In spite of the relatively small size of the majority of the groves, the planting of citrus, assuming the availability of the required sandy soil that was mostly in the coastal areas, required substantial sums of investment, especially if considered in light of the income of the majority of Arab peasants.

Citrus cultivation represented the most developed form of "capitalist" agriculture in Palestine, which relied, almost exclusively, on wage labor, and whose output was primarily geared for export. Besides the availability of land, it required funds for the digging of wells, and the purchase of water pumps and chemical fertilizers. It also required the availability of sufficient alternative resources for livelihood until the trees bore fruit, a process that lasted about six years and involved continuous maintenance. This clearly meant that they were beyond the means of most Palestine peasants.

It has been estimated that the "capital cost" of a *dunum* of citrus through its bearing sixth year to be, on average, £P 75.[27] By the season of 1936-1937, this translated into a total investment of about £P 22.5 million. In addition, annual maintenance costs were estimated at £P 10 per *dunum*.[28]

In spite of the sums required, citrus was so profitable in the early 1930s that it attracted investment from hundreds of foreign nationals living abroad (i.e., European and American Jews), absentee owners who saw it as primarily an "interest-bearing investment." This phenomenon developed to such an extent that

[27]Brown in Himadeh, ed., Ibid., 143.

[28]Ibid.