

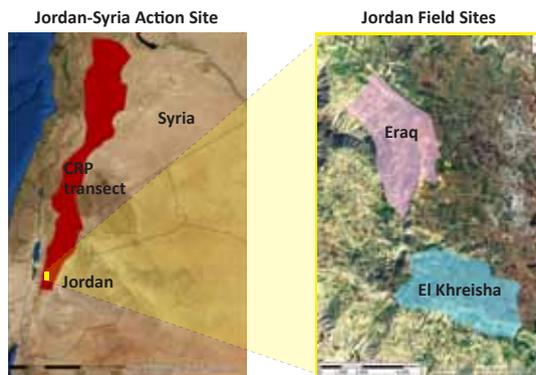


An agricultural diversity representative of Jordanian farming

In Jordan, two sites were selected for the program: Eraq and El Khreisha. The choice is based on the diversity of the farming activities, ongoing ICARDA research in the area, the recommendations of the national partner, the National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE), and the motivation of communities to partner with agricultural research for social, economic and environmental development.



The interest of working in a representative area of Jordan is the possibility to out scale the results through an innovation platform. This platform will synthesize learning from the field sites, promote technologies and best practices to other areas, and inform regional and national agricultural policies that can foster critical mass in the adoption of approaches developed within the action sites.



Map source: ICARDA Geoinformatics 2014 (<http://geoagro.icarda.org/>)

About Dryland Systems

The CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems is a major new effort to speed up the identification, testing, and delivery of solutions to increase food and nutrition security, and improve livelihoods in the world's most fragile agro-ecosystems.

Current reductionist, piecemeal, and single-dimension research approaches to improve agriculture in low-income countries are no longer effective. The Dryland Systems Program adopts an integrated agro-ecosystems approach, combining knowledge from applied research using the latest innovation system approaches, communication, and knowledge sharing strategies, and tools. The Program's new thinking and findings will be harnessed to create measurable, sustainable, and large scale impact on rural livelihoods. For more information:

<http://drylandsystems.cgiar.org>

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CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems: Action Site Research in Jordan

Exploring the Program's Field Sites in El-Karak



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Dryland Systems





El-Karak Governorate

The historical land of El-Karak is situated along the south coast of the Dead Sea and the Mountains of Moab. The region's different terrains produce a wide diversity of climates: from desert with high temperatures during the day and cold temperatures at night, to a mountainous climate with mild summers and cold winters. The estimated population is about 240,000, representing around 4% of Jordan's total population.



Activities of the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems will be implemented in two villages, Eraq and El Khreisha, where agro-pastoral systems remain central to many farm households as the major source of employment for both men and women.

Dryland Systems research activities will include:

- Community consultations to understand challenges and develop mitigation strategies.
- Surveys to understand the farming situation and evaluate progress over time.
- Training farmers on new practices and technologies, including: water harvesting, family gardening, crop and forage production, livestock productivity, and dairy processing.
- Developing models for sustainable land use management.

Eraq village, an ancestral site for the olive tree

Like the olive trees growing around households in Eraq village, men and women are attached to their land. Olive farming, despite its low profitability and decreasing productivity as a result of water scarcity, remains the main focus of the community.



While men take care of the trees, women process the fruits by making pickled olives, and even soap. These products are well marketed and the main concern to improve livelihoods remains the increase of fruit yields. Springs drying up and the reduction of rainfall - less than 200 mm per year - are important issues impacting the productivity of olive tree orchards. In this regard, water harvesting across this rugged land can lead to an improvement in olive tree productivity, and hence livelihoods.

El Khreisha villages, a harsh setting where Awassi sheep stand firm

The 12 km² land area is home to a cluster of 15 villages and is highly populated with sheep of the Awassi breed. During a typical day men and boys herd some 20,000 heads of sheep and goats on stubble, degraded communal rangeland and fallows, while women process milk. Fresh cheese, Shanina or Jameed- a rocky cheese used to cook highly appreciated dishes - are prepared with traditional processing methods. Through dissemination of improved technologies and knowledge, ICARDA has achieved savings on water and energy and yielded traditional products with a higher nutritional value.



Another major focus for ICARDA is animal productivity. Farmers are increasingly concerned by a reduction in their flocks' productivity, resulting from an uncommon prevalence of abortions, low conception rates, and high frequencies of neo-natal mortalities. Meat, but also milk production, are depressed and nutritional value is endangered. ICARDA is working alongside local communities to change this.