



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Foreign  
Agricultural  
Service

# FACT SHEET

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## *USDA at Work for Agriculture in Iraq July 2009*

Agriculture serves as the foundation on which many countries build their economies. For Iraq, agriculture has traditionally been the second largest employer, after the oil sector. Agriculture is the second largest component of Iraq's Gross Domestic Product and an important part of the social structure of rural communities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is helping Iraq revitalize its agricultural sector through a variety of activities.

USDA maintains a permanent presence in the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad through the assignment of two Foreign Service Officers. In addition, one USDA staff member serves as the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) liaison in Baghdad.

**Ministry Advisors.** Four USDA staff serve as ministry advisors to the government of Iraq. One is an agricultural economics advisor and three provide technical guidance and capacity building to the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant Ministries in the areas of agricultural extension, animal health and food safety, strategic planning, and soil and water management.

**PRT Advisors.** In 2009, USDA will fill 32 PRT agricultural advisors positions in Iraq. As of March 2009, 28 advisors are in-country with the remaining positions to be filled in the next few months. All of the people deployed to Iraq have been USDA employees who have volunteered and were selected and trained for these assignments.

PRT-led projects vary depending on the needs of the province and have established farmer organizations, started agricultural extension projects, managed natural resources, rebuilt institutional capacity to clean and maintain irrigation canals, recreated veterinary infrastructure, ensured animal health, and developed food and animal production and marketing systems.

In 2009, USDA provided \$10 million to help support the costs of participating in these activities in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

**Technical Assistance.** USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), in collaboration with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Colorado State University, provides technical assistance to strengthen Iraq's national animal health and disease control program. In 2007, FAS sponsored a 1-week planning session with 16 Iraqi government and private sector representatives to develop a national animal health program in line with international standards. The planning session was held in conjunction with the ninth conference of the World Organization for Animal Health Regional Commission for the Middle East in Damascus, Syria. FAS' technical assistance efforts facilitated the reintegration of Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture officials into this international standards-setting body and assisted in reestablishing key regional networks with technical counterparts in the Middle East region.

In 2008, 94 Iraqis participated in an animal health disease control workshop hosted by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture. The workshop resulted in the following:

- Outlines of five disease plans for the Iraqi National Animal Health Program. The plans include goals, monitoring approaches, administrative structures, and responsibilities;
- Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and the Kurdistan region signed a memorandum of understanding to establish full collaboration on animal health activities across Iraq;
- Seven veterinary colleges in Iraq signed a collaborative agreement to standardize the veterinary curriculum and to establish lines of research collaboration;
- Linkages with the Swiss Tropical Medicine Institute with the potential to establish collaborative research in the animal health arena;
- Linkages with Turkey's Ministry of Higher Education to train Iraqi faculty members in veterinary medicine; and
- An outline of enhancing the buffalo-raising units in Iraq was developed in conjunction with the Iraqi Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 2007, FAS awarded a 2-year cooperative agreement to the U.S. Grains Council to assist the Iraqi Poultry Producers Association (IPPA) in creating a Center for Poultry Excellence in Iraq. This center will be a one-stop shop for the latest information on the Iraqi poultry industry. The FAS grant will support the following activities to establish the center: increasing staff within the IPPA; increasing the IPPA's capacity to provide valuable market information; and conducting 18 training seminars to share the latest technical information.

**U.S.-Based Training.** The Cochran Fellowship Program (CFP) provides short-

term training in the United States to help countries develop market-driven food systems and increase trade links with U.S. agribusinesses. In 2007, the CFP provided training to three Iraqi veterinarians in animal health and animal disease control techniques. In 2008, 12 Iraqi government statisticians participated in an agricultural statistics training program and 6 Iraqi extension agents participated in an agricultural extension program. Thus far in 2009, eight Iraqi government officials have participated in an agricultural policy planning and budget management training designed in conjunction with the University of California at Davis.

The Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellows (Borlaug) Program provides 6- to 8-week collaborative research training for entry-level scientists and policymakers from developing and middle-income countries. In 2008, the Borlaug Program trained four Iraqi scientists at U.S. land-grant universities and at USDA research laboratories in water resources, waste-water recycling, and irrigation. In 2009, USDA plans to train about 12 more Borlaug fellows in planting seeds, geographic information systems, remote sensing, rainfed agriculture, and water management.

**Revitalization.** USDA cooperation with Iraq will help the Iraqi agricultural sector spur domestic economic growth. In addition, USDA efforts will ultimately lead toward increasing U.S. market share of Iraq's agricultural imports.

The U.S. Department of State provided FAS with \$12.2 million to undertake the implementation of phases one and two of the Iraq Agricultural Extension Revitalization (IAER) project in collaboration with USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, which is responsible for monitoring the execution of the IAER project by a consortium of U.S. land-grant universities. This project aims to support Iraq to restore, expand, and sustain a

private-sector driven Iraqi agricultural sector.

The IAER seeks to revitalize the Iraqi extension system by building the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Iraq's major agricultural universities. Iraqis can then establish up-to-date extension research and training facilities and provide efficient agricultural extension services that will promote sustainable economic development for Iraqi farmers and rural communities.

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From 2007 through 2008, IAER conducted 25 extension seminars including field demonstrations to 770 extension personnel of the Ministry of Agriculture and Iraqi university faculty. The IAER project has five principal focal points: livestock production, field crop production and marketing, horticultural crop production, extension methodology, and irrigation and water resources management.

**General information about FAS programs, resources, and services is available on the Internet at the FAS home page: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>.**