

Deir al 'Asal at Tahta Village Profile



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Background

This booklet is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in Hebron Governorate. These booklets come as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Hebron Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the 'Village Profiles and Azahar Needs Assessment'; a project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) and the Azahar Program.

The 'Village Profiles and Azahar Needs Assessment' was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in Hebron Governorate with particular focus on the Azahar program objectives and activities concerning water, environment, and agriculture.

The project's objectives are to survey, analyze and document the available natural, human, socioeconomic and environmental resources, and the existing limitations and needs assessment for the development of the rural and marginalized areas in Hebron Governorate. In addition, the project aims at preparing strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability with the focus on the agricultural sector.

All locality profiles in Arabic and English are available online at <http://proxy.arij.org/vprofile/>

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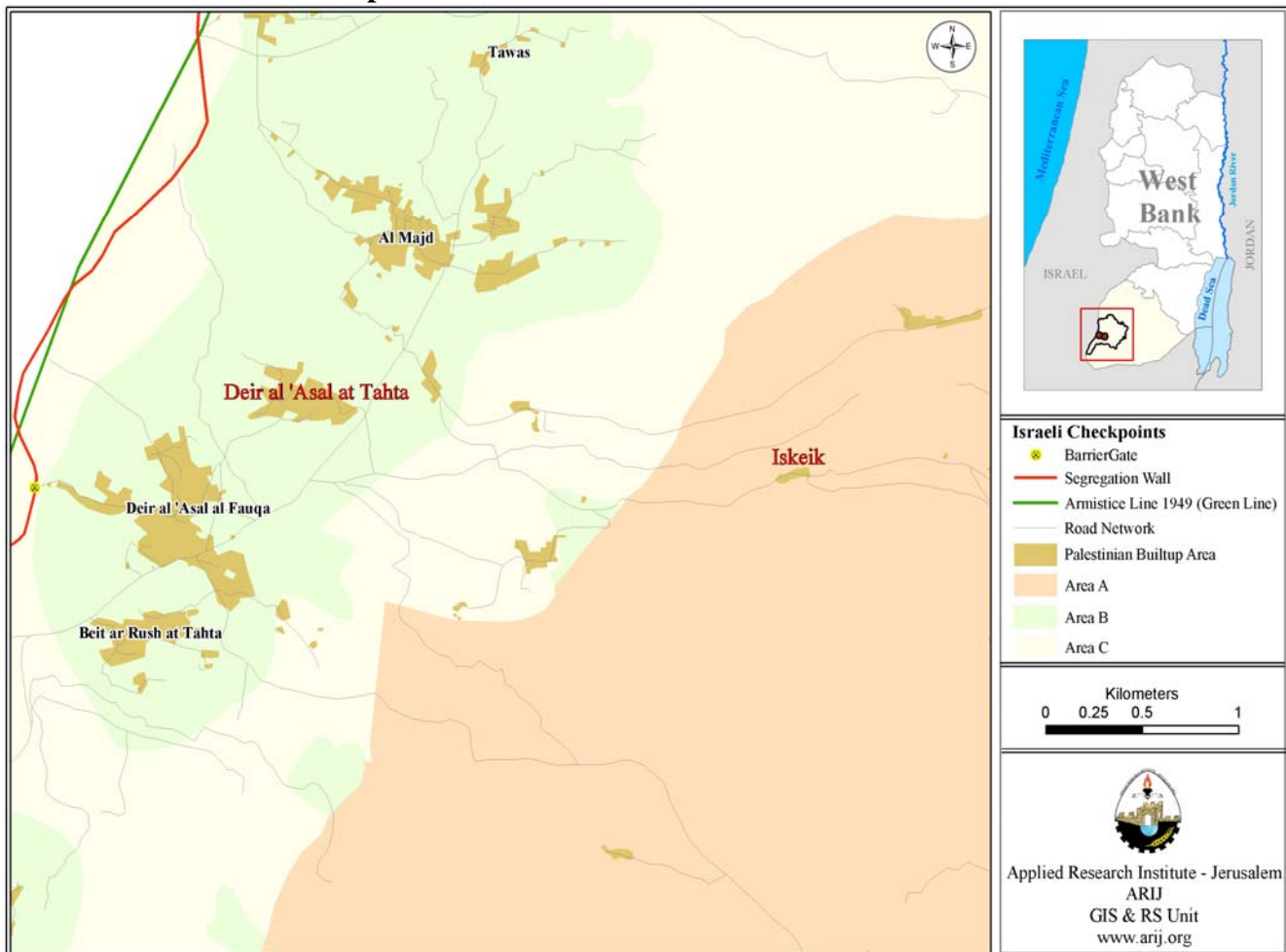
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Deir al 'Asal at Tahta Village Profile

Location and Physical Characteristics

Deir Al 'Asal At Tahta is a village in Dura area which is located 18 kilometers southwest of the city of Hebron in the southern part of the West Bank. It is bordered by As Sura and Marah al Baqqar to the east, Al Majd and Beit 'Awwa villages to the north, Adh Dhahiriya and Deir al 'Asal al Fauqa to the south, and 1949 Armistice Line (the Green Line) to the west.

Map 1: Deir al 'Asal at Tahta location and borders



The total area of Deir al 'Asal at Tahta village is approximately 5,500 dunums, of which 170 dunums are classified as built-up areas, 1,835 dunums are agricultural lands, 9 dunums are forests, 2,200 dunums are classified as an open spaces lands, and 20 dunums have been confiscated by Israeli Forces for the construction of the segregation wall.

Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta village lies at an elevation of 477 meters above sea level. The mean annual rainfall in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta village is 436 mm; the average annual temperature is 16 °c, and the average annual humidity is 61% (ARIJ GIS).

Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta is considered a rural area. Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta is governed by a village council consisting of seven members, and was established in 1998. It currently has one full time employee. In addition to implementing development plans, the council also provides utility services such as water, electricity, maintenance, road surfacing as well as providing social services.

According to village officials, the Khirbet Iskeik village is included in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta village council, and located 1.5 km to the south of the village. The residents of Khirbet Iskeik are from all originally Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta families.

History

The name of the village derives from the name of a local princess (‘Asal), who lived in a convent in the village. The history of the village began because of the 1948 war, when many individuals migrated from their destroyed villages after Israeli occupation of Palestine. The inhabitants originally lived in clay houses and caves; however they started to build new houses in 1967.

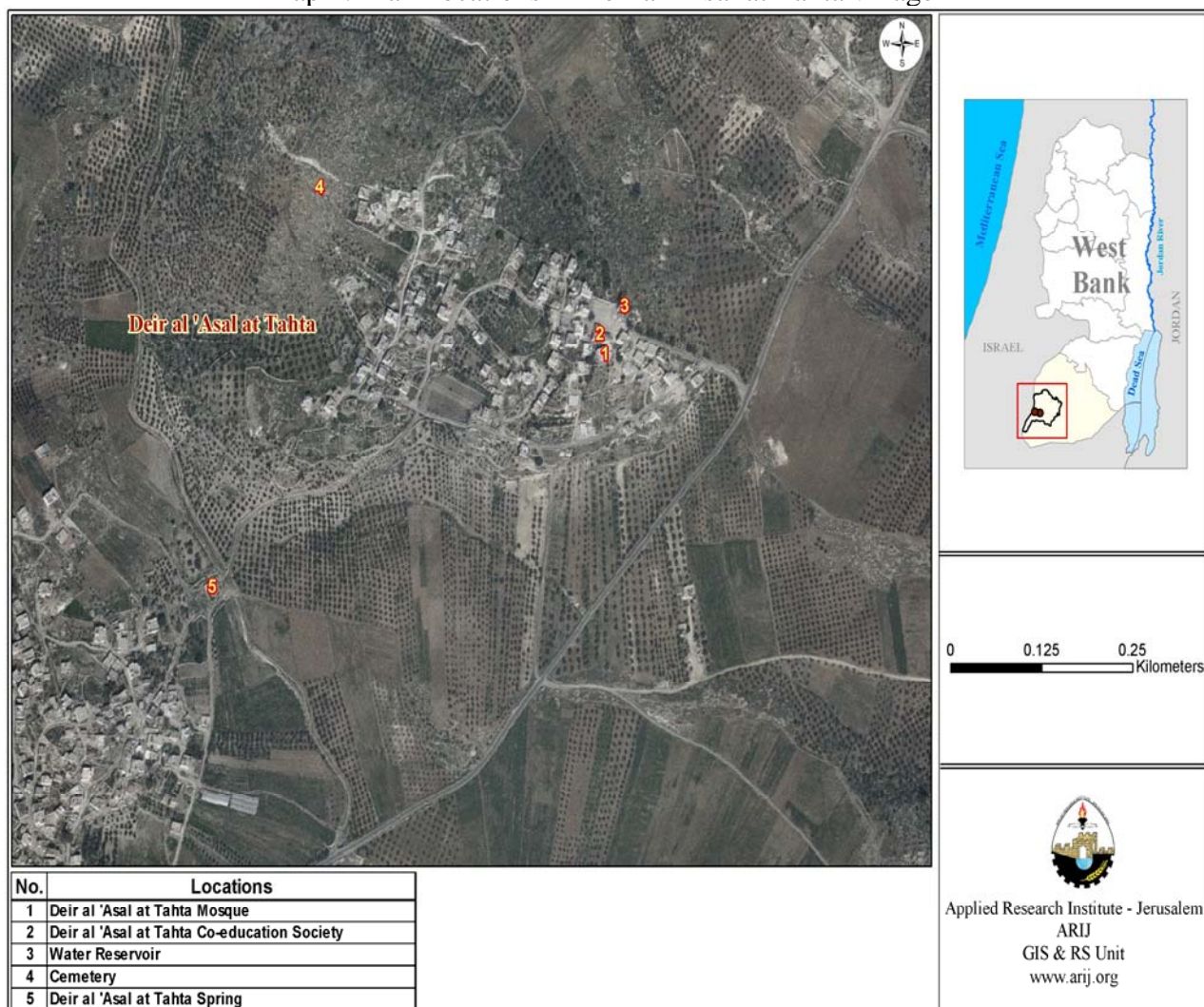
Photo of Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta



Religious and Archaeological

Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta has a single mosque “Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta Mosque”. There are no known historical or archaeological sites in the village.

Map 2: Main locations in Deir al 'Asal at Tahta village



Demography and Population

The total population of Deir al 'Asal at Tahta, in 2007, is estimated to be 708. this is an estimate number based on the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Census of 1997, of which 349 were males and 360 were females, of whom 555 were living in Deir al 'Asal at Tahta and 153 were living in Kherbit Iskeik (See table 1). There were 89 households and 111 housing units' in the village

Village	Male	Female	Total
Deir al 'Asal at Tahta	266	289	555
Kherbit Iskeik	83	71	153
Total	349	360	708

Source: PCBS, May 1999. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-1997, Final Results

Age Group and Gender

The 2007 Census data shows the demographic of the Deir al 'Asal at Tahta population by age and sex. The residents who were aged between 15 and 64 constituted the largest group in the village (56.4%). Individuals aged between 0 and 14 constituted 37.7% and the 65 and above age group constituted just 5.9% of the total population.

The sex ratio in the village was 92 males for every 100 females. In Deir al 'Asal at Tahta, males constituted 48% of the population and females constitute 52%.

Families

Most of Deir al 'Asal at Tahta residents have descended from a single family; the 'Awlad Mohammad family ("Sons of Mohammad") which make up 90% of the total population. 'Awlad Mohammad family consists of four small families which are the: Naser, Jadallah, Saleh and Muselam families. 10% of the residents have descended from Al Sekh family.

Migration

According to data collected from the village council, about 40 people emigrated from the village due to the political and economic situation.

Education

According to the 2007 PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census, of the total village population (aged ten and above), about 40 persons were illiterate (10%). Illiteracy among females is substantially higher than among males (77.5% of those illiterate were female). 47 persons (11.8%) could read and write but had received no formal schooling, 46% had elementary and preparatory education, 13% had a secondary degree, and 19.2% had an associate diploma or a bachelor's degree. Table 2 shows educational attainment by sex in Deir al 'Asal at Tahta village:

Sex	Educational Attainment										Total
	Illiterate	Can Read & write	Elementary	Preparatory	Secondary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	
M	9	22	39	49	24	5	30	1	3	-	182
F	31	25	40	55	28	10	28	-	-	-	217
T	40	47	79	104	52	15	58	1	3	-	399

Source: PCBS, March 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results

This data include population figures from the village of Deir al 'Asal at Tahta only

The survey showed that there is only one school in the village, which is called "Deir al 'Asal at Tahta Elementary Co-education School". The school is supervised by governmental authority.

According to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) scholastic year 2006/2007 statistics, there were 138 students, 8 classes, and 11 teachers. The school also provides education to Khirbet Iskeik (See table 7).

In addition, there is Al Naser kindergarten in the village which is authorized by the private sector and provides education to about 25 children.

The village does not have any preparatory and secondary schools. Students are therefore forced to travel 1.5 or 10 kilometers to reach Al Majd or Dura schools. The local education system also suffers from a lack of classrooms, a general lack of funds, and basic student needs.

Health Status

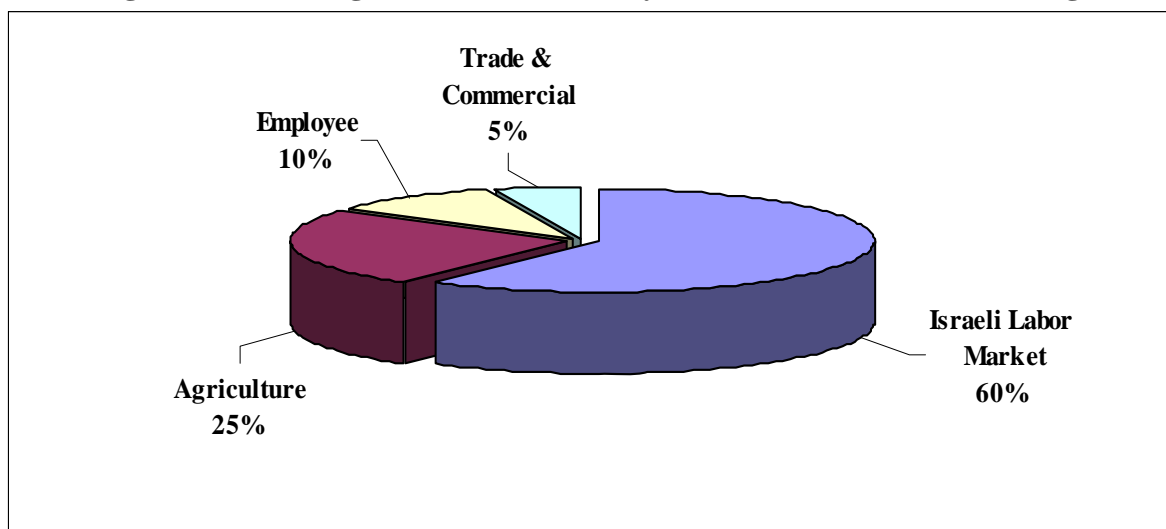
Deir al 'Asal at Tahta village suffers from a severe lack of health services. Though there is a single charity-run maternity and pediatric clinic, there are no other clinics, ambulances, or pharmacies. This combined with the distance of medical facilities in neighbouring villages makes medical treatment inconvenient and difficult, as residents are forced to travel distance of 10 kilometers to reach Dura or 18 kilometers to reach Hebron City to access hospitals or health centers.

Economic Activities

According to data collected from the village, most of the residents depend on the Israeli labor market. About 60% of working age residents (aged 10 and above) depends on Israeli labor market. In addition, the economic base of the village also depends on local agricultural activities. The village also contains three small grocers' which provide general services to the residents.

According to village officials, the village economic base can be classified as follows:

- The Israeli labour market (60%).
- The agricultural sector (25%).
- Employees (government or private sector) (10%).
- The commercial/trade sector (5%).

Figure 1: Percentage of economic activity in Deir al 'Asal at Tahta village

Source: ARIJ survey, 2006

Village officials' estimations indicated that the groups most affected in the village by the Israeli restrictions during the second Intifada were: 1) those previously employed in the Israeli labour market, 2) housekeeping and children, 3) families maintaining 6 individuals or more, 4) small-holder traders, and 5) small-holder farmers.

Labour Force

According to the 2007 PCBS, Population, Housing and Establishment Census, there were 124 economically active people in Deir al 'Asal at Tahta as of 2007, of whom 81.5% were employed. According to these figures, 22 individuals were unemployed - a group which constituted 17.7% of the total population (10 years of age and older). Of the 275 non-economically active persons in the village, 48.4% were students, 33.4% were housekeeping, and 18.2 % were unable to work. (See table 3):

Table 3: Population (10 years and above) by Sex and Activity Status in Deir al 'Asal at Tahta, 2007

Sex	Activity Status										Total
	Economically Active				Economically Non-Active						
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (Never Worked)	Total	Students	House keeping	Unable to Work	Not Working and Not Looking for Work	Others	Total	
M	76	21	1	98	56	3	20	1	4	84	182
F	25	1	-	26	77	89	25	-	-	191	217
T	101	22	1	124	133	92	45	1	4	275	399

Source: PCBS, March 2009. Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, Final Results
This data include population figures from the village of Deir al 'Asal at Tahta only

Agricultural Sector

Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta lies on a total area of 5,500 dunums. 1,835 dunums are considered arable land. However, only 1,491 dunums are currently cultivated. There are about 3 dunums of plastic houses; these dunums are used for growing cucumber.

Table 4: Land Use in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta Village (dunum)

Total Area	Arable Land		Built up Area	Forests Area	Open Spaces and Rangelands
	Cultivated Area	Uncultivated Area			
5,500	1,491	344	170	9	2,200

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agricultural (MoA), 2006

Map 3: Land use/land cover and segregation wall map of Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta village

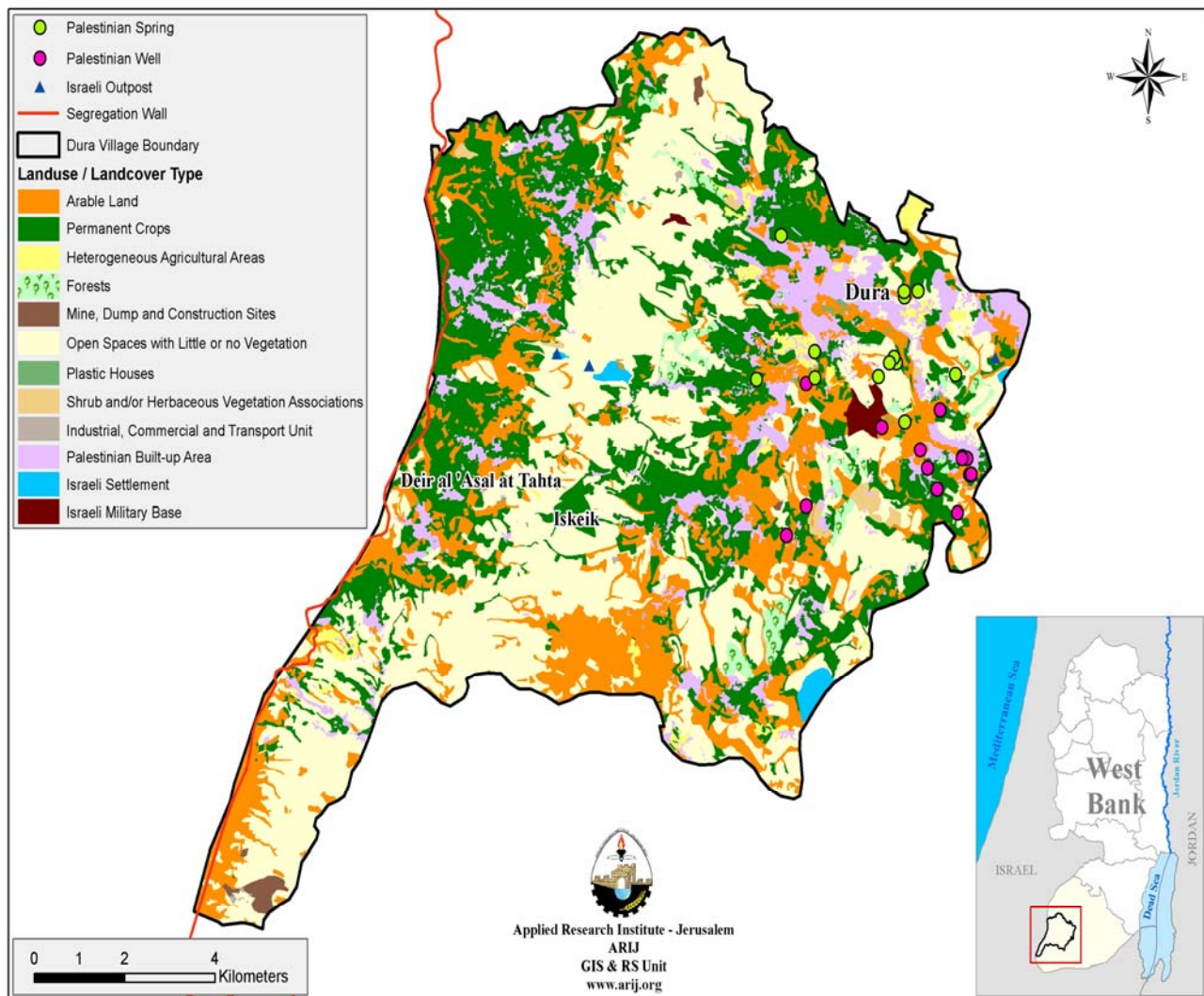


Table 5 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in the village of Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta. The rain-fed fruity vegetables are the most cultivated with an

area of about 54 dunums. The most common vegetables cultivated within this area are squash, zucchini and snake cucumber.

Table 5: Total area of rain fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta Village (dunum)

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetable		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total area	
Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.
54	0	0	0	2	0	0	0.5	0	2	56	2.5

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

In Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta, there is a total area of 717 dunums of olive tree plantations. Other trees planted in the area are mostly almond trees with a total area equal 59 dunums, grape vines with total area equal 30 dunums, and fig trees with total area equal 15 dunums.

Table 6: Total area of horticulture and olive tree in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta Village (dunum)

Olives		Nuts		Other fruit				Total area	
Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf		Irr.		Rf	Irr.
717	0	59	0	50		0		826	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

Table 7 shows the total area of field crops cultivated in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta. Cereals, in particular wheat, barley and corn, are the most cultivated crops with an area of about 410 dunums. In addition, the cultivation of forage crops, including Vetch and Sern, is common in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta.

Table 7: Total area of field crops in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta Village (dunum)

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Seeds		Forage crops		Total area	
Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.	Rf	Irr.
410	0	9	0	59	0	1	0	125	0	604	0

Rf: Rain-fed, Irr: Irrigated

The data also indicates that the residents of Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta are also dependent upon rearing livestock, approximately 60% of the households rearing livestock. The village currently has 850 sheep, and 120 goats, along with other livestock (See table 8).

Table 8: Livestock in Deir al ‘Asal at Tahta Village

Sheep	Goats	Donkeys	Broilers	Bee Hives
850	120	13	11,000	23

The main source of water for irrigation comes from rainwater collection cisterns. There are six kilometers of agricultural roads; however these are only suitable for tractors and agricultural hardware, and are not sufficient for general use. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Society is the only active group in the village. This provides services to farmers.

Village officials state that the agricultural sector suffers from an insufficient supply of water, lack of capital, policy for reclamation of agricultural land, a lack of pastures and high cost of feeds.

Furthermore, the Israeli Forces destroyed about 1,000 olive trees belonging to Deir al 'Asal at Tahta residents.

Institutions and Services

Deir al 'Asal at Tahta is supervised by the local village council, consisting of seven members, which was founded in 1998. However, with the exception of this council, there are no other major institutions serving the village population.

Infrastructure and Natural Resources

- **Telecommunication Services:** Deir al 'Asal at Tahta is connected to a telecommunications network, 70% of the village houses are currently connected to it.
- **Water Services:** Deir al 'Asal at Tahta has been connected to a water network supplied by the Palestinian Water Authority since 1984. Village authorities estimate that 90% of housing units are connected to this network. In terms of alternative water sources, villagers also depend upon rainwater collection in private and public wells, cisterns, and purchased water. There is a spring in the village however this is used only for livestock. Furthermore, there is a water reservoir in the village which has 100 cubic meter capacity. Village officials cite several obstacles to a functional water network, including the disruption of continuous water supply, the age of the existing water network, the high prices associated with filling reserve tanks and insufficient numbers of wells in the village.
- **Electricity Networks:** Since 1984, Deir al 'Asal at Tahta has been provided with an electrical network powered by the Israeli National Electricity Company (Qutria). Currently 100% of housing units are connected to this electrical network. The village suffers from the consequences of nonpayment of bills, weak currents, as well as the inability to maintain and refurbish the network.
- **Sewage Disposal Facilities:** Deir al 'Asal at Tahta does not have a sewage network and disposes of its wastewater in cesspits.
- **Solid Waste Collection Services:** there is no solid waste collection system in the village. Each resident or household must dispose of solid waste individually.
- **Transportation Facilities:** The residents of the village are served by three buses belonging to the Front Line Transportation Company. These serve many of the villages in the west of Hebron Governorate. Furthermore, there are 15 vehicles serving as informal taxis. Village officials cite the primary obstacles to transportation in the village are; a lack of suitable main roads, and rising transportation prices. Deir al 'Asal at Tahta has 2,000 meters of good quality surfaced main roads, 1,500 meters of surfaced roads in need of maintenance, and 6,000 meters of un-surfaced roads (mainly used for agricultural purposes).

Impact of the Israeli Occupation

Though the village of Deir al 'Asal at Tahta is reasonably free from the encroachment of settlements, it nevertheless suffers from many of the effects of the occupation that plague other municipalities throughout the West Bank. The permanent Beit 'Awwa checkpoint and unpredictable flying checkpoints makes access to hospitals and health centers, as well as the transportation of the sick, extremely difficult. In terms of agriculture, constant closure of agricultural access roads and the uprooting of trees (1,000 olive, grape, and nut trees) has represents an extreme barrier to creating a healthy income from marketing such produce. Village estimates suggest that 180-200 dunums of agricultural land has been isolated by the segregation wall. Some 12 families have experienced substantial loss or damage to their agricultural productivity. Construction of the segregation wall, to the southwest of the village, began in September of 2004. A 1,300 meter portion (of the wire type) has been constructed on 20 dunums of confiscated village land.

Development Plans and Projects

The village council is currently overseeing a number of development projects:

- The construction of a centre to manage the various village services.
- The construction and improvement of connecting roads.
- A project for the disposal of fluid forms of solid waste.

Locality Development Priorities and Needs

According to Deir al 'Asal at Tahta council the village suffers from a shortage of many infrastructural services needs. Table 9 shows the development priorities of the village.

Table 9: Deir al 'Asal at Tahta development priorities and needs						
No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Moderately Needed	Not Needed	Notes
Infrastructural Needs						
1	Opening and Pavement of Roads	*				4,5 km ^
2	Construction of New Water Networks	*				3 km
3	Rehabilitation of Old Water Networks				*	
4	Construction of Water Reservoirs				*	
5	Extending the Water Network to cover New Built up Areas				*	
6	Construction of Sewage Disposal Network	*				
Health Needs						
1	Building of New Clinics or Health Care Centre	*				
2	Rehabilitation of Old Clinics or Health Care Centres				*	
3	Purchasing of Medical Equipments and Tools				*	
Educational Needs						
1	Building of New Schools	*				Secondary school
2	Rehabilitation of Old Schools	*				
3	Purchasing of New Equipments for Schools	*				
Agriculture Needs						
1	Rehabilitation of Agricultural lands			*		300 dunums
2	Building Cisterns			*		25 cisterns
3	Construction of Barracks for Livestock				*	
4	Veterinary Services			*		
5	Seeds and Hay for Animals			*		
6	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses				*	
7	Field Crops Seeds			*		
8	Plants and Agricultural Supplies			*		

^ Connector internal roads: 3,000 m, and open agricultural roads: 1,500 m

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