

# **The interface between agriculture and urbanization**

## **The case study of Bir al-Sika, Israel**

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The urbanization process led to significant economic and landscape changes in the Arab settlements in Israel, among them the changing characteristics of agricultural activities and the survival strategies of farming households. The major question: Is the continued existence of agricultural activities an essential element in the urbanization process of the Arab settlements? In other words, what are the survival strategies of Arab farmers under the expansion of urbanization processes and the existence of local and national barriers - economic, social and institutional - to sustainable agricultural development? The discussion is focused on the village of Bir al-Sika, where changes in land uses were examined and estimated according to a chronological sequence, followed by the attitudes of officials. The positions of farmers were reviewed in the context of the continued survival of agriculture as a significant economic activity in the urbanizing settlement.

Along with the decrease in the scope of agricultural activities, with an increase in the intensity and in productivity and a decrease in the demand for labor - as part of the farmers' survival strategy, there are changing trends that indicate the development of alternative sources of income for the farmers. This is accompanied by changes in the nature of the local infrastructure and various aspects that accompany the urbanization process. The accumulation of evolving trends is the product of sociological and conceptual changes in Arab society in Israel, local development mechanisms and processes concerning the Arab communities but is also influenced by mechanisms and processes at the national level.

**Key words:** Arab settlement, land-use, agriculture, survival strategies, officials' attitudes, farmers' attitudes