

Discussion of results:

1. Commercial wheat production is evidently profitable, given its high productivity and open sale opportunities in Israel.
2. Profitability varies considerably with the amount of rainfall. The situation as reported in the previous data is representative of an average good year. According to sampled farmers and technicians, the frequency of good crops is around two out of three. But in "off-years" profitability declines sharply and producers may even encounter a real loss.
3. Free family labour plays a minimal role in commercial wheat farming, since it is markedly mechanized. But in many other parts of the country where wheat farming is still labour-intensive, productivity is low, and family labour is a crucial factor in the context of declining profitability.
4. Local demand for wheat as such is much too low to absorb all produce, due to rapidly changing consumption habits in favour of milled flour. Surplus produce is marketed in Israel at subsidized prices.

BarleyArea and distribution

The area under barley (1980) is estimated at 184 thousand donums producing 26.8 thousand tons. Table (VIII-5) shows that about one third of all barley is produced in Jenin district. Hebron is the next highest with a share of 22 percent in output and 42 percent in area, which is a marked indication of low productivity. It should be noted that the same districts rank also top in the size of their livestock herds.

Table (VIII - 5)

Area, yield and output of barley

(1980)

<u>District</u>	<u>Area (,000 don)</u>	<u>Yield (kg/don)</u>	<u>Output (,000 tons)</u>
Total	184.0	145	26.7
Jenin	42.5	190	8.1
Tulkarn	16.2	200	3.2
Nablus	17.4	200	2.5
Ramallah	11.8	200	2.3
Jerusalem	3.0	80	0.2
Jericho	5.4	330	1.8
Bethlehem	10.2	160	1.6
Hebron	77.5	116	6.0

Source: Files of the Department of Agriculture.

Economic and nutritional significance

In aggregate terms, barley is not a relatively important crop in the present context of West Bank agriculture. Its share in the gross agricultural income is less than 2 percent (wheat's share is only 3 percent). But the auxiliary role of barley as the major feed item for fairly large flocks of sheep, goats and draught animals which are kept by many farmers is very important indeed. The production of "cheap" grains with minimal out-of-pocket costs makes it possible to sustain livestock under what seem to be non-viable patterns of production. And as barley is produced mostly on marginal land not suitable for wheat, an expansion in its production would help boost the livestock industry and make use of inferior land resources.

Barley is the most important cattle feed on the West Bank. Grains are used extensively in feeding cattle, sheep and goats. Straw is