



Middle East Spotlight

In Full Bloom: Israel's Growing Agricultural Contributions

The end of winter means the arrival of spring, and with it, a sense of renewal. As the Passover season approaches, Jews everywhere prepare to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. The liberation from Pharaoh's servitude made possible the rebirth of the nation of Israel, and the realization of a better future.

Generations later, in their own sovereign homeland, the people of modern day Israel are realizing a better future for the entire world. Today, the state of Israel—a tiny desert nation surrounded by enemies on all sides—is known as the “startup nation.” This entrepreneurial spirit has led to some of the most groundbreaking innovations and technologies on the planet, including many agricultural advances that can make the desert bloom and help improve the human condition. Here are just a few examples of Israel's contributions in agricultural technology.

Growing Partnerships: Israel's agricultural acumen is recognized worldwide. In the United States, several states are seeking to collaborate with Israel in this critical field. In September 2015, Israel's Tel-Hai College and New Jersey's Rutgers University signed an agreement leveraging Israeli agricultural prowess to promote healthy foods. Israeli Knesset Member Erel Margalit praised the deal, stating, “This alliance with Rutgers will create a center of excellence in the Galilee region that will leverage the area's agriculture, life sciences and food industry expertise, transforming the region into a medical food global powerhouse.” AIPAC is engaging with Israeli and American policy experts to identify opportunities for expanded U.S.-Israel cooperation in agricultural production.

Broad Support on the World Stage: In December 2015, an Israeli resolution on agricultural technology was adopted with broad support at the United Nations. A total of 124 countries voted in favor of the measure, which promotes greater accessibility to agricultural technology for those affected by poverty, drought and hunger. Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Danny Danon called the resolution “a victory for Israeli innovation” and an effort which “beat U.N. hypocrisy” of Israel.

A Facet of Strategic Partnership: In 2014, President Obama signed into law the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act—a bipartisan initiative passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and 410-1 in the House. Among its many key provisions, the law mandates increased collaboration in the fields of water and agricultural technology. AIPAC is examining ways to strengthen and expand this partnership, including one exemplar known as the U.S.-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund (BARD).

To learn more about how you can help advance the U.S.-Israel relationship, visit www.aipac.org.