

Therefore, there is a strong case for rejuvenating fig plantations and expanding production. Besides the present constraints of insect hazards, fig culture would be materially accelerated if seedlings of desirable varieties could be made available on a sufficiently large scale. Furthermore, there is ample room for modernizing and expanding fig processing of surplus produce into Kottain.

### 3. Apricots

Total area is estimated at 4,737 donums (1980), versus 4,201 donums in 1966. Production has risen during the same period from 1,287 to 1,376 tons.<sup>1</sup>

Apricot culture is concentrated largely in Tulkarm district which accounts for about half of the total area. But the most common observation in this regard is the rapid decline in its production in recent years. Less than three decades ago the area under apricots was more than three times larger. The main problem which faces this tree and causes its eventual extermination is infection with chronic pests. Apricot trees are infested with a stem borer (Capnodis carbonaria) which is difficult to control and ultimately causes total destruction of infested orchards. Due to inherent weaknesses in extension services and apparent negligence by farmers due to the availability of more attractive sources of income (eg. employment in Israel), the Capnodis hazard is spreading rapidly and it threatens apricot orchards with total destruction.

1. For 1966 figures: Agricultural Atlas of Jordan, op cit, p 120.

Apricots are consumed fresh, and one of the local varieties (Baladi) is extremely perishable, while the other (Hamawi) is much less so. Exporting of Hamawi to Amman is allowed and its quality permits doing so, whereas the Baladi is too perishable.

Profitability of apricots is estimated at JD 45.6 per donum,<sup>1</sup> which is higher than all other types of rainfed fruit trees - except for trellised grapes. Expanded production is not only possible but strongly recommended, provided more emphasis is placed on Hamawi to facilitate exports. But the major problem, again, is insect and disease damage. Should there be a problem of surpluses over fresh consumption, much of the produce could go into processing, now in Israel, but possibly in Palestinian factories at a later stage.

1. Ibid, p 8.