

Jenin, Nablus, Halhoul and Hebron. Although wholesale markets are usually owned by local municipal authorities, most of them operate under minimal control from respective municipalities.

While middlemen in West Bank markets enjoy a relatively weak monopolistic position in comparison with other countries of the Middle East, there is still ample room for improvement. Wholesale handling of agricultural produce could be rendered much more competitive by instituting adequate regulations to curb monopolies and eliminate swindling. It may be helpful to learn more in this regard from the successful experiences of the Amman and Nablus wholesale markets.

5.3 Exploring the potential for selective agricultural industries and expanding cold storage facilities.

Development of West Bank agriculture, as will become clear in later sections, will entail a marked increase in the supply of many farm products. Oversupply problems can be effectively alleviated by setting up industries which take advantage of seasonal surpluses and by holding part of any excess supply in stores until subsequent improvements in the market situation.

Establishing successful agricultural industries and cold storage facilities should be preceded by adequate studies on the supply and demand dynamics of farm produce and of the market potential for processed products and storage services. As a first step in this regard it is proposed to commission a team of experts to conduct a full-fledged feasibility study for establishing appropriate industries and cold storage facilities in surplus areas. Such studies could be sponsored and financed by the Rural Research Centre at An-Najah University.

5.5 Improving auxiliary marketing services of agricultural products. Most farm products are offered for sale with either little or poor quality services performed during the marketing process. Many such examples were cited earlier under olives, dairy and poultry products. Such problems are as severe in the case of citrus and vegetable products. Suggested improvements will be discussed later under relevant sections in Chapters 12, 13 and 14.

6.0 Land reclamation

This project aims at reclaiming land in classes III and IV and putting it under active cultivation. This involves a number of complementary measures, mainly the following:

- a. Land development (removal of rocks and construction of retaining walls).
- b. Opening passable roads.
- c. Reconstruction of cisterns.
- d. Distribution of appropriate fruit tree seedlings.

6.1 Establishing regional land development units.

Land development should be handled by regional units equipped with a collection of heavy machinery such as bulldozers, graders, and trucks. The services of these units would be made available to farmers at a subsidized cost, preferably not exceeding half of market rates. Ownership and management of proposed units could either go to existing regional cooperatives (as has already been done in Hebron and Nablus) or, if no cooperatives are available, to private entrepreneurs. In both cases the finance would be made available by the PACC within an arrangement which gives a sufficient incentive to owners of these units. It is proposed to start by establishing three such units located in