Introduction and research problem

Economic development is an important goal for all human societies in order to achieve the well-being of all their members since the agricultural sector is a basic pillar in the national income of most of these societies; agricultural development is an important component of the economic process (Al-Jubouri 2009: 488). Accordingly, there are many reasons that make agricultural development a vital matter for any community; the degree of importance of each of these reasons varies according to the community’s conditions and needs. The number of population, the rate of population increase, the extent to which the current agriculture meets the needs of society, the...
extent of development in the standard of living, and international conditions that affect the
determination of the importance of self-reliance or the extent of the possibility of dependence on
others in providing food needs. All of these factors are important and influential in one way or
another in determining the degree of community interest in agricultural development (Abd al-
Salam, 2012: 10). Accordingly, this importance doubles in many societies of developing countries,
including Iraq, whose agricultural sector is the main pillar of their national economy (Al-Awsy,
2008: 344). A large proportion of natural and human resources are concentrated in rural areas.
Therefore, achieving economic and social development requires directing efforts to develop and
develop the countryside and enhance the contributions of the agricultural sector to the life of the
rural community (Al-Rimawi, 1996: 13). The agricultural sector in Iraq is one of the main
productive sectors, due to its abundance of natural resources (Arab Organization for Agricultural
Development, 1997: 12). Which contributes significantly to building the Iraqi national economy
because it provides food and job opportunities for the population, as about 45% of the rural
population depends on it, and about 20% of the workforce is employed in it, and the group of
agricultural products, including vegetable crops, is one of the most important pillars and
components of that economy (Abboud, 2003: 1). Agricultural production is the field of producing
agricultural goods necessary for the livelihood of the population, and scientific expectations for the
development of this field from the fields of national production in particular require a
comprehensive knowledge of the specificity of this production and its stages of development and
familiarity with all its different aspects (Al-Aref, 2010: 74) especially since the world today is
witnessing scientific progress in the agricultural field, so it has become necessary to encourage
farmers to use modern technologies and scientific recommendations related to agriculture.
Especially since the main goal of using modern agricultural technology is to work to increase
production and reduce production costs for its unit. This is through the adoption of procedures that
ensure changes and alterations in the means and methods of agricultural production used and
resulting from the introduction of new production methods such as modern agricultural
mechanization, the introduction of chemistry and genetic engineering in agriculture, the use of new
varieties, the amendment of planting dates, agricultural cycles, the use of advanced irrigation
systems and other modern practices (Al-Tanoubi, 2001: 40) among the modern practices is the
application of protected farming systems in vegetable production. Protected agriculture is an
important agricultural and economic activity in many countries of the world, including Iraq, in
which the proportion of the area of this type of agriculture increased at the end of the last century
compared to what it was in the seventies. Among the modern practices is the application of
protected agriculture systems in vegetable production. (Arab Organization for Agricultural
Development, 1999: 98). Protected agriculture of vegetables means ((producing them in special
facilities called The greenhouses for the purpose of protecting them from unsuitable weather
conditions in other than their usual seasons)) and the vegetables within these greenhouses have
environmental conditions that suit them in terms of temperature, the intensity of lighting, and ideal
nutrition (Al-Sayed, 2006: 237). The production of vegetables under this method of agriculture
greatly exceeds their productivity within the open cultivation method and thus it is a better
opportunity for farmers to obtain a higher income compared to open cultivation (Wady, 2006: 3).
Accordingly, protected agriculture in Iraq witnessed an expansion in the cultivated area in the last
century, as the percentage of this type of cultivation was 4% of the total cultivated area in 1970 and
became 6% in the 1980s. (Al-Samarrai, 2000: 1) And it reached 16% at the end of the 1990s (Arab
Organization for Agricultural Development, 1997: 98). This is with regard to areas in Iraq in
general. As for the area of specialization and the research area, the latest statistics of the Samarra
Agriculture Division indicate that the number of greenhouses in the district is estimated at (700)
greenhouses managed and employed by (239) farmers. In spite of the large areas cultivated with this
pattern, it is noticed that there is a decrease in production as agricultural statistics indicate a
decrease in vegetable production from 116.29 to 114.93 thousand Tons/Acres during the years
2003-2007 and the vegetables within these greenhouses have environmental conditions that suit
them in terms of temperature, the intensity of lighting, and ideal nutrition (Al-Sayed, 2006: 237).
The production of vegetables under this method of agriculture greatly exceeds their productivity within the open cultivation method and thus it is a better opportunity for farmers to obtain a higher income compared to open cultivation (Wady, 2006: 3). Accordingly, protected agriculture in Iraq witnessed an expansion in the cultivated area in the last century, as the percentage of this type of cultivation was 4% of the total cultivated area in 1970 and became 6% in the 1980s. (Al-Samarrai, 2000: 1) And it reached 16% at the end of the 1990s (Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, 1997: 98). This is with regard to areas in Iraq in general. As for the area of specialization and the research area, the latest statistics of the Samarra Agriculture Division indicate that the number of greenhouses in the district is estimated at (700) greenhouses managed and employed by (239) farmers. In spite of the large areas cultivated with this pattern, it is noticed that there is a decrease in production as agricultural statistics indicate a decrease in vegetable production from 116.29 to 114.93 thousand Tons/Acres during the years 2003-2007., which is the main and important in the production process. Since the greenhouse technology is a modern technology entering the country, what the farmer possesses of cumulative experiences as a result of the little practice is weak according to the number of years of work of the farmers in the field of protected agriculture. Therefore, it is important to stand at the level of knowledge of greenhouse farmers. It is the responsibility of the agricultural extension agencies to deliver and transmit the results of research, and the methods, ideas, and modern agricultural methods involved to farmers, and to follow up their implementation of them, which leads to higher productivity and consequently increased incomes and higher economic and social levels. The advancement of agriculture and the rise of society. Agricultural extension plays an important role in developing the expertise and knowledge of farmers by replacing traditional methods and methods with modern production methods and methods. The role of agricultural extension is not limited to the process of transferring and communicating the results of research and the new practices, experiences, and agricultural methods to farmers and peasants, but rather its effective research on the various obstacles facing farmers and identifying their needs. Then the transfer of these problems and needs to research centers to find appropriate solutions or ways to address them (Kashash, 2009: 202). Hence the idea of this research to answer the following questions:

1- What is the level of knowledge of eggplant farmers of the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses in Zalaya village?

2- What is the relationship between the level of knowledge of eggplant farmers with the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses and each of the following independent variables (age, educational level, land possession, information sources, the number of years of crop cultivation)?

- **Research Objectives**

1-Determine the level of knowledge of eggplant farmers with the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses in Zalaya village.

2-Determine the relationship between the level of knowledge of eggplant farmers' knowledge of the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses and each of the following independent variables (age, educational level, land possession, information sources, the number of years of crop cultivation).

- **Research hypotheses:**

1. There is no significant relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations regarding its cultivation in greenhouses and age.

2. There is no significant relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations regarding its cultivation in greenhouses and the educational level.
3. There is no significant relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers and the most important scientific recommendations regarding cultivation of eggplant in greenhouses and the possession of land.

4. There is no significant relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations regarding its cultivation in greenhouses and information sources.

5. There is no significant relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations regarding its cultivation in greenhouses and the number of years of crop cultivation.

- **Procedural definitions:**
  1. Knowledge level: The level of information that eggplant farmers possess with the scientific recommendations related to growing it in greenhouses.
  2. Greenhouse farmers: All the farmers who use greenhouses to produce vegetables in Zaliya village / Samarra district.
  3. Protected agriculture: Vegetable cultivation under controlled conditions at the premature time and it is protected from weather conditions by growing them under plastic sheets of all kinds. Among these vegetables is the eggplant product.

- **Materials and research methods**
  1. Research methodology:
    The descriptive approach was used in conducting the research in order to detect the reality, and to identify the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses.
  2. Research area:
    The research area is the Zalaya village of in the Samarra district.
  3. Geographical scope of the search:
    Al Zalaya village was chosen as an area to conduct the research for the following reasons:
    1. The large capacity of the geographical area.
    2. Taking the effort, costs and time of the researcher into consideration.
    3. Eggplant is one of the most common vegetable products grown in greenhouses, and upon it, it was focused in the current research.
  4. Research Society and Sample:
    Research Population included eggplant farmers in greenhouses in Zaliya village / Samarra district, whose number is (148)* farmers, excluded from them (15) farmers included in the pretest of the questionnaire and thus the total number of community members is (133). A random sample of (75%) was taken from them and the number of those included in the study became (100) farmers.

- Measuring search variables:
  1. Measurement of Independent Factors: The independent variables included in the study were measured as follows:
    1. Age: It was measured by the number of years of age of respondents until the date of data collection.
    2. The educational level: It means the educational stage respondents completed, as the educational level was measured according to the following:
       illiterate, read and write, elementary graduate, intermediate graduate, high school graduate, institute graduate, college graduate, and for the purpose of measurement, she was given the following numerical values: (1,2,3,4,5,6,7) respectively.
Land possession: It was measured by classifying the respondents’ lands into four categories (ownership, contract, lease, and participation) and the numerical values were given (1,2,3,4) respectively.

3- Sources of information: It was measured through (10) paragraphs to find out the sources of information using the scale (always, sometimes, I do not get) and the numerical values were given (1,2,3) respectively Thus, the values expressed for the variable are limited between (10-30).

4- The number of years of crop cultivation: It was measured in the number of years the crop was grown

**B – Measuring knowledge level of eggplant farmers in greenhouses using the most important recommended scientific techniques:**

The level of knowledge of eggplant growers of the most important scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses was measured by: (50) paragraphs, the degree of (1) was specified for the correct answer and (zero) for the wrong answer, and therefore, the highest score obtained by the respondent is (50) and the lowest score is (0), after obtaining knowledge level scores for all the respondents, and for the sake of describing the respondents, the knowledge level scores were classified into three levels: low, medium, and high, and the number of respondents, the percentage and the average level of knowledge for each category were calculated.

As for the relative importance of the fields of the knowledge level of greenhouse, growers has been appreciated by experts. Where their rates and estimates were approved for each area of agricultural development obstacles, as shown in Table (1)

**Table (1): The average relative importance of expert estimates for the fields of knowledge level of greenhouse growers**

| No | Domains of the cognitive level                  | Average relative importance of expert opinion | Number of paragraphs |
|----|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1  | Create a greenhouse                             | 24                                            | 12                   |
| 2  | Agricultural operations / soil service          | 20                                            | 10                   |
| 3  | Agricultural operations / crop service          | 42                                            | 21                   |
| 4  | Marketing operations                             | 14                                            | 7                    |
|    | **Total**                                        | **100%**                                      | **50**               |

**Statistical methods and means:**

For the purpose of reaching the research aims, many statistical methods and means were used, such as: range, arithmetic mean, simple correlation coefficient (Pearson), Spearman's law of correlation, (t) test, percentage.

**Results and discussion:**

The first objective: Determine the level of knowledge of eggplant farmers with the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in greenhouses in Zalaya district.

The results showed that the highest numeric value for the level of knowledge of eggplant farmers with the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in
greenhouses is 44 degrees, and the lowest numerical value is 19 on the knowledge level scale with a
degree between (0-50) degrees with an average of 30.5 degrees and a standard deviation of 5.03,
egggplant farmers were divided into three categories according to their knowledge scores (low,
medium, high) as shown in the table No (2).
Table (2) Distribution of the respondents according to the knowledge level of eggplant
farmers with the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in
greenhouses in Zalaya district

| Categories | Cognitive level degrees | the number | % | Cognitive level rate | X | s.d |
|------------|-------------------------|------------|---|----------------------|---|-----|
| Low        | 19-27                   | 24         | 24 | 24.5                 |   |     |
| Middle     | 28-36                   | 61         | 61 | 30.6                 | 30.5 | 5.03 |
| High       | 37-45                   | 15         | 15 | 39.9                 |   |     |
| Total      | 100                     | 100        |    |                      |   |     |

from the table No (2), it shows that the majority of the respondents have a medium level of
knowledge that tends to Low, and this may be due to many reasons, including the weakness or lack
of extension service provided to vegetable farmers with the most important scientific
recommendations for cultivating eggplant, and for the farmers ’adherence to the traditional farming
methods that they are accustomed to in cultivating their open fields.
The second Objective: Determine the relationship between the level of knowledge of eggplant
farmers with the most important recommended scientific recommendations for growing it in
greenhouses and each of the independent variables, namely:
First - Age: -
The results of the research showed that the ages of the respondents ranged between (20-57)
years with an average of 34.5years and a standard deviation of 10.7 degrees. The respondents were
distributed into three age categories as shown in table No. (3):
Table (3) Distribution of respondents according to age groups and its relationship to
knowledge level

| Age groups | the number | % | knowledg e level average | Correlatio n coefficient | Significant at the level |
|------------|------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 20-32      | 56         | 56 | 29.2                     |                          |                         |
| 33-45      | 23         | 23 | 30.5                     | 0.28**                   | 0.01                    |
| 46-58      | 21         | 21 | 34                       |                          |                         |
| Total      | 100        | 100|                          |                          |                         |

The table No (3) indicates that the highest percentage of respondents fall within the first age
group and the lowest percentage falls within the third age group and to find the correlation between
the knowledge level of eggplant growers with the most important scientific recommendations on growing eggplant in greenhouses and age, the simple Pearson correlation the coefficient was used, whose value was (0.28 **). This indicates the existence of a positive significant relationship at the probability level (0.01). So we reject the statistical hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This means that the level of knowledge of farmers increases with increasing age, and this is due to the fact that older farmers have more field experience as a result of accumulating years of agricultural work.

Second - Educational level:

The results of the research showed that the educational level of the respondents ranged between (illiterate - college), and the respondents were divided according to the educational level into six categories, as shown in the following table No. (4):

| educational level categories | number | %  | The knowledge level | Correlation coefficient rs | Significant at the level |
|-----------------------------|--------|----|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Illiterate                  | 12     | 12 | 24                  |                           |                          |
| read and write              | 18     | 18 | 30                  |                           |                          |
| elementary graduate         | 11     | 11 | 30                  |                           |                          |
| intermediate graduate       | 13     | 13 | 31                  |                           |                          |
| high school graduate,       | 26     | 26 | 30                  |                           |                          |
| institute graduate          | 9      | 9  | 34                  |                           |                          |
| college graduate            | 11     | 11 | 36                  |                           |                          |
| Total                       | 100    | 100|                     | 0.45**                    | 0.01                     |

To find out the correlational relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations related to cultivating it in greenhouses and the educational level, used the Spearman correlation equation, whose value was (0.45 **). This indicates that there is a significant correlation relationship at the level of 0.01. Therefore, we refuse the statistical hypothesis, and we accept the alternative hypothesis, which means that the knowledge level of greenhouse farmers increases with the increase in the educational level. This result may be attributed to the fact that more educated farmers seek to obtain and benefit from many educational experiences, especially those related to greenhouses. Also, farmers with educational certificates are more aware of the use of everything new and then applies the practices more than others.

Third: - Land possession:

When the respondents are distributed according to the possession of the land, it was found that the highest percentage of them are from the category of contract holders, then the owners, then the leaseholders and finally the group of participants, as in the following table 5:
Table (5) Distribution of eggplant growers according to categories of land possession and their relationship to knowledge level

| land possession categories | number | %  | Cognitive level average | Correlation coefficient rs | Significant at the level |
|----------------------------|--------|----|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participants               | 13     | 13 | 27                      |                           |                          |
| Rent                       | 20     | 20 | 28                      |                           |                          |
| Contract                   | 42     | 42 | 31                      | 0.52**                    | 0.01                     |
| Owner                      | 25     | 25 | 34                      |                           |                          |
| Total                      | 100    | 100|                         |                           |                          |

To find out the correlational relationship between the knowledge level of eggplant farmers with the most important scientific recommendations related to cultivating it in greenhouses, and the possession of the land, the Spearman correlation equation was used, whose value was (0.52**), and this indicates there is a positive direct relationship between them this indicates the existence of a significant correlation at 0.01 level. Therefore, we reject the statistical hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The reason may be Contract Owners may seek to increase productivity in order to achieve remunerative profits and pay the contract value.

Forth: - Sources of information:

The results showed that the lowest score obtained by the respondents was (7), the highest was (29). This variable was divided into three categories as follows: as in the following table 6:

Table (6) Distribution of eggplant farmers according to categories of information sources and their relationship to knowledge level

| information sources Categories | number | %  | The average of the knowledge level | the significant correlation | Significant at the level |
|-------------------------------|--------|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7-14                          | 35     | 35 | 29                                 | 0.16                        | Not Significant at the level |
| 15-22                         | 31     | 31 | 32                                 |                             |                          |
| 23-30                         | 34     | 34 | 30                                 |                             |                          |
| total                         | 100    | 100|                                   |                             |                          |

The table No (6) indicates that the highest percentage of respondents obtaining information resources was 35% within the high category, with an average knowledge of 31, and the lowest percentage in the intermediate category of 31%, with an average of 32 .To find the correlation between the knowledge level and the information sources, used the Spearman correlation equation numerator correlation coefficient (0.16) This indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables. To accept the statistical hypothesis.
Five : - The number of years of crop cultivation

The results of the research showed that the number of years of cultivation of eggplant ranged between (10-36) years, with an average of 24.2 years and a standard deviation of 8.2. The respondents were divided into three categories, as shown in the following table No. (7)

Table (7) Distribution of the respondents according to the categories of the number of years of cultivation of eggplant and their relationship to the cognitive level.

| The number of years | number | %  | The average of the knowledge level |  - | s.d | the significant correlation | Significant at the level |
|---------------------|--------|----|-----------------------------------|----|-----|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 18 -10              | 28     | 28 | 29                                |    |     |                              |                         |
| 27– 19              | 28     | 28 | 30                                | 24.2| 8.2 | 0.31**                       | 0.01                    |
| 36- 28              | 44     | 44 | 32                                |    |     |                              |                         |
| total               | 100    | 100|                                  |    |     |                              |                         |

To find out whether there is a correlation between the level of knowledge with the scientific recommendations on growing eggplant in greenhouses and the number of years of cultivation I used the simple person correlation equation with a value of 0.31 **, and this indicates the existence of a significant correlation relationship at 0.01 level, so we reject the null hypothesis, and we accept the alternative hypothesis. This result may be interpreted to the fact that the number of years that eggplant growers spend growing it generates accumulated knowledge as a result of their passing through many experiences and providing them with information in growing this crop.

Conclusions:

From the results of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1- The respondents still adhere to some traditional methods of protected agriculture, including the methods used in the cultivation of plastic tunnels, and did not rise to the agricultural standards necessary for the cultivation of greenhouses.

2- Eggplant growers in greenhouses with more knowledge is the eldest, those with a higher educational level, and the owners of land, property and contracts, and therefore it can be judged that this segment of farmers can be approached with extension activities to raise their level of efficiency and production. Local leaders and mentorship others can learn from.

3- Concentrating extension efforts and participating in extension activities and providing agricultural machinery and supplies in the front of farmers will lead to raise the level of knowledge and then the quantity, and quality of agricultural production, and will push continuously to follow the scientific and advisory recommendations, which is hoped for a continuous increase in knowledge, which may transform their plastic houses into indicative views For others, we guarantee through it to raise their knowledge and achieve their cognitive, and productive progress.

Recommendations:

1- In order to avoid the decline in the knowledge level of eggplant cultivation with the most important recommended agriculturally scientific recommendations and to fill the deficiency in agricultural information and knowledge. The matter requires the Governorate Agriculture Directorate to plan training programs based on knowledge needs, and to intensify extension activities based on planned
programs to work to fill the lack of knowledge related to what is required by protected agriculture, especially in greenhouses.

2- Providing access to knowledge from many agricultural, extension, educational sources. With the necessity of coordination and cooperation with colleges, institutes, agricultural research stations continuously to know the latest developments in the field of agricultural extension and agricultural research.

3- Make the department of agriculture in the governorate to prepare a number of agriculture extension worker trained in the field of protected agriculture from graduates of agricultural colleges to take over the task of agriculture extension worker for greenhouse farmers in all fields due to its importance in providing vegetables to the markets.

4- Providing simple informative brochures for greenhouse farmers to deliver information and knowledge to them.

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الخلاصة

تهدف البحث التعرف على مستوى معرفة زراع البذنجان بأهم التوصيات العلمية لزراعتها في البيوت المحمية وعلاقتها بعض المتغيرات في قرية الزلاية / قضاء سامراء

باحثون

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الخلاصة

تم بناء مقياس مستوى المعرفة لزراع البذنجان البلاستيكي، وتضمن (4) مجالات. المجال الأول إنشاء البيوت البلاستيكي يضم فترات المجال الثالث (5) فترات، والمجال الثاني (10) فترات، والمجال الأول (2) فترات.

وجاءت نتائج البحث باستخدام برنامج تحليل الإحصائي Spss

1- أن 52% من المحbiosعين كان مستوى معرفتهم ضمن الفئة المتوسطة وسمت متوسط مقارانا (30.5) درجة، مما يعني أن أكثر المحbiosعين لديهم نقص في مستوى معرفة زراع محصول البذنجان بأهم التوصيات العلمية والخاصة بزراعةه في البلاستيكي.
2- وجد علاقة ارتباط بين المستوى المعرفى لزراع البذنجان بأهم التوصيات العلمية الخاصة بزراعته في البيوت البلاستيكي وكل من: العمر، مستوى التعليم، حيزة الأرض.

كلمات مفتاحية: البذنجان، مستوى معرفي، بيوب البلاستيكي.