

**AIRGRAM**

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

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DATE RECD.	4 PM 4 45
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DATE SENT	December 26, 1967

FROM - Rabat

SUBJECT - Review of the 1967/68 Cereals Production Campaign

REFERENCE -

# BEST AVAILABLE DOCUMENT

## Background

Planning for the current wheat campaign was considerably more thorough than for last year's "Operation Engrais". Meetings to plan the logistic requirements for the distribution of seed and fertilizer were started in May. These were followed by extensive field contacts and assignment of provincial goals. Initial land preparation with GOM equipment was well under way by August. During most of September, Minister of Agriculture Bargach traveled extensively throughout the wheat production regions to conduct planning meetings with provincial personnel. The actual campaign was kicked off by the King on 25 September who called a meeting for 250 leading agricultural officials in northern Morocco. Lengthy discussions were held concerning the importance of agriculture to the Moroccan economy. The role of agriculture in the new five-year plan was stressed by the King and a proclamation was issued designating 25 September as a "National Agriculture Day" to be celebrated each year.

Although USAID recommended a goal of 300,000 hectares based on findings of the IWA, the GOM, after considerable debate with the mission, set 350,000 hectares as the new 1967/68 goal. The goal was subsequently reduced to 335,000 hectares after consultations with field representatives, and later raised again. Fertilizers and seed were ordered and delivered to regional distribution points prior to 1 October. During that month, farmers began to receive seed and fertilizer from the Agricultural Development Centers. Seedbed preparation continued at an increased pace with the arrival of early rains. In many areas of the modern farm sector, mechanical ground preparation was kept on a round-the-clock schedule for several weeks.

Attachment: a/a to CTR 1/17/68

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By 15 December, a total of 344,484 hectares within the government program had been plowed and fertilized, and 343,270 hectares seeded. All wheat areas have experienced above-average rainfall and the mission anticipates a record 1968 wheat crop if the weather continues favorable.

#### USAID Participation

The mission has played a major role in the current campaign, primarily through credit support. Letters of agreement approved the use of 21 million DH from PL 480 Title IV to finance a portion of the campaign and additional credit funds are planned from 104(f) local currency in conformity with the self-help measures specified in bilateral sales agreements. Program guidelines as stated in the cereals TAP are generally being followed in the current wheat campaign.

#### Wheat Seed from Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico (CIMMYT)

Results of the 1966 wheat seed trials have been most encouraging. Starting from scratch in October 1966, the mission ordered from CIMMYT 50 wheat varieties for yield trials and 600 lines for further testing. Fifty kilograms of the variety Siete Cerros yielded 900 kilograms from multiplication in dryland areas. Late this summer, the USAID assisted the Ministry of Agriculture (INRA) in ordering one ton of Siete Cerros and 150 kilograms of two other wheat varieties. The seed arrived on 17 December and is being planted in eight different locations, including irrigated sectors. By the summer of 1968, INRA will have on hand about 36 tons of Siete Cerros from two years of multiplication. In addition, the mission intends to have INRA order about 80-100 tons of eight selected wheat varieties to further expand the program. It is expected that the Garvey Grain Company will form a joint company producing commercial wheat seed starting in 1968. In 1969, after three years of testing, the government will be ready to move into a massive program of distributing improved wheat seed. Large-scale wheat seed imports could become a part of the proposed Agricultural Sector Loan in ~~the~~ 1969.

#### Agricultural Extension

USAID technical assistance has been given the GOM extension division in the preparation of radio programs, posters, leaflets, and other forms of communications media. Although the agricultural extension sector remains the weakest element in the program and still lacks proper administration, there is noticeable improvement over last year.

In an effort to improve the quality of extension leaders, a three-week extension training seminar was sponsored by USAID in July and four provincial agricultural directors were sent to the special TVA course in the U.S. for 13 weeks. They were most enthusiastic upon their return and efforts are being made to have them participate in regional seminars. Six more directors will be sent to a similar course in 1968. In addition, a three-week trip has been arranged for six provincial governors, with the accent on agricultural development. The governors will visit the TVA during their tour of the U.S.

### Peace Corps Volunteers

Following arrangements made a year ago between the GOM, USAID, and the Peace Corps, 35 PCV's are now completing intensive training in California prior to assignment to Morocco in January 1968. They will be posted in selected agricultural development centers in the wheat-growing areas. The centers have all been visited and arrangements made to receive the PCV's. We have received excellent cooperation from the Ministry of Agriculture and expect the PCV's to be a valuable addition to the USAID extension effort. They will also assist in an evaluation survey to be conducted prior to, and during, harvest next year.

### Scope of the Current Cereals Campaign

In spite of the poor results of "Operation Engrais" (1966/67) due to drought, the GOM, as well as a substantial number of farmers themselves, realized the value of fertilizer usage, selected seed, and proper land preparation. As a result, the cereals program for 1967/68 was expanded from 181,000 to about 345,000 hectares. In addition to expanding the program within provinces, more provinces were added. In all of the 62 provincial agricultural development centers, an agent has been designated as the cereals production coordinator. In an effort to expand rural credit facilities, the GOM established 57 new local credit banks under the National Agricultural Credit Bank (ONCA). Although no credit is being channeled this year to farmers participating in the cereals program, it is expected that they will be utilized next year. It is generally recognized that a proper rural credit mechanism is lacking in Morocco which may well hamper the cereals program in the future. The GOM is cognizant of the problem, however, and has at least made a start with the organization of new local banks.

Status of the cereals program as of 15 December 1967 is attached. As further developments occur in the cereals program, the mission will continue to keep AID/1 informed.

DICKINSON