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NEWSLETTER

FAO IRAQ



Better production
Better nutrition
Better environment
Better life

EU DELEGATION REVIEWS PROGRESS IN CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOODS IN SOUTHERN IRAQ

A delegation from the European Union Mission in Iraq, including Mr. David Healy, Deputy Head of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires, and Dr. Lennart Deridder, Head of Cooperation in Iraq, visited project sites in Basra and Thi Qar Governorates to closely assess the progress of EU-funded initiatives.

The visit aimed to evaluate the progress of ongoing initiatives and highlight their impact on strengthening resilience and sustainability in agri-food systems, with a particular focus on key value chain development interventions: livestock, tomatoes, and date palm production.

The delegation also visited rural centers for milk collection, cooling and processing, dairy marketing facilities, new fodder crop plantations, and a renewable energy model for marsh water desalination for household use.

These activities are implemented with the support of the "Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq" project, funded by the European Union, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

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25 FFS IN THI QAR AND AL MUTHANNA FOR AGROECOLOGY PRACTICES OF MIXED FARMING

The Establishment of 25 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in ThiQar and Al Muthanna Governorates aims to demonstrate the economic and environmental benefits of agroecology practice of mixed farming, producing vegetables, fruit trees, and fodder to support livelihood diversification.

This initiative is part of the "Sustainable Land Management (SLM) for Degraded Areas in Iraq" project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project promotes agroecological practices and biodiversity enrichment to enhance sustainable land management, targeting 1,000 farmers.

PRACTICAL TRAININGS TO EMPOWER RURAL WOMEN AND ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY

FAO has conducted practical training sessions for women farmers and women's groups in the Middle Euphrates region, as part of climate-smart agriculture projects funded by Norway and Canada.

The training, implemented under multiple initiatives, focused on improving ruminant nutrition by using molasses to enhance animal health and productivity. These efforts contribute to a broader climate adaptation strategy, supporting rural women and key agricultural value chains in Karbala, Babil, Wasit, Diwaniyah, Najaf, and Muthanna.



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The training focused on improving animal nutrition by using molasses as a key component to enhance animal health and productivity.



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FFS AT FOUR WHEAT SITES

Under the project 'Enhancing climate-resilient agriculture in Southern Iraq', funded by Canada, Farmer Field School (FFS) were conducted at four wheat FFS sites in Babil, Wasit, and Diwaniyah, to train 80 farmers.

The training focused on crop management, including foliar fertilizer application, integrated weed control, and climate-resilient irrigation. They also highlighted the benefits of laser-leveled FFS plots, which contribute to improved water efficiency, enhanced crop growth and yield, reduced input costs, better weed control, labor savings, soil conservation, and environmental sustainability.

CANADIAN MISSION ASSESSES FFS PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A mission from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) visited Wasit Governorate on 27 January 2025 to observe the livestock training on feed enrichment arranged for the local milk producers and potential milk providers to the women dairy center in the village. The mission also visited the women's collective center in Hasjah village, selected for rehabilitation under the project. They expressed keen interest in gathering feedback from the center owners, focusing on the challenges faced, problems encountered, and improvement opportunities after rehabilitation.

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SUPPORTING 3,580 RURAL WITH DAIRY VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT EQUIPMENT

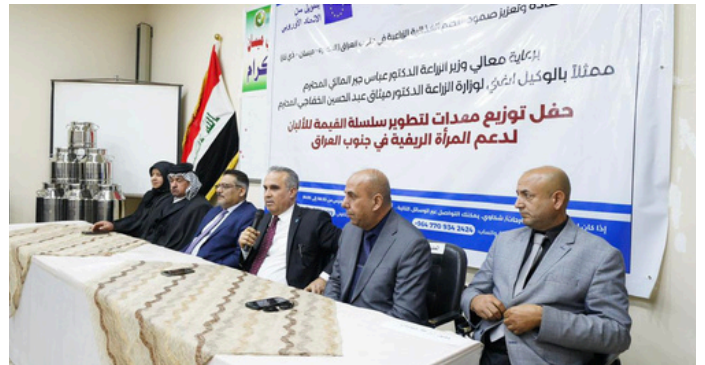
During three consecutive distribution events, held in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the directorates of agriculture and local governments, in the governorates of Basra, Maysan, and Thi Qar, support was provided to 3,580 rural women working in the dairy sector. This was achieved by equipping them with specialized tools to strengthen the dairy value chain, as part of the European Union-funded project.

The women will use this equipment to transport and store approximately 160,000 liters of milk per day.

“These activities are part of broader efforts to empower 25,834 rural households in the three governorates, contributing to significant improvements in milk and dairy product quality, increasing production, and economically empowering rural women,” said Dr. Salah El Haj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq.

“Supporting and empowering rural women by providing them with the necessary skills and modern equipment to produce dairy products and other small agricultural projects, contributes significantly to enhancing food security efforts in Iraq, and leads to improving the economic conditions in rural communities and creating more job opportunities” said Dr. Mithaq Al-Khafaji, Technical Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture.

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400 FARMERS IN 40 FFS TRAINED ON CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has launched a training program for Farmer Field Schools on conservation agriculture practices, targeting 400 farmers across 10 selected pilot sites cultivated with barley, wheat, and alfalfa in Dhi Qar and Muthanna governorates during the 2024-2025 winter season. This initiative is part of a project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment.

Additionally, vegetable seeds for six summer crops have been distributed to establish 25 pilot sites for Farmer Field Schools, aimed at promoting agroecological practices and preserving the marshland environment. Farmers' activities also include managing nurseries for vegetable seedling production, which will be ready for planting by April 2025.

THREE DIRECTORATES OF AGRICULTURE EQUIPPED WITH SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT FOR AUTOMATIC POLLINATION OF DATE PALMS

As part of its efforts to develop date palm and tomato value chains in southern Iraq, with support from the EU in Iraq, FAO has equipped the Directorates of Agriculture in Basra, Thi Qar, and Maysan with specialized equipment for automatic pollination. These directorates have been designated as certified centers to provide this service to farmers, aiming to facilitate faster and more efficient pollination while reducing manual effort and waste.

Additionally, 25,000 carton boxes (5 kg capacity) were distributed to tomato farmers in Basra and Thi Qar, introducing new marketing and packaging methods that enhance the value of tomatoes.

This initiative has improved product presentation, facilitated transportation, and increased access to high-value markets, ultimately boosting farmers' profitability.

The project team also conducted 15 days of field visits to monitor the ongoing agricultural season.

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EVENTS AND VISITS

FAO IRAQ REPRESENTATIVE REVIEWS PROGRESS OF CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE PROJECT IN KARBALA

During a field visit to Karbala Governorate, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, was briefed on the progress of the Integrating Climate-Smart Practices project, funded by the Norwegian government. The initiative aims to empower rural women and strengthen their role in the agricultural sector.

As part of the visit, El Hajj Hassan toured several renovated centers that provide rural women with the necessary infrastructure to develop their businesses in the dairy sector. He commended the efforts invested in upgrading these facilities, which contribute to improving dairy products quality and enhancing the productivity of women in rural areas.

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CANADIAN DELEGATION ASSESSES CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURE AND VALUE CHAINS

A Canadian delegation, led by the Executive Director of Global Affairs Canada (GAC), along with FAO and Ministry of Agriculture teams, visited several project sites in Dhi Qar Governorate to assess progress in developing value chains and promoting climate-resilient agriculture.

The delegation visited a women-run dairy center in Hasja village, where they engaged with workers on the challenges they face, the benefits of rehabilitation efforts, and sustainability plans. They also visited a women's dairy center funded by FAO and the European Union, where improvements have led to doubled profits, increased job opportunities, and enhanced dairy production.

Additionally, the delegation visited a Farmer Field School in Al-Refai district, where farmers demonstrated the benefits of laser land leveling technology in reducing costs, improving irrigation efficiency, and increasing productivity.

During another visit, the Global Affairs Canada technical mission inspected four Farmer Field School sites in Babil and Diwaniyah governorates to assess progress and outcomes achieved under the Farmer Field School initiatives.

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA (GAC) TECHNICAL MISSION TO GOVERNORATES OF BABIL AND DIWANIYAH ON 18-19 FEBRUARY 2025.

The Donor Technical Mission inspected four FFS sites in Babil and Diwaniyah to evaluate the progress and outcomes of FFS initiatives. The assessment focused on farmers' adoption of water-efficient irrigation techniques, climate-smart crop production practices, and technologies such as integrated crop management and land laser leveling. Farmers provided feedback on adoption rates, barriers to implementation, required solutions, the potential for establishing farmer associations, women's representation in FFS, and further capacity-building needs to ensure sustainability and the scaling up of interventions.

HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION VISITS CONSTRUCTION SITE OF POST-HARVEST CENTERS FOR TOMATOES AND DATES IN BASRA

A high-level delegation, led by Dr. Mithaq Al-Khafaji, Technical Undersecretary at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, visited the construction site of two specialized centers for post-harvest transactions for tomato and dates in Basra Governorate.

The centers, developed in collaboration with the MoA and the Zubair Agricultural Cooperative Association, with support from the EU in Iraq, aim to enhance tomato and date production, improve marketing, strengthen food security, and boost farmers' incomes.

The delegation also visited the pilot farm of Abdul Wahid Amin, which implements Sustainable Agricultural Practices (SAPs) and modern technologies in irrigation and organic fertilization. Additionally, they visited tomato farms in Safwan, where FAO promotes sustainable agricultural techniques.

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FAO REPRESENTATIVE HIGHLIGHTS SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT DURING VISIT TO HADIYA ORGANIC FARM

During his visit to Hadiya Organic Farm in Dora, Baghdad, FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, emphasized FAO's commitment to supporting agricultural sector development initiatives in Iraq. He praised the farm's success in adopting sustainable farming methods, supporting farmers, and promoting environmentally friendly production—key priorities for ensuring safe and healthy food for all.

He reaffirmed FAO's dedication to strengthening the agricultural sector through collaboration with governmental and private entities, as well as through training and knowledge exchange. He also stressed the importance of improving production efficiency and long-term performance to enhance food security in Iraq.

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SCG AFI MEETING DISCUSSES CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED WATER SCARCITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The 5th Meeting of the Sector Coordination Group on Food, Agriculture, and Irrigation (SCG AFI) was held at the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad. The meeting—co-chaired by FAO, MoA, and the EU—discussed key topics, beginning with the increasing climate change-induced water scarcity and its implications for agriculture and the environment. It was suggested to organize a thematic meeting on water for the next sector coordination meeting, scheduled for April/May.

Government representatives provided updates on the current situation, while FAO briefed attendees on the progress of the 2024/25 wheat season, which began in November/December and will conclude in May.

FAO and ITC also provided a brief overview of their complementary work under the EU-funded Agri-Food Business Development Programme, which targets specific agri-food value chains.

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JOINT MEETING TO DISCUSS FAO COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK (CPF) FOR IRAQ (2025-2029)

A joint meeting, chaired by the Deputy Minister of planning, Dr. Maher Johan, and the Director General of International Cooperation Department, Dr. Saher Mahdi, was held with the participation of representatives from government agencies to discuss the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) in Iraq for 2025-2029.

FAO Representative Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan reviewed the CPF document, outlining key priorities and addressing feedback from all parties to ensure alignment with the Iraqi government's priorities and the UN Framework for Action (UNSDCF). The meeting also examined challenges facing the agricultural investment sector.

Additionally, a national team was formed to develop an Agricultural Investments Guide for Iraq, which will be presented at the Investment Forum under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in Rome, October 2025.

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LAUNCH OF THE "CLIMATE-WISE WOMEN" INITIATIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN IRAQ

FAO has concluded a four-day Training of Trainers (ToT) program to prepare a group of women leaders under the "Climate-Wise Women" initiative, launched for the first time in Iraq. Conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the initiative aims to empower these women as agents of change, enabling them to support adaptation efforts to climate change impacts on the agricultural sector in central and southern governorates, with a special focus on rural communities in Muthanna and Najaf.

The training was designed and delivered by FAO's international experts specializing in climate-smart agriculture and women's empowerment as part of the "Enhancing Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Agricultural Households in Southern Iraq" project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The initiative consists of a network of female agricultural advisors and local facilitators who receive specialized training and certification as Climate-Wise Women Leaders. They are equipped with scientific knowledge tailored to local climate conditions, hands-on field experiences demonstrating climate adaptation practices, and community engagement strategies to raise awareness on the importance of climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

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IRAQI GENE BANKS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

As part of its efforts to improve natural resource management and enhance biodiversity, FAO organized two intensive training sessions in Baghdad and Sulaymaniyah under the title: "Enhancing Knowledge and Skills in Plant Genetic Resources Management in Iraq."

Conducted within the framework of an EU-funded project, the training aimed to enhance both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of personnel working in the conservation of plant genetic resources. The training program focused on highlighting the importance of plant genetic resources in Iraq, the threats they face, strengthening conservation strategies, exploring the role of gene banks, and developing expertise on national plant genetic resources and their significance in achieving food security.

These training initiatives are crucial in building national capacities and ensuring the preservation of Iraq's plant genetic resources, contributing to the support of the agricultural sector and the promotion of food security.

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SDGS AND WOMEN'S LAND OWNERSHIP RIGHTS

As part of the project "Strengthening Government Capacity to Monitor & Report on SDGs," FAO, in collaboration with the Commission of Statistics and GIS at the Ministry of Planning, conducted a workshop on monitoring women's rights to land ownership and control within national legal frameworks.

Dr. Diaan Kazim, Head of the Commission of Statistics & GIS, emphasized the importance of women's participation in economic sector development and population census data, highlighting that they represent half of society. He also praised the constructive cooperation with FAO in monitoring SDG progress.

Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, FAO Representative in Iraq, stated that effective monitoring and reporting on this indicator can help identify legal gaps and promote reforms that ensure more equitable land management between women and men.

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WATER PRODUCTIVITY ASSESSMENT AND CROP MAPPING

A five-day training workshop was held in Najaf Governorate under the title "Field Data Collection for Crop Mapping and Water Productivity Assessment." The workshop aimed to monitor and improve productivity in alignment with the FAO's Water Productivity Open-access Portal (WaPOR) objectives, as part of a project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Participants received training on geospatial technologies, digital data collection tools, and methodologies for crop mapping and water productivity assessment. The training aimed to enhance the capacities of experts from the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad and Najaf, equipping them with the skills needed to collect high-quality field data.

This initiative contributes to identifying productivity gaps, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and improving natural resource management.

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IMPROVING ANIMAL NUTRITION USING MOLASSES

A series of training sessions and workshops was conducted in Karbala, Najaf, Babil, Wasit, Diwaniyah, and Muthanna to enhance ruminant nutrition through the use of molasses.

These activities were implemented under multiple climate-smart agriculture projects, including the "Integrating Climate-Smart Practices" project (funded by Norway), the "Enhancing Climate-Resilient Agriculture in Southern Iraq" project (funded by Canada), and the "Enhancing the Resilience of Climate-Vulnerable Agricultural Households in Southern Iraq" project, which promotes climate-smart water management and good agricultural practices in key value chains in Najaf and Muthanna.

As a result, rural communities in Karbala have witnessed significant improvements in livestock breeding practices. The introduction of molasses into animal diets—for the first time in some villages—has led to increased livestock productivity and improved the quality of animal products.



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ONE HEALTH: EMPOWERING EPIDEMIOLOGY EXPERTS

As part of the One Health approach, FAO, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Regional Government (MoAWR-KRG), conducted a five-day workshop on "Data Management and Analysis" in Erbil. The training aimed to empower 18 epidemiologists and data specialists in data collection, quality assurance, control, and GIS mapping.

FAO Representative in Iraq, Dr. Salah El Hajj Hassan, emphasized the importance of modern technologies in data management and analysis, particularly in developing GIS maps for animal diseases and their application in early warning systems for disease prevention and control.

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SPECTRORADIOMETER DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS USING ENVI SOFTWARE

As part of Sida funded project dedicated to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable agricultural families against climate change in southern Iraq, FAO conducted a 4 day training on Spectroradiometer data collection & analysis using ENVI software for MoA and MoST staff in Bagdad. The training covered essential topics including advanced Remote Sensing GIS practices, Spectroradiometer Field Data, collection Data analysis via ENVI Software and Satellite Image Processing. This initiative supports Sustainable Agriculture Practices and informed climate adaptation strategies in Iraq.

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PRACTICAL TRAINING SESSIONS ON THE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF FODDER AND REED CUTTERS

FAO team has conducted a series of practical training sessions in Maysan, Thi Qar, and Basra, training 500 livestock breeders on improving animal nutrition efficiency and enhancing feed utilization through the use of fodder cutters and prepared feed. These activities were implemented under the “Restoration and Strengthening the Resilience of Agri-Food Systems in Southern Iraq” project, funded by the European Union.



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KEY NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE:

The Ministry of Agriculture Achieves a New International Milestone in Seed Testing and Certification Proficiency Test.

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Continued Free Distribution of Bran and Molasses to Buffalo Breeders in Basra.

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Ministry of Agriculture Successfully Cultivates Stevia Seeds Through Tissue Culture for the First Time in Iraq..

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The Council of Ministers Approves the Ministry's Request to Continue Implementing the Two Council Decisions on the Maintenance of Agricultural Aircraft.

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The Technical Deputy Minister of Agriculture Confirms the Ministry's Continued Provision of Veterinary Services and Support for Breeders During His Meeting with Livestock Breeders in Baghdad Governorate.

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Minister of Agriculture Takes a Series of Measures to Support Livestock Breeders Affected by Foot-and-Mouth Disease Following His Meeting with the Parliamentary Agriculture Committee.

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With the Support of the Ministry of Agriculture and to Protect the Country's Palm Sector, the Salah al-Din Directorate Continues Free Campaigns to Combat the Red Palm Weevil.

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High Germination Rates for Wheat Farms in Basra Achieved Due to Quality Seeds and the Use of Modern Irrigation Technologies.

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A Successful Experiment by Basra Farmers Will Help Achieve Self-Sufficiency in Tomatoes and Export the Surplus to Other Governorates.

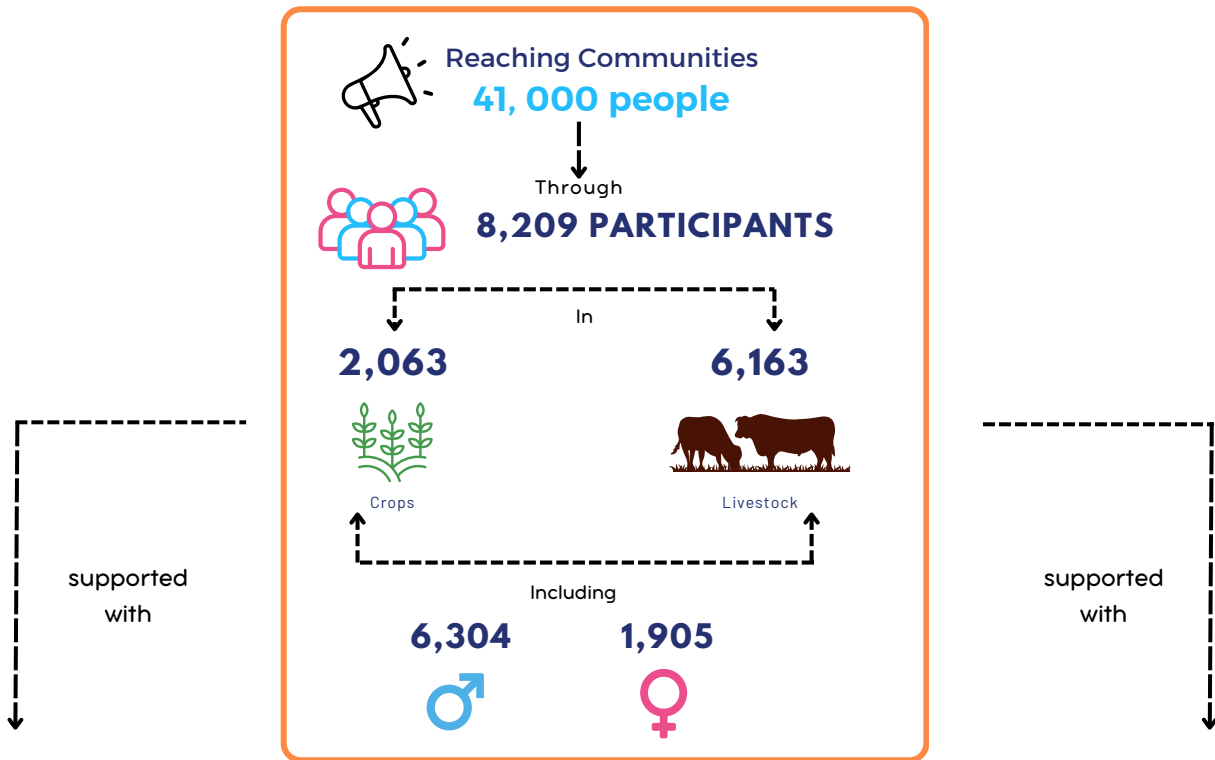
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In Support of the Beekeeping Sector, the Plant Protection Directorate Welcomes a Delegation from the FAO and the President of the Iraqi Beekeepers Association.

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AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM IMPACT

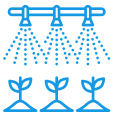
2024 DATA HIGHLIGHTS



5.2 MT crops seeds



2.2 MT fertilizers



25 irrigation systems



45,293 pcs of horticulture tools & equipment



11,495 seedlings



19 agriculture machinery



1,262 people trained



41 Farmer Field Schools



3.4 MT fodder seeds



24,808 liters sugar molasses



7,131 pcs of dairy equipment



50 dairy centers constructed



626 people trained

With thanks to our esteemed partners for their support to our country programme



For more information- Contact FAO Iraq office at:

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