

3. Fertilizer Situation

The 1983-1984 grain season has been a good one in so far as the use of fertilizers is concerned. An increase in the use of triple superphosphate and ammonium nitrate has been observed.

Use of Fertilizers in Grain Production ('000 tonnes)

	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>
SUPER 16	15	15	10	10
SUPER 45	50	61	68	70
AMMONIUM NITRATE	63	75	63	80

It should be noted that this increase in the amount of fertilizer used was accompanied, as noted elsewhere, by an increase in the amount of land sown. As a result, in the northern regions, the average rate of nitrogen use, which dipped from 96 kg/ha in 1981-82 to 80 kg/ha in 1982-83, rose again to 90 kg/ha in 1983-84.

Chemical wheat control: Chemical weed control operations got off to a poor start in the 1983-84 year because of weather conditions ill-suited to that type of activity (rain and wind). Special incentives and other measures were necessary to ensure the success of weed control operations. Some 107,000 ha were weeded with polyvalents and 177,000 ha with 2-4-D as of March 22, 1984.

It was forecast that, by the end of season, a total of 245,000 ha would be weeded. This is 60,000 ha less than originally forecast, but is nevertheless an unprecedented level and is 10,000 ha higher than the level attained in 1980-81.

4. Import Mechanism

In general, control over foreign trade (import/export) is the responsibility of the foreign economic relations branch of the Ministry of the National Economy, in co-operation with the Central Bank, which controls foreign exchange operations.

Certain "sensitive" products and major consumer goods are imported by government agencies only (state trade). Grains and their by-products fall into the latter category. The national grains office (Office national des céréales, ONC) is responsible for the supply, importing and marketing of grains in Tunisia. Import volumes are established in September/October of each year. Once the purchasing program has been determined, the grains office examines available supplies under bilateral food aid programs (USA/EEC). After these sources have been exhausted, international calls for tenders are issued.

5. Grain Industry Infrastructure

Many new projects have been undertaken and a number of silos have been restored (e.g. Manouba, 45,000 tonnes). In addition, wharf facilities are being developed at the Bizerte silo. The IBRD has awarded a U.S.\$42 million loan to finance these projects (scheduled to be carried out in 1986). Significant changes expected soon include construction of eight new units in the milling sector.