

September Newsletter, 2020

Organic Wheat and Almond Seasons



Our Strategic Vision

Converting into Organic Farming

Since the establishment of Al-Reef, we strategically believed and adopted the idea of organic farming in order to maintain the access and competition in international markets.

Within our sustainable strategic approach for planting and producing healthy products for humans and safe for the environment and the ability to compete domestically and internationally. Since more than 13 years, Al-Reef initiated and in cooperation with Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and the Company of Organic Agriculture in Palestine (COAP), and invested in knowledge, capital and human resources to achieve this strategy in collaboration with the Palestinian agricultural cooperatives.

This journey succeeded by obtaining organic certifications for 12 agricultural cooperatives and an olive oil press, which contributed to expand the external markets for this product. In the recent years, this plan has extended to small-scale farmers to earn organic certificates for growing wheat (to make Couscous) and for the Palestinian medjoul dates.

Since many years and within our partner's approach; Altromercato (CTM) to meet the requirements of fair-trade markets in Italy to head towards organic farming for wheat in order to sell Couscous. A joint plan has been set between CTM, Al-Reef, COAP, and PARC which was funded by Chico Mendes and Milan municipality to renovate and rehabilitate the women's Couscous production station in Jericho city to make it a suitable place for producing organic couscous. This is the first season (2020) of producing organic couscous that is certified organic by COAP and the women's station is also certified organic from COAP.



The organic wheat has been grown by the farmer; Yousef Fayad who has a farm called Aman, an area of 185 dunums, half of it is grown wheat and the other half is grown sesame and he rotates between them. The farm is located in Al-Zababdeh; a Palestinian town in the northern West Bank located 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) southeast of Jenin Governorate. It is a majority Christian town - the only one of its kind in the West Bank - with about 4,000 residents.



PARC visited Yousef in 2016 and he showed his interest to convert into organic farming and started with his agricultural cycle in order to certify the wheat organic. A coordination was done with COAP so he could register for an organic certification application in December 2016 and an agreement was signed in January 2017. He started using local seeds in his farm and maintained it annually. COAP followed up through conducting inspection visits to his farm and through laboratory tests for the soil and wheat to ensure that they are free from any chemical residues.



The documentation process then started for his organic farm. He successfully obtained the certificate in June/ 2020 from COAP. This was due to his skills, techniques, good pre-planting tillage and manual weeding instead of using fertilizers or chemicals. He produces an average of 400-450 Kg per dunum. Al-Reef purchased all his produce at a rate of 25-30% higher than the local market's non-organic price and PARC covered the audit fees for 3 years. This was funded by Luxemburg project.



After we purchased the wheat, the quality assurance department conducted laboratory testing for the quality of the organic wheat at Al-Reef's lab in addition to certified Palestinian and Italian laboratories. The results were positive. The managers of the Quality Assurance and Financial Departments followed up and supervised the organic wheat grading processes in the organic Aqaba Mill in Tubas governorate. Then the organic wheat goes under the process of manufacturing it into organic couscous by the women's cooperative in Jericho where this creates job opportunities for more than 30 women from Jericho city and its refugee camps; Ain Al-Sultan and Aqabt Jaber. The couscous will be exported to international markets (Italian, Belgian, New Zealand, and Swedish).



The organic certificate For Aman Farm for producing organic wheat which was issued on 24th of June, 2020.

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Certificate

No. COAP-"1"

Aman Farm for producing organic wheat
jnine -Palestine
PS-J-Z

According to the decision of the certification director Hasanein Hasanein adopted in 24.6.2020 The abovementioned organization The Company of Organic Agriculture in Palestine(COAP) hereby confirms that the declared operator has submitted their activities for control and meets the requirements of "IACB" Equivalent European Union Organic Production & Processing Standard in the current version for the equivalence in third countries, Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labeling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, and COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 889/2008 on organic production and labeling of organic products with regard to organic production, labeling and control.

Main Activity

Organic Agriculture Production

sell the certified products

Scope of Certification:

A- Plant Production Organic Conversion

"30 "Ton for sale

See the description Annex"1"

D-Process Product

First Registration :2017

Issuance Date

24.6.2020 By COAP – Code number: PS-BIO-163

Validity

Form issuance date Until : 30-6-2021

Date of inspection

15.6.2020

16.6.2020

This document has been issued on the basis of article 29(1) of regulation (EC)NO. 834/2007 and regulation (EC) NO.889/2008. The declared operator has submitted his activities under control, and meeting the requirements laid down in the named regulations.

Signature

General Manger :Dalal Hussien

Certification body: Company of Organic Agriculture in Palestine(COAP), Ramallah, A.-massion, Sabbat building, tel.:00972-2958902.

Date reception: 20.7.2020

Based on the annual inspections done by COA

It can be surrendered, suspended or above mentioned regulations occur.

This document has been issued on the basis of IACB Standard for third countries. The declared operator submitted his activities under control and meets the requirements laid down in mentioned regulations.

Validity ends automatically with reissuing of the certificate or with termination of the inspection contract.

This Certificate is issued within the scope of the accreditation issued by IOAS, Registration Number: 79

This Certificate belongs to COAP and has to be returned upon request

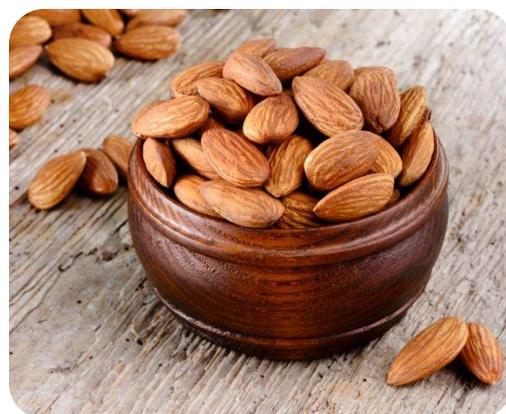


Company of Organic Agriculture In Palestine
الشركة الفلسطينية للزراعة العضوية
رقم التسجيل: 302464817
DALAL HUSSIAN

Almond Season

Al-Reef's raw and natural almonds are highly nutritious, rich in healthy fats and minerals. We sell the best almond variety; Om Al-Fahem, which is considered one of the finest types of almonds locally and internationally. It is distinguished by its distinctive taste and attractive shape, broad in shape and golden in color. Additionally, almonds have many health benefits:

1. Deliver a massive amount of nutrients like fiber, protein, and magnesium.
2. Promote healthy cells as they are loaded with antioxidants.
3. High in vitamin E.
4. Assist with blood sugar control.
5. Lower cholesterol levels.
6. Reduce the risk of diabetes.
7. Protect people from heart diseases.



Since the nineties, PARC started encouraging farmers to grow almond trees (Om Al-Fahem variety) in Jenin and Tubas governorates due to the convenient weather in these areas, the high-quality of this variety and the high potential of marketing it domestically and globally. Therefore, PARC distributed tens of thousands trees to small-scale producers in the villages of the mentioned governorates and provided them with ongoing guidance and orientation. Since more than 15 years, the production of this almond variety has been increasing. However, a couple of years ago, farmers started facing a problem with having insufficient water to irrigate the trees because of the Israeli occupation control over water resources. Unfortunately, some of the farmers are currently quitting this farming due to the low productivity.



Al Reef's Quality Assurance Department team conducts field visits and provides consultations for farmers in early stages. Before the picking of almonds in order to avoid any problems that may affect the quality of almonds after the harvest. The harvest begins when the almonds become dry during August. After the picking process, farmers remove the external crust of the almonds and dry them under sunshine to reach the required humidity level. This procedure doesn't allow bio organisms to grow inside the almonds after storage. Samples of almonds are tested before sending the whole amount to the cooperatives to be shelled.



After making sure that the almonds are dry enough, they get packaged and sent to the Filling Station where workers carry out a final sorting for the almonds to remove the broken pieces. Every August of every year, Al-Reef Fair Trade begins its contracting program with almond small-scale farmers in the villages of Tubas and Jenin governorates. We export almonds after doing the crushing, grading, sterilizing, filling and packaging processes to international fair trade markets in Italy, New Zealand and Sweden.



Every season, we pursue a unified purchase policy and pay fairly traded prices to almond growers. This season, they got paid 23 shekels per one kilogram (with the shell). This was after completing the physical and laboratory quality tests in the certified laboratory and following-up in the almond fields before starting the harvest process. This program is followed-up by the Quality Assurance and Financial departments in cooperation with the ministry of agriculture offices in Tubas and Jenin governorates.

Almonds different packaging:

