

ER AW
172

:-----:
: I R A Q :
:-----:

CULTIVATION OF RECLAIMED LAND

The Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform has set up a committee to supervise cultivation of reclaimed land. The ministry will also assign technicians and inspectors to assist and advise farmers cultivating new plots.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform said farmers prefer four hectares of reclaimed land to 12 hectares of ordinary land because reclaimed land offers higher productivity and profits. In the first year after reclamation, he said, plots distributed to farmers have yielded an average of 750 kilos a quarter hectare, compared with only 200-250 kilos a quarter hectare before. He added that the full potential productivity of reclaimed land is usually realised in its third year.

The ministry will also continue to encourage the private sector to increase its stake in agriculture. Private investors, whether individual farmers or companies, can lease reclaimed land from the ministry provided they follow certain rules, which include cultivating the land within a specified period.

In addition, the ministry will provide technical and financial assistance to those who wish to set up poultry farms or similar enterprises, and is drawing up a plan to merge private and public sectors to create an integrated poultry industry.

SITE FOR JOINT ARAB CROP SCHEME

A joint Arab agricultural venture is to be developed over more than 34,000 hectares on Iraq's Hilla-Diwaniya agricultural project. The land will mainly be used to grow grain, fodder crops and vegetables.

Field studies will be carried out by a local committee headed by the economic adviser in Iraq's Agricultural and Agrarian Reform Ministry. The feasibility study and economic evaluation will be done by another committee working under the supervision of the Khartoum-based Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development. The feasibility study will be funded by KD 6,000 (\$ 20,435) provided by the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

The Hilla-Diwaniya project has already been the subject of studies by the Damascus-based Arab Company for the Development of Animal Wealth.

PLANS FOR PASSENGERS TRANSPORT

The State Establishment for Passengers Transport (SEPT) is planning to buy 200 buses for its inter-city routes, the acting director-general has announced. SEPT is now trying to coordinate passenger agreements with neighbouring countries similar to an existing one with Jordan. It is negotiating with Kuwait to set up a joint bus company. SEPT is also planning to open branches in Basra, Najaf, and Niniveh, and has completed designs and purchased land for transit facilities to be set up in Al-Hai, Touz Kharmatc, Baiji and Mosul.