

produce more of it themselves.

4. Competition with imported olive oil. Although no detailed statistics are available, the West Bank consumes large quantities of imported olive oil, mostly from Spain and Greece. Imported oil is cheaper by around 10 - 25 percent and bottled in small-size containers. Its quality, as viewed by local residents, does not match with local oil although it may be considered superior in some export markets. Cheapness of European olive oil is due to higher productivity which is rendered possible by growing olives on land which permits intensive production techniques.
5. Small size and extensive dispersion of holdings. This has gradually reduced the interest on the side of owners and has made collective action in cultural practices (eg. pest control) difficult. Likewise, it is very difficult to reach many growers in order to extend to them financial support or credit facilities.
6. Unsatisfactory processing and marketing techniques. Most olives are still pressed in relatively old machinery, thus losing precious oil in the pulp (even over 5 percent). As oil is bottled in tin cans of 17 kgs on these machines, it is difficult to purchase oil in smaller quantities. Quality is not standardized and is inadequately controlled. Occasional but widely publicized cases of adulteration have badly damaged the export potential of local oil.
7. High cost of fertilizers and chemical sprays. Fertilizing olive trees undoubtedly helps increase productivity and the

question is only one of how much of what fertilizers to add. Likewise, it may be essential to use chemical sprays for the control of certain pests. The most serious constraint in both cases is the high cost of needed inputs. It is very difficult to promote their wider use on olives in the present economic setting without a partial subsidy on their prices.

b. Political Problems

Conforming with their land policies, Israeli authorities display little approval for olive culture. Although there is not yet suppression of olives cultivation, official caution is apparent in the attitude and policies of the Department of Agriculture. Recently, for example, the Military Administration instituted new measures which aimed at curtailing large-scale expansion in olive groves by demanding licences from producing nurseries¹ (possibly closing some of them) and by insisting on prior approval for distribution of subsidized seedlings by voluntary agencies. The Military Administration even asked for detailed lists of recipient farmers and locations of planting.² Furthermore, the Department of Agriculture stopped, from the early 1970s, previous efforts aimed at collective control of chronic olive pests. No credit facilities are provided to olive growers and the flow of funds from foreign sources is carefully controlled.

c. Technical Problems

1. Incidence of chronic pests. The most important olive pests
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1. Interview with the Chief Horticulturist in the Department of Agriculture, November 5, 1981.
 2. Voluntary agencies have so far refused to do that. Reference: an interview with the Director of the Community Development Foundation, March 5, 1981.