



for Investment and Agricultural Marketing  
شركة الريف للإستثمار والتسويق الزراعي

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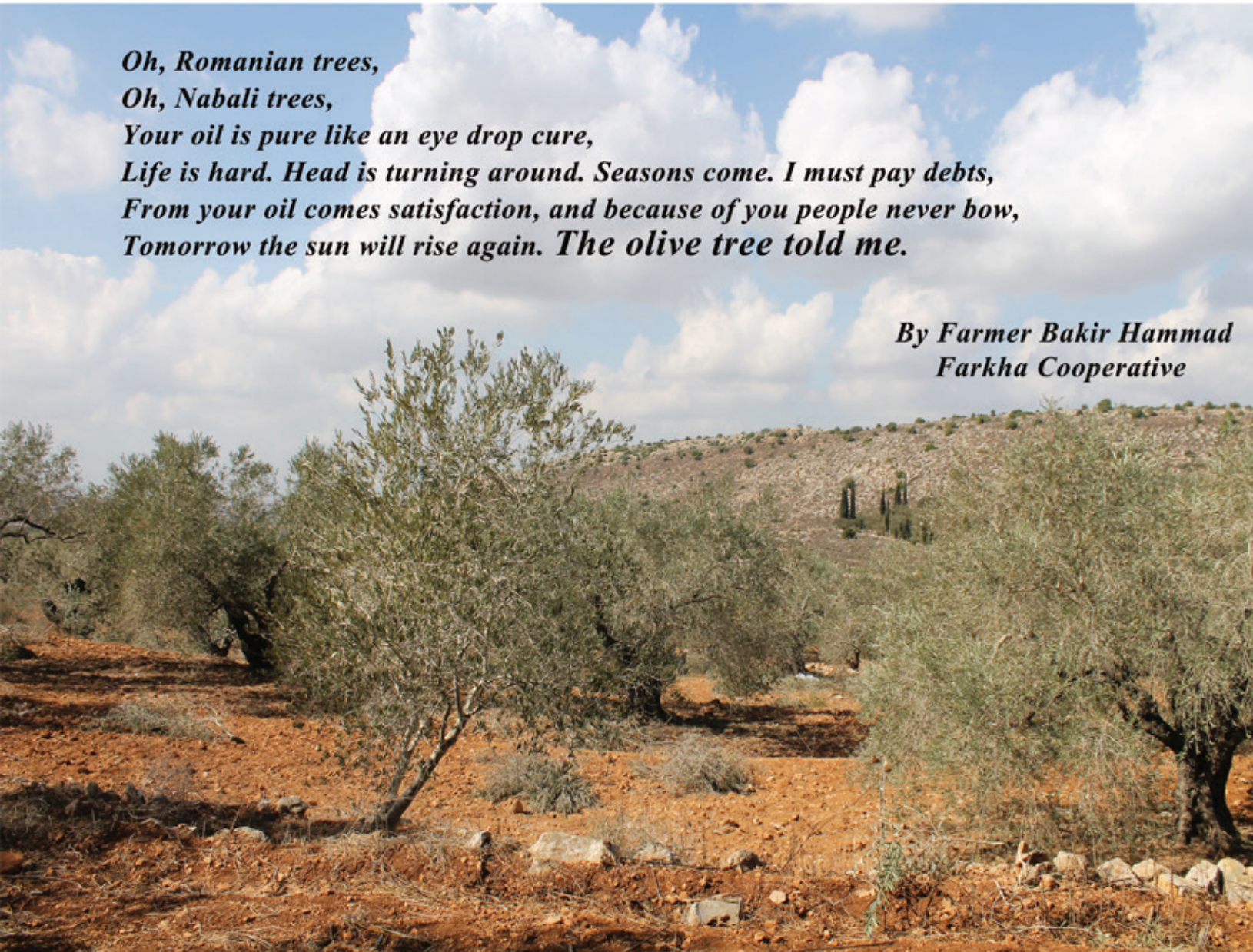
*Fifth edition- December 2016*

## Olive Oil Season 2016

*In this newsletter, you will see an update on olive oil production for 2016 season, stories from the field, and brief on Al Reef activities in November and December.*

*Oh, Romanian trees,  
Oh, Nabali trees,  
Your oil is pure like an eye drop cure,  
Life is hard. Head is turning around. Seasons come. I must pay debts,  
From your oil comes satisfaction, and because of you people never bow,  
Tomorrow the sun will rise again. The olive tree told me.*

*By Farmer Bakir Hammad  
Farkha Cooperative*





# Olive oil season 2016



This olive oil season production was about 75% compared to last year production with a production quantity of 16000 tons compared to 21000 tons in the last year. This is due to the climate change especially the continues increase in temperatures and the undistributed rainfall around the year. Some areas were affected more than other areas due to the geographical diversity of Palestine (mountains, valleys, hills). 100,000 Palestinian families benefit directly and indirectly from olive oil production where olive oil is considered a vital sector with its contribution by 13% to the national agricultural income. **Source: Ramiz Obeid – Director of Olive Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture.**

## More than just a tree



*Palestinian olive farmer during the harvest season*

- Olive trees represent Palestinian persistence and forever connection to their land just as these trees have been in the area for such a long time, where some of them date back to 5000 years ago.
- The olive harvest season is a festive season where all family members come together to share this special time of the year as their ancestors has always done.
- If you know Palestinians, you know that one of the things they are proud of the most is their olive trees and the special taste and flavor of their olive oil.
- Palestinian olive farmers know that olive oil production is all about the process. Throughout the years they have become aware and educated about the right practices and processes to produce a high quality olive oil with excellent organoleptic features.



## Palestinian olive oil characteristics



- Palestinian olive oil has strong organoleptic characteristics in terms of color, smell and taste.

- It has a major green olive fruit taste that makes you discover the true taste of olives in addition to its bitterness and pungency taste.

- It has a greenish color and a fruity smell of green apples and green almond fruits.

## Famous Palestinian meals prepared at farms during the harvest season

Tea with sage and coffee are a must during the harvest season! Fried tomatoes with pepper, fried eggs, fried eggplant, fried eggs with beans cooked with olive oil using fire in the field are some of the traditional Palestinian lunches during the harvest season that olive farmers are used to prepare and cook in the farm! Makloubah and Grape leaves are also main meals during the harvest season! *Credit: Amer Ghannam.*







## Falling in love again

According to Bakir Hammad - member of Farkha cooperative- it all started in 2000 – 2001 when the farmers had large quantity of olive oil and had to sell it for 6 and 7 shekels per kg in the market; a price that didn't even cover half of the production cost. "We had to look for a solution and this is where PARC intervened and introduced us to the idea of group pressing; to produce high quality olive oil to be able to market and export to the international markets in partnership with Al Reef. We did that and succeeded" said Bakir. Al Reef began selling olive oil at 14 and 15 shekels and our member increased from 9 to 17 members. Farkha cooperative has 450 donums of organic olive oil farms and became officially an organic registered cooperative in 2005.

"When the idea of organic production was introduced to us, we thought of it as a trend that will eventually be unfeasible, but now we are living it, it's our way of living for the coming generation too" said Bakir.

**Farkha village is the first Palestinian village to officially become a member of the Global Eco village Network for a year now.**



Being able to market our olive oil at fair prices has given us the opportunity to give back to our community, said Bakir Hammad. Through olive oil premium payments, Farkha cooperative makes contributions to Farkha annual festival that takes place every year from 23/7 30/8; an event that has been taking place since 1991 and aims to enhance the voluntarism spirit, educate the youth, raise awareness on environmental issues and maintain the Palestinian culture, talented work and creativity. Last year we had 150 permanent volunteers and 350 part-time volunteers from all over the world (local, international) said Bakir Hammad. Through premium Farkha cooperative has been able to take a joint loan with three other cooperatives to purchase a press for olive oil (Eastern Bani Zeid Cooperative, Aboud Cooperative, Western Bani Zeid Cooperative) and through premium all these cooperatives pay the monthly payment of the joint loan. Also, through premium farkha cooperative has been able to help in developing the women club kindergarten.



***Pictures from inside the new joint olive press of the 4 cooperatives located in Al Nobani farms- Eastern Bani Zeid!***



Our relationship with Al Reef is not a commercial one. We feel like it's our own company. Every year in November they hold a meeting to set up prices in coordination with olive oil producing cooperatives to achieve fair prices for our produce based on the given circumstances, production and international markets. It's a complementary relationship; they discuss with us, inform us about the international market situation and through them we get to know the fair trade concept. Without Al Reef, there would be no security; because Al Reef connects us with great consumers who appreciate our olive oil, said Bakir Hammad.

***Eng. Mohammed Hmidat, the quality assurance manager at Al Reef Fair Trade during his visit to the joint press in October conducting organoleptic testing!***





*31 Oct 2016 - Farkha Cooperative*

Olive trees are holy trees; they are the backbone of the household economy and life sustainability. The olive tree is a source and food security for our families, said Amina Hammad- Bakir's wife. Amina loves the olive harvest season and while plucking olive fruits she said; olive season has a special place in my heart, it's that magical time of the year when all of my family comes together and we get the opportunity to connect strongly with our land and ancestors.



Organic production provides us, our families and the world with healthy olive oil. It makes us love our land and motivates us to take care of it in addition to being able to market our olive oil at fair prices, *and this is how we fell in love again with our olive trees,* Said Bakir Hammad.

*Bakir Hammad's son Mohammed joining his family in the plucking of olive fruits, he can't miss out on this special time of harvest season!*



# What's happening at Al Reef?

## Power is gained by sharing knowledge



Al Reef Fair Trade welcomed a delegation of 20 women from women's cooperatives and feminist activists in Tulkarm governorate, in a mission to transfer Al Reef technical expertise in the field of food processing to the women of cooperatives. The delegation visited Al Reef olive oil filing station in Al Ram, dates factory and women's couscous cooperative in Jericho. It was agreed to coordinate an integrated training program by Al Reef Fair Trade staff to raise the capacities of the women cooperatives and to develop their businesses in Tulkarm.

## Al Reef annual meeting with olive oil cooperatives

On Nov 20th, Al Reef Fair Trade held its annual meeting with representatives of cooperatives producing organic and extra virgin olive oil which meets the standards for export to the international markets. This meeting is part of the strategic partnership with agricultural cooperatives. During the meeting, there was a thorough discussion regarding the challenges facing the cooperatives, both in terms of climate change (especially drought) and the diseases and insects that affect the quality and productivity of olive trees. In addition, there was a lengthy discussion concerning the olive oil prices in the new season.





# What's happening at Al Reef?



Al Reef Fair Trade participates in the Third International Conference on Olive in Palestine and Olive Products Exhibition to promote olive products and agricultural cooperatives products. Mayor of Tulkarem governorate Mr. Issam Abu Baker, State Minister (Head of Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission) Mr. Walid Assaf and Director of PARC branch in Tulkarem Dr. Ahed Zanabit visited Al Reef stand at the exhibition.



Al Reef Fair Trade participates in the 7th general assembly meeting of Asian People's Fund for Mutual Benefit (APF) in Indonesia (Asian Fair Trade Organization) between 12-15 / 11/2016. Our colleague Mohannad Hmidat represented Al Reef and attended a workshop on shrimp production and processing methods.



In cooperation with the economic empowerment program implemented by UNDP, Al Reef Fair Trade and Reef Finance held yesterday a workshop at PARC office in Al - Zababida with almonds producing cooperatives from Tubas and Jenin governorates. The workshop aimed to discuss mechanisms and prospects for setting an Islamic lending program in order to provide cooperatives with an early funding solution; to facilitate and develop their businesses in the almond sector.



Jord & Frihet Association and in cooperation with Al Reef Fair Trade funds the distribution of 160 olive seedlings aged 4 years to Jaba' High school for girls, Beit Ijza High school for girls and Beit Enan High school for girls in Jerusalem governorate.





2016 has been a wonderful year full of accomplishments and hard works for us here in Palestine. We would like to thank our producers, partners and everyone involved for making this happen and contributing to a fair world.

*We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and A happy New Year full of more accomplishments and contributions to a Just world through fair trade!*

**Stay updated with us on our website:  
alreeffairtrade.ps and  
our facebook page: Al Reef Fair Trade**

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