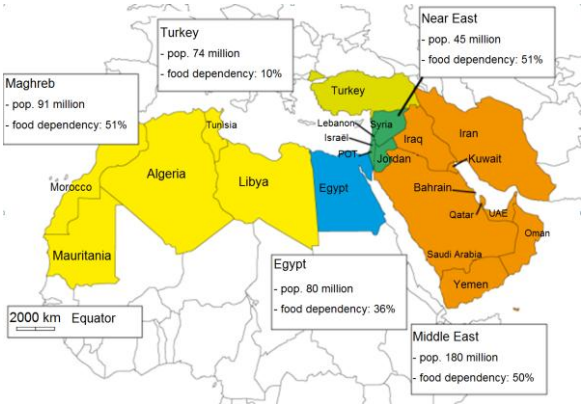
ADDRESSING FOOD DEPENDENCY IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST THROUGH THE YEAR 2050

Results from a study led by INRA, on behalf of Pluriagri, will be shared with stakeholders at a colloquium in Paris on 28 October 2015. The goal of the conference will be to consider the future of the agri-food system in the politically sensitive region of North Africa and the Middle East.



Geopolitically complex and potentially affected by powerful disruptions linked to the effects of **climate change,** North Africa and the Middle East are characterized by some of the highest levels of **food dependency** in the world: 40% of regional food consumption is currently being met by agricultural products purchased on international markets. **Reducing this food dependency is essential to eliminating the scourge of poverty in the region – particularly rural poverty.**

In recent decades, population growth and changes in dietary habits have led to a sharp increase in regional food requirements. Meanwhile, challenging soil and climatic conditions and weakly effective agricultural policies have enabled only a moderate increase in agricultural production. The gap between agricultural production and food requirements has expanded considerably, to the point where agricultural imports have become a substantial burden on the economies of these countries. Dependence on agricultural imports is likely to increase in decades to come as a result of continued population growth, changes in eating habits, and the effects of climate change on land and water resources in a region already characterized by climatic extremes. Probable knock-on effects include continued low levels of agricultural productivity – a key factor in rural poverty – and exacerbated income differentials between urban and rural areas.

To address these critical questions, the study considered a range of scenarios intended to represent potential future development pathways for the North Africa/Middle Eastern agri-food system through the year 2050. Scenarios were constructed using *GlobAgri-Pluriagri*, a model for surveying agricultural resources and food needs developed as part of the INRA/CIRAD foresight study Agrimonde-Terra. Taking prior trends as identified by a historical analysis of the agri-food system (1961-2012) as a starting point, hypotheses for the future evolution of a variety of different system components were outlined through the year 2050. Initially considered simply as trends, these hypotheses were further elaborated to include the possible impacts of climate change on the agricultural system (crop yields, cultivable land area), as well as the potential effects of other factors such as technical innovation, improved irrigation methods, rising dietary standards or various demographic and economic shifts. What insights do these findings have to offer to public policymakers and private-sector actors, both in North Africa and the Middle East and in France and in Europe more broadly?

INRA/PluriAgri "Restitution" conference

28 October 2015 @ 14:00 at FIAP Jean Monnet, 30 Rue Cabanis, 75014 Paris