

The Palestinian Farmers' Union (PFU)



Annual Report

2001

Hand in Hand towards a Green Palestine

Mission Statement....

PFU is a grassroots non-profit voluntary organization working on representing Palestinian farmers through organizing farmers, defending their rights and interests in the field of production and marketing, rationalization of agricultural resources, raising awareness among them and improving their cultural, health, social and economical status through enhancing cooperation, voluntary work, assembling potentials and unifying farmer's gatherings in order to contribute in the establishment of a democratic civil society.

Main Objective:

The Unification, assembling and strengthening Palestinian farmers' gatherings to contribute in influencing public policies and establishing a Palestinian civil society.

Aims:

First Working on organizing farmers within committees, agricultural specialized associations and strengthening their role to **manipulate** in developing the Palestinian agricultural.

Second Working on improving the economical, social and health conditions of the Palestinian agricultural families.

Thirdly Representing and defending the farmer's legitimate **professional** rights and interests.

Fourth Developing the capabilities and abilities of Palestinian farmers to improve their awareness and develop them.

Fifth manifesting and activating the role of the woman farmer in the agricultural process, her participation in decision making and creation of gender awareness.

Sixth Creating agricultural awareness to maintain environment and rationalize the use of land and water.

Seventh Working on establishing integrated and cooperative relationships with foreign, local governmental and non-governmental agricultural institutions to serve the agricultural process.



Preface:

The members of PFU have been convinced as a result of their experiences in organizing themselves as farmers during the last period that as much as they put effort in organizing themselves they will be able to play a bigger role in the Palestinian agricultural process and that success in agricultural development cannot be achieved without organizing their situations and establish their structured base. However, this requires having well experienced cultured leaders to rule out this active base of farmers and belief in its targets as farmers.

- The occurring change in the structure of the PFU that led to have specialized programs such as (Recovering the value added tax, health insurance to farmer's families, and the right's concerns of the farmers) as well as the significant program the establishment of specialized agricultural associations has led to daily solving of problems for farmers in the fields of production, marketing and depend on their individual efforts through their associations to develop their production and facilitate the marketing of their products the way that sustains their work.
- Throughout the development of such programs two integrated shapes of farmer's organizing will be highlighted in the life of the PFU structure in the future.
 1. The first shape: is a servicing union to the Palestinian farmers and its programs focus on services.
 2. The second shape: A cooperative specialized body for agricultural production, based on specialized cooperative associations and its programs focusing on developing production and solving marketing problems.
- Within the success of such policy in the future, a healthier structure of the PFU will be developed based on a well organized establishment and clear plans to the Palestinian farmers, sustainability in work and compatibility between the members to achieve their interests and solve their social, political and economical problems.
- The success in building up this structure requires establishing cooperative relationships with the interested institutions in the Palestinian agricultural process and accumulation of roles with partner organizations working in agriculture to develop and influence the Palestinian agriculture.



Political and Socio-economic Situation:

The year 2001 witnessed the arrival of a radical government in Israel led by Ariel Sharon. A brief reading into the future [based on the current events and the history of Sharon] leads to a grim conclusion that a political solution is not in the horizon and that a serious return to the table of negotiations is in question for the next couple of years. The most likely scenario is that the current conservative and radical Israeli government will continue increasing pressure on the Palestinian people and its national authority through suppression, encirclement, assassination and destruction of physical infrastructure.

As evidence, the year 2001 have seen a clear deterioration in the living conditions of Palestinian families. According to the most recent report issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on the effects of the Israeli practices on the Palestinian economy, 31% of the West Bank workers and 47% in Gaza are unemployed. The World Bank indicated that 51% of the Palestinians live below the threshold of poverty.

Since the beginning of the year, PFU has launched an intensive program to assist farmers to overcome their difficult conditions related to their production and marketing problems, through facilitating the reach of agricultural products to the market places and contributing in stabilizing the prices of products especially in the field of Olive oil, white cheese, vegetables, seedless grapes and palm dates.

On the other hand PFU continued to provide farmers with services in the fields of health insurance, recovering the value added tax and fighting the deceived agricultural inputs as well as fighting the settlements products from entering the Palestinian markets.



Main Achievements:

Marketing & Collective Purchasing Program:

In light of the Emergency situation facing the Palestinian Territories, this program had a significant impact on the farmers.

Main objective: Assisting farmers in developing their production and solving their marketing problems.

Other objectives:

1. Facilitating the reach of agricultural production to the Palestinian main markets.
2. Decreasing the production cost through collective purchasing of inputs.
3. Contributing in stabilizing the prices of the agricultural production.

Marketing:

. This program targeted different production varieties and focused on (Olive oil, vegetables, white cheese, dates and seedless grapes). Hereunder are some numeral facts reflecting this issue:

Variety	No of Beneficiaries	No of Locations	Quantity in Tons	In cooperation with
Olive Oil	269	16	82,656	PARC
White Cheese	63	4	15,676	Women clubs
Vegetables	23	3	100	PARC
Palm Dates	7	3	24	Palm Dates association in Jericho
Seedless Grapes	32	3	1200	Seedless grapes association in Jericho



Collective Purchasing:

Despite that the situation in the rural areas is difficult, but this program has not reached the expectations yet. The number of locations served by this program is still limited.

Item	Locations	Beneficiaries	Amount Saved	Quantity purchased	In cooperation with
Fertilizers	13	30	46,000 NIS	6.9 Tons	PARC
Poultry meat	1	67	1785 NIS	2100 bird	-
Vegetables	1	67	1285 NIS	2570 tons	PARC
Animal fodder	24	117	620,400 NIS	3763 tons	Sheep Breeders association in Ramallah

Recovering the Value added tax (PVATR):

Main objective: Raising awareness to farmers and assisting them on recovering the value added tax of their purchased inputs.

The program of VAT recovery has started in 1996 as a pilot program by the PFU. After tremendous efforts carried out by the administration staff, PFU had the chance to assist farmers on recovering the vat of agricultural inputs in the field of plant production.

The program which started in the Jordan Valley area targeted around 99 farmers and recovering an amount of 2,934,607 NIS until the end of March 2002.

Since the start of the Intifada, the program has been facing difficulties due to the obstacles and problems generated by the Israeli government.

It is expected that through out the year 2002, different locations in the West Bank and Gaza will be benefiting from the program.

It is worth to say that, the majority of the farmers allover Palestine did not know about their right to recover the Vat or how to do it.

On the other hand, another petition to wave taxes and customs on imported agricultural equipment and animal production inputs was submitted to the concerned authorities, but none has been endorsed yet.



Memberships & Health insurance:

- Memberships:

Main Objective: organizing farmers to play a bigger role in the Palestinian agricultural process.

In regards to the increase of the PFU's activities in different programs, the number of memberships in 2001 has increased with 18.5% than the year 2000. Around 2675 members are distributed in 9 areas. Despite the political situation facing the Palestinian territories, it became obvious to farmers that the PFU is able to provide services and assist them to overcome their problems in production and marketing and activate the volunteers towards establishing specialized agricultural gatherings. Nevertheless, some difficulty faced the working committees and volunteers from getting together continuously due to closures.

Further, hereunder are numeral facts showing the membership distribution along the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Area	No of locations	No of members
1. Nablus & Salfit	25	271
2. Tulkarem	28	699
3. Jericho	11	218
4. Jenin	18	100
5. Ramallah	28	167
6. Hebron	21	435
7. Gaza North	6	300
8. Gaza South	-	485
Total	137	2675



- **Health Insurance:**

Main Objective: Improving the health conditions of the Palestinian farmer's families

There has been no health insurance for the farmers in the Palestinian territories. Farmers who have been facing injuries and health problems had to go for their own.

PFU had initiated this program because of its importance and significance to the need of the farmers. However, PFU faced a lot of obstacles from the private insurance companies. They had never experienced such program and their services were out of expectations.

When the Intifada started, the PFU made an agreement with the Palestinian Ministry of health to include farmer's families in its Health insurance program and carried out different joint activities with other organizations to provide farmers with first aid courses in light of the severe conditions in the Palestinian territories.

PFU is looking forward to develop this program through out the year 2002 to cover more locations. Further, hereunder some numeral facts on the number of course provided and number of insured farmers.

Area	No of insured families	No of First Aid Course	No of beneficiaries	In cooperation with
1. Nablus & Salfit	69	-	-	
2. Tulkarem	342	-	-	
3. Jericho	72	-		
4. Jenin	27	15	225	UPMRC
5. Ramallah	143	-	-	
6. Hebron	220	10	150	UPMRC
7. Gaza North	300	-	-	
8. Gaza South	485	-	-	
Total	1658	25	375	



Specialized Associations:

Since 1998, PFU has been working on establishing specialized committees and activating it. The fact that farmers are unable to overcome their problems and fight for their interests was the reason of this initiated program, which is based on not only common problems and factors between farmers in the agricultural sector, but also common issues between farmers of the same cultivating crop. Starting the Intifada, PFU encouraged these associations on carrying out different activities such as (collective purchasing, collective marketing, participating in formulating laws and policies and fighting against deceived agricultural inputs). Hereby, are some of the achievements accumulated in coordination with the PFU staff by these associations:

1. Saving 400,000 NIS through collective purchasing of fodder to around 120 sheep breeders.
2. Rehabilitation of 10 agricultural pools benefiting 10 agricultural families.
3. Distributing 204 date pal seedlings to 27 farmers subsidized by 60% of cost.
4. Distributing 1500 tissue culture palm date seedlings subsidized by 30% of cost.
5. Collective marketing of 24 tons of different palm dates varieties benefiting 7 farmers, the nursery of the Ministry of Agriculture, and creating 500 working days for local labors.
6. Collective marketing of 1200 tons of seedless grapes to 32 farmers.
7. Distribution of beekeeping inputs and tools to 30 beekeepers subsidized by 80 %
8. Coordinating with MOA to distribute around 120 tons of barely to 150 farmers in accordance to a drought project provided by the MOA.
9. Decreasing the cost price of potato tuber from 280 NIS per 50 kg to 180 NIS for potato farmers through lobbying with different organizations.
10. Holding different training course for plant production farmers benefiting around 170 farmers in 4 locations.
11. Creating 239 job opportunities for unemployed farmers and labor in coordination with the Welfare association in 2 locations in the South of Gaza Strip.
12. Distribution of around 470 fruit trees seedlings to 90 beneficiaries subsidized with 40% in South Gaza.



Hereunder are the list of associations and gatherings established and or supported through out 2 years as follows:

No.	Association	Location	No. of members	Status
1.	Sheep Breeders association	Ramallah	150	Licensed
2.	Bani Nu'aim Sheep breeders cooperative association	Hebron	16	Licensed
3.	Beekeeping association	Jordan Valley	36	Licensed
4.	Ein Al-Sultan water association	Jordan Valley	300	Licensed
5.	Tamoun Greenhouse association	Nablus	17	Licensed
6.	Pam dates association	Khan Yunis	134	Licensed
7.	Palm dates cooperative association	Jordan Valley	53	Licensed
8.	Seedless grapes association	Jordan Valley	32	Under licensing
9.	Banana producers association	Jordan Valley	20	Licensed

No.	Association / Gathering	Location	No. of members	Status
10.	Dier Ghassaneh agricultural cooperative association	Ramallah	44	Licensed
11.	Greenhouses association	Khan Yunis	90	Licensed
12.	Froush beit dajan Sheep Breeders association	Nablus	22	Under licensing
13.	Faqou'a Sheep Breeders association	Jenin	57	Under licensing
14.	Jalameh vegetables producers association	Jenin	30	Under licensing
15.	Burqeen vegetables producers association	Jenin	20	Under licensing
16.	Vegetable farmers cooperative association	Jericho	14	Under licensing
17.	Far'a Vegetables gathering	Nablus	40	Gathering
18.	Al-Nasariya Vegetables gathering	Nablus	40	Gathering
19.	Froush beit dajan Vegetables gathering	Nablus	25	Gathering
20.	Azoun Atmeh Vegetables gathering	Qalqilya	23	Gathering
21.	Beit Fourik Sheep breeders gathering	Nablus	22	Gathering
22.	Bardala Vegetables gathering	Jordan Valley	22	Gathering



Projects:

During the year 2001, a number of projects started and accumulated as follows:

1. VSP:

Duration: 3/2001-3/2003

Total Budget: \$ 264,222

Activities: activities held during 2001

Activity	No of Activities	No of locations	No of Beneficiaries
1. Constructing cisterns	43	7	274
2. Training women farmers on house gardening	5	5	133
3. Training farmers on IPM	2	2	38
4. Training on animal husbandry	1	1	18
5. Working with students through Environmental clubs	10	10	
6. Pesticide residue testing campaign	2		39
7. Building a pool for animal disinfection	1	1	474 families
8. Training women on team building, management and communication skills	1	1	35
9. Training women on saving and income generating projects	1	1	20

2. Cear Project:

Duration: 1999-2001

Total Budget: \$ 66,125

Activities: activities held during 2001:

Activity	No of activities	No of locations	No of beneficiaries
1. Training on use of fertilizers and decrease use of chemicals	3	3	95
2. Distribution of fertilizers	1	6	161

3. Overcoming poverty through the development of rural areas:

Duration: 1999-2001

Total Budget: \$ 262,728

Activities: activities held during 2001:

Activity	No of activities	No of locations	No of beneficiaries
1. Opening agricultural roads	7.2 km	2	80 families
2. Constructing drinking wells	10	2	10 families
3. Constructing Irrigation wells	8	2	8 families



Lobbying & Advocacy:

The continuous policy undertaken by the Israeli government in imposing collective punishment and hindering the transport of domestic agricultural produce from one side and entering settlement's agricultural products from the other made no chance for the farmers, PFU and other non-governmental organizations but to start lobbying with related governmental bodies to stop and prevent settlements products from entering the Palestinian markets.

During the year 2001 PFU carried out a number of activities in order to assist farmers in stead fasting in the face of the policies carried out by the Israeli government as follows:

1. Lobbying with Al-Marsad Al-Filistini and the MOA to prevent the entering of settlement's seedless grapes from entering Nablus Market.
2. Assisting farmers in the production cost of the seedless grapes and palm dates produce in coordination with PARC.
3. Lobbying with the MOA to prevent the entering of potato produce during the spring season in order to sustain prices of Palestinian produce.
4. Carrying out different awareness campaigns and demonstrations calling for the boycott of settlements products.
5. Lobbying with PARC and carrying different campaigns to promote Palestinian produce in the field of olive oil, white cheese, vegetables and fruit.
6. Providing different articles, news in the newspapers, local TV stations and Radio station in the field of settlement products and deceived inputs.
7. Lobbying with farmers and PARC to compensate farmers for deceived agricultural inputs.



Financial Report:

Despite that the external funding for PFU activities was not huge, but significant activities were carried through out the year focusing on the difficult situation facing the Palestinian families and farmers.

Total funds administrated by PFU:

Projects	296,692.07 NIS	21.4%
Olive oil campaign	722,947.06 NIS	52.1%
White cheese campaign	10,803.00 NIS	0.08%
Vegetables Campaign	21,530.00 NIS	0.16%
Palm dates campaign	180,000.00 NIS	13%
Memberships	54,605.00 NIS	4.4%
Other	99,952.00 NIS	7.2%
Total	1,386,529.13 NIS	100%



The Palestinian Farmers' Union

Main Office & Branches:

The Main Office is located in Ramallah – PARC Building

The PFU has branches in Gaza, Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem

Main Office: Tel: +970 2 2963845
Fax: +970 2 2963846
E-mail: PFU@p-ol.com
P.O.Box: 3816 Al-Bireh

Gaza North: Tel: +970 8 2805041
Fax: +970 8 2805039

Gaza South: Telfax: +970 8 2067935

Hebron: Telfax: +970 2 2224288

Jericho: Telfax: +970 2 2323651

Ramallah: Tel: +970 2 2956852

Nablus: Tel: +970 9 2337428
Fax: +970 9 2381049

Tulkarem: Telfax: +970 9 2675944

Jenin: Telfax: +970 4 2436673

