

The project is funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Italian Government. A partnership of ICARDA, The Government of Iraq, Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Higher Education, Environment and Science and Technology in Iraq, University of Western Australia, CSIRO, IWMI and ICBA.

# A Preliminary Analysis of Causes, Effects and Approaches to Management of Salinity in Iraq

Detailed analyses of best practices in the farm are needed to ensure sustainable agricultural production in saline areas in Iraq. The research team has interviewed successful farmers in Iraq who achieved cost-benefit ratios, adapted efficient methods and best-bet farm management practices to provide scientific analysis of their approaches and introduce these findings to a wider range of farmers for long-term sustainability in managing salinity.

This research component is designed to:

- identify the best soil, agronomic, irrigation and drainage management practices for salinity management at farm level;
- demonstrate these practices to farmers;
- adoption plans to promote these practices to wider farmer groups

## How we're working

A multistage sampling technique was used to select the outstanding farmers. Based on the land quality classification, governorates with low to medium salinity were selected in the first stage. Project sites are Dujaila in Wasit Governorate, Mussaib in Babil Governorate; and Abu-AIKhaseeb in Basra.

Within each of these selected governorates, the district with the lowest land quality was chosen. Farms were selected based on their representation of the general situation within the district or the governorate with regard to salinization, land quality, productivity and farm incomes.

The precise identification of the outstanding farmers was undertaken based on media and other published and unpublished reports and sources of information documenting them as "success stories" in agriculture using three criteria; a) highest reported yield per unit area, b) meeting the state yield target continuously, and c) positive reputation of the farm among officials, authorities and neighboring farmers.



Researchers working in the field, Iraq

## Early results (at February 2012):

- Most members of the farming families take important part in agricultural work. This helps the outstanding farmers generate higher incomes
- The low income families push their family members to contribute in agricultural work as an alternative to the machinery work
- Economic status of most of the farmers is between medium level and low
- The role of governmental establishment was very limited at these sites or non-existent.

## Through 2012, activities in this Component will continue with:

- Showcasing the pilot farms to demonstrate the promising

best-bet practices, including the ongoing measurements

- Revising and documenting the outcomes of past activities
- Understanding the scientific grounds of the best-bet practices and then improve them to be more effective in tackling salinity and improving farmers' income
- Identifying the knowledge gaps and research requirements to further refine these practices.

## Team members

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