

**Title: "The Economic and Marketing Knowledge of Palestinian Farms' Use of Heirloom Seeds"**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to encourage Palestinian farmers to grow heirloom crops in the West Bank and continue to grow them. Through studying the current economic and marketing factors affecting the cultivation of heirloom seeds in the north and south of the West Bank, represented by Meithalun in Jenin and Al Khader in Bethlehem, and showing the extent of farms' knowledge of the technical specifications of heirloom seeds and the impact of agricultural expertise on the profit from cultivating heirloom crops according to the region. To find out, a field questionnaire was designed as a research tool targeting farmers of the two research regions, looking at demographic information and the productivity of Armenian cucumber and zucchini crops, as well as economic factors, marketing opportunities and technical expertise related to the characteristics of heirloom seeds, and the most important financial obstacles facing the targeted farmers.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a suitable sample size of 67 farmers were chosen, 40 questionnaires were distributed in Al Khader - Bethlehem and 27 questionnaires for Meithalun - Jenin. These questionnaires were completed by meeting the targeted farmers directly. The researcher used the descriptive method to accomplish this research,

and the form was analyzed using the SPSS statistical program.

The study concluded that the farmer profit from growing the heirloom vegetables in Al Khader and Meithalun, specially Armenian cucumber and zucchini, due to the fact that the Palestinian farmer has a long experience and agricultural knowledge on growing heirloom seeds. Most of the Palestinian farmer spend their life span working in the land, despite the fact that there are those who work in jobs outside the farm's work, where they accounted for 65% in Al Khader and 20% in Meithalun. The two regions have different environmental characteristics, but the farmers are aware of these differences, where the vines are planted in Bethlehem in the last third of April, while in the Meithalun it is grown at the beginning of April. The farmers agreed that the productivity of the heirloom seeds is high and it strengthens the ties with the land, although the price of the seeds is not convenient for them due to their high price according to them, so we find that the farmer carefully selects the best seeds to store them, as the percentage of farmers who store seeds reached 94% in both regions.

However, the results show weakness in the marketing operations carried after the harvest process so that the farmers do not realize how to market for their crops as a distinct crop as they do not put their own logo to indicate to the consumers that the crop is heirloom. Moreover, 90% of Meithalun farmers depend on wholesale, compared to 90% of Al Khader growers depend on retail sales, and this may explain why the low selling price per

kilo in Jenin compared to Al Khader for both crops. Furthermore, 68% of the farmers' land is Al-Khader is located in Area "C".

The study came out with a number of recommendations, the most important are: introducing farmers to marketing methods and training them on sound agricultural marketing practices in a way that guarantees farms post-harvest profit and providing marketing guidance to ensure results. Opening markets for heirloom crops, as well as reducing sales channels. In addition to providing what is necessary to ensure the continuity of cultivation in areas classified "C", especially heirloom crops, as it is the only crop that can be grown in dry and classified agricultural areas "C".