

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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September 16 Morsels of Jordan

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Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights: This report covers some of the relevant agricultural developments in the month of September.

General Information:

Jordan Sheep Industry in Overdrive

As of July of 2016, Jordan has exported 350 thousand head of its highly prized “awassi” sheep to the Gulf Council Countries (GCC), where it commands a premium due to the countries’ high-purchasing power and its preference. Peak exports occurred in the month of August as demand surges in preparation of Eid al-Adha. Eid-el-Adha is one of two Muslim holidays celebrated worldwide, when capable Muslims practice the slaughter of a mammal and give away two-thirds of the meat to relatives and the less fortunate.

Domestically, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) announced the availability of plentiful supplies of 500,000 animals during the festivities. Of these, 200,000 are local sheep and goats, while the remaining 300,000 are imported sheep from New Zealand, Australia, Romania, and Sudan. The imported animals are cheaper than the local “awassi” sheep, thus traders prefer exporting the local sheep to the Gulf countries, fetching higher prices.

Partially Hydrogenated Oils

The ban on partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) triggered another dispute between the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) and the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO). The issue at stake is the implementation of the decree. JFDA wants to allow for a phase-in period so that traders have time to comply, while JSMO would like to see it implemented immediately. It is still not clear who will have the upper hand in this dispute.

According to the decree “only animal fat that occurs naturally in dairy produce will be allowed in products like milk and cheese”, therefore banning any dairy produce that contains PHOs. For more information on the decree please see [August 16 Morsels](#).

Fluctuation in Food Expenditures

Jordanians spend 40 percent of their income on food. Reports indicate that food expenditures went up to 56 percent in August, which is attributed to have been the cause for lower-than-expected sales during the first week of September during the onset of Eid al-Adha.

Merchants stock up the week before Eid al-Adha when sales are the strongest during the calendar year, as consumers prepare themselves for the week-long celebration. This year’s slowdown has been a big disappointment to merchants who expected to boost their sales in what has been a slow year. Household incomes may have been exhausted as several events converged in a short period involving greater-than-usual expenditures such as Eid Al Fitr, the summer season, and the start of the new school year.

It is estimated that the decrease on demand for foodstuff declined between 10 and 25 per cent, compared last year’s festivities, leaving many merchants with excess stocks.