

Thus of the 16 main work tasks associated with the agricultural cycle, eight have been substantially altered. Some of the change has been labour displacing, primarily due to the expanded functions of the tractor in harrowing, farrowing and manuring, and the built-in fertilization process in the drip system. Others were labour demanding, especially the extra work during the harvest season and the related tasks of packing, hauling and clearing. The net effect has been:

- a. An increased work load for women and children.
- b. A decline in heavy toil for men, especially the burdensome activities associated with furrow irrigation. This reprieve was replaced by a corresponding increase in marketing related tasks, and in the technical maintenance of the drip lines.
- c. An increased demand for hired labour during the harvest season.

The peak demand for hired labour in Zbeidat takes place during the tomato picking season in March and April. The optimal pattern of hiring takes the form of gangs of women workers (usually a team of four to five women) under supervision by a man. Those women are recruited through a labour contractor (usually a truck owner who provides their transport from and to their homes) who deals directly with the farmer. The contractor charges the farmer for the gang, at the rate of IL.200 (\$5) per woman per day, and pays them in turn IL.100 (\$2.50) each per day*, pocketing half the money in the process, ostensibly for transport and "protection". The women, however, receive in addition a basket of the pick (amounting to about 20 kgs.) and one meal. The work day is seven hours from 6 a.m. to

*Rate for the season of Spring 1980.