

CHAPTER IX

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ECONOMICS OF LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

Livestock production has not for many years been a flourishing sector in West Bank agriculture. This is a fundamental problem which has been precipitated by several factors. Most importantly West Bankers did very little until recently to exploit more efficiently their underground and surface water resources. Accordingly, available land and water were generally used for fruit trees and cash crops. By so doing, livestock raising was restricted largely to those areas which were unfit for other forms of agriculture. During the Jordanian rule, this was not considered a serious problem, because any deficit in the local supply of meat was easily supplemented by imports from Turkey, Syria and Romania and the problem was further eased by a rise in the West Bank's poultry meat production.

The situation of the livestock sector deteriorated further in the wake of Israeli occupation in 1967. As demonstrated below (see Table IX-1) the average number of cows and sheep dropped by 17 and 33 percent respectively during the early years of occupation, in comparison to the base period of 1964-66, and then later dropped by 30 and 57 percent during the period of 1977-79. The reasons for this decline will be investigated in this section.

Table (IX - 1)

Secular changes in the number of livestock - in thousands

	Av. for base period 64-66	1969-72		1977-79	
		Number	% change	Number	% change
Sheep & goats	651.3	434.2	-33	398.2	-39
Cows	34.6	28.6	-17	15.0	-57

(Extracted from Table VI-3, chapter VI).