

FEATURE –CHALLENGES OF REBUILDING IRAQI AGRICULTURE

INTRO: U.S. Department of Agriculture advisors are in Iraq helping to rebuild farming in that country. And the challenges they face can be daunting. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. (1:48)

REBUILDING AN AGRICULTURE SYSTEM IN A WAR-TORN, FORMERLY TOTALITARIAN STATE IS AN EPIC CHALLENGE. THAT'S ONE REASON U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ADVISORS ARE IN HIGH DEMAND IN IRAQ.

Ryan Crocker U-S Ambassador to Iraq: This reflects the centrality of agriculture to the economy of Iraq and to the society of Iraq and it also reflects improving security conditions that allow our ag advisors to be more active.

Greg Brooke, USDA Ag Advisor: Security has improved significantly. It's still a constant daily thing we deal with. Military does everything they can to keep us safe and occasionally we still have to scrub or delete missions because of security issues.

Jim Conley, USDA Agricultural Liaison: We don't go outside the wire or off our secured locations without military or security detail.

ASIDE FROM SECURITY ISSUES, THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS INVOLVED IN A REBUILDING MISSION HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

Conley: It's been hard to imagine anything more challenging than this. We're challenged certainly by language and cultural barriers.

Michael Carrigan, USDA Agricultural Advisor: Very few of the Iraqis that I work with speak good English. Some don't speak any English. So we rely very heavily on our interpreter.

Culture's an issue. There are certain ways one needs to act in and among the Iraqis.

BUT DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES THE U-S ADVISORS SAY THERE ARE WORTHWHILE REWARDS.

Carrigan: You reach a small goal and you feel very good about it. Mostly the main thing is you feel you've helped the Iraqis.

Bill Huston, USDA Agricultural Advisor: I have found the farmers are farmers no matter where you are. The farmers here work very hard. They have some unique challenges and yet they have some common challenges that we experience in the United States. And as a farmer in the United States I think it has been a great experience for me.

FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.