

PRODUCER PROFILES

Mamoun Derra
Jordan Valley, Palestine



In Palestine's fertile Jordan Valley, Mamoun Derra works hard to provide a secure income for his family. Mamoun is a date farmer, and a member of the Palm Farmers' Co-operative. Founded in 2008, co-operative members own 40% of all Palestinian date palm groves in the Jordan Valley and work together to agree a fair price for their produce.

Date farmers in Palestine grow the delicious Medjoul date variety, the so-called 'King of Dates'. So named because of its plump flesh and caramelly flavour, these dates are a means of income for many families, yet face intense competition from dates grown in the illegal Israeli settlements that are expanding in the Jordan Valley.

Israeli dates are cheaper because the costs and scale of production are different. While Israeli settlers enjoy enough water to keep sprinklers on their lawns, Palestinian farmers have to pay for water to be brought in by tankers. Settlement agriculture is a modernized and subsidised industry but most Palestinian farmers are smallholders battling severe restrictions on investment, movement and access even to domestic markets.



Palestine's date farmers are working together to increase sales of their product, particularly to fair trade buyers who are committed to long-term relationships and support of their work. Mamoun's co-operative is campaigning to eliminate the trade of illegally grown Israeli dates in Palestinian markets, and to attract investment which will enable them to build more cool storage facilities for their crop and sell their produce all year round.

This in turn would provide a livelihood with dignity not only for family farmers like Mamoun, but for many Palestinian farm labourers who at present have no alternative to finding work in illegal settlements where they often face discrimination and violations of their rights.

Rooted in Time
& Tradition



THE FACTS

Village Co-operative
Member of the Palm
Farmers Co-operative
since 2010

Location:
Jordan Valley

