

Table (IV - 1)

Number and distribution of technical staff

(March 1981)

District	College graduates	Agricultural high schools	Non-diplomate	Total
Total	46	24	12	82
Tulkarm	6	7	-	13
Jenin	5	4	1	10
Nablus	5	4	2	11
Ramallah-Bethlehem	13	3	3	19
Jericho	8	1	2	11
Hebron	7	5	4	16
Planning unit	2	-	-	2

Source: Files of the Department of Agriculture.

Agricultural research prior to occupation was undertaken by the Research Department of Amman through several experimental stations representing all major farming regions. The department was started in 1958 through massive US AID financial and technical support, which enabled it to make rapid progress in building fully-fledged and modern research infrastructures, serving both parts of Jordan. On the eve of occupation the West Bank had one major research station in the Jordan Valley (Wadi Fara'a) and five smaller ones located in other important production regions and serving localized needs. According to available records, Wadi Fara'a Station had in 1962 a resident technical staff consisting of 3 PhDs, 4 MSc's, and 6 BSc's.¹

1. Files of Wadi Fara'a Station.

Following occupation, the situation started to deteriorate. Early on, the activities of Wadi Fara'a Station (only four miles away from the Jordan River) were drastically curtailed for security reasons. Furthermore, all research activities were put under the direct supervision of Israeli researchers, mostly of the Volcani Institute. The results were published in Hebrew and were scarcely accessible for local users.¹ Recognizing the Volcani Institute as serving West Bank research needs, the Military Administration passed to it the largest part of the West Bank research budget for the purpose of setting up a modern laboratory for olives and grapes.

In order to facilitate the process of technical "annexation" the Military Administration established what it called the Research Office in Ramallah as a coordinator between Volcani technicians and local extension agents. Although it may be argued that this formula has probably helped accelerate technological change, yet it has also undermined the local research base in the West Bank itself.

The situation deteriorated much faster after 1979, essentially due to more stringent budget restrictions. All research stations were turned over to commercial production and their "surplus" staff were either transferred or dismissed. In seven stations there were left only four college-educated technicians (see Table IV-2). The Research Office in Ramallah was closed and its director,

1. The researcher was able to visit the Olive and Grape Research Institute at Volcani only after lengthy contacts. He was given copies of several research studies on olive fertilization and picking hormones. All reports were in Hebrew or English, and they were published in a form which neither ordinary farmers nor extension agents could understand. The author has failed to find any one of these publications on the West Bank itself, even at the Department of Research in Ramallah. This casts further doubts on the usefulness of Volcani research to West Bank agriculture.