

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Voluntary Public

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Iraq

Post: Baghdad

Mesopotamian Minute July 31 2011

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

- **Pasta Making PRT Baghdad**
- **Ministry of Agriculture: An Initiative to Purchase Corn**
- **USDA Sponsors Two Training Courses**
- **Personnel Update**

General Information:

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -

Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad

Sunday, July 31, 2011



Pasta Making PRT Baghdad – PRT Baghdad worked closely with Al Shabab Organization for Civil Development to launch a training program on “Pasta Making”. The training provided inexpensive pasta making start-up kits and supplies. Training on pasta making principles, safe food handling, food borne illnesses and health issues were introduced as part of the training package. The training lasted 5 days and targeted twenty-five widows and disadvantage women in the 9’Nissan beladiyah of Baghdad. The economic impact on savings realized from a lower rate of spoilage and pasta as source of alternative calories for a family’s food basket is significant. In addition, pasta can be dried and preserved for future consumption. Thadd White, Agricultural Advisor PRT Baghdad, reports that, “Since the projects inception, two local stores have offered to purchase pasta from the women to be sold in stores. This is a great way for the widows to provide a small income for their families.”



Ministry of Agriculture: An Initiative to Purchase Corn – A long proposed initiative designed to support the domestic poultry industry appears to be moving forward. The Mesopotamia State Company for Seeds, which is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, has announced its intention to tender for 100,000 MT of corn in the very near future. The plan is to import corn and supply it to domestic poultry operations at a subsidized price, approximately 25 percent below the acquisition and handling cost. Iraq has limited feed grain production capacity and restrictive import procedures, which has resulted in very high domestic feed cost. The initial funding will be provided by the Iraqi National Agricultural Initiative. The initiative to provided subsidized feed is

designed to operate as an ongoing activity. The proceeds from the sale of the corn/feed will be used to fund future purchases, with the Ministry of Agricultural making up the difference between the world price and the subsidized price.



USDA Sponsors Two Training Courses – The USDA has coordinated two training courses being taught the week of July 24 at the University and the Ministry of Agriculture Experiment Station in Erbil. This was coordinated with the KGR Ministry of Agriculture, the University, the Borlaug Group from Texas A&M, as well as the expertise of Samuel Roberts Nobel Foundation of Ardmore, Oklahoma. Instructors Jim Johnson taught a course in Crop Residue Management, and Chan Glidewell taught a course in Range

Management. They volunteered their services as part of the training mission of the Nobel Foundation. The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation is an independent, nonprofit institute headquartered in Ardmore, Okla. Founded in 1945, the Noble Foundation conducts direct operations, including assisting farmers and ranchers, and conducting plant science research and agricultural programs, to enhance agricultural productivity regionally, nationally and internationally.

Personnel Update - There are currently 18 USDA personnel in Iraq, including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), at Embassy Baghdad, or embedded with U.S. military units.