

## Training Program for Agricultural Extension Staff, Syria

(Period of the study: 24 months from March, 1999    Our assignments: Capacity Building)

### Background of the Study

Syrian government promotes to increase the agricultural production as one of the most important national development policies. However, food self-sufficiency cannot be attained due to low productivity and increase of population and consumption. The sustainable agriculture needs to be developed against various problems such as exhaustion of water resource and salt accumulation. Under such condition, it is important to activate agricultural extension to farmers but there are insufficient staffs that have satisfactory level of technique and knowledge. It is therefore strongly required to improve the agricultural extension and the training of extension agents. Consequently, Japanese expert was dispatched to Syria aiming at the strengthening of training activity for extension agents mainly through the improvement of training curriculum and materials.

### Outline of the Study

Present situation of the ongoing training courses was surveyed in order to establish the improvement plan. According to the result of survey, various recommendations for the improvement were made including the implementation of practical training based on the level of extension agents, the preparation of training plan based on the requirement and the coordination of training activities in central and local levels. Improvement activities based on the recommendations were then carried out through the improvement of existing curriculum and the planning of new training courses. TOT course for trainers, SMS course for fruit production and computer application in extension activities were planned and implemented. Since it is necessary to carry out the needs assessment and reflect the results to the training, furthermore, the survey methods with participatory approach were incorporated in farm survey and needs assessment. In relation to the farm survey and needs assessment, the course on "Regional Characteristics Understanding" was also programmed. In this course, simple GIS by using the statistic data and geographical map was introduced and the target area for the demonstration of village revitalization trial was selected.

### Our Assignments

- Survey for the present situation of the ongoing training courses and proposal for the improvement plan,
- Implementation of the training courses based on the level of the extension agents,
- Implementation of TOT course for the coordination of training activities in central and local levels,
- Transfer of new information and research results in the training courses,
- Planning and implementation of SMS course for fruit production and computer application in extension activities, and
- Implementation of needs assessment by incorporating participatory approach.

