

d. Discussion of results:

1. Sheep raising under the present nomadic pattern of husbandry is a surprisingly profitable type of agriculture, and probably the most remunerative of all dry farming patterns.
2. The profitability of sheep proved to be relatively less vulnerable to the processes of occupation, although the size of sheep flocks was severely reduced by their impact. The reasons for the relative stability of profits in this sector are the following:
 - a. Prices of mutton and cheese have risen at high rates because of a marked local monopoly. Israel does not produce a similar type of cheese and it is not a major exporter of mutton.
 - b. Heavy reliance on free grazing, which saves much on expensive concentrates and purchased roughage.
 - c. Mobilization of a substantial amount of family labour in the production process.
 - d. Minimal use of fixed investments in the form of sheds and equipment, made possible by exploiting available constructions.
3. Productivity is low and, at least theoretically, it gives great room for improvement. But the attainment of a substantially higher productivity has been frustrated by several constraints arising from the decline in extension and veterinary services, and from escalating land encroachment policies.

Problems

1. Closure of a major proportion of natural pastures. This is a severe problem to sheep and goat farmers, because it entails

- a drastic decline (over 50 percent) in the area available for natural grazing.¹ Violators are referred to military courts and their flocks are likely to be banished to the Negev.²
2. High cost of forages and concentrates. According to a study by a local technician, the cost of feed ingredients has increased during 1971-76 by 7.5 times, while the prices of dairy (and poultry) products have risen by 5.5 times.³
3. Poor level of veterinary services. The level of services rendered by the Department veterinarians declined in the middle seventies in response to budget cuts and increased official awareness of the importance of West Bank markets to the Israeli dairy industry. The amount and quality of services rendered by private veterinarians is very limited due to the reluctance of most farmers to pay the required charges. The problem is further compounded by the questionable quality of drugs packed locally under inadequate official control.
4. Inadequate promotion of artificial pastures. Despite the availability of inputs and technology required for a breakthrough in the status of pastures, the success achieved in promoting artificial pastures has been minimal. Although this is influenced by a wide range of factors, yet the most important constraint stems from the rapidly declining potency of extension offices caused by drastically curtailed resources.

1. It was noted earlier (see section on Land Politics, Chapter III) that close to one million dunums (18 percent of total area) was closed by 1979 for military purposes. Most of this kind of land was used for grazing for many years prior to occupation.
2. The researcher was told that trespassing shepherds are sometimes collected by helicopters as a gesture of psychological warfare.
3. A R Arafeh, Livestock sector of the West Bank, a paper submitted to the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem, Sept 1981.