

Water Resources and Water Rights in Zbeidat

Even more crucial than the struggle for land resources has been disputes over the control of water resources between Israeli settlements and Arab farmers in the Valley. The settlements are served by artesian wells of up to 600 meters in depth; most Arab farmers are allowed to drill no more than 100 meters in depth. Between the Makhrouq area to Zbeidat in the Far'a Valley, a stretch of about 15 kms., the Israelis seized and destroyed 6 wells serving the Arab farmers of Makhrouq, Jiftlek and Zbeidat (Matar, 1980:Inter.). In their place new tube wells were drilled to serve the two settlements of Argaman and Masu'a. The Zbeidat community was forbidden to drill for new water resources and limitations established on the use of their own well, which serves both domestic use and plot irrigation. The current capacity of the Zbeidat well is 200-300,000 cubic meters, serving 311 dunums (Jericho Bureau of Agriculture, 1980:Water Statistics).

Altogether there existed in 1980 seven artesian wells in the Zbeidat/Marj Na'je area distributed as follows:

Table 11:6

Artesian Wells in the Zbeidat/Marj Na'je Area
By Owner and Cultivated Area Covered, 1980

<u>Owner</u>	<u>No. of Wells</u>	<u>Dunums Irrigated</u>	<u>of Which Under Drip</u>	<u>% Under Drip</u>
Suleiman Saleh	1	284	184	65%
Zbeidat Farmers	1	311	295	94%
Jamil Abdul Fattah	1 1/2*	67	50	74%
Badie Yunis	1	60	40	67%
Abu Jarrar	1 1/2*	100	125	60%
Marj Na'je Farmers	2	400	125	31%
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Totals	8	1,222 dun.	754 dun.	62%

Sources: (1) Sameer Hleileh, (2) Jericho Bureau of Agriculture, (3) Author's 1980 Zbeidat Survey. *Abdul-Fattah owns a well in partnership with Abu Jarrar.