

Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crops

Currently, fruit and vegetable crops are relatively valuable for Pakistani farmers close to sizable urban markets. For example, farmers in the Hyderabad area reported gross revenues of greater than Rs 350 and Rs 1000 per acre for onions and potatoes, respectively. Carrots and cauliflower were also said to be profitable, although all vegetable prices were reported to have large seasonal variations.

Tree crops are another means for increasing income. In Former Sind there were reports of mangoes and bananas netting more than Rs 2000 per acre. In the case of bananas, some farmers reported revenues of greater than Rs 10,000 per acre. Citrus fruit production has been profitable around Quetta and Peshawar, and possibilities of expanding citrus production in other areas should be explored, keeping in mind, however, the low soil-salt tolerance of these crops.

The potential of expanded fruit and vegetable production appears high. Growing urban markets within Pakistan could absorb much greater quantities than are now being supplied. In addition, there are large potential export markets for fresh and canned fruits and vegetables, especially in Western Europe.

An expansion of specialty crops will take a concerted effort on several fronts. Research will be required to adapt varieties to West Pakistan conditions. Development of storage, transportation, and marketing facilities will be necessary before these products will be profitable enterprises for Pakistani farmers. Quality control, selection of appropriate varieties, the development of standards, and grading will be especially important in producing for an export market. The problems will be difficult to overcome; however, the possible gains from doing so are large.

Some indication of the variety of products that might be grown in West Pakistan can be obtained from data on the irrigated arid valleys of California. These regions, which have climates and soil conditions similar to those in parts of the Indus Plain, are a center of specialty-crop production in the United States.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 summarize farm experience in adapting various vegetables and fruits to the climatic and soil conditions of desert valleys in