

Conservation & Sustainable Use of Dryland Agrobiodiversity in Lebanon

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Establishment of fattening unit in Aarsal

The Herders Cooperative in Aarsal established a fattening unit based on organic livestock and crop production with the support of the Agrobiodiversity Project, the GTZ Project on Combating Desertification in Lebanon, the AUB-IDRC Project, and the Green Line Association. The aim of the fattening unit is to decrease the pressure on the degraded rangeland while increasing the income of the herders in the region.

The project provided and supported the planting of 5,000 shrub seedlings (Salsola and Atriplex) in the vicinity of the fattening unit and will provide the Herders Coop with feed blocks as additional source of feed for the animals in the unit.



Fattening unit in Aarsal

Fruit trees nursery

The project continued for the third year the support of the fruit trees nursery operated by Aarsal Rural Development Association (ARDA) for the production of around 9,000 seedlings/year of wild fruit trees and plantlets (from cuttings) of local varieties of several targeted species. These seedlings are distributed to the farmers and used in reforestation activities.



Medicinal plants at ARDA



Nursery of wild and local varieties of fruit trees in Aarsal

This year, additional 2,200 seedlings of plant species with potential medicinal uses are to be produced in the nursery. Seeds of those species were previously collected from Aarsal, Ham, Maaraboun and Nabha and multiplied by the project with the collaboration of ICARDA-Turbol station.



Agro-food processing

With the scope of community empowerment, the project conducted 4 training sessions on agro-food processing at ARDA premises for the cooperatives and women groupings in the Project Sites of Aarsal, Ham, Maaraboun and Nabha in collaboration with the GEF/UNDP "Wetland Project" with the participation of women grouping from the site of Ammiq/Beqaa. The cooperative "Atayib Al-Reef", and the YMCA Association conducted the trainings in the following areas:

- Theoretical and practical processing of dairy products.
- Theoretical and practical processing of jams and compotes.
- Theoretical and practical processing of molasses, preparation of rose water drink and preservation of food in salted water and tomato.
- Marketing of agro-food products (labeling requirement, conducting market study and cost calculation).



During the agro-food processing training



Session on Dairy Products



Session on processing of jams and compotes

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An average of 27 women from Aarsal, Ham, Maaraboun and Nabha participated in the 4 training sessions and expressed high interest and enthusiasm for further support in this area.

Rangeland rehabilitation activities

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"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect".

Aldo Leopold
1887-1948



Fenced demonstration site in Aarsal to show the effect of protection on rangeland

Many species targeted by the project are forage legumes. These species are under threat mainly due to overgrazing. The project established several demonstration sites in Aarsal and Nabha to show the effect of protection, reseeding with native legumes and water-harvesting techniques on rangeland rehabilitation.



Contour ridges for water harvesting reseeded with native legumes (Nabha)