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THE LANDSCAPE IN ISRAEL'S ARAVA VALLEY

is the picture of punishment. Among the driest regions on the planet, the area receives about 1 inch of rain (20 to 30 millimeters) in an average year, and temperatures soar well above 100°F (40°C) during a chunk of summer, as well as parts of spring and fall. As for the soil, it's mostly baked hardscrabble, while what little water is available is often highly saline.

The Arava, it would seem, is hardly a place for a thriving agriculture-based economy. Yet, this area along the Jordanian border and part of the larger Negev Desert, is the source of 60% of Israel's agricultural vegetable exports and a linchpin in its plans for the future.

A Message From Bob Crain: Thirst For Knowledge

How did Israel make its desert bloom? And, more broadly, how did the country overcome its own storied water shortage? We explore those questions and more in a special series of stories debuting in this issue of *FarmLife* (p. 18) and on myFarmLife.com/israel.

Given extreme drought conditions in the Western U.S. and potential shortages in many other parts of North America, we decided to take a deep dive into the topic of water and farming, as well as get a fresh perspective. Israel, the majority of which is desert and where the population, as well as farming, continues to grow significantly, offered a case study in how a thirst for knowledge (pun intended) can inspire innovation and hope. Perhaps above all, it's that sense of never-give-up optimism that we hope to share here.

There's plenty more in this issue we'd like to share as well, including tips on tractor maintenance (p. 25), and stories on a pioneer in the outdoor recreation business (p. 8) and a dairyman who applies the tenets of teamwork he learned playing football to his own farming operation (p. 12).

All in all, we're extremely excited about this issue. It's got plenty of that out-of-the-box thinking that's at the center of what we at AGCO, as well as our customers, consider so critical to success.



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PHOTO: GREG M. COOPER

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