

Agriculture in the Dhofar Region, Oman (5)

Part 5: The meaning of 'the inter flow of Dhofar agricultural products'

The following is a brief summary of agricultural practices in different parts of Dhofar State that have been reported in previous issues of AAI News:

- 1) Salalah (coastal plain): traditional vegetable and fruit cultivation, dairy farming on pasturage cultivated using modern methods.
- 2) Jabal (mountain region): traditional pasturage for cows and camels.
- 3) Nejd (desert region): camel pasturage and modernized pasturage production.

The farming practices of these areas are deeply related to each other in complementary ways. As summarized in the table below, the major products from each area support the farming activities of other areas in the form of food, fertilizer and forage. The flow of agricultural products within Dhofar is not entirely a closed circle - other areas contribute - but the local interdependence is considered to be fairly significant (chemical fertilizers excluded).

	To Salalah	To Jabal	To Nejd
From Salalah		Food products, dairy products fodder from fish	Food products, dairy products
From Jabal	Meat, dairy products cattle manure		Meat, cattle manure
From Nejd	Pasture, camel meat	Pasture	

What should be also mentioned here is that this relationship of interdependence among the above regions has been more and more significant in recent years. In other words, each region's agricultural activities cannot proceed independent of the other regions, and the role of producing specific products is becoming increasingly divided among the different regions. For many years past, farming practices in each region were effectively self sufficient but as agricultural production activities expand in area it seems that inter-regional dependence is also growing.

Self sufficiency within a region of the traditional sort is sustainable but its productivity is low. On the other hand, the expansion of agricultural productivity is taking place under the name of 'modernization,' and this seems to be destroying the traditional forms of agriculture, which were sustainable in the past.

By combining only the positive aspects of the above two forms of agricultural activities, one could achieve 'sustainable modern farming', and this should be the goal of future agricultural development. In the next issue, the final part of this series considers the future of agriculture in the Dhofar region.



Cattle manure from Jabal, on sale near Salalah



Fodder on sale near Salalah