



**IDAL**

INVEST IN LEBANON

**AGRICULTURE**  
FACT BOOK  
2015



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# SECTOR OVERVIEW

## MAIN GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Lebanon's moderate climate, rich soil, and abundant water resources provide it with key enablers to stand out in the region as an ideal location for agricultural activity.

The country is endowed with the highest proportion of agricultural land<sup>1</sup> in the Middle East.

According to the latest figures of the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO),

**65%** of Lebanese territory is covered by agricultural areas

of the total area of Lebanon is considered arable<sup>2</sup>

**14%**

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Rainfall in the country remains relatively abundant at an average of

**2.2 billion m<sup>3</sup>/yr**

significantly higher than the regional average

The country is also rich with major rivers & water resources



Climate is overall moderate and allows the cultivation of a wide variety of crops that would normally grow in both cold and tropical countries.

Major regions for crops, meadows and pastures include the Bekaa plain (where more than 40 percent of the land is cultivated), the North, especially in Koura and Akkar, and the South with the coastal region from Sidon to Tyre (where intensive agriculture is also present in greenhouses).

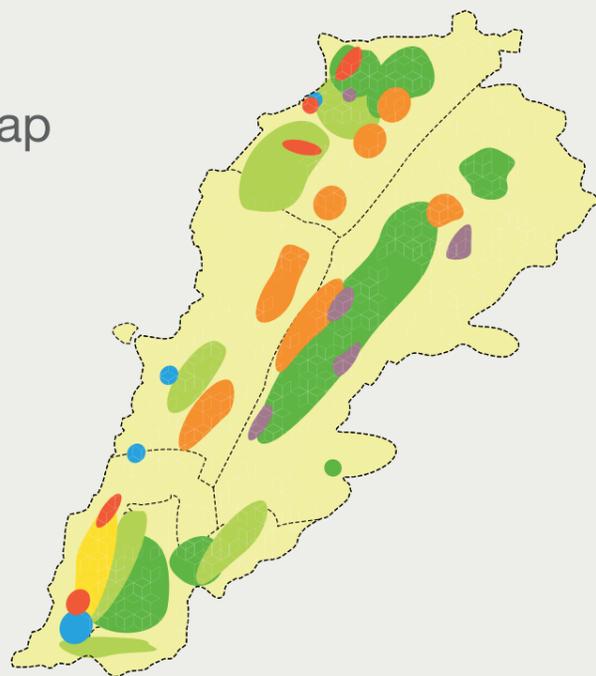
Mount Lebanon and Nabatiyeh are also important agricultural zones, albeit with lower shares of cultivated land due to their rough landscape.

## CONTRIBUTION OF THE SECTOR TO THE ECONOMY

The Agriculture sector generates around 4.7% of Lebanon's GDP<sup>3</sup>. It employs roughly 10% of the Lebanese labor force<sup>4</sup>, and is the fourth largest employer in the country.

## Agricultural Map of Lebanon

- Annual Crops (Vegetable, Cereals, Etc.)
- Olives
- Citruses
- Bananas
- Vineyards
- Fruits (Other)
- Intensive Agriculture



Source: FAO, 2010

## MAIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Fruits constitute the largest share of agricultural production in Lebanon at

**26%**

Citrus, apples, grapes and bananas occupy the biggest volumes within this category.

Vegetables rank first with

**48%**

of total agricultural production. Potatoes are the main produce within this category

Livestock production has also been picking up in recent years. In fact, meat production has more than doubled since 1990 reaching levels slightly below

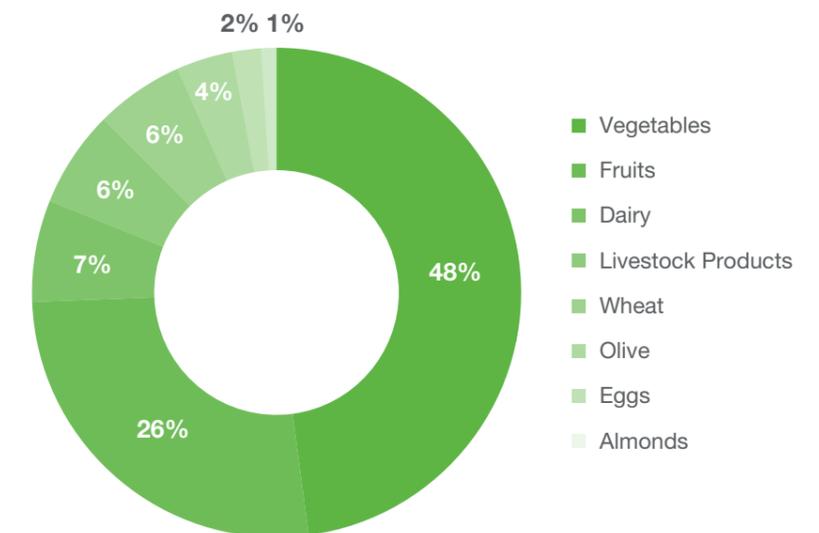
**200,000t**



Other produce includes tobacco and cereals (mainly wheat and barley).



Figure 1: Agricultural Output by Sub Sector | 2012



Source: FAO 2012

Amongst the fruit category, citrus account for

**17%**

of total fruits production

Apples

**23%**

of total fruits production

Grapes

**14%**

of total fruits production

Bananas

**18%**

of total fruits production<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As defined by the FAO, agricultural areas include arable lands, as well as permanent crops and pastures.

<sup>2</sup> Arable lands consist of temporary crops and meadows, market and kitchen gardens, and temporary fallow areas.

<sup>3</sup> National Accounts.

<sup>4</sup> Central Administration of Statistics, Statistical Year book 2009, Green Projects and Agriculture.

<sup>5</sup> Based on FAO data, 2012.

# TRADE STATISTICS

## EXPORT PERFORMANCE

While agricultural production had been previously limited to meeting local market needs, it has recently shifted towards lucrative production, with higher focus on export.

Exports of agricultural products have fluctuated widely over the last years, due to varying factors and conditions. Having flourished in 2007 and 2008, the figures dropped by an estimated 10% in 2009, down to 538,000 tons as a result of the global economic recession, only to recover the year after.

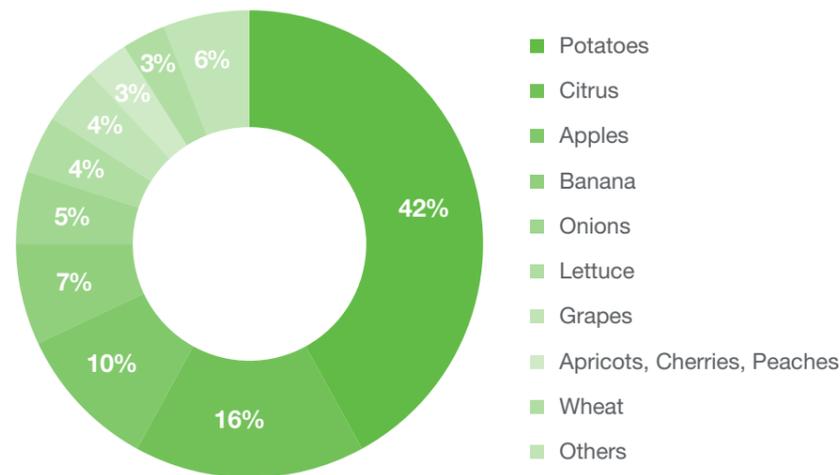
Over the 2011-2014 periods, the agricultural exports rose with a net increase of 4.4%, passing from 504,000 tons in 2011 to 526,000 tons in 2014. The Lebanese farmers were able to find alternative and more secure trade routes after the beginning of the civil unrest in neighboring Syria.

In 2014, agricultural exports accounted for around 47.8% of total exports reaching 526,000 tons, around 3,500 tons higher than 2013. By value, agricultural exports accounted for around 4.3% of total exports in 2014.

Vegetables exports constituted around 51% of agricultural exports in 2014 (Figure 2). Potatoes are amongst the highest exports within this category, and have witnessed considerable increase in volume over the past 5 years, reaching 238,500 tons in 2014.

It is worth noting that Lebanon remains highly import dependent with regards to agricultural products, with imports in this sector amounting to LBP 1,536 Billion in 2014 (about 3 times the value of agricultural exports).

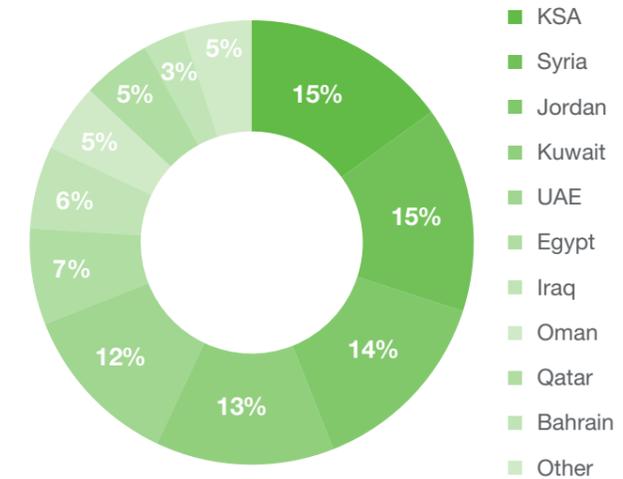
Figure 2: Agricultural Exports in Lebanon % | 2014



Source: Lebanese Customs

## EXPORT DESTINATION

Figure 3: Agricultural Exports by Destination % | 2014



Source: Lebanese Customs

## EXPORT PARTNERS



## INVESTMENT TRENDS

Overall, Lebanon is seeking to diversify and enlarge its fruit varieties such as kiwi, custard apple, and truffles. The same can be said for fresh water farming which has kicked off since the 1990s. On another level, organic agriculture is gaining in popularity, and there are currently some 300 farmers working in this area.

## INVESTMENT THROUGH IDAL

IDAL has mediated an agriculture project for Kuwaiti NPPC Fresh Produce Factory; specializing in premium packaging for fruits and vegetables. The project has generated 62 new job opportunities, considerably enhancing the livelihoods of several rural households.

Agriculture in Lebanon has a strong potential for growth, for it still hasn't attained its expansion limit. In addition to the country's ideal climate and landscape, other factors such as skilled labor, devoted research (8 agricultural colleges established across the territory), and good export opportunities to the Middle East, also make investments in this sector highly attractive.

On another level, the persistent dependence on imports signals that the market is far from being mature yet. With demand greatly exceeding local supply and local conditions favoring agricultural activity, Lebanon's diverse and rich agricultural sector makes it an eye-catching center for future investments.

## MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

### MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

The Ministry of Agriculture has put in place a new four-year strategy expected to significantly improve the sector's competitiveness by 2014, the main pillars of this plan include efforts to increase export volumes and mechanisms for the improvement of production practices.

The ministry has equally focused on providing financing for the sector. In August 2010, it signed a memorandum of understanding with the Lebanese banks association to provide investors in the sector with soft loans to finance small and medium enterprises at low interest rates.

Other programs run by the ministry include a project focused on the promotion of olives and olive oil production, one of the hallmarks of Lebanese production.

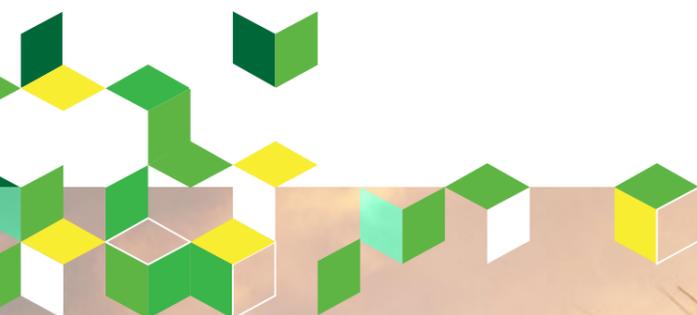
### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Extensive Funding has been directed to the agricultural sector from organizations such as the FAO, UNDP, IFAD, USAID and the EU.

### INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF LEBANON (IDAL)

As per its mandate, IDAL is responsible for assisting in the support, promotion and marketing of Lebanese agricultural products among others. For that purpose, it has launched in 2001 its Export Plus program, an initiative aimed at boosting outbound trade as of agricultural products through both financial as well as non financial services. An amended and improved program, AgriPlus, was then put in place in 2012, and has been in effect ever since.

The program targets exporters, and provides them with needed support to decrease their transportation costs. IDAL equally assists Lebanese producers in tapping foreign markets through organizing training sessions, and participating in food fairs in potential markets. Products that receive assistance include fruits, vegetables and eggs.



FAO extends assistance through the provision of seeds and fertilizers, and support in the rehabilitation of greenhouses and the stocking of animals. The organization also provides financial assistance through partly funding grants to help agricultural companies invest in new technology



Projects implemented by the UNDP, particularly those funded by the Lebanese Recovery Fund (LRF) established in 2006, include wide-ranging assistance to horticulture smallholders and livestock keepers. Projects also focus on the cultivation of aromatic plants and herbs, as well as water management projects including a hydro-agriculture development initiative in the area of Marjaayoun.



A recent USAID project has been launched in support of agricultural value chains in Lebanon. The project aims to transfer marketing and production know-how to Lebanese farmers to help raise their productivity, and increase agricultural value added. It equally has a parallel focus on agro-food industries, thus reinforcing linkages between both sectors.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Ministry of Agriculture  
[www.agriculture.gov.lb](http://www.agriculture.gov.lb)

Ministry of Economy and Trade  
[www.economy.gov.lb](http://www.economy.gov.lb)

Investment Development Authority  
of Lebanon (IDAL)  
[www.investinlebanon.gov.lb](http://www.investinlebanon.gov.lb)

The Federation of the Chambers  
of Commerce Industry and  
Agriculture in Lebanon  
[www.cci-fed.org.lb](http://www.cci-fed.org.lb)

▶ Beirut and Mount Lebanon  
[www.ccib.org.lb](http://www.ccib.org.lb)

▶ Tripoli and North Lebanon  
[www.cciat.org.lb](http://www.cciat.org.lb)

▶ Saida and South Lebanon  
[www.ccias.org.lb](http://www.ccias.org.lb)

▶ Zahleh and the Bekaa  
[www.cciatz.org.lb](http://www.cciatz.org.lb)

Industrial Research Institute-IRI  
[www.iri.org.lb](http://www.iri.org.lb)

Quality Programme-QUALEB  
[www.qualeb.org](http://www.qualeb.org)

Lebanese Standards  
Institution-LIBNOR  
[www.libnor.org](http://www.libnor.org)

Lebanese Agricultural  
Research Institute (LARI)  
[www.lari.gov.lb](http://www.lari.gov.lb)

National Council for Scientific  
Research Lebanon  
[www.cnrs.edu.lb](http://www.cnrs.edu.lb)

KAFALAT s.a.l / Loan guarantee  
company  
[www.kafalat.com.lb](http://www.kafalat.com.lb)

### Sources:

Ministry of Agriculture;  
Federation of the Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon;  
Lebanese Economic Accounts 2010;  
FAO 2010;  
World Bank Database



## CONTACT US

If you require any further information on investing in Lebanon or on the services IDAL can offer you, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following:

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