

1 Preface

1-1 Abstract

A study was conducted among selected Bedouin households in the Eastern Desert of Jordan. The principal focus of research was upon developing socio-economic and management strategies, with particular reference to the recent removal of a state subsidy upon important livestock feeds.

A 12 month period of monitoring herd inputs and outputs suggested that prior to its removal, managers were heavily dependent upon the subsidy for their production profits.

Following the removal of the subsidy, wide spread sales of animals were recorded, (particularly from sedentary village areas) and attempts were made to cut production costs down to former subsidised levels of expenditure.

In trying to adjust to the new economics of production, herd owners have necessarily become more active in their management and opportunist in their acquisition of resources.

Management behaviour was in most cases motivated by livelihood security concerns and descent group based economic association was identified as one of several important mechanisms for risk aversion. It is hypothesised that as producers come under increasing economic pressure, traditional types of association within Badia society may be strengthened.

Home dairy products were found to be extremely important to Bedouin livelihoods, and therefore the established practice of maintaining small sedentary domestic herds in village areas will probably continue.

Evidence points to a future possible polarisation of production strategies within the new economic environment, with producers either operating herds as a component within a range of economically complementary business interests or specialising in large scale rangeland pastoralism.