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**Economic Success of Bedouin Sheep Production under Different  
Resource Endowment in Jordan and the Palestinian Territories**

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**Abstract**

Lack of pastures and short grazing periods forced Bedouin sheep keepers in Jordan and the Palestinian territories (PA) to practice hand feeding most of the year and intensify production. The marked increase in fodder prices during the season 2007/2008 resulted in an increase at the cost side forcing sheep keepers not only to sell the offspring at early age but also part of the breeding ewes at low prices, thus widening the gap between sheep keepers able or not to cope with the intensification process.

To study the efficiency of current sheep husbandry, a farm survey was conducted in 2007 in two study areas in Jordan and the PA, each. The study area in Jordan was divided into two sites, west and east (Badia) of Mafraq Governorate. The study area in PA was divided into Ramallah-Jerusalem and Bethlehem-Hebron districts covering a range of production conditions. Twenty-four sheep keepers from Jordan and 20 from the PA were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire on household and herd data.

The analysis of economic success of the existing sheep systems, using Gross Margin (GM) per ewe and benefit cost ratio (BCR) analysis, revealed a positive GM value in the PA (19.5 and 13.0 JOD in Ramallah-Jerusalem and Bethlehem-Hebron respectively). Sheep keepers in Jordan generated negative GM in both areas. Both groups in the PA achieved higher BCR with 1.4 and 1.2 per ewe for Ramallah-Jerusalem and Bethlehem-Hebron districts, respectively than sheep keepers in Jordan, being economically ineffective with low BCR (0.92 for west and 0.96 for east). Breeding ewes and new lambs were sold at lower prices in Jordan than in the PA reducing the revenues severely.

Feed purchases comprised around 82% of the total variable cost per ewe in Jordan and even more in the PA with 92.7%. Sheep keeping was executed by family members in the PA, while hired labour was the second contributor to the costs in Jordan. On contrary to Jordan, water contributed a very small amount to costs in the PA since 55% of sheep keepers had free access to water sources compared to none in Jordan.

**Keywords:** Bedouin, benefit-cost, economic success, gross margin, sheep