

BSEF 2018

Bkerke Socio-Economic Forum

PANEL 5:

**Adjusting to New Challenges & Opportunities
in Lebanese Agriculture
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Acreage used in agriculture in Lebanon

- 350,000 hectares suitable for agriculture
- 220,000 hectares planted

120,000 hectares irrigated

100,000 hectares non-irrigated

Actually 200,000 families are working and living from agriculture which equals 1,000,000 persons (5 persons/family) living from agriculture (20% of Lebanon population)

- 130,000 hectares left available for Agriculture Production.

If planted, this acreage will create 80,000 jobs (giving income to 400,000 persons (5 persons/family))

Main Crops of Agriculture Production

1/3 Fruit Trees (mainly Citrus/Apples/ Bananas / Grapes)

2/3 Various Vegetables

- 25% Potatoes (partly exported)
- 20% Tomatoes for local consumption
- 10% Cucumbers for local consumption
- 10% Onions/ lettuce, etc... for local consumption
- 35% Various vegetables

Total Agriculture yearly Production in Lebanon: 2,5 million tons

Yearly Exports of Agriculture Production: 500,000 tons

Main exported produce:

Potatoes	40%
Apples	20%
Citrus	15%
Bananas	10%
Grapes	5%

N.B. It happened that 500,000 tons are also 20% of Total Lebanese Exports (in all fields)

Forage Crops: quantities needed/ year

Barley	150,000 tons
Soya	10,000 tons
Chick Peas	10,000 tons
Lentils	10,000 tons
Maize	500,000 tons imported 4,000 tons produced!
Wheat	500,000 tons imported 50,000 tons produced

N.B. Producing these or some of these forage crops in Lebanon needs deep technical and economic studies before any decision.

Dairy Products Status in Lebanon

Yearly Imports \$ 300 million

Exports \$ 8 million

(Huge potential for Dairy Industries)

Also, Interesting Potential for Non-Dairy Milks

(Soya, Almond, Oat, Coconut)

Investment Opportunities in the Agriculture field: (with possible Tax Exemptions for 10 years)

1) Agricultural Production:

- Avocados: 22,000 tons/ year are needed to cover our needs (now imported)
- Carrots: 10,000 tons/ year are needed to cover our needs (now imported)
- Garlic: 8,000 tons/ year are needed to cover our needs (now imported)
- Lentils
- Chick Peas
- Quinoa
- Chestnuts

Investment Opportunities in the Agriculture field: (with possible Tax Exemptions for 10 years)

2) Agricultural Projects:

- Dairy Products
- Fish Farming (Seafood: sea bass, etc...)
- Aquaculture (Trout) actually producing 20% of Lebanese needs
- Dried Fruits
- White Mushrooms
- Olive oil marketing badly needed with important export potential as the brand “Produce of Lebanon” has a strong positive impact on the international markets and mainly within Lebanese Diaspora

Investment Opportunities in the Agriculture field: (with possible Tax Exemptions for 10 years)

3) Agro-Industry:

- Processed Food
- Wine (Actual yearly production: 8 million bottles produced by 40 wineries of which 50% is exported to 40 countries.

4) Modern Cold Storage Facilities to store agricultural produce (Existing Facilities: only 14% certified)

Trade status of Edible Products between Lebanon and some countries (Yearly average).

I have selected 3 countries: Australia / Canada / Brazil

Australia

Imports to Lebanon	USD 30 million
Exports to Australia	USD 10 million

Canada

Imports to Lebanon	USD 20 million
Exports to Canada	USD 20 million

Trade status of Edible Products between Lebanon and some countries (Yearly average).

Brazil

Imports to Lebanon USD 250 millions of Edible Products:

- Live Animals	USD 54 million
- Meat	USD 80 million
- Coffee, Tea, Spices	USD 60 million
- Cereals	USD 16 million
- Sugars	<u>USD 40 million</u>
TOTAL	USD 250 million

Exports to Brazil USD 1 million!!

Challenges

In order to render successful and profitable the Investments in Agriculture Production in Lebanon, some basic decisions and steps have to be taken by the Government and the Private sector:

- 1) Decide steps to protect Agriculture (mainly customs duties on some produce and for an optimum period) which will boost investments in the Agriculture Production.
- 2) Review Existing Agreements between Lebanon and Arab countries (as well as European Union) so as to allow for Lebanon to set some efficient barriers reducing existing unhealthy competition toward Lebanese produce (as several countries are subsidizing their agriculture).

Challenges

- 3) Create and organize a successful cooperation between the governmental bodies and the Private sector to combat smuggling.
- 4) Organize the marketing of what it could be a huge produce coming from planting the still available agricultural land (130,000 hectares, which is 30% more than the land planted now!

THANK YOU.