

FEATURE – USDA ADVISORS HELP IRAQI FARMERS

INTRO: U.S. Department of Agriculture advisors are in Iraq trying to help farmers build a modern agriculture system. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. (1:57)

EXPERTS SAY IRAQ'S AGRICULTURE SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE REBUILT. TO THAT END, PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS, OR P-R-T'S, STAFFED WITH U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ADVISORS, ARE SHARING EXPERTISE.

Ryan Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq: The P-R-T's in terms of agriculture do two important things. First is work with provincial governments, but second and this is really critical is they are working with the people that make agriculture work and those are the farmers.

WAR AND INSURRECTION HAVE GREATLY DAMAGED IRAQ'S AGRICULTURE SYSTEM. BUT U-S-D-A ADVISORS SAY SADDAM HUSSEIN'S AGRICULTURE POLICY IS ALSO TO BLAME.

Bill Huston, USDA Agriculture Advisor: He had a Soviet style agriculture, which was centralized. Everything, all the inputs, was provided by the central government. Unfortunately his system was not production oriented. It was really gauged...just to keep the farmers on the farm.

ADVISORS SAY THE P-R-T'S ARE TRYING TO TEACH IRAQI FARMERS HOW TO HELP THEMSELVES.

Logan Barbee, USDA Agriculture Advisor: That's gradually coming into place now and Iraqis are gaining a lot of leadership and abilities now and learning how to spend their own money.

Jim Conley, USDA PRT Agriculture Liaison: I think the most progress we've made are those project that build capacity with the Iraqis. We try to help the Iraqis learn new technical skills, learn new management skills.

HOWEVER, U-S-D-A ADVISORS ADMIT THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO IN REBUILDING IRAQI AGRICULTURE.

Joseph Carrigan, USDA Agriculture Advisor: And the Iraqis themselves have to step up and take a hold of this thing and make the difference, frankly. We can just do a little bit...but they're the ones that ultimately have to take hold of the agriculture and make it what it could be.

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.