

But not every Zbeidat farmer is a share-cropper. Of those heads of households in our survey that have lands registered to their names eight farmers (or 30% of the total) do not have any access to surplus land which they could share-crop, and it is within this category that we presume an alternative source of income (wage labour, leasing of tractors, etc.) to have originated.

In contrast to share-cropping arrangements cash renting of land is infrequent but not uncommon in Zbeidat. In 1980, there were three farmers in Zbeidat (all from the Abu Sabbah sub-clan) who rent land in Marj Na'je, the total area of which is 47 dunums (approximately 10% of all land held under co-cultivation). Cash renting is of course, much more advantageous to the farmer than to the landlord since there is no sharing of the crop involved. However, it entails a substantial investment on the part of the peasant-renter, and any losses are born solely by him. In Marj Na'je Zbeidat farmers pay all the fuel costs of running the water pump, and any expenses incurred in repairing the pump (which is substantial in the isolated conditions of the Ghor) (Ibrahim, 1980:inter.). The landlord provides the land and water only, and the farmer is free to dispose of the crop as he wishes, unless he is under contract to a commission agent, in which case the same conditions as in share-cropping prevail.

Landlords and Commission Agents

The source of co-cultivation under tenancy arrangements in Zbeidat is the presence of surplus land in the hands of six resident and absentee landlords.