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## Factors Affecting Olive Production: The Case of Olive-growing Farms in Syrian Drylands

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### Abstract

In the last few decades, significant land use changes are taking place in the Syrian dry areas, as several crops such as cotton; wheat and barley are being replaced by the olive plantation due to less water requirements of the olive plants. Various factors are thought to be influencing the olive plantation and production in the regions and therefore, the study objectives are: 1) to analyse the factors that affect the production of olive across different zones in the study area and 2) to determine the constraints of olive production faced by farmers. Primary data were collected in a field survey using structured questionnaires administered to 140 randomly selected farmers from 19 villages in the Salamieh area in Syria in 2007/08 agricultural seasons. Data analysis procedures included descriptive statistics, factor analysis and logistic regression. The results showed that type of varieties (Sourani and Qaisi) planted by the farmers, application of chemical and organic fertilisers and irrigation water are the significant factors affecting olive production in the study area. The most important problems faced by olive farmers in the study areas are concerned with: Decrease in producer price of olive oil, high costs of olive production, lengthy keeping time of olive before it is milled, and pests and diseases infection. These four problems were rated considerably higher than other problems. To enhance farmers income through better olive growth, and production supplemental irrigation in addition the rainfall need to be ensured. As recommendations, development of extension leaflets on these varieties to create awareness about modern agriculture techniques and crop management practices. Facilitation of production inputs provision like (fertilisers, irrigation water infrastructure). In addition, better access to international markets with a particular focus the olive farming. To promote the sustainable cultivation and production of olive in the study area, these variables should be taken into account in any agriculture extension program.

**Keywords:** Dry Areas, extension, fertilisers, irrigation, olive production, Syria, varieties