



# Shmitta Today - What is Practiced in Israel?

<b>Solution</b>	<b>Heter Mechira</b>	<b>Otzar Beit Din</b>	<b>Importation</b>
<i>Prominent backer</i>	Rav Kook	Chazon Ish	Rav Elyashiv
<i>Who gives the hechser today</i>	Local chief rabbis	Otzar Ha'aretz	Badatz
<i>Goal of the solution</i>	To unify Israelis and make it possible for all to engage in Shmitta without going financial ruin	Solution for religious farmers who want to keep Shmitta	Solution for religious, non-farmers who do not want to consume any problematic material
<i>How it works</i>	Jewish farmers sell their lands to non-Jews, but then continue to work the fields doing permitted labor, or hire non-Jews to do non-permitted labor. They rely on the psak that a) you may rent Israeli land to non-Jews, and that foods that grew on non-Jewish owned lands in Israel does not have the status of shevi'it	The farmers relinquish control of their land. Agents of the court may come and harvest, even using methods that would be prohibited to regular farmers, as described by the Tosefta She'viit. The Beit Din hires the original farmers as its agents, and the now agents get paid for their labor. All restrictions on fruits and vegetables apply	Import fruits and vegetables from outside Israel. No kedusha on the produce, so no restrictions apply
<i>Who uses it?</i>	Most farmers	Religious farmers who don't want to use heter mechira	Chareidim
<i>Disadvantages</i>	Undermines shmitta, sells land to non-Jews (a big halachik no-no according to many opinions), supports Arabs (a big no-no for many religious farmers who view them as the enemy)	Only works for some farmers, not a national solution. One is still not permitted to plow, seed, and do other biblically prohibited actions.	Hurts Israeli farmers, drives up prices
<i>Advantages</i>	Works for all, supported by Rav Kook, just as much of a legal fiction as otzar beit din, prices stay low	If you don't believe in heter mechira, this is a way of preserving shmitta and keeping Israeli produce going, one gets to eat Sheviit fruits (understood to be a mitzvah by some)	Chareidim don't stumble on any halachot of shmitta.