

FEATURE – USDA ADVISORS HELP REBUILD IRAQI IRRIGATION

INTRO: Without water there is no farming. U-S Department of Agriculture advisors are in Iraq trying to help rebuild irrigation systems in that war-torn nation. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. (1:31)

SUCCESSFUL NATIONS HAVE HISTORICALLY HAD SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURE. TO THAT END, ONE OF THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S GOALS IN IRAQ IS HELPING FARMERS GET ENOUGH WATER.

Ryan Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq: The irrigation system has been very badly affected again by those thirty years of conflict and bad policy. What we find is that anywhere that the Iraqis with our assistance can get irrigation systems going again, agriculture starts to recover.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE CHALLENGES IN IRAQ'S DIYALA PROVINCE, WHICH BADLY NEEDS IRRIGATION.

Stephen Morin, USAID: Water is clearly a key issue for Diyala. There's an extensive irrigation system. Very sophisticated. And I think in its day was very successful and effective. It's not anymore. It needs a lot of work.

AND IRRIGATION EFFORTS IN DIYALA HAVE BEEN HAMSTRUNG BY AN EXTENSIVE DROUGHT.

Greg Brooke, USDA Agricultural Advisor: The canals have been cleaned and then repaired. Now, unfortunately, we're not able to use them because of the drought or the lack of water in the Diyala river drainage system.

Lt. Nicolas Fiore, U.S. Army: It's real hard on the people there because if you looked around all that brown stuff used to be perfectly green. These guys are hard working farmers and with no water what are they supposed to do?

WHILE THE DROUGHT HAS BEEN A SETBACK, THE AMERICANS SAY IRAQI FARMERS IN DIYALA REMAIN POSITIVE. HOWEVER, THE IRAQIS ARE FRUSTRATED BY THE SLOW PACE OF RECONSTRUCTION.

Brooke: They seem to be excited to have us willing to help them. We also hear their frustrations, too.

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