

*Agricultural Development: Planning and Implementation (Israel Case Study)*

by R. Weitz and A. Rokach, D. Reidel Publishing Co., Netherlands, 1967. Pp. XIX + 404. Price 117s., DM 55.50.

Jewish agricultural settlement since the 1880's can be characterized by two unique features: the urban, educated people settled and became farmers of their own free will; and the agricultural settlement was carefully planned, first on the farm-unit level, and later on the regional and national levels. On both of these the Israeli experience is unique in that each is the reverse of the usual process observable elsewhere. During the twelve years following the attainment of statehood in 1948 Israel absorbed successfully over 1.25 million immigrants into agriculture, over two-thirds of whom had none or limited degree of familiarity with the "modern" agriculture, as they came from North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Nonetheless, they became part of a highly technical and organized farming system. Between 1950 and 1965, total agricultural production in Israel increased by 500 per cent. The productivity of labour in agriculture rose at a remarkable annual rate of 10.8 per cent between 1955 and 1959 and at 11.2 per cent between 1958 and 1963.

In an introductory chapter, the authors recount Israel's initial experiments in forms of land settlement in the latter part of the nineteenth century; the influence of the Zionist organization during this early period; and the impact on agricultural development of the achievement of statehood. The main body of the book is devoted to a concrete analysis of the many facets and achievements of Israeli agriculture and deals with the comprehensive planning of rural development in the country. The book emphasizes the need of comprehensive planning that integrates agriculture, industry and services on the basis of the positive interaction among these sectors of the economy as well as the interaction between economic, social, institutional, political and environmental factors. The area covered by the book is large and calls for an extensive, meticulous research. The authors accomplish their task well.

In many ways the success of Israeli agriculture is the result of a combination of factors unique to the country. Land ownership and water rights of Jewish farming has been in the hands of national authorities for many decades, so that the distribution of land and water resources could be made on a planned basis with no problems of landlord rights or tenancy. The Land Settlement authority, which is not governmental but a subsidiary of the Jewish Agency that raises funds abroad, leases the land to the settler-farmer and invests on the average \$ 15,000 directly in each farm unit and more than \$7,000 per farm unit in public works. With this much capital available for investment in agriculture, the planning of a highly technical production system as well as the comprehensive rural development is much easier to tackle than in any other developing area of the world. Of course, no country can exactly duplicate the experience

of any other country. And the factors that favoured Israeli agriculture are absent elsewhere. However, because of the combination of the unique features of Israeli development, it offers a relatively well controlled experiment in agricultural development to countries that contemplate changes in land-tenure systems and rural development patterns.

The authors' discussion on balancing the supply and demand of agricultural commodities, which form the basis of the ten-year plan meticulously surveyed in the book, is particularly instructive. The development plan for Israel's agriculture begins with the calculation of the market potentialities of various products, then of the resources available, and finally of the allocation of these resources to meet the market demand. The limiting resource factor in Israel is water as in the case of Pakistan's agriculture. The market demand and value of the various agricultural products, therefore, determine the extent and intensity of water use within total water availability. In the use of irrigation water, high value crops will, to the limit of the demand for them, lay first claims. Although a controlled price structure (a system of floor prices) is used so that the sum of the farmers' effort will lead to production of the desired quantities, Israel uses production control in order to limit the government's subsidy liability and to direct the production of particular products to the areas most suited to them and away from others. In view of the increasing necessity for planning the improved output mix in Pakistan's agriculture, valuable lessons can be learned from this Israeli experience.

A comprehensive approach to rural development, where the positive interaction between agricultural development and the growth of industry and services is exploited for social and economic progress, is another specific example of the Israeli strategy for agricultural development that the reviewer concurs with whole-heartedly. Industry established in rural areas will not only create the "forward" and "backward" linkages to the agricultural sector (*e.g.*, raw material processing; industrial workers create a consumers' market for farm products; farms need industrial products, say, improved implements), but will also provide employment to surplus labour from the farm and an expanded tax-base on which better services can be built for farm as well as town people. The spectacular growth of the small-scale industry manufacturing tubewell pumps and engines in many localities in West Pakistan is an apt example of such an interaction.

The book is highly recommended for those who are seriously interested in agricultural planning and the related problems of economic development. It also offers planners a practical guide to formulating long-term plans for agricultural development.