedling production programmes are designed to meet medium- and long-term national requirements, reduce imports and step up exports by 2000/2005. The goal is to help the national fruit industry meet 85% of the local demand. The implementation of these programmes will be complemented by a revised fiscal policy (tax relief provisions), support measures to kick-start productivity and quality and actions to promote partnerships in Algeria and abroad.

The fruit sector

The fruit and vine sector plays a major role in the Algerian agricultural development strategy. Fruit orchards and vineyards cover 405,409 ha (4.9% of the farmland), 65% of the area being used to grow the main crops (olive trees, citrus and vines).

Fruit production in 1998 amounted to 1,011,513 tonnes (all fruits included), but is still insufficient to meet the increasing domestic demand (source: DASEE – year 1998).

Citrus. Citrus orchards stretch over 44,820 ha and are located within the irrigated area. However, 60%

of the orchards exceed 30 years of age and their productive potential is alarmingly declining.

The mean production (250,000 tonnes) reported in the eighties has increased sharply after the re-structuring of the sector (1987) and soared to 418,000 tonnes in 1998, despite some draught years and the difficulties experienced by the country. The yield remains low (93 Q/ha) because of the age-ing of the orchards and the irrigation water short-age.

The organoleptic properties of the fruits which are produced locally will help supply international markets with up to 20,000 tonnes of seedless clementines and Navel oranges by 2000/2007. A re-vitalisation and development programme is in pro-gress for these species.

Vine. Vineyards cover a total area of 55,310 ha, which are subdivided as follows: 32,080 ha of table grape, 23,010 ha of wine grape, 90% of which are located in the western part of the country, and 220 ha of raisin.

The production of table grape climbed from 146,670 tonnes in 1997 to 180,000 tonnes in 1999. The pro-duction of wine grape amounts to 38,000 tonnes out of 13,000 harvested hectares.

As far as raisin is concerned, the production amounts to 1,200 quintals.

Some 608 ha of rootstock mother blocks yield 15 to 20 million vines a year and 4 to 5 million seed-lings (of standard category).

The exports of CDO (Controlled Designation of Ori-gin) wines in 1999 totalled 100,000 Hl. According to market surveys, exports are expected to bounce to 500,000 Hl/year in 2003.

The production of vine seedlings averages 12 mil-lion seedlings a year.

Rosaceae. By the end of 1993, stone and pome tree orchards covered 86,000 ha. The area grew to 104,710 ha in 1999.

Fruit production equals 276,136 tonnes with a mean yield of 50 to 60 Q/ha (7.5 quintals of which from almond trees). These yields are regarded as decidedly below the actual potential of the species. A development programme has been launched by the government in the mountain- and semiarid cropping areas.

Olive trees. The olive groves stretch across a total area of 165,260 ha, which is subdivided into two major categories according to the environmental conditions:

- the modern olive groves (29,000 ha), which are located in the western part of the country, mostly produce table olives;
- the conventional olive groves, which are located in the mountains, mostly produce olives for oil-making.

The national olive production amounts to 293,600 tonnes and 70% of olive groves exceed 60 years of age. A development programme is in progress for this species. The action plan (2001-2005) is expected to increase the production by 10,000 tonnes, allow to export 2,000 tonnes of virgin olive oil and produce 15,000 tonnes of table olives of improved quality.

Oil and olive productions are based on 90% local varieties.

Health status of the national fruit tree orchards and vineyards

Citrus. The investigations and sanitary assessments which have been performed on citrus orchards (temporary mother block, collection block and commercial orchard) have identified the presence of Stubborn (0.14% of infestation rate) and Exocortis (0,01%) on clementine variety.

These orchards have been planted along with plant material of unknown and doubtful sanitary origin. Hence, a plant material sanitation programme has been introduced at specialised facilities. A parallel programme for the renovation of mother blocks

has been initiated. It envisions the use of foreign plant propagating material (INRA, Corsica).

Vine. The sanitary assessments which have been carried out on the vineyards have reported the presence of GFV with 4.20% of infestation rate.

To rein in the infection, the government launched in 1987 a renovation programme to plant mother blocks with virus- and mycoplasma-free plant material of basic category obtained from a French vine selection and breeding institute (ENTAV, France).

Rosaceae. The sanitary assessments which have been performed on this species have shown the presence of some world-wide spread viral diseases, though at low rates of infestation: PDV (1.44%), PNRV (1.86%), CLRV (0.33%) and APMV (1.12%).

A programme for the renovation of plant propagating material has been launched. It uses plant material derived from foreign research centres (CTIFL, France; Gembloux, Belgium).

Guarantee and certification

Legislation. On November 23, 1993, the Algerian government passed the law No. 93/284 which regulated fruit tree and vine seeds and seedlings.

The production and marketing of seeds and seedlings are subject to mandatory assessments.

The law laid down the guidelines pertaining to:

- assessments and certification
- the official catalogue of species and varieties
- the marketing of seeds and seedlings
- the packaging, the transportation and the storage of seeds and seedlings

Law No. 116 (May 21, 1995) compiled the provisional list of fruit tree and vine varieties authorised for production and marketing.

Law No. 117 (May 21, 1995) included the phytosanitary provisions governing the import of seeds, fruit and vine seedlings.

Law No. 248 (October 3, 1995) established the general technical regulation governing the production, the assessment and the certification of seeds and fruit and vine seedlings.

Laws No. 251-253 (October 3, 1995) established the specific technical regulation governing the production, the propagation and the distribution of plant material of fruit trees and vines.

Guaranteed plant propagating material

The implementation of the aforementioned laws, which were designed to regulate plant propagating material, was started for vine and citrus in 1996 at I.T.A.F. in co-operation with C.N.C.C.

At present, seedling production surveillance is ensured by C.N.C.C. and I.T.A.F.

The infrastructures needed for certification

At I.T.A.F./M.A., the plant material intended for propagation complies with the technical regulations in force.

Surveillance, propagation and conservation infrastructures are also available at I.T.A.F./M.A.

The infrastructures intended for sanitary assessments (laboratories and indexing green-houses) are also located within the premises of I.N.P.V./M.A. and C.N.C.C./M.A.

Specialised staff

More than 50 engineers and technicians (I.T.AF/M.A., C.N.C.C./M.A., I.N.P.V./M.A. and co-operatives of nurserymen) are being trained abroad (France, Belgium, Germany and Italy) in virology, nematology, mycology, bacteriology and plant micro-propagation.

Additional courses have been organised for nurserymen in plant production and management of plant propagating material.

Nurseries

The production of fruit and vine seedlings is an age-old tradition in Algeria which dates back to the French colonisation. Following the independence in 1962, the sector was organised in public-owned farms and was able to fully meet the demand for plants intended for planting. From the 1970s to the 1980s, the national production of fruit seedlings ranged between 5 to 6 million (fruit trees) and 12 to 15 million (vines).

During the last decade, the sector experienced a steep decline as a result of the restructuring process, which was started in 1986/87, and the lack of State-funded aid programmes.

In 1997/98, the sector revived and more than 2 million fruit seedlings and 3 million vine seedlings were produced.

Plant protection: greenhouses and institutions

The sanitary protection of the national fruit trees is ensured by a number of services which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture.

- I.N.P.V. (*Institut National de la Protection des Végétaux*) boasts a 30-year experience and suitable infrastructures (laboratories, indexing green-houses and quarantine screen-houses);
- I.T.A.F. (*Institut Technique de l'Arboriculture Fruitière et de la Vigne*) has been regularly storing and assessing plant propagating material for twenty years and is equipped with laboratories, greenhouses and quarantine screen-houses;
- C.N.C.C. (*Centre National de Contrôle et Certification des semences et plants*) monitors the

production of seedlings and is equipped with a laboratory to perform the necessary controls.

Pomology and certifying institutions

Pomology studies to ensure true-to-type varieties are carried out at I.T.A.F. and C.N.C.C.

The National Agronomic Institute and the Departments of Agronomy, which are under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, are full-fledged training and research centres for fruit crops (plant pathology, breeding, technology, etc.)

The production of seeds and seedlings intended for propagation is ensured by I.T.A.F. and the Ministry of Agriculture.

The production of seedling for the planting of orchards and vineyards is ensured by the co-operatives of nurserymen (State pilot farms and private nurserymen).

International co-operation

A co-operation project was implemented in 1989-1992 between Algerian I.T.A.F. and French ENTAV in the field of vine breeding.

A co-operation project, entitled “Promotion of certifiable fruit and vine seedling production”, which was launched in 1993, is currently in progress between Algeria and Germany,.

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