

# MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

*- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -*

**Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad**

Sunday, February 13, 2011

**USG Delegation Meets New Iraq Agriculture Minister** – Economic Minister Counselor Ken Fairfax and Agriculture Minister Counselor Ron Verdonk, led a USG delegation in discussions with new Iraq Agriculture Minister, Izz Al-den Al-Dawla. Al-Dawla expressed pride in the cooperation between the U.S. & Iraq, while Verdonk highlighted the need for Iraq to embrace new agriculture technology to improve its agricultural productivity to meet consumer demand.



**Center Pivots of Salah Ad Din** – Center pivot irrigation systems are a familiar sight in Salah ad Din Province. A recent mapping effort conducted by the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency for the SaD PRT identified more than 2,000 systems in the Province. Many of these systems were installed under the “Oil for Food” program 1999 - 2002. An estimated 30 - 40% of these systems are currently in need of major rehabilitation due to neglect, looting, and the lack of proper spare parts and repair expertise.



**Animal Genetics Outreach** – USDA sponsored the visit of three employees of the MoA’s bull stud program to learn about bull genetics management in the U. S. The employees gained a new understanding of the value of semen from proven bulls, such that they have recommended policy changes that would allow imports of semen. Since returning, they have embarked on an ambitious program to teach Iraqi farmers and veterinarians about the value of bull selection, and the use of scientific methods to improve their herds.



**Micro-dairy Training for Daquq Women** – PRT Kirkuk Ag Advisors received a QRF grant to conduct a six-week training with four dairy associations that will receive a micro-dairy. The fifth week of training was specifically targeted to women in the Daquq district. Thirteen women completed the 5-day training course that covered milk handling, milk collection, hygienic and sanitary milking procedures, the California Mastitis Test (how to use the test), how to handle milk from cows on antibiotics, HACCP, and other topics.

**Personnel Update** - There are currently 30 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), at Embassy Baghdad or embedded with U.S. military units.

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