

International Food Supply Chains and the Right to Food



**GOOD NEWS FOR ONE PERSON CAN BE
BAD NEWS FOR ANOTHER**

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Contrary to what everyone was expecting, the Covid 19 positively affected the agriculture sector in Iraq. A short report on the Dutch "DW" TV Channel in the Arabic language can explain what this article talks about [Link](#).

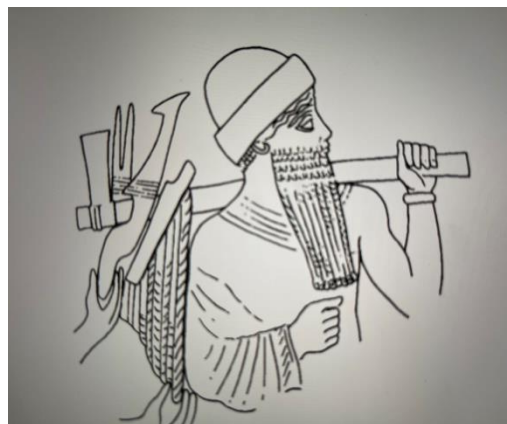
What do you know about Iraq?

"Ard Al Sawad", as they used to call it, the land of black colour due to the size of cultivated lands that reflect dark colour when you look from a distance¹. The land of two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, The Mesopotamia (3000 BC), the home of ancient civilizations of Sumerians, Akkadians and Assyrians, and we now call Iraq.

How ancient Iraq's agricultural life was?

On the mountains of Iraq, 12,000 years ago, history recorded the beginning of the agricultural age, when people started using their hands in farming.

Magnificent tools like (Axe-heads, Mattock-heads, Adze-blades, and others) from Babylonian Dynasty were found; they were very well preserved in the ancient city of Tell Sifr/ Dhi Qar Province now and brought to the British museum in 1856²ⁱⁱ.



Ancient Iraqi farmer in the eyes of a painter

¹ Muhammad Rashid Al Feel, *Iraq* (Ministry of culture and guidance 1964).

² P. R. S. Moorey, 'The Loftus Hoard Of Old Babylonian Tools From Tell Sifr In Iraq' (1971) 33 Iraq.

To solve the watering problems, ancient Iraqis did several things to increase the cultivated areas. The solutions they adopted significantly altered the land, primarily through the creation of irrigation networks in the southern part of Iraq, where the supply of water from the river was vital to growing the crops, palms, and weeds. The first signs of archaeological irrigation appeared around 6000 BC, and water was brought to the fields by canals.

What was the situation in Modern Iraq³ⁱⁱⁱ?

During the middle of the last century, Iraq's agricultural production was not significant but vital, especially before the development of the oil industry; at that time, agriculture contributed to around 8% of Iraq's GDP. During the past 50 years, Iraq successive governments mainly focused on having control over products and prices. Its main objective was to achieve self-sufficiency with food, which was the main reason behind introducing land reclamation and water use management policies to overcome salinization.

The wars Iraq witnessed in 1991 and 2017, among other adverse effects, have highly affected the planned agriculture policies; the attacks of ISIS from 2014-2017 made the situation even worst. Subsequently, these adverse effects have highly impacted the country's employment level as agriculture used 25% of employment in the country^{4iv}.

Iraq's main types of productions

Considering the (i) expected growth and demand; (ii) the expected level of support from local and international entities; (iii) environmental conditions; and (iv) contribution to food sufficiency, wheat, tomato, date and grape are the main products the government/ investors should consider when studying the Iraqi agriculture market.

The date is the dominating crop in Iraq; before the 1991 war, Iraq covered three of four quarters of the world's need and had 600+ types of dates. This productivity has dropped in the past years to 7.2% due to the increase in both human and animals and the wars and conflicts the area has witnessed during the past decades.

Dates are essential product; they can be processed to make syrup, sugar, ethanol, jam, animal food, and many other food productions; with this in mind, only 4% of cultivated lands in Iraq is utilized for date cultivation.

³ (*Nationalaglawcenter.org*, 2021).

⁴ (telleria, 2021)

The type of dates Iraq is producing enjoys a competitive advantage worldwide; however, it still requests efforts to achieve the quality cultivars, measures in management policies, applying international standards for achieving higher quality and more. Above all, investors are needed to increase cultivated areas of palms and use advanced technology utilizing the privileges both the local and international provided.

[Link](#)

How to Improve the Effectiveness of the Agricultural sector in Iraq?

To increase the productivity of the agriculture sector and improve the quality of production, decision-makers should reconsider the importance of agriculture as a primary source of income and pay extra efforts in accelerating the improvement process acknowledging the oil sector's future and the instability of oil prices which make the necessity to add more income sources to the country, essential.

Understanding the challenges is a critical factor for providing adequate solutions. We can highlight the main challenges facing the Iraqi farmers in planting palm trees by saying that he faces difficulties with finance, technology and skills. The farmers are also in need of government support in developing a regulatory framework by which it will ensure market stability, build national capacity, apply best practices, and provide educational support.

To protect the local production and increase it, the Iraqi government activated Law no.11, 2010 (Protecting Product), Law no.1, 2010, The Consumer Protection law and encouraging planting palm trees in provinces in the middle and southern part of Iraq. It also encouraged the investors (both local and foreigners) to invest in the agriculture sector and granted them extra privileges; such as:

According to the valid Investment law, the Investor enjoys the below privileges:

- 1- The right to repatriate the capital he brought into Iraq in addition to the profits he gained.
- 2- Enjoys three years of customs exemptions.
- 3- Protection against any nationalization or expropriation fully or partially by the government.
- 4- Hiring foreign employees to manage the project.
- 5- Open a bank account at one of the licensed Iraqi or non-Iraqi banks operating in Iraq.
- 6- The right to ensure the project with local or foreign insurance companies.

- 7- Non-Iraqi workers in the investment project, including the Investor, can transfer salaries and compensations out of Iraq.
- 8- Protection against any amendment to the current laws, as they will not have any retroactive effect on the privileges provided by this law.
- 9- Exemptions from import duties that apply to furniture and accessories imported for the investment project, for renewal or modernization once every four years.
- 10-The right to trade project shares at the Iraqi Stock Exchange "ISX".

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ⁱ Al Feel M, *Iraq* (Ministry of culture and guidance 1964)

ⁱⁱ Moorey P, 'The Loftus Hoard Of Old Babylonian Tools From Tell Sifr In Iraq' (1971) 33 *Iraq*

ⁱⁱⁱ (*Nationalaglawcenter.org*, 2021) <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/RL32093.pdf> accessed 17 April 2021

^{iv} telleria, r., 2021. 4. [online] Available at: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/buyessay>