

The Rubber Outgrowers Unit (ROU) is the extension wing of the Ghana Rubber Estates Limited (GREL) responsible for the implementation of the Rubber Outgrower Plantations Project (ROPP). ROPP is a government project aimed at assisting Outgrowers to alleviate poverty. The vision of the unit is economic empowerment through rubber cultivation for sustainable rural community development to alleviate poverty. Its mission statement are to deliver quality and affordable inputs and services to rubber Outgrowers through advance and innovative technology; to enable Outgrowers have sustainable income, enjoy a better living and to contribute to national development and to collaborate with all stakeholders to effectively and efficiently utilize public funds to improve the living standards of the rural communities.

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Plant Rubber Trees



The Paraa

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PLANTING SCHEDULE FOR 2011

Field planting in 2011 is scheduled to take place from 18th April provided the weather conditions are favorable. Extraction and distribution of stumps in polybags to outgrowers would be carried out during this time.

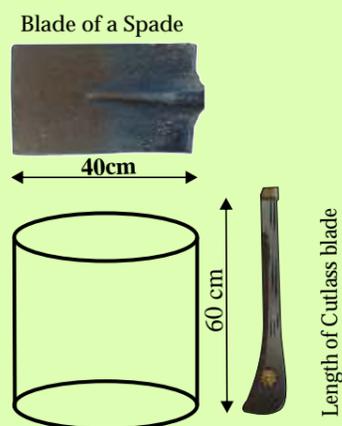
Planting of the stumps in polybags would be carried out three (3) days after the materials are distributed to the outgrowers. For this reason, outgrowers whose farms are very close to motorable roads would be considered in the distribution of the polybags because of the problems associated with conveying the materials from points of off-loading to the farms. On the other hand, planting of bare root stump would also start from 10th May to 20th June. During this period, all field plantings together with replacement planting should be undertaken. In order that outgrowers do not miss out on the planting schedule, their land preparation must be completed by March ending for lining and pegging and holing to be carried out in April. The standard holing dimensions should be 40cm x 40cm x 60cm. This means the holes should be at least 40cm wide and 60cm deep.

The phase IV outgrowers who planted in 2010, but could not complete the target of 2,220 trees are supposed to complete the target in 2011. Again a total of 1110 trees equivalent to two (2) hectares would be planted for newly selected farmers in 2011. The rest would be planted in 2012.

Since good plantation establishment start from land preparation, outgrowers are to ensure that they have quality land preparation. This would help reduce the incidence of termites on the rubber trees when planted, reduce the mortality rate, ease movement of personnel and inputs and ultimately reduce cost of maintenance of the farm.



Holing dimensions



RUBBER OUTGROWER UNIT (ROU)

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PLANT RUBBER TREES

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GUARANTEEING FOOD SECURITY-Increasing Food Crop Production Per Unit Area



MD of GREL, Mr. Marc Genot

As part of its contribution to ensuring food security, Ghana Rubber Estates Limited would provide technical assistance to rubber farmers interested in food crop production to increase their output per unit area. In this way, farmers would be able to sufficiently produce quality and sustainable food crops. Since the gestation period of rubber is seven years, it is anticipated that the income realized from the sale of the food crop by the farmers would be used to sustain themselves and their families during the immature stages of the rubber and also for consumption. Against this background, ROU of GREL conducted a survey in 2010 on suitable food crops which are grown in rubber growing areas. Plantain/banana, maize, vegetables, pineapple and rice were found to be the major food crops cultivated in all the areas surveyed. For this reason, a Field Manager solely in-charge of Food Crop Production has been employed to manage the programme. Under the programme, farmers would be educated on the need to adopt good

agricultural practices as far as food crop production is concerned. The food crop production programme would be implemented in two main ways.

First, rubber farmers who want to cultivate any food crop of their choice including cassava on their farms where rubber is not cultivated would be given technical assistance.

Second, farmers who have used their lands to plant rubber and still want to go into food crop production would be guided to do the intercropping.

Benefits of intercropping food crops are enormous. Prominent among them is that it serves as a source of income in the immature stages of the rubber. The recommended food crops include vegetables, maize, plantain, banana, pineapple, rice and cocoyam. Cassava cultivation would not be considered as a suitable intercrop because it serves as an alternate host for *fomes*, the organism which causes root rot disease of rubber. However, it could be considered as a sole crop on lands where rubber is not planted

As a guideline, crops suitable for intercropping should not exhibit adverse effect on the growth and development of the rubber. Furthermore, only annual and biennial crops would be considered. Again, it should be noted that rubber farms which are three years and above do not qualify for intercropping.

In 2011, two (2) demonstration farms would be set up in each sector

All other farmers interested in going into food crop production in addition to rubber cultivation will have to inform the office of the food crop manager through their sector managers for detailed guidelines and direction.

INVEST WISELY



THE PROJECT DIRECTOR, MR. E. A. OWUSU

On behalf of management of GREL, I wish all out growers a fruitful 2011. Indeed, the prices of rubber has been increasing since 2009 with an all time high in February 2011. This is no mean achievement as several people are now becoming “paradees”.

Whiles some are buying cars, others are putting up houses, sending their children to the best Schools in their Districts, and yet some extending the rubber farms using resources from the matured farms. However, I wish to draw attention to some observations. While it is good to acquire cars, purchase of rickety cars would eventually become a liability to you. The income from the sale of cup lumps which should have been put into profitable ventures would then be used to undertake repairs on the cars. Since rubber is a natural commodity just like oil, the prices could go up or down on the world market on any day. Currently, the prices are very good but could reduce tomorrow. This is the time to also manage the bark wisely since it is the economic part of the tree. Invest what is being currently realized from the farms wisely so that if the prices should fall, you could depend on your other investments.

To the immature farmers, this is the time to carefully manage your resources very well since there is no returns in the form of money from what is being spent on the farm. However, be assured of the fact that very soon, your labour would start producing fruits.

WHAT IS BROWN BAST OR TREE DRYNESS

Brown bast or tree dryness is not yet considered a disease as it is not connected with any pathogen. It is a physiological disorder of the latex vessels in that no latex is produced when the bark is tapped away. Almost all clonal seedling materials and some of the high yielding clones are susceptible to brown bast.

Symptoms of trees that suffer from brown bast can be several, beginning from partial dryness of the tapping cut or panel to total dryness of the tree. The most chronic of all being the flaking of the bark. There is no known cure for brown bast yet. The most effective method currently available is to stop it from spreading along the latex vessels, by creating a discontinuity between the dry and the yielding areas of the bark. It is again recommended that trees experiencing brown bast or panel dryness should be left untapped for a minimum of three (3) months during which time test tapping could be carried out to ascertain healing of the disorder.

The Story of Appreciation - cont'd

The youth cleaned his mother's hands slowly. His tear fell as he did that. It was the first time he noticed that his mother's hands were so wrinkled, and there were so many bruises in her hands. Some bruises were so painful that his mother shivered when they were cleaned with water. This was the first time the youth realized that it was this pair of hands that washed the clothes everyday to enable him to pay the school fee. The bruises in the mother's hands were the price that the mother had to pay for his graduation, academic excellence and his future. After finishing the cleaning of his mother's hands, the youth quietly washed all the remaining clothes for his mother. That night, mother and son talked for a very long time. Next morning, the youth went to the director's office. The Director noticed the tears in the youth's eyes and asked: " Can you tell me, what have you done and learned from yesterday in your house?" The youth answered, " I cleaned my mother's hand, and also finished cleaning all the remaining clothes' The Director asked, " please tell me your feelings." The youth said, Number 1, I know now what is appreciation. Without my mother, there would not be the successful me today. Number 2, by working together and helping my mother, I now realize how difficult and tough it is to get something done. Number 3, I have come to appreciate the importance and value of family relationship. The director said, " This is what I am looking for in a manager. I want to recruit a person who can appreciate help from others, a person who knows the sufferings of others to get things done, and a person who would not put money as his only goal in life. You are hired.

REORGANIZATION OF OPERATIONAL AREAS

Economic uncertainty is not the only issue challenging companies today. Fast moving markets and competition from traditional and non-traditional sources are also taking a toll too.

As it becomes harder to hit performance targets, virtually all organizations need to consider some type of restructuring. Companies recognized for management excellence, innovation and ability are those that regularly review their business models, renew the market approaches and revise their operations to sustain growth. It is against this background that the ROU of GREL has embarked on reorganization of their operations into sectors. Management recognizes the challenges associated with rapid expansion of the rubber projects. In order to be more efficient in its extension service delivery and to get more closer to the rubber farmers, the operational areas have been broken down into sectors and territories.

Each sector is headed by a Field Manager, who would be responsible for all categories of immature farms including Outgrower, SFO, Green retirement and Community and Social Responsibility farms in the sector.

In all, seven (7) operational sectors have been created. Sector one starts from Ankyernin in the Nzema East District to Elubo in the Jomoro District with the office at Aiyinasi in the Ellebelle District. Sector two starts from Princess/Aketekyi in the Ahanta West District through Yediyesele

in the Nzema East to Attakrom/ Nyanso Nkran in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality with the office at Nsein in Nzema East Municipality. Sector three starts from Abura in the Ahanta West District through Nsuaem/Asuogya in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality to Ntaamakrom in the Mpohor Wassa East with the office at Apemanim in the Ahanta West District. Sector four encompasses Subri to Daboasi in the Mpohor Wassa East to Huni Valley in the Prestea Huni Valley District with the office at Subri in the Mpohor Wassa East District.

Sector five starts from Kanyankor in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality to all locations in the Wassa Amenfi East and West Districts and office located at Bogoso in the Prestea Huni Valley District.

All the five sectors described above are in the Western Region. Sectors six and seven are found in the Central Region. Whiles THLD, UD and Agona Districts form sector six with office at Dunkwa-On-Offin, AOB, AEE, AN and AS Districts make up sector seven with office at Assin Fosu.

To bring the extension service delivery to the doorsteps of the outgrowers, the sectors have also been further broken down into territories where front line staff of the project, the Technical Officers in charge of the territories are supposed to interact constantly with the farmers on daily basis on issues bordering on the management of their rubber farms.

It is hoped that by adopting this approach, management would identify areas of under performance in the various sectors, analyze available options, adopt strategies to enhance operations and use the findings to inform decision making.

STRIVE TO BECOME A “PARADEE”

As the saying goes, the aim of every army officer in the military is to become a General some day whiles in the police service, every police officer aims to become an Inspector General. In the rubber industry, every rubber farmer hopes to become a ‘paradee’ some day. But one may ask, ‘who is a paradee?’

By local definition, a *paradee* is a rubber farmer whose farm is in production and gets an average net monthly income of more than GHC2,000. By this definition, most of the phase I and II farmers are *paradees*. When the PARAA contacted a Senior *Paradee* ‘SP’ (name withheld) on how he became a rubber farmer, he had quite a lot to say but here are some excerpts of his response

“PARAA” good day sir

“SP” good day. Yes how may I help you?

“PARAA” oh yeah. This is PARAA, the ROPP newsletter to out growers. Can you please share with us how you became a rubber farmer?

“SP” Hahahaha! It all started when in 1995, Mr. Emmanuel A. Owusu, together with his team came around and talked to us about rubber. After his presentation, he asked those who

wished to plant rubber to submit an application letter, indicating their readiness to plant rubber. “PARAA” but sir, did you know of rubber before that time?

“SP” Well I knew that, the Rubber Estates was producing rubber but I didn’t know it had the potential to change lives.

“PARAA” any challenges in your effort to becoming a “paradee”?

“SP” a lot of them. But just to mention one concerning maintenance. Because I didn’t want to leave the farm in the bush, I tried as much as possible to put the farm in good maintenance state with the little resources I had.

“Paraa” any benefit at all?

“SP” hahahaha! HUUUW!! Why do you think I am a senior “paradee” now? I have recently bought a car worth over Fifty Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHC50,000) ; I have built a house; I am able to do everything that can be done with money. What else do I want?, all through my rubber farm.

“Paraa” thank you sir! that would be all for now.

Dear out growers, what else do you want? The paraa wishes you all the best in your endeavors to becoming a ‘paradee’.