WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Beyond Wheat: Promoting Germinated Date Seed Flour through Agricultural Extension Networks in Tunisia

23–25 November 2026 - INRAT

Sunday, 22 November 2026

Arrival day and check-in at hotel

Monday, 23 November 2026

Conference & Knowledge Sharing | Venue: El Maamouri INRAT

08:30 - 09:00 Registration of participants

09:00 - 09:35 **Welcome & Official Opening Words**

- Prof. Mondher BEN SALEM, General Director, INRAT
- Dr. Olfa MESSAOUD, Assistant Professor, University Tunis El Manar, AGYA Alumna
- Prof. Ali CHEBIL, Director of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Research Programs, Institute of Agricultural Research and Higher Education (IRESA)

09:35 - 09:45 **Workshop Introduction** - Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus & Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT

Conference Sessions

09:45 - 10:05 **Date Palm Sector in Tunisia: Current Situation and Perspectives** - Aicha GHEZAL, Assistant Director of Fruits, General Direction of Agricultural Production (DGPA)

10:05 - 10:25 **Tunisian Dates: Between Food Traditions, Nutritional Quality and Sustainable Innovation** - Ms. Sonia AOUNI, Nutritionist and Consultant in Healthy and Sustainable Food

10:25 - 10:45 **German Perspective on Food Fortification and Sustainable Food Systems** - Dr. Layla ENGELHARDT, Scientist, University of Göttingen

10:45 - 11:05 **Date Seeds: A By-Product with High Bioactive Potential for the Development of Innovative Formulations** - Prof. Moufida. S. TOUNSI, Full Professor, Center of Biotechnology of Borj Cedria (CBBC)

11:05 - 11:25 **Panel Session: Tunisian Perspectives on Sustainable Food Systems, Agricultural By-Products, and Community Nutrition**

- Dr. Henda MAHMOUDI, Plant Physiologist, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), AGYA Alumna
- Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT

Moderator: Prof. Ahmed DEBEZ, Associate Professor, Center of Biotechnology of Borj Cedria (CBBC), AGYA Alumnus

11:25 - 11:55	**Coffee Break**
11:55 - 12:15	**Value Addition of Germinated Date Seeds for Fortified Bakery Products - Covering Community Involvement, Nutritional and Economic Benefits, Technical Processing Methods, and Product Applications** - Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus & Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT
12:15 - 12:35	**VACPA Industry: Valorization of Deglet Nour Date By-Products and their Derivatives** - Dr. Nahla ZGHONDA, Head of Technology Transfer and Innovation, Boudjebel VACPA
12:35 - 12:55	**Enhancing the Sustainability of Oasis Agroecosystems through Date Palm By-Product Valorization** - Dr. Henda MAHMOUDI, Plant Physiologist, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), AGYA Alumna
12:55 - 13:15	**Open Discussion: Scaling up Community-led Food Initiatives; Stakeholder Dialogue with Academics, Extension Officers, and Policymakers** Moderators: Dr. Henda MAHMOUDI, Plant Physiologist, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), AGYA Alumna & Dr. Mouna BOULARES, Assistant Professor, Higher Institute of Food Industries of Tunisia (ESIAT)
13:15 - 14:40	**Lunch**
14:40 - 15:00	**Valorization of Date Seed Polysaccharides as Encapsulation Matrices for Essential Oils Against Stored Product Insect Pests** - Prof. Jouda BEN JEMAA, Full Professor, INRAT
15:00 - 15:20	**Valorization of Date By-products in Gluten-Free Flour Blends for Breadmaking** - Dr. Dorra SFAYHI, Researcher, INRAT
15:20 - 15:40	**Professional Training as a Key Driver for Empowering Rural Women in Southern Tunisia through Date Processing** - Ms. Sghaira ABDENNOUR, SANA Training Center
15:40 - 16:20	**Poster Session**
16:20 - 17:00	**Closing Session and Best Poster Award Ceremony**

Tuesday, 24 November 2026

Hands-on Training | Venue: INRAT

09:00 - 09:30	**Opening Remarks and Welcome** - Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus; Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT & Dr. Sourour AYED, Head of Field Crops Laboratory, INRAT
09:30 - 10:30	**Overview of the Training Sessions: Interactive Quiz and Guidelines for Good Hygiene Practices** - Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT & Dr. Mouna BOULARES, Assistant Professor, Higher Institute of Food Industries of Tunisia (ESIAT)
10:30 - 11:00	**Coffee Break**

Training - Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus; Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT & Dr. Mouna BOULARES, Assistant Professor, Higher Institute of Food Industries of Tunisia (ESIAT)

11:00 - 13:00 **Session I: From Date Seeds to Germinated Date Seeds Flour -** selection and collection of date seeds / washing and cleaning / disinfection / germination / milling

13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch**

14:00 - 17:00 **Session II: Characterization of Germinated Date Seed Flour -** quality analysis of the germinated date seeds / commercial germinated date seeds flour labeling requirements / packaging specifications of the germinated date seeds flour

Wednesday, 25 November 2026

Hands-on Training & Closing | Venue: INRAT

09:00 - 09:30 **Recap and Round Table Discussion: Reflections and Questions, Providing Recipe Documentation and Standardized Guide -** Dr. Jazia SRITI, Associate Professor, Center of Biotechnology of Borj Cedria (CBBC); Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT & Dr. Mouna BOULARES, Assistant Professor, Higher Institute of Food Industries of Tunisia (ESIAT)

09:30 - 10:00 **Coffee Break**

10:00 - 13:00 **Training Session III: From Germinated Date Seeds Flour to Cereal Products**
Preparation of: gluten free products / bakery products (bread, cookies and snacks) / pasta and couscous / local Tunisian cereal products (tabouna, mellaoui, nwasser,…)

Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus; Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT; Dr. Mouna BOULARES, Assistant Professor, Higher Institute of Food Industries of Tunisia (ESIAT); Dr. Jazia SRITI, Associate Professor, Center of Biotechnology of Borj Cedria (CBBC) & Dr. Dorra SAFAYHI, Associate Professor, INRAT

13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch**

14:00 - 16:30 **Training Session IV: Product Tasting, Sensory Evaluation, and Participant Feedback**
Dr. Karima GABSI, General Manager, EURO SENSOLAB; Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus & Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT

16:30 - 17:00 **Wrap-up, Next Steps and Closing Remarks -** Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN, Full Professor, King Saud University, AGYA Alumnus & Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG, Assistant Professor, INRAT

Organizing Committee:

- Prof. Amro BABIKER HASSAN (King Saud University & AGYA)
- Dr. Mouna BOULARES (ESIAT)
- Dr. Dorra SFAYHI (INRAT)
- Prof. Mariem BOUHADIDA (INRAT)
- Sameh AOUADI (INRAT)
- Dr. Youkabed ZARROUG (INRAT)
- Corinna NAWATZKY (AGYA)
- Dr. Jazia SRITI (CBBC)
- Dr. Taoufik HOSNI (INRAT)
- Dhoha MECHERGUI (INRAT)