

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

The following developments in Israel's Agriculture and Food Sectors are summarized in this report:

- EU-Israel "Twinning" Project to Strengthen Israeli Veterinary Diagnostic Capacities
- The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture to Begin Regulating Feed Additives
- Winter Storms Wreak Damage
- Russia's Reduced Buying Leads Israeli Farmer To Seek Compensation

EU-Israel "Twinning" Project to Strengthen Israeli Veterinary Diagnostic Capacities - On March 26, the EU and Israel launched the a "twinning" project aimed at strengthening the Israeli Veterinary Institute's diagnostic capacities. The EU-funded project, to be carried out by Israel's Ministry of Agriculture with experts from Germany and the Netherlands, will focus on improving the Institute's capacity in terms of legislation, enforcement, and institutional development. By improving its diagnostic capacities, Israel will meet its international requirements regarding the monitoring and control of animal diseases and the safety of products of animal origin.

The 18 month 1,030,000 Euro project is part of the EU funded "twinning" projects of the European Neighborhood Policy, encouraging neighboring countries like Israel to draft laws and regulations, or reorganizing institutional structures along European models. In Israel, eight "twinning" projects have been completed in fields including equal employment opportunity, statistics, telecommunications, and transport.

The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture to Begin Regulating Feed Additives - The Control of Animal Feed Law, approved in February 2014, is expected to enter into effect in March 2016. The Law is intended to regulate the production and marketing of animal feed, guaranteeing the wholesomeness of animal products throughout the production chain through food control plans and traceability systems following the "Farm to Fork" idea.

The Law institutes the basic terms for the licensing of animal feed production and marketing, as well as the licensing and registration of imported feed, feed materials, and/or feed additives. In preparation for the law's implementation, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOAG) assessed the current state of affairs, comparing current practices with the practices in the US that allow the use of "medications not intended to be used as a cure" (feed additives). Following the assessment, MOAG decided to take immediate action adjusting the doses and indications of feed additives in accordance with those approved in the US. As of April 2015, 20 feed additives have been granted a permit, and 10 more are undergoing further examination.

Once the Law goes into effect, the Ministry of Health will be responsible for the registration of a new feed additive. The additives that have been approved by MOAG will not have to be re-registered, but new feed additives will undergo MOH's registration process.

Winter Storms Wreak Damage- According to the Kanat Agricultural Insurance Fund, the heavy winds and hailstorms that affected the country in January caused damage estimated at NIS 70 million (\$17.7 mil). Kanat said that most of the damage was to crops and infrastructure in the Central and Northern regions, affecting thousands of acres of avocado, citrus crops, and some row crops in the south.

Reduced Russian Buying Leads Israeli Farmers To Seek Compensation - The unfolding financial crisis in Russia and the rapid depreciation of the Russian ruble, have resulted in an estimated decrease in export revenues of about 30 percent from the same period in 2014. The Israeli Farmers Association has requested compensation from the government for losses of \$51 million for all agricultural exports to Russia, stating that the severity of the situation requires immediate government intervention.