

"From an agricultural and economic point of view (Argaman) was considered a failure. The impermeability of the ground did not allow for the salt to be removed, as in other places Jordan Valley. Perhaps for that reason leaders of the Moshav and Kibbutz movements refused to adopt the settlement. Near the site line the Beduin tribe of Arab-al-Zbeidat and to the north Marj al-Naije, inhabited by Moslems (sic.) who were not born loving Zionism."⁽²⁾

By 1974 the cultivated area had further declined to 300 dunums, and all but three of the original settlers had left.⁽³⁾ A decision (in 1975) was made to change the status of the settlement to a cooperative moshav (moshav ovdim) in which individual families cultivate separately, following ideological disputes and physical hardships which had threatened the unity of the formative group. Each new family was given a 20-25 dunum plot, and a cooperative turkey coop was added.

The gross annual income per Argaman household was calculated (in 1976) to be around IL.110,000 (\$5238) compared to about IL.180,000 (\$8570) in neighbouring Petza'el (built on the lands of the Arab village of Fasa'il).⁽⁴⁾ In addition to the electric, water and housing infrastructures, the settlers were allotted a million-and-a half cubic meters of water annually (compared with 3000,000 c.m., for the whole village of Marj Na'je, with its 350 inhabitants and 700 dunums to cultivate). The turnover for 1975/1976 was 2.7 million pounds (\$128,570).⁽⁵⁾

Notes

1. "Argaman Declared a Civilian Settlement", Ha'aretz, 19/5/1971.
2. Nehman Fabian, "A Member of Betar Needs to be a little Religious", Ha'aretz, 22/6/1972, p. 10.
3. Yehuda Litani, "There is No Permanent Settlement in Moshav Argaman in the Jordan Valley", Ha'aretz, 14/8/1974.
4. Yair Kutler, "Herut Moshavs: Words Versus Facts", Ha'aretz, 2/7/1976, p. 15.
5. "Argaman Declared Civilian Settlement", Ha'aretz, 19/5/1971, and Conversations with Mr. Muhammad Abu Hila' (1980: inter.).