

Consumption and nutritional significance

The lentil is a very popular local food item. It is cooked in various forms, mainly as soup or majaddarah. In rural communities, the lentil constitutes a staple food, and because of its rich protein content (28 percent), it is described locally as the "poor-man's meat". It could indeed be so in the light of the excessive rise in the price of meats.

All domestic produce of lentils is consumed locally. In fact there is a constant deficit in supply which is met by imports from Jordan. There is no reliable data available in this regard, but about 3 percent of all imports from Jordan are classified as "pulses", which consist largely of lentils, and probably some chickpeas.

Cultural practices

These are broadly the same as for chickpeas, except that lentil production is less mechanized.

Profitability

Profitability of production was ascertained on the basis of a sample of five farms, all located in Jenin and Hebron districts which produce more than 80 percent of all marketable lentils. Respondent farmers were selected from a total population of 150 farmers each cultivating over 4 donums. Sampled farms were representative of major production areas in both districts. Table (VIII-9) contains a summary of results. It is clear that lentils are markedly more profitable than chickpeas. But as they are more labour-intensive, lentil culture is more suitable for areas where topography is relatively rough.

Table (VIII - 9)

Profitability of lentils

	Unit	Price JD/unit	Quant.	Value	
				JD	Fils
Cost outlay					
a. Land rent	Donum	10.00	1	10	-
b. Production inputs - total				3	570
seeds	kg	0.220	12	2	640
fertilizers					
insecticides	Donum	0.600	1		600
jute sacs	No.	0.330	1		330
c. Labour & machine service - total			9		380
ploughing	Donum	1.000	1	1	-
discing	"	0.500	1		500
seed drilling	"	0.500	1		500
spraying	"	0.300	1		300
pulling out	Women/days	1.200	3	3	600
threshing	Hour	1.480	1	1	480
hauling of produce	Man/days	3.000	1/4		750
other expenses				1	250
d. Interest on investment	%	10	4 months		750
TOTAL COST				23	700
Returns:					
seeds	kg	0.42	60	25	200
straw	"	0.07	130	9	100
TOTAL RETURNS				34	300
NET RETURNS				10	600