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## Cowboys of Kurdistan

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The Kurdish Globe | Saturday, 14 March 2009

*Several feedlot projects implemented in the Region.*

**Foreign investors have been given licenses to run cow farms across Kurdistan Region. Some investors have also planned to start dairy farms in the region as the need for foreign imported agricultural goods is still very much on the increase.**

During 2008, a number of local and foreign companies have submitted proposals to the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Ministry of Agriculture, for the implementation of feedlot projects in the Kurdistan Region, says Dr. Raffat Hidayat, General Manager of Animal Capital in the Agriculture Minister. The aim is to invest capital and enhancing the role of the private sector in the region's economy in general, and in the agriculture sector in particular.

A number of these proposals have been accepted by the Ministry and the companies have been granted plots of land for their projects.

Dr. Hidayat said that until now around seven foreign companies and investors have started feedlot projects for feeding cows and cattles in various areas on the region. They include the Egyptian Noor Company which has been granted a 250 hectare plot of land in Erbil Governorate, which is to be used for feeding 5000 cows and 1000 cattles. They are also planning to open feedlots in Suleimaniya and Duhok, for which lands will be allocated. Additionally,



the British UK company has been granted 152 hectares in Erbil, near Erbil International Airport. Other licensed projects include one implemented by Shiwa Company on a 62 hectare plot of land and another by Hawkar Company on a 125 hectare plot of land.

On the other hand, a Swedish company is trying to implement a dairy production and processing factory in Garman area, especially for those Kurds who return from Europe. This is in addition to several other dairy, feedlot and food processing projects implemented by foreign and local Kurdish companies and investors.

Ministry of Agriculture supports all such projects to boost the level of the domestic agricultural and food production in the region. However, it only helps them in granting plots of land for the projects. On the other hand, for other needs such as alfalfa, the companies have to seek support of the farmers to allocate more land for growing alfalfa, storing and establishing factories.

The move forward in domestic agricultural production is the focus of the Agriculture Ministry's five year strategic plan which has been announced last month. According to the plan, by 2013, domestic agricultural and food production is to fulfill 100% of the domestic demand and push down the need for foreign goods and imports. Nevertheless, the plan might face some difficulties due to shortage or delays in the budget. And budget has already become a hindrance on the way of implementing the plan as the approval of 2009's budget was delayed several times and reduced dramatically due to the sharp fall in oil revenues as the price of oil keeps declining in the world markets.

Currently, the production sector in the region is very weak and Kurdistan's market mainly depends on imports from neighboring countries, and only a small part of its market demand is fulfilled by domestic products.

Even this small portion of the product is produced in a traditional and inefficient way due to lack of modern agricultural and production technologies, skills, and sources of finance.

However, recently some efforts have been made to help out farmers and businesses in enhancing their productions. Some NGOs arrange trainings for farmers and some other companies and organizations have initiated microfinance plan to facilitate the farmers' access to finance and improve their businesses.

**Source:** [The Kurdish Globe](#)

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