

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

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Plant Rubber Trees



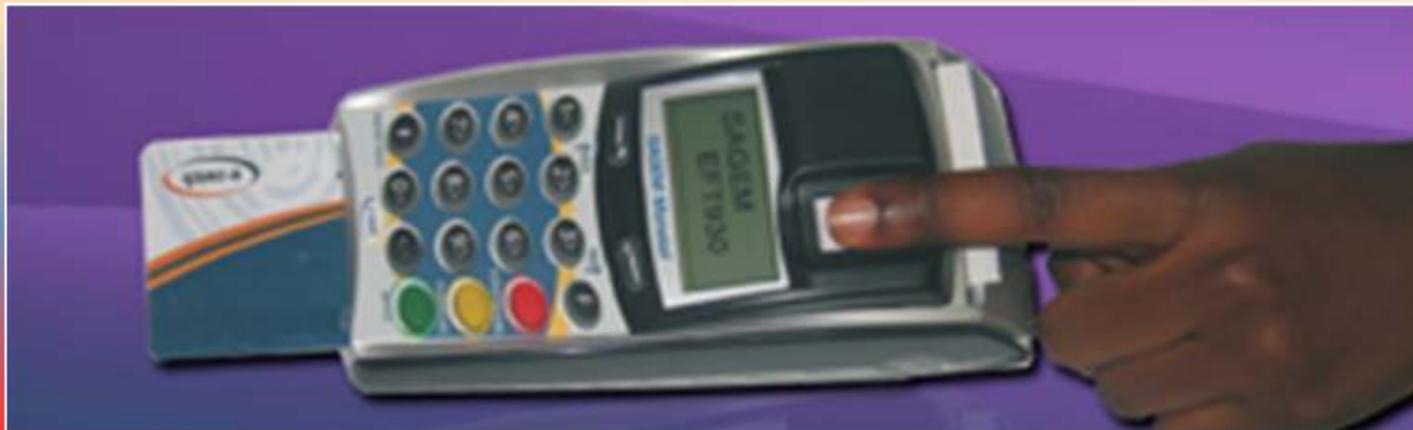
The Paraa

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E-zwich, now accessible to Rubber Outgrowers

In January 2008 the Bank of Ghana announced that it had introduced a new centralized mechanism for the settlement of transactions between the Ghanaian banks. This interbank switch, as it was called, was indexed biometrically, using a key derived from the ten fingerprints of account holders. With the hustle and tussle that outgrowers go through whenever they go to the bank to receive their monies for the cup lumps supplied to GREL, the Project management and the leadership of ROAA made several efforts to make e-zwich accessible to outgrowers so that without necessarily travelling to Agona Nkwanta or Takoradi, cash withdrawals could still be made in their localities. Some of the services of e-zwich available to the outgrowers are money transfers, cash withdrawals from any bank, savings and loans company or ATM or merchant with a point of sale (POS) terminals, load funds such as receiving money transferred and salary paid, balance enquiry, cash deposits, payment for goods and services such as items purchased from a super market, school fees, water and electricity bills. The e-zwich smartcard could be used in any universal bank, rural or community banks, savings and loans company and e-zwich ATMS. The benefits to the smartcard holders are that it gives the card holder a wide range of retail and banking services at any POS terminal anywhere in Ghana, offers offline transaction, the e-zwich smartcard is secure (it requires biometric/fingerprint authentication for its use, there is no minimum balance required on the smartcard. In addition, if the cardholder's smartcard is lost their funds are transferred safely onto a new card. It also minimizes the risk of losing cash through carelessness, robbery, impersonation, fraud or any such related incidents. Services such as cash deposits on smartcards, payment for goods and balance enquiry (view only) attract no service charges. However, services such as cash withdrawals, money transfers and third party bill payment attract charges. The pilot scheme has been successfully launched and outgrowers are to note that a programme would be drawn to register them at the usual places of meeting at their various localities.



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RUBBER OUTGROWER UNIT (ROU)

PLAN YOUR FUTURE;
PLANT RUBBER TREES

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Disturbance of Rain Towards Tapping and Yield

Rainfall generally disturbs tapping and eventually affects production. Rain water that flows down the trunk from the crown causes the panel to be wet and disturbs the flow of latex along the tapping cut when tapping, after the rains have stopped. One major weakness in natural rubber production is the adverse effect of rainfall on the harvesting of the latex, which is the crop. Latex is diluted when it rains and the whole crop can completely be lost through wash off during the peak rainy periods in May/June and September/October. Rain disturbances during these periods always determine the levels of production. When the disturbance is low, production is relatively high and vice versa. Again, tappers especially those on rate/kg are not motivated to work during such periods as their toils can easily go waste. Therefore absenteeism is always very high leading to low production. Latex from the panel also drips off down the bark instead of through the front channel into the cup as the trunk of the trees get wet after heavy rains. This situation, called "side dripping", leads to severe loss of crop. It must however be noted that the effect of rain disturbance is less devastating in upward tapping panels than downward panels because the upward panel is somehow 'hidden' from the direct effect of the water running down the trunk from branches and leaves. Fixing a rain guard above the tapping panel can overcome such problem. This technology was first introduced in Malaysia in 1989 and given the trade name RRIMGUD.

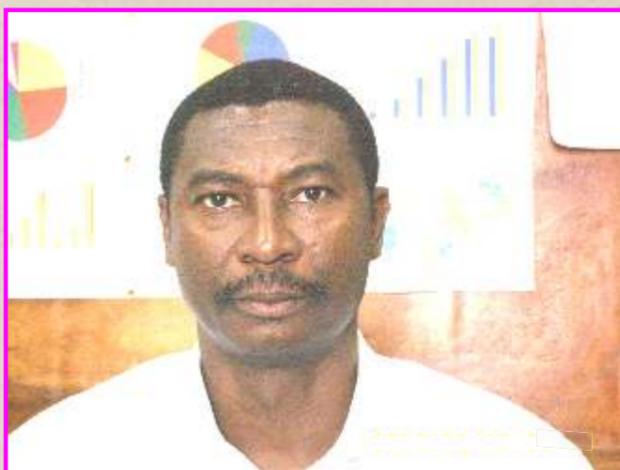
Rain guards are therefore useful in diverting the water running down the trunk, away from the front channel leaving the tapping panel dry. The amount of crop wasted through wash offs is significantly reduced, increasing the production of the outgrower. Absenteeism in tappers are reduced drastically, as they are always motivated to tap the trees even after heavy rainfall because there would be no crop loss through 'side dripping of the latex.

The above reasons will culminate in stabilizing the levels of production during the rainy periods. Rain guards will also make collection of latex by farmers during rainy days and the subsequent manufacture of slabs, absolutely unnecessary. **Procedure for fixing rain guards.** The plastic plate is placed on the trunk of



the rubber tree at the same angle as the tapping panel at a height of 30-50 cm above the panel. The plate is then fixed to the tree by stapling with 4-6 staple pins. Melted coal tar is applied from top to a point just after the front channel to glue the edge of the plate to the bark of the tree using an industrial brush, sealing off completely any opening between the two. The plastic plate is then folded upward to form a groove or spout which divert and carry away any water streaming along the trunk of the tree. This leaves the region of the tree panel below the plate always dry. It must however be emphasized that the quantity of coal tar used per tree is a little more on poorly renewed bark than on a smooth virgin bark.

POST PLANTING ACTIVITIES



THE PROJECT DIRECTOR, MR. E. A. OWUSU

The sprouting of rubber after planting is influenced by both internal and external factors. Whiles there is virtually no control over the internal factors, one can maximize control over the external factors to achieve a very high sprouting rate (that is reduced mortality). One of these external factors is re-firming of the planted

stumps. since planting of the rubber normally coincides with the onset of the rains, good firming of the stumps is not normally achieved especially during planting whiles raining. It is therefore important to undertake re-firming of all the planted stumps in order to dislodge the air and water which have settled around the root region of the stumps. This will prevent rotting of the root even before sprouting starts. Another external factor is pruning. It is the removal of undesirable shoots and side branches. undesirable shoots are removed in order to obtain the desirable shoot from the budded zone. To obtain a straight smooth clean stem for tapping, all the side branches must be pruned off from time to time. Other benefits of pruning are that it enhances growth, thus reducing immaturity period and yield improvement. Line opening is another important factor. Normally, because of poor land preparation which result in poor burning, field conditions even at the time of planting may not be suitable. It is very important to clean the planting lines of all tree stumps and debris, one meter to the left and right away from the planted rubber trees. Afterwards, subsequent cleaning of the lines should be done. It is also important to undertake frequent slashing of the inter-rows to improve air circulation in the farm and also to allow for enough sunlight for the newly shooted leaves. Finally, I wish to caution outgrowers against the use of weedicides on first year plantings.

WHEN IS THE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR TAPPING ?

Tapping is carried out as early as possible in the morning and that is why it is mostly referred to as "Dawn Tapping". Though no time is specified, it starts as soon as the tapping panel is clearly visible without the use of aided light. As the full impact of sunlight is not yet present, transpiration rate is still very low. Thus the cells of the rubber trees are still in turgid condition and, therefore, effective and efficient flow of the latex in the vessels. The turgor pressure within the tree is also high during this period, thus resulting in a faster flow of the latex. When tapping is done along the tapping cut, the ends of the latex vessels are again severed and latex oozes out along the cut and drips into the cup. After some time, the drip stops due to the plugging of the latex vessel since the latex becomes coagulated. The table below shows the quantity of latex flow by time of tapping.

Time of Tapping	Quantity of Latex per tree (ml)
04:00 - 07:00	155
08:30 - 11:30	129
12:30 - 15:30	102

Source: www.lgm.gov.my

Jokes! Jokes!! Jokes!!!

Punctuation

The English professor wrote the words, "Woman without her man is nothing" on the black board and directed his students to punctuate it correctly. The men wrote: "Woman, without her man, is nothing". The women wrote: "Woman! Without her, man is nothing".

The "Other Milk"

The ill-prepared student sat in his life science classroom staring at a question on the final exam paper. The question directed: "Give four advantages of breast milk". What to write? He sighed, and began to scribble whatever came into his head, hoping for the best. No need to boil; Cats can't steal it; Available whenever necessary. Umm...So far so good... may be... But the exam demanded a four-part answer. Again, what to write? Once more he sighed. He frowned. He scowled, then sighed again. But suddenly he brightened, grabbed his pen, and triumphantly, he scribbled his definitive answer: Available in attractive containers.

FOOD CROP PROGRAMME IN PROGRESS



The essence of establishing the demonstration farms is to enable outgrowers adopt good agricultural practices and its benefits on their food crop farms. It is anticipated that the demonstration farms would be replicated in other sectors of the project's operational areas on outgrower fields. In addition, outgrowers who wish to inter crop their rubber farms with vegetables, plantain/banana, rice, pineapple, maize etc. can consult the office of the food crop manager for technical assistance.



It would be recalled that, in the first quarter edition of the 'PARAA' newsletter, the Ghana Rubber Estates Limited introduced a programme which would provide technical assistance to outgrowers who wish to produce food crop on their 0.5 to 1 hectare land in order to sufficiently feed themselves and their dependants. These pictures were taken on a demonstration farm at Ankyernin in the Nzema East Municipality.

2011 FERTILIZER APPLICATION

All plants including rubber require adequate amount of water, light, carbon dioxide and nutrients for growth to their maximum potential. A shortage or an excess of one or more of these elements, the presence of disease or extreme climatic conditions cause reduction in growth, yield and the quality of the crop produce. Water, light and carbon dioxide are naturally available, however, nutrients are added by fertilizer application.

Rubber responds favourably in terms of growth and yield to adequate and proper fertilizer application. Among the elements, the major ones are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and Magnesium (Mg). In addition, other elements such as sulphur (S), calcium (Ca), iron (Fe) etc are also needed in micro quantities. Until last year (2010), NPK was the only fertilizer supplied and applied on outgrower fields. **In 2011, a new fertilizer mixture with a formulation of (NPK) 12: 11: 10 + 6.5S + 16CaO + 5MgO would be applied on outgrower fields at a rate of 134kg/ha and 268kg/ha on the first year of planting and years (two and three) plantings respectively.**

The application is expected to start from mid September to end of October. All outgrowers and SFO's are expected to undertake their line cleanings to ensure smooth and successful execution of the activity. The actual dates of application in the various locations would be communicated to the outgrowers two (2) weeks before the programme.

