

According to available reference data, there is a large number of vegetable crops which are grown currently in the West Bank. But four of these (tomato, onions, melons, and okra) account for about 70 percent of all the area under rainfed production. The remaining 30 percent is distributed in tiny shares among more than 12 types of vegetables.

The vast proportion of rainfed vegetables (mainly tomatoes, okra, and snakecucumber) are produced in a peasant type of farming which is almost totally family-oriented, whether in regard to the source of mobilized labour or consumption of produce. A major share of the produce is consumed by the farm family, and the rest is sold to neighbours or in village markets. Furthermore, most of these crops are grown in an intercropping pattern in olive or young grape orchards. Obviously, the profitability of this kind of agriculture is very difficult to ascertain meaningfully.

Notwithstanding the peasant nature of rainfed vegetable production, there are a few types of vegetable crops which are grown on a full-fledged commercial scale. Most significant of these are melons (cantaloupes and watermelons), which will be discussed in the next section.

#### Melons and cantaloupe

The West Bank was an important producer of melons prior to Israeli occupation in 1967. According to available data the area under watermelon and cantaloupe during the period 1963-66 averaged at 75,000 donums producing 75,200 tons.<sup>1</sup> About 95 percent of all

1. See sections on change in acreage and output, Chapter VI.

watermelon output was produced in Jenin district under rainfed conditions. Local produce not only met the needs of domestic markets but much of it was exported to Jordan.

In the wake of Israeli occupation, melon culture dropped to very low levels for reasons discussed earlier (see sections on changes in area and output). In the latter seventies, however, farmers in Jenin district discovered new opportunities by producing melons using modern intensive techniques. The new technology spread so rapidly that output of watermelon rose again though to levels still lower than those of pre-occupation. Table (VIII-12) shows trends in area and output for watermelon and cantaloupe during the past three years.

Table (VIII - 12)

Area and output of melons

	1978		1979		1980	
	<u>Donums</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Donums</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Donums</u>	<u>Tons</u>
Watermelon	815	548	6,217	10,400	11,353	12,800
Cantaloupe	6,975	3,079	3,515	3,400	3,883	4,728
Total	14,790	12,627	9,732	13,800	15,236	17,528

Source: Files of the Department of Agriculture.

#### Economic significance

Based on national estimates melons do not have a prominent role in West Bank agriculture. Their average share in gross farm income during the past three years is calculated at 0.5 percent.<sup>1</sup> But viewed on a regional basis, melon culture is very important

1. Derived from Administered Territories Statistics Quarterly 1980, op cit, p 89.