

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Date: 12/31/2011

GAIN Report Number:

Iraq

Post: Baghdad

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE - December 2011

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Approved By:

David G. Salmon

Prepared By:

Layla Salman

Report Highlights:

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- *Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq* -

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

December 2011

General Information:



John Schnittker Addresses Middle East Water And Livelihoods Initiatives Conference: Agricultural Advisor John Schnittker recently addressed the plenary session of the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA)/USAID sponsored conference on Middle East Water and Livelihoods Initiatives. Mr. Schnittker reviewed current agricultural water use issues within Iraq and the need for better overall agricultural and water policies to ensure sustainable development within the rural/agricultural sector. The Iraq Ministry of Agriculture is a participant in the initiative that seeks to improve rural livelihoods through better, sustainable land and water management.

Discussions With Iraqi MoA Officials On Issues Related To Food Security and Productivity Enhancement:

Agricultural Advisor John M. Schnittker recently met with senior Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture officials to discuss issues related to food security and productivity enhancement. The meeting focused on the needs of the food and feed grain sectors to access modern seed and the role that agricultural policy reforms can play to better facilitate a more market oriented agricultural sector in Iraq. Mr. Schnittker met with Dr. Abdul Hakim, the Ministry's expert on agricultural economics, and Dr. Saleh Jabur, Director General of Mesopotamia State Company for Seeds. Mesopotamia State Company for Seeds has shared responsibilities to ensure that Iraq's agricultural producers have access to modern wheat and corn varieties.



Meeting between USDA Advisor and DM of Agriculture: USDA Advisor for Animal Health and Livestock Production, Dr. Robert Smith (L), met with the Iraq Ministry of Agriculture's Deputy Minister of Science & Technology, Dr. Mahdi Al-Kaisey (second from R), and his staff in late December 2011. The goal of the meeting was to brief the Deputy Minister on past, current and future capacity-building activities to support livestock health, food safety, animal husbandry and trade for Iraq. More importantly, this meeting also served as a mechanism for the Ministry of Agriculture to provide constructive feedback on these activities, as well as to its future needs and desires

with regard to targeted training activities for specific Directorates within the Ministry. For example, during this meeting there was a specific request for English language training for twenty key staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, which the U.S.-Embassy-Baghdad Cultural Affairs Office was able to accommodate immediately.



Food and Agriculture Import Regulations (FAIRS) report details Iraqi import requirements and procedures for food and agricultural products: Post submitted an updated version of the FAIRS country report for Iraq, which was first prepared in March 2011. This public report is updated yearly to capture changes to import regulations and other requirements. A notable addition to this report was the new precertification requirement by the Central Organization of Standard and Quality Control/Ministry of Planning, which requires imported products to be precleared in the country of origin prior to shipment. This new measure, meant to address safety issues with substandard products, has been problematic for many U.S. exporters.