



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/new-water-source-renews-optimism-moroccan-farmers>

# New Water Source Renews Optimism for Moroccan Farmers



Jake Lyell/MCC

The MCC-funded irrigation of the Douirane Perimeter in Chichaoua Province, Morocco, has brought increased productivity to smallholder farmers on this 1700 hectare area of land. Here, farmer Brik Ait Ali Ou Massoud harvests wheat.

Brik Ait Ou Massoud first wandered around the family olive orchard when he was just a toddler. He followed his father into the family business and, now in his 80s, he still grows crops in the same orchard that has provided his family's livelihood for generations.

Farmers like Massoud have struggled to coax fruit from trees in the unforgiving climate in Morocco's Chichaoua province for years. Growing conditions are harsh, rainfall is unpredictable, and irrigation is inefficient and often backbreaking. Farmers walk long distances to cisterns to collect water and carry it back to their crops. When the rainfall is low, crops fail and incomes plummet. This agriculture-dependent area is one of the poorest in the country.

But the future prospects for successful harvests and higher incomes have brightened as a result of a Feed the Future project, funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, to bring water to Massoud's arid valley.

By introducing a new irrigation and water management system, Feed the Future has helped free farmers like Massoud from the constant struggles low rainfall patterns pose to their crops, changing the lives of thousands of people in this hard-pressed region. Four concrete-lined irrigation canals now capture and distribute water to over 53,000 hectares of orchards. Farmers have increased their productivity and thus their incomes by shifting from annual cereal crops to perennial fruit trees. Almost 580,000 are likely to benefit from a shift, and household income promises to rise by more than \$505 million over 20 years.

Massoud is feeling a new sense of optimism about his and his family's future. His olive harvest is up 15 percent. His trees are healthy. His income is healthier too. He is able to sell his produce domestically for table olives and olive oil. Best of all, he has more time to tend to his trees, preserve his heritage, and spend with his family—and to pass on the good news about the

improved flow of water for people in his community who hope to also make a better living from the land.