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FACT SHEET

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U.S. AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS IN IRAQ

Agriculture serves as the foundation on which many countries build their economies. The U.S. Government is therefore helping Iraq revitalize its agricultural sector.

Agricultural Trade. USDA efforts in Iraq have helped establish a growing market for U.S. agricultural exports of wheat, rice and poultry. Iraq currently imports almost \$3 billion in food annually. Of that amount, U.S. agricultural exports in 2005 totaled \$325.6 million. During the period January-October 2006, U.S. agricultural exports to Iraq increased to \$339 million compared to \$244 million for the same period in 2005—a nearly 39-percent increase in one year. Iraq was the No. 2 buyer of U.S. hard red winter wheat in marketing year 2005-2006. In addition, Iraq was the No. 1 buyer of U.S. long grain milled rice in 2005. In the late 1980s, it was our top market for rice and one of our top 10 wheat export markets.

Trade Capacity Building. The United States supports Iraq's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). To help Iraq gain a better understanding of U.S. trade policy and the WTO, USDA expects to place an agricultural advisor in Baghdad to work with the Iraqi Government on agricultural policy issues. In July 2005, the United States and Iraq signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to promote

bilateral trade and investment. Prior to that, a large Iraqi delegation, including representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Trade and Investment, attended a WTO orientation workshop in Washington, DC, in November 2004. These efforts are coupled with ongoing activities by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other U.S. Government agencies, all of which are aimed at accelerating Iraq's WTO accession so that it becomes integrated into regional and global markets.

Development. USDA's Cochran Fellowship Program in Iraq resumed for the first time since 1990 in December 2004. Thirteen individuals participated in agricultural education and extension training in the United States in 2005. Up to 15 Cochran Fellows are expected to participate in the program in 2007. This program provides short-term, market-oriented agricultural training to help countries develop market-driven food systems.

Technical Assistance. In January 2007, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is sponsoring an Iraqi Government scientist's training in epidemiological Avian Influenza (AI) at its office in Cairo, Egypt. Another Iraqi Government scientist will visit

APHIS' key epidemiology center in Fort Collins, Colorado, in March 2007. In August 2006, USDA and the U.S. military organized a regional AI workshop in northern Iraq, which was attended by 15 Iraqi Government veterinarians. In May 2006, two Iraqi scientists attended training on diagnostic testing for highly pathogenic AI at USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. This training is a joint effort of Iowa State University and USDA. As part of the training, U.S. diagnostic experts will travel to Iraq to observe and provide feedback on the implementation of what was learned.

Revitalization. By providing aid and assistance, the U.S. Government is helping Iraq revitalize its agricultural sector so it can become an engine for economic growth and strengthen U.S. market share.

In December 2006, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced that a team of U.S. universities, led by Texas A&M, will receive \$5.3 million to strengthen agricultural extension and training at Iraqi universities. The Iraq Agricultural Extension Revitalization Project will provide training programs for Iraqi nationals to enhance the management, production and marketing related to small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises. Arid crop production development, livestock production and animal health and water resources management and irrigation technology will be addressed. Activities will include training of extension specialists; long-term degree training; development of distance learning methods and instructional materials for train-the-trainer extension programs; and field trials, demonstration plots and lab methods for adoption by Iraqi farmers.

On June 30, 2005, USDA signed a \$10.8 million Food for Progress food aid

agreement with the U.S. Grains Council under which USDA provided Iraq with 21,250 tons of corn and 8,750 tons of soybean meal. Commodities were delivered and sold in Iraq in early 2006. The Grains Council is using the proceeds from the sales to revitalize the country's poultry sector.

USAID conducted a variety of agricultural production, infrastructure and machinery and capacity building projects through the Agriculture Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI). This program ended in October 2006. A new program, INMA, is scheduled to continue USAID's efforts in this area in spring 2007.

Advisors. Currently, six USDA employees are in Iraq to support the country's reconstruction. Two U.S. agricultural officers from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service are posted at the American Embassy in Baghdad, starting in July 2004. Two employees of USDA's Rural Business Cooperative Service are serving as agricultural development officers on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These employees are serving one-year details assisting Iraq provincial government officials in developing the agricultural sector. One extension advisor from the Natural Resources Conservation Service is assigned to the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture to build its capacity in agricultural extension, agricultural strategic planning and food safety and inspection. Two other USDA agriculture advisors are expected to be on duty at the Ministry of Agriculture soon. A USDA public affairs specialist is part of the U.S. Embassy's public affairs team.

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