

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 3/10/2015

GAIN Report Number:

Egypt

Post: Cairo

Nile Nuggets for February 2015

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Approved By:

Ron Verdonk

Prepared By:

Mohamed Hamza & Ibrahim Al-Habbal

Report Highlights:

News on development in agriculture and food in Egypt.

Nile Nuggets

*News on Developments in Agriculture and Food in Egypt
February 2015*

EGYPT'S MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE REPLACED: Dr. Salah Helel was appointed as Egypt's new Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation replacing Dr. Adel Al-Beltagy. Dr. Helel is considered to be a leading scientist in the Ministry of Agriculture, working as the Chief of the Research Center at the Agricultural Research Center. During his tenure, he implemented successful reforms and programs.

GASC PURCHASES U.S. WHEAT FOR FIRST TIME SINCE SEPTEMBER 2014: On February 24, the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade's General Authority for Supplying Commodities (GASC) purchased 290,000MT (5 cargoes) of U.S. hard red winter wheat for an average price of \$273.11/ton. Egypt awarded tender bids valued at just over \$79 million from funds transferred to the Egyptian Government several years back by USAID. GASC needs 10 million metric tons of wheat every year for the subsidized baladi bread program, of which around 5-5.5 million metric tons are imported and the rest are procured domestically.

EGYPT REMOVES CASH SUBSIDIES FOR COTTON: The Egyptian government will no longer provide cash subsidies to farmers and millers. Beginning in 2015, in order for the farmers to receive seed and fertilizer from the government, they must have contracts in place that the cotton they produce has a buyer. Former Minister of Agriculture Adel el-Beltagy said that cultivation of Egypt's long and extra-long cotton was too expensive and Egyptian factories no longer bought local cotton because of the availability of far cheaper imported medium-staple cotton. Removing cotton subsidies is expected to reduce area and production by 40-50 percent. In 2014, total area harvested with cotton was 157,000 hectares, producing 525,000 bales of lint cotton. Local millers expect to buy more cotton from abroad to meet the industry's needs.

EI-FUTTAIM GROUP TO INVEST EGP LE 18 BILLION: Majid Al-Futtaim, the leading operator of shopping mall, retail and leisure establishments across the Middle East and North Africa which includes the Carrefour brand, will expand its investments in Egypt, by pumping EGP LE 18 billion (\$2.4 billion) into new developments as well as the expansion of existing projects. It is estimated that Al-Futtaim's investment will create an additional 144,000 direct and indirect job opportunities and will result in the largest shopping center in Egypt (on Cairo's outskirts) and on the African continent in 2016. Al-Futtaim foresees the project as a huge leap forward in the retail sector in Egypt as the mall will include over 420 retail shops.

Molokhia – Along with lentil soup, molokhia, a green soup made from leaves of *Corchorus spp*, is a favorite among Egyptians. When boiled, the resulting liquid is a thick, somewhat slimy broth that packs a nutritional punch.



The nourishing components of molokhia include fiber, potassium, iron, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, and selenium, as well as vitamin C, E, K, B6, A, and niacin. Molokhia's innumerable health claims include a healthier heart, regulated digestion, boosting of the immune system, building strong bones, improving blood pressure, increasing cognitive abilities, improving sleep habits and circulation, and reducing inflammation.