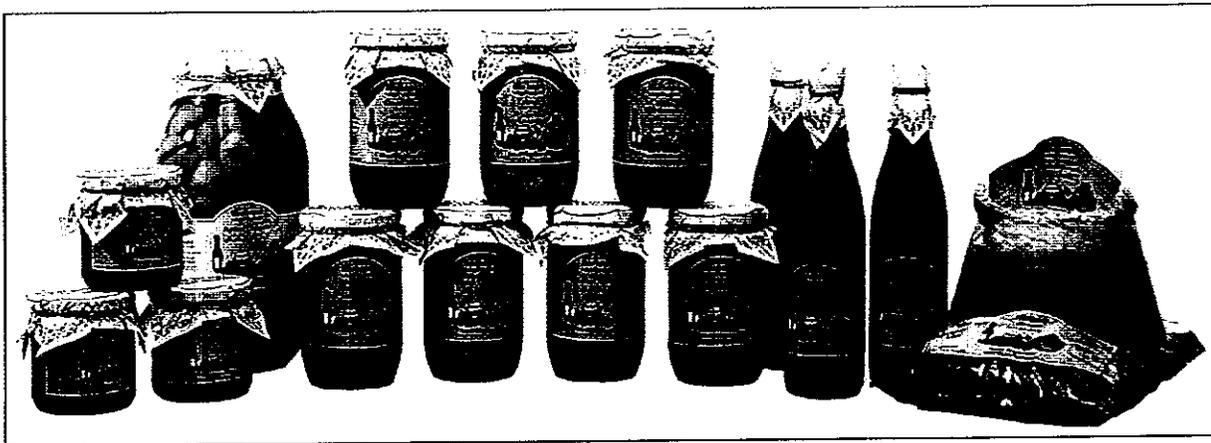


PD-ABJ-679

Expanded Economic Opportunities Program/USAID Lebanon



SMART
Quarterly Report of the YMCA
September 15, 2003

Expanded Economic Opportunities Program/USAID Lebanon Quarterly Report of the YMCA

Cooperative Agreement No.: 268-A-00-03-00204-00

Program Title: **The SMART Program
Stimulating Markets and Rural
Transformation**

Grantee: **YMCA of the USA/YMCA of Lebanon**

Reporting Period: **June 11 to September 8, 2003**

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A1. Physical Rehabilitation and Initiation of Production Centers

The rehabilitation of the production centers is on schedule. The rehabilitation of two centers, in Kosaybeh, South Lebanon and Beit El Faks, North Lebanon has been completed. These centers are fully compliant with HACCP requirements and are expected to be fully operational by the next reporting period – pending the procurement of the equipment. The physical rehabilitation of the new Atayeb Al Rif headquarters in Wadi Chahrour continues and will be completed by October 15, 2003.

A2. Marketing and Training for Production Centers

Marketing continues to be the focus of the SMART program and much time and attention have been dedicated to building efficient marketing and sales systems. Promotional campaigns have included a six-day, 16 store tasting and selling promotion in supermarkets that included Monoprix and Spinney's. The new label and new branding campaign for Atayeb Al Rif are in the final stages of development and the coop expects to launch them before the holiday season this year. The most significant marketing event to take place during this period was Atayeb's participation in the Fancy Food Show in New York in June/July. Atayeb representatives made numerous contacts with buyers and distributors and the coop is currently following up with a letter campaign and shipment of samples. Progress toward meeting FDA importation standards are underway with lab analysis on some 30 products currently in the pipeline.

Training continues at its usual active pace. Some 545 women have been trained during this reporting period on topics ranging from food production and food safety to business management and marketing.

B. TASKS COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

B1. Training

Training for the production centers is well underway. The SMART training team has completed the training modules and continues to rollout the programs throughout the centers.

Production Centers	Basic Training Status Number of Women Trained	Upgrading Training Status Number of Women Trained
Deir Al Ahmar	Complete/30	Complete/14
El Ain	Complete/9	Complete/9
Fakiha	None	Complete/21
Fourzol	Complete/10	Complete/9
Wadi Arayech	Complete/12	Complete/25
Kartaba	Complete/31	None scheduled
Kfardebian	Ongoing/15	Preparation Underway
Beir Al Fakess	None scheduled	Complete/74
Beit Shelala	None scheduled	Complete/2
Abdelleh	Preparation Underway	None scheduled
Tekrit	Complete/15	Complete/15
Zghorta	None scheduled	Complete/33
Ain Ebel	Complete/6	Complete/9
Arnoun	Complete/31	None scheduled
Deir Qanoun El Naher	Complete/9	Complete/6
Deir Qanoun Ras El Ein	Complete/48	Complete/15
Dhaira	Preparation Underway	Preparation Underway
Khelwat	Ongoing/17	Preparation Underway
Ksaybeh	Complete/17	Complete/41
Total Number of Trainees	250	295

B2. Atayeb Al Rif Marketing Cooperative

Human Resources Re-structuring

The last part of this reporting quarter saw a new shift to the internal organization of Atayeb Al Rif. Efforts are being focused on building and strengthening the capacity of the marketing coop so that it functions as a business oriented organization. The goal is to develop the capacity of the Atayeb Al Rif marketing cooperative to market and sell Atayeb Al Rif products both in Lebanon and abroad. Technical assistance is being geared to build the cooperative's capacity to increase sales through the use of strategic marketing and sales campaigns and build export markets. Assistance will also be targeted to develop sales tracking systems, promotional materials, participate in food exhibitions, build a

business to business web site for Atayeb Al Rif, conduct international marketing trips, and comply with international food labeling and packaging requirements for export markets. The anticipated results are significantly increased demand on the production centers. The increased sales of Atayeb Al Rif products will ensure a steady output by the production centers with a guaranteed marketing outlet.

The marketing cooperative currently operates with a skeleton staff, many of whom have been seconded from the YMCA. For the cooperative to become a sustainable business entity, it must undertake the hiring and training of professional staff capable of directing a business-oriented sales and marketing strategy. Strengthening the human resources capacity of this entity is the best guarantee for the future sales of the women's production center products. Without a successful market outlet, demands on the production centers will decrease, and their ability to provide income for the rural women employee-owners will be compromised.

The SMART team has developed a new organizational structure for the marketing coop, and created new and redefined old position descriptions. The position descriptions for the coop are attached as Annex A.

Systematizing Processes

The marketing cooperative currently lacks an efficient system for capturing and tracking important information. Efforts are now underway to install a sales and inventory tracking system, install additional PCs and ensure that all staff have access to a PC and are trained in their use, create templates for communications, develop protocols for promotional campaigns, establish standards for promotional literature, and ensure that communication throughout the coop is effective and facilitates decision-making.

Promotional Campaigns

Atayeb Al Rif and its distributors, DIMA Inc., undertook a large promotional campaign in 16 supermarkets throughout Beirut. The campaign ran from August 28 to September 3, 2003 and included Spinney's Achrafieh, Spinney's Dbiah, Monoprix Jnah, and Monoprix Achrafieh, as well as 14 other stores. The marketing cooperative engaged the services of a professional firm to provide promoters and tasters in each store. The promoters were trained for half a day on the history and ingredients of Atayeb Al Rif products. A separate promotion that was held for three days at the Bamboo Bay beach resort yielded good exposure and several hundred dollars in sales. The stand was provided by Bamboo Bay free of charge and Atayeb Al Rif was invited as a genuine Lebanese producer.

Atayeb Al Rif sales associates closely monitored the progress of the promotions. Mistakes were identified and included in a report that will serve as guidance for future promotions. Protocols for planning, preparing for, and undertaking future promotions are underway.

Made in USA Exhibit

The Atayeb Al Rif marketing cooperative also participated in the US Embassy sponsored "Made in USA" exhibit. The exhibit ran for three days from September 1st through 3rd. Several hundred free samples were distributed during the event, which attracted a diverse group of people.

Billboards

The Picasso Company has been putting up approximately 200 billboards free of charge throughout Lebanon. The company has been donating the billboard space while the Atayeb Al Rif coop pays for the printing of the posters.

Fancy Food Show

Atayeb Al Rif products made their US debut on June 29th through July 1st, 2003 at the Fancy Food Show in New York City. The executive director of the coop, Mr. Abdul Hafiz Elladki as well as an associate of the YMCA/USA took part in the show where hundreds of buyers, importers and distributors stopped by the stand and tasted the products.

During the first day of the show, 400 persons visited the booth and tasted the products. The second and third days of the show were open to buyers, importers and distributors. Atayeb Al Rif's stand was visited by 180 specialists who tasted the products and expressed a liking for many of the products. Distributors represented the entire USA, Canada, and some South American countries including Brazil, Argentina and Chile. Contact information was collected from all those who expressed interest and the coop are following up with letters and information. Additionally, Mr. Elladki undertook a visit to Michigan, home to the largest expatriate Lebanese community in the US and met with several buyers and distributors. The coop is currently finalizing meeting FDA food labeling requirements in order to send a sample shipment to interested parties.

The food show has led to action oriented plans for export to the US market. The coop is currently working on the following tasks to see these plans through:

- Appoint an agent to register Atayeb Al Rif with the FDA and obtain an importer's number and license.
- Change the size of Atayeb jars and bottles in accordance with standard US sizes.
- Analyze products in a lab and print Nutrition Facts in accordance with US FDA requirements.
- Send sample of jars and bottles with the above specifications to interested persons in USA and Canada.
- Keep in touch with the interested persons in order to reach an agreement with a distributor.
- Keep in contact with several food distributors in South America who were very interested in the products.

Exports

Exports of Atayeb Al Rif products during this reporting period are as follows:

- Germany – regular order of \$1,500 to \$2,000 every two months processed in August
- Bahrain – an order for \$2,325 was concluded
- Qatar – this is a new market and an initial order of \$4,923 has been concluded. Atayeb Al Rif is working on a distributorship agreement with an agent in this country.

- Kuwait - this is a new market. Atayeb Al Rif is working on a distributorship agreement with an agent in this country.
- Jordan - this is a new market and an initial order of \$337.00 has been concluded.

B3. Physical Rehabilitation of Facilities

The team has made significant progress on the physical rehabilitation for the existing production centers. A detailed table of works completed during this reporting period is attached as Annex B. A description of these works for each center is provided below.

Identification of Contractors – The Tendering Process

The YMCA maintains strict regulations regarding the identification and selection of contractors for all design, construction, operation and maintenance works. The key to our process is transparency. The process begins with YMCA senior engineers who determine the specifications of the facility to be rehabilitated or constructed based upon the needs and intended use of the production center. YMCA staff of engineers will then contact several contractors who are known to provide the services required. These contractors all receive the same bidding specifications and are given a deadline to submit their offers to the YMCA. The YMCA assembles an evaluation committee comprised of senior engineers, a finance specialist and a project supervisor. The bids are opened and evaluated according to fixed and pre-determined criteria, which typically include:

- Appropriateness of technology and materials
- Ease of operation and maintenance of facility
- Management and budget monitoring
- Cost reasonableness

El Ain, Bekaa Valley

During the last reporting period, the SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. The engineering visits to determine the physical rehabilitation requirements took place that determined the physical layout and works to be undertaken. The team's architects completed internal designs and a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team is currently reviewing the bids.

El Fakiha, Bekaa Valley

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. The engineering visits to determine the physical rehabilitation requirements have taken place, and the drawing of the center has been completed. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-

qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract has been signed, and work is scheduled for completion in November 2003.

Beit El Faks, North Lebanon (completed)

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, a legal permit for the production center was secured, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and internal designs and a drawing of the center was completed by the team's architects. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract has been signed, and work commenced on June 30 and was completed in August 2003.

Tekrit, North Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, a legal permit for the production center was secured, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed.

Zghorta, North Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, a legal permit for the production center was secured, and the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor has been applied, and the evaluation team is currently in the process of selecting a contractor and negotiating the terms of the contract.

Ainebel, South Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn

up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract was signed and work commenced on June 30, 2003 and was concluded in August. The 5th monitoring report has been completed and a final report will take place in September at which time rehabilitation of the center will be completed.

Der Qanoun El Nahr, South Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract was signed and work has commenced, and will be finalized by the end of October 2003.

Dhayra, South Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract has been signed and work is over 75% completed and will be finalized in September 2003.

Khelwat, South Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center.

Kosaybeh, South Lebanon (completed)

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, a legal permit for the production center was secured, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, internal designs and a drawing of the center was completed by the team's architects, electrical, mechanical

and sanitation plans were drawn, and finally a bill of quantity was developed. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract has been signed and the rehabilitation work has been completed.

B4. Upgrading of Production Equipment

Progress on upgrading the production equipment has been focused on conducting an assessment of existing equipment in the production centers, developing guidelines on how to improve upon the equipment, studying options for improved equipment available in the market, and finally, drawing up specifications for new equipment to be installed in the new production centers.

B5. Initiation of New Centers

The team has made significant progress on the physical rehabilitation for the new production centers funded under the SMART program. A description of these works for each center is provided below.

Fourzol, Bekaa Valley

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the following steps related to rehabilitation were undertaken: the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and internal designs and a drawing of the center was completed by the team's architects.

Wadi Al Arayech, Bekaa

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, a legal permit for the production center was secured, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract has been signed, and work commenced in August and will be completed in October 2003.

Deir Al Ahmar, Bekaa Valley

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, a legal permit for the production center was secured, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, internal designs

and a drawing of the center was completed by the team's architects, electrical, mechanical and sanitation plans were drawn, and finally a bill of quantity was developed. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed.

Kartaba, Mount Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team is currently in the process of selecting a contractor.

Kfardebian, Mount Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract has been signed and work commenced during the first week of August and will be finalized in November 2003.

Der Qanoun Ras Ein, South Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied and will be conducted by the Council of the South.

Arnoun, South Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract was signed and work is 75% completed, and will be finalized by the end of September 2003.

Beit Shelala, North Lebanon

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, and the team's architects completed a drawing of the center. Final electrical and sanitation plans have been completed, and bills of quantity have been drawn up. An engineering assessment report and specifications for pre-qualifying contractors have been completed. The tendering process for identifying a contractor was applied, and an evaluation team selected a contractor and negotiated the terms of the contract. The contract was signed and work is 50% completed, and will be finalized by the end of October 2003.

Ain Atta, Bekaa Valley

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. Community leaders have not yet agreed on their terms for cooperation.

Atayeb Al Rif Marketing Cooperative Warehouse, Laboratory and Office

The Atayeb Al Rif Marketing Cooperative (RDMC) secured a 1400m² space in Wadi Chahrour that will be used as a new warehouse, quality control laboratory, printing area, and offices and display center for Atayeb Al Rif products. The lease agreement was secured for a period of six years, at a cost of \$30,000 per annum. The property owner donated the first year of rent to the Atayeb Al Rif Marketing Cooperative.

The SMART team of engineers and field coordinators undertook the first meeting with the local cooperative to identify and share information regarding the production center and the area's requirements, and concerns. After reaching a consensus with the cooperative on the facility, the following steps related to rehabilitation were undertaken: a legal permit for the production center was secured, the first engineering visit was conducted to determine physical layout and works to be undertaken, a internal designs and a drawing of the center was completed by the team's architects, electrical and sanitation plans were drawn, a bill of quantity was developed, and an engineering assessment report was completed. The team also developed the physical specifications for the work and released tendering documents to selected contractors. The tendering process for the installation of a ventilation and air conditioning system began in August 2003. The bids were opened and evaluated according to the specified criteria and a work order agreement with the selected contractor was completed. Work on the center has commenced and it will be completed by October 15, 2003. The SMART program's chief engineer, Mr. Joseph Kassab, undertakes continued and regular monitoring of the work.

B6. Initiation of New Farms

A component of the SMART program requires the identification, rehabilitation and cultivation of land for the purpose of producing high value marketable crops to be used by the Atayeb Al Rif cooperatives in the production process. A total of five farms in Kartaba,

Der Qanoun Ras El Ain, Dhaira, Ain Atta, Ghouma Batroun, have been targeted for this program during the first six months of the 2003 calendar year. Work on three of these farms is underway. Work on the remaining farm in Ain Atta has not begun due to problems with the community's willingness to make a contribution toward the project as well as strong disagreements among community members which has delayed any decision-making on the project.

Progress during this reporting period focused on the farms in Kartaba, Der Qanoun Ras El Ain, Ghouma, Kfarhelda and Dhaira. Details on the progress within each farm are provided below.

Kartaba Farms, Mount Lebanon

The Kartaba farm's objective is to produce locally grafted semi-dwarf fruit trees of highly marketable values. About ten women have who will join the Atayeb Al Rif cooperative have been recruited to run this production farm. The SMART team secured an 8 dus farm (1 du = 1000 m²) with a water source available. Rehabilitation of the land is complete and the irrigation system is working. Planting beds have been prepared, and the rootstocks have been planted. Agricultural training was completed in August.

Der Qanoun Ras El Ain, South Lebanon

This farm is being cultivated for the production of aromatic annual and perennial plants and trees. The following plants are being produced on the farms: cumin, saffron, cardamom, sumac, coriander, mint, fennel, basil, chili pepper, star anis, and oregano. Upon harvest, the produce from this farm will be processed by the Atayeb Al Rif production centers in located in each village. These plants are now ready for transplant. The team has identified local sources for buying the herbs. The team has met with the local community leaders and identified an 8-du plot of suitable land with a water source. The land was contributed for a minimum of seven years. The team has completed work to rehabilitate the land. Rehabilitation of the water source is on-going, and bids for irrigation systems have been evaluated. A comprehensive training program was completed in August.

Dhaira Farm, South Lebanon

This farm will be used for the production of locally produced rainfed fruit trees including olive trees, loquats, jujube fruit, carob, bay leaves, pecan nuts, walnuts grafted on American rootstocks (black walnut), and almonds grafted on rootstocks suitable for calcareous soils (GF677). Work for this farm has been delayed due to the YMCA's request for a waiver from USAID. However, training on plant production and post harvest handling has commenced.

Ghouma Batroun Farm, North Lebanon

The farm in this village will be cultivated for the production of aromatic annual and perennial plants and trees. The following plants will be produced on the farms: cumin, saffron, cardamom, sumac, coriander, mint, fennel, basil, chili pepper, star anis, and oregano. Upon harvest, the produce from these two farms will be processed by the Atayeb Al Rif production centers located in each village. The team has identified local sources for buying the herbs. The team has met with the local community leaders and identified a 20-

du plot of suitable land with a water source for each of the farms. The farm will be managed and operated by 10-15 women. The land is ready for rehabilitation, and the women's group has been identified and is ready for training, which will start in September.

CONCLUSION:

The YMCA's SMART program has achieved measurable results through the increased production capacity and technical capability of the processing and production centers as follows:

- ⇒ Technical updates to internationally recognized standards (HACCP) and increases in capacity of the food processing centers are on target and have been implemented as scheduled.
- ⇒ Further expansion and increase of food production capability is underway with development of new farms with diversified products for new 'niche' markets.
- ⇒ Human resource capacity has been increased by numbers of women trained with skills in processing and production techniques. A group of women have also been trained in operations and management skills necessary for the Atayeb Al Rif Cooperative.

The YMCA's SMART program requires additional support in the following area:

- ⇒ The marketing and sales component requires additional financial investments and human resource inputs to ensure successful expansion of markets and overall increase in sales/revenues as per the request to *Develop the Capacity of the Atayeb Al Rif Marketing Cooperative* submitted to USAID on September 3, 2003.

The YMCA SMART program has achieved important recognition in various media on the value and meaningful contribution derived from the work in Lebanon. The YMCA of the USA has published two important documents on the impact of the USAID funded SMART program. The YWORLD newsletter has been disseminated to 2,540 YMCAs. A story on the program has also been included in an informational poster entitled *Y-Member News*, sponsored by the Pepsi Corporation. The poster will be displayed on bulletin boards of all YMCAs across the country with a readership potential of up to \$18 million.

The YMCA is grateful to the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and specifically the mission in Beirut, for their strong technical support to the program contributing towards creating and sustaining expanded economic opportunities for rural women throughout Lebanon.