

Bashir calls on Agriculture Ministry staff to cut costs, improve efficiency

By Olga Mikhael
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Agriculture's main task is not restricted only to agricultural production, rather its responsibilities are extend far beyond to include planning agricultural production, conducting research to expand markets and offering agricultural education in order to increase farmers awareness about proper farm methods. Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Al Bashir said Thursday during a meeting held at the University of Jordan.

Addressing over 500 agricultural engineers, veterinarians and administrators from the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Bashir outlined the problems facing the ministry and stressed the need to amend the agricultural law and the bylaws of the ministry in accordance with the new requirements and goals of the ministry.

Since the Ministry of Agriculture is facing a deficit in its budget this year, the minister called for a new policy to economise the spending of all sectors and fields of agriculture.

"If an efficient administration is provided this year, we can manage to work smoothly within the limited potentials that we have," the minister said.

The Ministry of Agriculture started its economising policy this year and reductions were made in various fields such as fuel, transportation, allowances and labour wages.

In 1984, labour wages reached up to JD 627,000, while in 1985 this amount was reduced to JD 600,000, leaving the ministry with a deficit of JD 27,000 to work on.

Cutting expenses

"We are trying to cut on expenses in all fields where we have a lot of unnecessary spending as a result of irresponsible actions practiced by irresponsible people at the ministry," Mr. Bashir said. The ministry, as part of its new policy, started reevaluating many administrative matters and new sections were introduced in the ministry such as a new marketing directorate, a new agricultural information office and a new post for a general inspector. The general inspector, the minister said, will inspect all agricultural directorates and sectors all over Jordan to assess the achievements in

these areas.

The Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan is trying hard to organise all agricultural sectors, to set priorities, to hire qualified engineers and veterinarians, to modernise many of its techniques and to present the proper advice and supervision to the farmers and the private sector, Mr. Bashir said.

"The ministry will reorganise laboratories, encourage veterinarians to open their private clinics under the supervision of the ministry, encourage the private sector use vaccinations and try to solve the problems facing personnel, labourers and administrators at the ministry as well as the problems facing the farmers by presenting the proper technical advice to them," the minister said.

"There are around 31.4 illiterate people at the ministry who are working as ambulants and whose health conditions do not help them to work efficiently. Therefore, these people will be replaced with young people who can read and write," he added.

New measures

The minister outlined many other measures to be taken, such as handling over projects to the private sector. "The fish project in Azrak will be handed over to the private sector, but will be subject to the ministry's supervision," he said.

The new economy procedures taken at the ministry, include merging the cow station in Dair Alla with the Jordanian Economic Social Organisation for Retired Servicemen. Al Jater project will be handed over to a cooperative society and the water project there (to be given to the Water Authority of Jordan). The development of the Zarqa River basin will become part of the responsibility of the directorate of forestry and soil conservation in order to save expenses and machinery and the scientific research centre will be moved to new premises in Baqa'a and the old building will be given back to the University of Jordan. Also, the ministry will reopen the three maintenance workshops for the purpose of fixing and doing proper maintenance on cars and machinery belonging to the ministry and this will save large amounts that are paid for maintenance every year, he said.

The minister called on all the agricultural engineers, veterinarians and directors to be

more responsible and to help as much as they can in implementing their tasks, according to the new policy of the ministry, in order to avoid any unnecessary spending and to be efficient in their fields, to set priorities in accordance with the available requirements and potentials of the ministry.

"We have around 70 unlicensed poultry farmers which were established and started operation without the Ministry of Agriculture's knowledge," the minister said. "What we need is the efficiency at work and cooperation between the various sectors and directorate at the ministry," he added.

The minister went on to explain the problems facing the sheep industry in Jordan because of the low amount of rainfall this year. As a result the ministry took the same procedure (taken last year where exportation of sheep was allowed under all conditions," he added.

Also speaking at the meeting was Dr. Salem Al Lawzi, under secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, who praised this huge gathering at the ministry, the first of its kind. Dr. Al Lawzi highlighted the importance of the agricultural sector and the continuous support this sector is getting from the government. "The government has donated JD 7 million to the Ministry of Agriculture which is the concerned sector for supporting the agricultural production," he said.

Wheat, apples

Dr. Al Lawzi highlighted the wheat project in Alswan area where around 15,000 dunams will be cultivated with wheat and the apple project which has been supported by the government and which is to be implemented in south of Jordan.

"A new slaughter house for poultry will be established in Duleil area with a capacity of 5,000 tonnes per hour, we hope that by the year 1990, all the problems of poultry slaughtering will be solved," Dr. Al Lawzi said. "The ministry will also expand its irrigation services in the Jordan Valley and many other areas where irrigation is needed, as the case in northern Ghor," he added. Dr. Al Lawzi also pointed out the role of the agricultural credit institution which contributed JD 8 million to farmers.

Arar approves committee's recommendations

Border points to issue work, residence permits from today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Aliens and Borders Saturday starts receiving new applications for bringing in non-Jordanian manpower to the Kingdom in addition to issuing and renewing residence permits. The department will issue new permits according to new bases and the duty stations will include the person's time of entry into the country and their full address.

The new permit forms will be filled in at the border points, particularly at the airports.

The department stopped issuing such permits on Dec. 9, but will start implementing new measures in relation to the bases and terms of issuing and renewing residence permits in addition to granting

annual residence permits for the first time and permit renewal for various categories of Arab and foreign workers in Jordan.

These categories include unemployed foreign workers and maids, in addition to foreign wives of Jordanians and students who are exempted according to the law on residence and alien affairs.

The Jordan Times has learnt that Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Suleiman Arar has approved the recommendations of the ad hoc committee, charged with studying and evaluating work at the department. Under the committee recommendations, the department has been divided into six divisions: Foreigners annual residence permits, Arabs annual residence permits, records general registers, accountancy, issuance and files.

The Jordan Times has also learnt that Mr. Arar has approved the conditions governing the issuance of residence permits as contained in the director of Public Security Department's letter.

Potash company, bank consortium sign JD 12m syndicated loan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab Potash Company (APC) Thursday signed a JD 12 million syndicated loan, which converted its overdrafts of an equal amount from local banks into a long-term credit.

The seven-year government-guaranteed loan is repayable after three-and-a-half years in eight semi-annual instalments at 10 per cent interest.

The Arab Bank in Jordan lead-managed the syndication and the local branches of the Citibank, Chase Manhattan Bank, Grindlays Bank, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Jordan National Bank and the Arab Jordan Investment Bank participated.

The company lost JD 13.84 million in its first year of limited operation in 1983.

Kuwait, Libya, Iraq, the Islamic Development Bank and the Arab Mining Company are shareholders in the company, set up with a fully paid-up capital of JD 63 million.

The agreement was signed for the government by Finance Minister Hanna Odeh and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan Hussein Al Qasem and for the consortium by Khaled Shuman, vice president of the Arab Bank, Mr. Thabet Al Taher, vice chairman of the Arab Potash Company's board of directors, and the company's director general Ali Nsour.

Following the signing ceremony, Dr. Odeh expressed the government's appreciation to the consortium of banks and paid tribute to the constructive cooperation between the two sides in supporting the country's development projects.

Mr. Taher also spoke after the ceremony voicing appreciation to the government for its support to the Arab Potash Company and for

guaranteeing of loans. He also paid tribute to the Jordanian banks which offered the loan which, he said, will enable the company to implement its expansion and other programmes.

Mr. Shuman, who also spoke afterwards, said that the government's guarantee ensures the facilities from the banks, the major development project in Jordan.

Earlier, Mr. Taher announced that APC's offices will be moved to the company's field of operation near the factory, south of the Dead Sea. He said that this will take effect from March 31, upon decision by the company's board of directors and in response to government request. The presence of the administrative office near the factory will ensure more control, better production and create job opportunities for the people of the southern regions of Jordan, Mr. Taher added.

Nsour wins Salt municipal elections

By Sa'ad G. Hattar
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SALT — Dr. Abdul Razzak Al Nsour has won the municipal elections here while eight other candidates from his bloc, the con-

structing and building bloc, and a candidate from the labour and solidarity bloc won membership of the town council, municipal council, Balqa Governor Mohammad Al Khatib announced Thursday.

In a statement to the press, Mr. Khatib disclosed the following vote counts: Dr. Nsour - 5,269; Salem Esmail Khreisat - 3,360; Mousa Al Dabbas - 3,341; Mansour Al Alken - 3,283; Mahmud Al Heyari - 3,126; Abdul Razzak

the afternoon and Salt city witnessed the hottest election, with 78 per cent of the 10,000 votes being distributed in seven centres in the city.

Mr. Khatib, president of Salt city elections, personally oversaw the distribution of the boxes and election commission. Eighty presidents and members took the legal oath in front of the governor after which he passed the necessary administrative and electoral