USAID | IRAQ
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Iraqi Sweets, Ready for Take-off

Travelers passing through Baghdad's airport can now buy Basrah dates, three types of local honey, and fragrant Anbar rice.

Photo: USAID Inma Agribusiness Program

*A customer compares high-quality Iraqi foodstuffs at Baghdad International Airport. The duty-free store, featuring several USAID-*Inma *Agribusiness Program-supported products, is creating new export opportunities for Iraq.*

USAID-*Inma *has also helped date farmers export their fruits to the United Kingdom, where they sell for eight times more than they would on the Iraqi market.

For the first time, travellers passing through Baghdad International Airport can pack a taste of Iraq in their carry-ons. The USAID-*Inma* Agribusiness Program has helped stock the duty-free shop with specialty food products from Iraq's southern and central provinces. These include orange blossom, alfalfa, eucalyptus and jujube honeys, Basrah date snacks with nuts, and Anbar rice, said to be the fragrant grain preferred by former kings.

USAID-*Inma* has worked closely with the producers of Anbar rice, dates and honey to meet international customers' demands for quality goods and sturdy, attractive packaging. The program introduced these growers to the ASK Group, retailers who space in their duty-free shops in Iraqi airports.

More than 300 items were sold in one week when the food products were introduced to ASK Group's duty-free shops in early 2011. The company immediately ordered additional stock and set up three additional displays. During the following months, Iraqi specialty foods debuted in the two other duty-free shops.

USAID-*Inma* is actively providing opportunities for food producers in Iraq to meet key buyers in new and developing markets, so that relationships are developed and growers learn about which products consumers desire most, as well as which products command the best prices.

"Marketing is simple. It requires common sense, a bit of creativity, and a strategy to reach your customers," said Alexander Dahan, marketing specialist of the USAID-*Inma* Agribusiness program. Mr. Dahan emphasized the importance of promoting brands as "Grown in Iraq" and "Produced in Iraq" to create new export opportunities.

USAID-*Inma* has provided considerable technical assistance to Iraqi producers to improve the quality and quantity of products available in the local market. Recently, the program held two agribusiness marketing forums in the cities of Erbil and Hilla. They focused on modern marketing techniques and building linkages between suppliers and potential clients in a rapidly emerging retail environment.