



FAIRTRADE PROGRAMMES



CASE STUDY: CREATING A BUZZ ABOUT PALESTINIAN ALMONDS

Almonds are a traditional mainstay of the farming economy in Palestine, but yields are falling and many farmers are struggling. At the Fairtrade Foundation, we are currently looking for partners to co-fund this exciting opportunity to help revitalise the almond sector in Palestine. If you are interested in this opportunity, or if you want to find out more about what we are doing in almonds, please feel free to [contact us!](#)

LOCAL CONTEXT:

Agriculture is an important contributor to the Palestinian economy. Almonds are a traditional crop of the region. They are considered a high-value and low-risk crop for farmers. They also have significant commercial potential as the international market for almonds is growing rapidly, led by the increase in the vegan and health food segments.

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

One of the many challenges that Palestinian almond farmers face is very low productivity. The average almond yield in Palestine is around 270 kg/HA, compared to farmers in California who can achieve yields of around 2,337 kg/HA.

So why are Palestinian yields so low? Yield in almonds is directly dependent on the successful cross-pollination of flowers, which will increase the number of fruits on the trees.

One of the challenges is that almond trees are generally self-incompatible, which means that they are not capable of self-pollination. This is a good thing, as it prevents self-fertilisation and inbreeding and encourages outcrossing. For successful pollination to occur not only do compatible varieties (with correct pollen) of almond need to be planted in fields, there also needs to be a good pollinator. Bees are the most successful pollinators of almond blossoms and are seen as essential for the success of an almond crop. These Palestinian almond trees need more bees.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME APPROACH?

Building on work done with Fairtrade almond co-operatives by Catholic Relief Services in 2016, Fairtrade, with local partners and a committed commercial partner, now looks to support almond farmers to respond to a number of challenges, including low productivity.

One way they will do this is to continue installing beehives on farms. What's more, the proposed programme will also train the farmers on caring for the bees and honey production.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Introducing bees is vital to increase yields for farmers. It will take a few years to see the results, as new seedlings need around three years to bear fruit and a further two years to reach peak productivity.

The beehives and their inhabitants will not only lead to bigger almond harvests, but they will also provide an opportunity for income diversification, as the farmers can sell the honey produced by the bees to supplement their income.

The introduction of the bees and their hives (together with other activities) will help almond producers increase the productivity of the almond trees from the current level of 270 kg/HA to 500 kg/HA over a three-year period.

This will lead to increased sustainable productivity of both yield and quality, and in turn lead to increased incomes for farmers.

The end goal of the programme is to support smallholder almond farmers to achieve sustainable livelihoods from agriculture, and play a part in reviving almond farming in Palestine.

