

are tailored essentially for intensive almond production, possibly under irrigation. Modest fertilizer use and proper application of weed killers, coupled with effective insect control schemes is likely to raise productivity and reduce seasonal variations in production.

3. Poor marketing structure. There are several loop-holes in the present marketing structure of almonds. The following problems were voiced by most sampled respondents:
  - a. The almond trade with Jordan and Israel is dominated by a few middlemen who are in a position to earn a substantial margin, much higher than that commensurate with their services. Loosening this cartel is a great step towards giving producers a fair share of almonds' sale price.
  - b. Marketing of West Bank almonds in Amman faces several problems. Besides constraints resulting from elaborate permit procurement procedures, local produce suffers even more from competition with almonds imported from such countries as the United States and Cyprus. By virtue of a much higher productivity, these countries are easily able to undercut West Bank prices. As the almond is a luxury good consumed by higher income strata which are not too sensitive to possible price rises, and since almond growing affects classes of Palestinian peasants which are most vulnerable to Israeli economic policies, it is politically reasonable to seek more stringent measures on almond imports into Jordan from foreign countries. This argument carries further weight in view of widely held suspicions that much of Jordan's imported almonds come in fact from Israel, via a third country.

#### Other trees

The discussion has so far covered olives, grapes and almonds, which are by far the most important of all common rainfed trees with regard to their area and share in agricultural income. However, there are many other kinds of trees which, though currently of minor significance, may possess large potential under different circumstances. The following is a brief review of the most common of these trees, with emphasis on their comparative profitability, problems, and prospects for the future. The data on areas and output is derived from the files of district offices of the Department of Agriculture and from the Agricultural Atlas of Jordan. Profitability estimates are derived from a 1979 study published by the Economic Planning Unit in the Department of Agriculture.

#### 1. Plums

Total area is estimated at 32,275 donums (1980) versus 14,230 donums in 1966. Production has also increased in the same period from 3,770 to 18650 tons.<sup>1</sup> More than two-thirds of all plum orchards are grown in Hebron and Ramallah districts.

Plum production expanded rapidly in the seventies, mainly in the upper hills of Hebron and Ramallah districts. The main reason for that was the high returns earned from exports to Israel. But most recently it has been noticed that local supply, particularly of early maturing varieties, has exceeded demand which hence led to a sharp drop in prices and profitability. A 1979 study of profitability has shown differences among late and early varieties. While the former netted JD 42.5 per donum, the latter netted only JD 39.1.<sup>2</sup>

1. Agricultural Atlas of Jordan, op cit, p 116.

2. The Economics of Common Farming Enterprises, op cit, p 6.