

# NEWS

## From GEORGIA TECH'S ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT STATION

Atlanta, Georgia 30332

Contact: Mark Hodges/Ray Moore  
(404) 894-3405

TECH RESEARCHER HELPS ALGERIA

March 26, 1980

DEVELOP RURAL SOLAR PROGRAM

For Immediate Release

ATLANTA, GA....Algeria expects to run out of fossil fuels in 30 years and a crash program in solar technology may fill in the resulting energy gap.

A Georgia Tech scientist working for UNESCO is one of the key advisors helping the North African nation plan for its energy future.

"They're working on a fairly tight time frame to introduce some other energy form," said J. D. Walton Jr. of Tech's Engineering Experiment Station. "They don't have large quantities of wood but the country does get plenty of usable sunlight."

Walton spent the month of February in Algeria, looking for ways to introduce solar energy in rural areas.

The Algerian government plans to build 1,000 new villages, most of them at least partially fueled by power from the sun. The program is an attempt to slow migration from rural areas into Algeria's overcrowded cities - and to build a stronger national agriculture.

"One of the country's major problems is that they must import nearly all of their food," Walton said. "The government is emphasizing agricultural development and solar can do a lot to promote that."

Solar energy will be tapped for such vital functions as crop drying and irrigation. Rural communities also can use it to heat water for central baths and bakeries as well as for private homes.

(more)

Walton has proposed that the Algerian government import solar technology from the United States until the country learns enough to build and operate its own systems.

Algeria's experience with solar is limited largely to single units such as collectors, Walton said.

"They need to learn to use complete systems," he added. "We could give them the training and technical expertise they must have to approach energy independence."

Walton believes that Georgia Tech could provide the technical expertise Algeria needs if his proposals are approved.

His February visit was his third to Algeria for UNESCO. Walton is a specialist in high temperature solar systems and acting chief scientist of Tech's Engineering Extension Laboratory.

# # #