



The Reform That Will Kill Israeli Agriculture

by Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacoen

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Agriculture is a strategic national asset in Israel and its existence cannot be subject to short-term cost-benefit considerations. Without an extensive agricultural presence in the Galilee and the Negev, Israel will lose its governance in considerable areas of its sovereign territory.

The dairy and egg economy in Israel needs government planning and guidance and is therefore managed subject to production quotas. It is also committed to creating independence for Israel in the field of food with minimal dependence on imports.

A proposed new reform jeopardizes that approach.

Influenced by the “advanced” ideas of proponents of the free market economy, and in an effort to establish an American right-wing economic approach in Israel, the Israeli leadership created an ideological reservation within the remnants of Mapai’s market economy. Israeli agricultural construction has undermined the convention that the egg farm, like the dairy farm, has a national role in addition to an obligation to produce food for the country’s residents. Free market economists in Israel are toying with the idea of letting Chinese or Thais do the work and closing down family barns and chicken coops in the moshavim.

That is how you create a suburb. The Israeli planning system denies the difference that must be preserved between a village and a suburb. This entails a world of considerations.

The reform and the system of infrastructural constraints currently imposed on poultry owners are pushing Jewish farmers to the point that they have lost profitability. The immediate result is that the chicken coops are moving to the

Arab sector. No inspector will be able to enter, meaning those eggs will be unsupervised and a danger to public health. It is also worth recalling what we learned during the May riots. In the event of another violent Arab uprising, who will send eggs to city markets?

The Jews are losing their grip on Israel's open rural space, and a large part of kibbutz lands are now leased to Arabs. The Jews, meanwhile, revert to the traditional city professions they have turned to throughout their prolonged exilic existence.

The demographic problem also depends on geographical population distribution. If 20 million Jews and 5 million Arabs live in the Land of Israel between the Jordan and the sea, Jews will have a clear majority. But if 80% of those Jews are herded into the towers of the coastal strip, even if they have a numerical majority, they will lose control and, indeed, their sovereignty over the country.

The demographic layout in the Galilee and the Negev cannot be predicated on suburban villa neighborhoods like Lehavim, Omer, and Kfar Vradim. These areas desperately need Jewish farmers who are committed to agriculture and grazing. There is a lack of hard-working Jews in Israel willing to take up this obligation. If they do not step up, the Jews of the Land of Israel will end up like the Jews of the Diaspora: dependent on the sufferance of others.

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Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacoheh is a senior research fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. He served in the IDF for 42 years. He commanded troops in battles with Egypt and Syria. He was formerly a corps commander and commander of the IDF Military Colleges.