

FAO Saudi Arabia Newsletter

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World Food Day Celebration in Saudi Arabia

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Welcome Note

Welcome to the 1st Newsletter of the FAO Saudi Arabia. A series of events were organised in collaboration with REEF, National Center for Vegetation Development and Combating Desertification (NCVCCD) and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MoEWA) in October and marked a few international days namely; International Day for Rural Women in Aseer. A 4-day training cum exhibition was coordinated successfully to groom rural women in entrepreneurship and agri-business. World Food Day (WFD) was grandly celebrated in Jazan and globally promoted on the WFD website along with other countries. FAO Saudi Arabia (FAOSA) has also participated in international conferences to celebrate International Coffee Day, the UN Day, the Saudi Agri-Investment Forum and the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) meeting. Also with Cooperative Society Council (CSC), the first Cooperatives Leadership training was organised with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) under UN-UN partnerships. Besides, training for contract farming and effective beekeeping in national parks was also carried out. These activities have successfully raised the profile and visibility of the Sustainability Rural Agricultural Development (SRAD) project with all our stakeholders. **Happy reading!**

The International Forum of Saudi Coffee Sustainability

Kakoli Ghosh, Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), SRAD and Bandar Alfaifi, National Professional Officer, Coffee participated in the Saudi Coffee forum held in Jazan organized by the Ministry of Culture and presented two papers on "Developing Sustainable Coffee Value Chains in Saudi Arabia" and "International Good Practices for Coffee Cultivation". The presentations highlighted the main features of sustainable food value chains and FAO approach to accelerate sustainable good practices across the coffee value chain to increase production, conserve local diversity and improve management practices. Several important contacts were established to improve production and opportunities for coffee farmers.



FAO participation at the Saudi Coffee Forum

World Food Day Celebration¹

World Food Day in Saudi Arabia was celebrated in Jazan and jointly organised by MoEWA and FAO. His Royal Highness Prince Muhammad bin Nasser bin Abdulaziz and Ayman Omer, FAO Saudi Arabia (FAOSA) Project Director (OIC) delivered the opening remarks and the agri-exhibition has raised awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainability Rural Agricultural Development (SRAD) and various local initiatives on agricultural development. A series of panel discussions and field training was conducted to disseminate Four Betters and good practices for coffee, livestock, beekeeping, agritourism, sesame and natural resources management. It brought together over 1 000 visitors including farmers, policy and decision-makers, entrepreneurs, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders.

Celebration of International Day of Rural Women²

FAO and REEF organized training in Abha, Aseer on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Sustainable Rural Agriculture Development Project in Saudi Arabia", Eng M Abdullah bin Hassan Alwaymani, Director General of MoEWA Aseer, Kakoli Ghosh, CTA SRAD and Maha Dighriri, REEF delivered the opening remarks. The training launches the Warfa Initiative and was attended by 45 small-scale female farmers and businesswomen from across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The participants were felicitated by His Royal Highness Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz and His Excellency Eng Mansour Al-Mushaiti, Vice Minister, MoEWA inaugurated the exhibition and distributed certificates. The training was highly successful and paves the way for greater empowerment of small-scale female farmers in rural development initiatives.



Saudi rural women's participation at Warfa in conjunction with International Rural Women's Day

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Participation in MGI Workshop³

The FAOSA team, including Ayman Omer, Project Director (OIC) participated in the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) technical workshop organized by the MoEWA on 19 September 2022, in Riyadh. The workshop was attended by Abdulhakim Elwaer, Assistant Director General, Regional Near East and North Africa. FAO continues to work with MoEWA to support the initiative technically and through its leadership in policy, technical expertise and participation in national land restoration. Follow up MGI workshop has been organized also in October.



MGI Technical Workshop in Riyadh

Contract Farming

The Agri-marketing team promoted contract farming with rose producers in Taif and conducted a one-on-one discussion with buyers and the Taif Agri-Cooperative Association. Muneer Al Sahli, General Manager of the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) provided information on their contract farming finance products and services. The meeting was successful and attended by about 46 participants including farmers, processors, cooperatives, and members from Taif University.

Participation in Soil Amendments Workshops

The cereals team participated in the "perspective of future technologies for soil amendments" workshop organized by Palladium Group (PG) and held in the Tabuk region from 15-19 October 2022. Local universities as well as regional and local research centres attended the workshop. The importance of employing soil amendments to increase the productivity of local soils were discussed in several presentations.

Training for Cooperative Leaders

Agri-cooperative team organized training for 21 cooperative leaders, including four women, drawn from the Cooperative Society Council (CSC) across the Kingdom. Two cooperative professionals (trainers) from International Labour Organization (ILO) were invited and conducted the training in Riyadh. The training addressed topics including the cooperative ecosystem, institutional framework, and governance structure in accordance with the assessment of training needs.



Agri-Cooperative team trains the cooperative leaders in the Kingdom

UN Day celebrations

FAO with other UN Saudi Arabia staff participated in the celebration of the 77th Anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, under the theme "Together Towards the Goals" on 24 October 2022. The UN Saudi Arabia Resident Coordinator delivered the opening remarks, and three interesting panel discussions were organized to discuss the role of academia and private sector partnerships in SDGs.

Strengthening MoEWA's Capacity to implement its Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development (SRAD) Programme (UTF/SAU/051/SAU)

In the framework of the FAO Technical Cooperation Program, this project is strengthening the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MoEWA) capacity to implement its Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development Programme (2019-2025). The project is being implemented with MoEWA, REEF and NCVCCD in nine components across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, i.e., coffee, beekeeping, roses, sub-tropical fruits, livestock, fisheries, rain-fed cereals, value addition and natural resources management covering forests, national parks, rangelands and controlling desertification. The main objectives of the project are to increase production and productivity while managing natural resources, promote diversification and income generation for smallholders, in particular rural youth and women.

¹ <https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/view/en/c/1610515/>

² <https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/view/en/c/1610519/>

³ <https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/greeninitiativeworkshop>



Contact information:

FAO Representation in Saudi Arabia

Email: Fao-sa@fao.org

Website: <https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=SAU>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia