

# Conservation & Sustainable Use of Dryland Agrobiodiversity in Lebanon

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## Establishment of a seed cleaning unit in Aarsal

The Agrobiodiversity Project established a seed cleaning unit in Aarsal in collaboration with Aarsal Rural Development Association. The unit distributed more than 10 tons of cleaned landraces seeds of wheat, barely, chickpea and lentils to more than 70 local farmers in the project sites of Nabha, Aarsal and Ham/Maaraboun.

## Orchard tractors to Ham and Maaraboun Coops

Within the framework of community empowerment, the project provided the two agricultural cooperatives recently established with the support of the project in the villages of Ham and Maaraboun with small 35 hp orchard tractors (one for each coop).



## World Food Day celebration

World Food Day event (theme this year: Biodiversity for Food Security) was celebrated in Lebanon in an opening ceremony at the Order of Engineers-Beirut on October 11, 2004 under the patronage of the President of the Republic represented by the Minister of Agriculture with the presence of the Minister of Industry and the Representative of FAO in Lebanon. This was followed by several presentations focusing on the importance of biodiversity for agriculture and food security at the national level.



The project participated in organizing the exhibition “Biodiversity: For Better Environment and Healthy Food”, which was held on the occasion at the Order of Engineers between 11 to 13 October 2004.

## Establishment of two agro-food centers in Ham and Nabha

YMCA, through USAID fund, established two agro-food processing centers in the Project Sites of Nabha and Ham/Maaraboun. The equipment to be provided to the centers will be co-shared between the project and YMCA.



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*"If we once – and for so long – lived in balance with nature and each other, we should be able to do so again."*

John Zerzan

YMCA also provided intensive training (9 weeks) to the local women groupings to be able to operate the centers. The project and YMCA will assist the women groupings to establish two cooperatives, which will be the main beneficiaries from this initiative.



## Eco/Rural-tours in Ham/Maaraboun

Two eco-tour operators, in collaboration with the project, organized last fall two trips to Ham/Maaraboun. Around 30 participants, accompanied by a local guide, had tours inside the two villages, visited some farmers' fields, were introduced to the wild fruit trees in the area and met with the local community who welcomed them in a very friendly atmosphere. Upon their request, the eco-tourists bought several local products from the villagers.



## Other News/Events

- A painting contest on agrobiodiversity for students between 10-14 years old was launched by the project in 12 local schools in the project target area. This contest is part of a regional contest including Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.
- A training course on orchard management and post-harvest practices was provided by the project to farmers from the villages of Aarsal, Nabha, Ham and Maaraboun.
- The project conducted a workshop in Tel Amara on "Agrobiodiversity, importance and conservation" for around 22 engineers and technicians from the Department of Agricultural Extension (Ministry of Agriculture). Afterwards, the participants visited the Project Site of Ham & Maaraboun.
- Two presentations on apiculture and agrobiodiversity were organized by the project for the student club in Aarsal, in collaboration with ARDA; a collection of books was provided by the project to the club library.
- Last call for participation in the international conference on "Promoting Community-Driven Conservation and Sustainable Use of Dryland Agrobiodiversity" to be held at ICARDA-headquarters (Aleppo, Syria) on 18-21 April 2005. Author's guideline and other information can be obtained from the website: [www.icarda.cgiar.org/Announcement/Agrobiodiversity\\_18-21April05.htm](http://www.icarda.cgiar.org/Announcement/Agrobiodiversity_18-21April05.htm)