

New irrigation techniques yield gains in Morocco

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Modified irrigation practices have decreased water usage for crops by 40% in the Beni Mellal region of Morocco, while increasing wheat crop yields by 50% to 80% since 2004.

Working in conjunction with the Institute of Agronomical Research, part of the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, the International Centre of Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) has in the past five years implemented new methods of irrigation, known as deficit and supplemental irrigation, in tandem with early planting and increased weed control, which have shown to use water more efficiently, helping the farmers yield greater productivity rates under more stable conditions.

“The ultimate goal is to improve water productivity and water allocation and reduce water losses/wasting through technical/technologies, institutional and policy options (TIPOs),” Dr. Mohammed El Mourid, ICARDA’s regional coordinator for North Africa in consultation, explained to MediaGlobal.

“Using less water while increasing productivity give more return and income to farmers, and saves water for more areas and for longer periods, reaching sustainable use of natural resources here,” El Mourid said.

The program’s deemed accomplishments have paid off: The International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development have now agreed to fund the second phase of the project, “devoted essentially to scaling the results,” and introducing the practices to different regions.

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