

Extension of Water Saving Agriculture, Syria

(Period of the study: 2 months from May, 2001 Our assignments: Arid Land Agriculture)

Background of the Study

Irrigation is indispensable for the sustainable agricultural production in Syria where most of the land belongs to arid and semi-arid areas. Food production increase is also needed because of population increase and the improvement in productivity through introduction of irrigation is therefore needed. Irrigation area increased from 652,000ha (Irrigation rate: 11.6%) in 1985 to 1,210,000ha (Irrigation rate: 22.6) in 2000. However, increase in irrigation water amount due to irrigation area increase, along with the decrease of precipitation, caused the shortage of irrigation water in many areas in Syria. As for underground water, especially, depletion of water table and amount become serious problems due to uncontrolled well digging. Under such critical circumstances, introduction of modern irrigation system into ordinary farmers field becomes one of the priority subjects in order to save irrigation water amount that is 90% of total water use and also to utilize the saved amount of water in irrigation area increase, domestic water use and industry.

Outline of the Study

Under such circumstances, the study to formulate the technical cooperation program for the irrigation department in the Ministry of Agriculture was requested in order to investigate the present situation of agriculture and water resources in Syria and also to clarify the technical and social constraints in the extension of water saving agriculture. The study includes the survey on the present situation of agriculture, present situation of water resource depletion, future water balance, government and donor activities on the introduction of modern irrigation system, present situation of extension activities and their constraints along with the examination of already requested projects. Based on the results of all such surveys, various projects including dispatch of long term expert, development study and project type technical cooperation were practically recommended.

Our Assignments

- Collection and analysis of information related to the agriculture sector of national level,
- Survey and analysis of present situation on water resource depletion in major areas of the country,
- Survey and analysis of activities by the government and donors related to the introduction of modern irrigation,
- Field survey and the analysis of constraints on the extension of water saving agriculture,
- Examination of already requested project by the Syrian government, and
- Formulation of future program on technical cooperation in the concerned field.

