

OMAN TRADITIONAL PALM DATES: PRODUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF PALM DATE CROP IN OMAN

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Date production in the world is only confined to a small number of countries, most of them being the Arab countries. However, the date industry in the Arab world is not yet fully developed and concerted efforts are still needed to fully utilize the tremendous potential of date tree as a commodity that can be consumed in the local market or processed for export. Date palm cultivation is one of the most important agricultural activities in Oman. It occupies more than 82% of the total fruit area and about 42% of the total agriculture land. Not only is the domestic demand met, but also a significant surplus for export is generated. Tremendous development has occurred in the production and distribution of dates during the last two decades. Traditional methods were developed to allow farmers to live in harmony with a harsh environment. The farming techniques employed required only limited inputs of capital and caused minimal disturbance to the environment. The patterns of production were truly sustainable and skills were passed from generation to generation. The majority of palm date growers in Oman still practicing traditional methods from planting the crop till is marketed. This paper examined date palm crops in terms of its traditional practice and economic development. Special emphases have been put in order to tackle the problem of dates quality. The contribution of dates to the total agriculture export was found to be low and declining