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Judea and Samaria Civil Administration		
Agriculture	Staff Officer/Coordinator	
P.O. Box	33	Beit-El
Tel.		02-9977757
Fax:		02-9977099
<u>Ag(31)</u>		<u>105532</u>
Elul	25	5776
September	28	2016

Civil Administration/Civil Coordination/Head of Crossings Department – Amos
Deputy Head of Civil Administration
Assistant Head of Civil Administration
Head of Branch, Civil Coordination
Head of Branch, Consultation on Palestinian Affairs
DCOs Distribution
Head of Branch, Operations Department
Legal Advisor Judea and Samaria
Deputy Head of Branch, Civil Coordination

Re: **Definitions for Agricultural Needs in the Seam Zone**

1. Following your request concerning the above referenced matter and your question concerning the **minimal plot size in respect of which there is a sustainable agricultural need for which a permit is requested for agricultural needs in the seam zone.**
2. For the purpose of providing a professional answer to this **complex** question and following consultation with several professional bodies in the Ministry of Agriculture we were unable to find a professional background for the above matter, since the question which was raised contains **not only professional agricultural aspects but also of security, political, legal and other aspects.**
3. Nevertheless, we have acted to answer your questions according to the professional considerations of the Agriculture Staff Officer which were based on the following parameters:
 - a. Agriculture in the seam zone is considered traditional and family agriculture and most of the agricultural yield is for self-consumption.
 - b. Agricultural yield in the seam zone is very low.
 - c. Lack of mechanization and technology requires intensive manual labor agriculture.
 - d. Under-productivity: small plots, unirrigated farming and relatively homogeneous crops.
 - e. Lack of infrastructures supporting agricultural production.

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- f. Lack of marketing and logistic infrastructures.
- g. In the seam zone (west of the fence) there are approximately 58 thousand agricultural dunam (according to the data of the Palestinian Authority) in which continuous agricultural activity takes place.
- h. Said agricultural crops require the manual labor:

Crops	Total labor days per person/dunam
Olives	8
Citrus	20
Grapes	17
Deciduous Fruit Trees	20
Wheat and Barley (field crops)	6
Vegetables – unirrigated crops	20
Tobacco	14
Greenhouse tomatoes	180
Greenhouse cucumbers	100
Other vegetables – irrigated in an open field and tunnels	Up to 50

- i. Said agricultural crops require agricultural activity throughout the years including plowing, pruning, irrigation, fertilization, fruit-picking, harvesting and more as follows:

Crops	Required Activity	Term of Activity	Comments
Olives	Plowing A Plowing B Pruning Fertilization Harvest	November + December February + March December January October - December	
Citrus	Fruit picking Irrigation Pest control Pruning	October – March April – October June - July	Once every ten days Once every 2 weeks
Greenhouse vegetables	General	All year round	
Field crops	Sowing/planting Soil preparation Weed control Fertilization Harvest	November October January – February February June - July	
Grapes	Pruning Irrigation + fertilization + pest control + fruit picking Pruning + irrigation + pest control + fruit picking	February April – September April February	Northern districts Hebron + Bethlehem

Deciduous Fruit Trees (pome and stone)	Pruning Pest control Fruit picking	December + January April – June June - August	According to type
Open field vegetables – Winter	Soil preparation Sowing/planting, fertilization, irrigation and pest control	September - March	
Open field vegetables – Summer-Spring	Soil preparation, sowing & planting, fertilization, pest control, fruit-picking	March - September	
Field crops		All year round	

4. In general, agriculture currently plays an important role in the Palestinian economy and constitutes a major source of income for numerous families, in the absence of other sources of income. Therefore there is a vital need to enable orderly agricultural activity in the seam zone.
5. Orderly agricultural activity requires regular access of farmers to cultivate their lands.
6. Based on the above said and at the professional discretion of the undersigned, **it can be assessed that the minimal plot size in respect of which there is a sustainable agricultural need requiring an agricultural permit in the seam zone does not fall below 330 square meter (one third of a dunam).**
7. It should be pointed out that this is a **professional opinion only**, and nothing in the determination of the plot size in Section 6 above prevents owners holding smaller plots from using their ties to the land for other needs which shall be requested by them.
8. For your information and attention.
9. I wish you a happy holiday and a happy new year.

Sincerely,

Samir
Agriculture Staff Officer/Coordinator

Mo'adi