Problems

1. Competition with Israeli beef and dairy products. This is by far the most important factor responsible for the drastic decline in West Bank cattle farming. Commercial Arab dairy farms face inequitable competition with Israeli dairy products which enjoy the benefits of scale and receive various forms of subsidy. This problem is not as severe in the case of dairy products made from sheep and goat milk because, as explained earlier, they enjoy a marked degree of differentiation in quality. Competition with Israeli beef, unlike that of mutton, is very strong because Israel produces beef on a large scale and at competitive prices.

2. High cost of feed. Unlike sheep and goats, cows cannot rely heavily on natural grazing for their diet, because it is highly inefficient to let them scavenge over wide areas for their daily ration. So most of their feed consists of grains (barley and vetch) and hay. Whether produced on the farm or purchased from local markets, the current cost of feed is so high that it squeezes profits.

3. Shortage of easy credit. Dairy farming is a notable example of a technology and capital-intensive type of agriculture. In most LDC countries credit is advanced to dairy enterprises at concessional terms.* The situation in the West Bank is quite different. Credit for long-term investment purposes is rarely available, even at ruling rates of interest.

4. Weak auxiliary services. This applies to the services rendered

* This is a public policy in such countries as Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and practically all other countries of the Middle East.

by the Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Service and cooperative institutions. This was described earlier in chapter IV on Supportive Service Institutions.

Poultry

Poultry production developed on a commercial and intensive scale in about 1960, influenced largely by the Lebanese poultry expansion of the fifties and sixties. The West Bank's poultry industry developed so rapidly that by 1966 there were 190 farms raising about 3 million broilers per year and 32,000 commercial layers, in addition to more than half a million layers of indigenous strains.[1] The industry was served by five hatcheries and two feedmills, all located in the East Bank. Credit facilities were provided at concessional terms by governmental institutions and suppliers of feed and chicks. The levels of technology and productivity were improving so rapidly that by 1967 they were comparable to those in Lebanon and Europe. The rate of growth in poultry production was so high that Jordan (West Bank included) was heading towards self-sufficiency.

The situation of the poultry industry, however, changed with the advent of Israeli occupation in June 1967. Despite a brief initial setback, Jordan's poultry industry resumed its accelerated growth at such a pace that local production of broiler meat reached, in 1981, about six times that of the West Bank, whereas it was, in 1967, only 50 percent higher. In this section we will try to explore the main attributes of the West Bank's poultry farming, and evaluate the prospects of its revival under occupation. The

1. Hisham Awartani, Problems of Marketing Poultry in Jordan, (Amman: Cooperative Institute, 1966), pp 2, 7.