

are met through stocks carried from previous years or imports from Spain and Greece. According to an FAO olive expert, the trend towards local consumption of oil products is a typical feature of all oil producing countries. He further notes that exporting oil is merely a process of interchanging market needs among producer - consumers.¹

The main export market for olive oil and pickles is Jordan, where some of it is re-exported to the Gulf states. There they are consumed mainly by Palestinian residents. Some quantities, though considerably smaller are sold in the Gaza Strip. In general, exports fluctuate violently from one year to another, in direct response to yield fluctuations. Except in off-seasons, the value of olive exports (oil and pickles) may exceed one fifth of all West Bank exports, although compared with citrus, olive culture is not as significant in export trade. Table (VII-4) shows that although occupying an area of only 25,000 dunums (3.7 percent of the area under olives) citrus exports have, on the average, substantially exceeded those of olives.

1. O F Marsico, Olive Cultivation in the Countries of the Mediterranean Basin and the Near East, (Rome: FAO Publication No TA 3159, 1974), p 2.

Table (VII - 4)

Exports to Jordan of Olives and Citrus

| | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 | 1980 | Average |
|-----------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| <u>Olive oil</u> | | | | | | |
| - tons | 4275 | n.a | 4586 | 2164 | 6527 | 4388 |
| - value (IL mill) | 57.9 | 23.1 | 209.8 | 145.7 | 1084.7 | 304.2 |
| <u>Olive pickles</u> | | | | | | |
| - tons | 2200 | -- | 1609 | 837 | 2143 | 1702.3 |
| - value (IL mill) | 15.2 | -- | 30.9 | 24.2 | 132.8 | 40.6 |
| <u>Olives</u> - total value | 73.1 | 23.1 | 240.7 | 169.9 | 1217.5 | 344.8 |
| <u>Citrus</u> | | | | | | |
| - tons | n.a | n.a | 44400 | 35300 | 29000 | 36200 |
| - value (IL mill) | 62.8 | 143.8 | 213.6 | 217.8 | 381.4 | 203.9 |

Source: Administered Territories Statistics Quarterly, op cit, relevant volumes for respective years.

Cultural practices

The olive tree is a highly versatile plant which can be grown with varied results under extremely diversified conditions, whether in terms of topography, climate, soil type, or amount of precipitation. It is a long-lived tree which takes 7 - 10 years to commence commercial production. Until recently the establishment of a new plantation was hampered by slow and inefficient propagation technologies. In the late seventies, however, there was a major technological breakthrough following the introduction of forced-rooted cuttings by the use of growth stimulating hormones. There are three local nurseries using the new technique which, combined together, produce around 0.6 million seedlings a year. About 180-210 thousand seedlings are sold on the West Bank and the rest are exported to Jordan, Israel (exclusively to Arab farmers), and the Gaza Strip.