

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.

Plan Your Future;



Plant Rubber Trees

**RUBBER
OUTGROWER
UNIT (ROU)**

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**PLAN YOUR FUTURE;
PLANT RUBBER TREES**

Improving Productivity on Outgrower Farms



MD of GREL, Mr. Marc Genot
On behalf of the management of GREL, I wish all Outgrowers a joyous and productive 2009. The first half of 2009 would be one of the most challenging moments for both GREL and Outgrowers for obvious reasons. It is therefore important to device ways and means of overcoming the momentary

challenges in order to sustain your incomes and enjoy better living. One of such ways is to improve your productivity. In simple terms, improving your productivity means to reduce the resources needed to produce each kilogram of cup lumps in your plantations. It consists of two parts namely producing more rubber with virtually the same resources and/or maintaining the production levels with less resources. Outgrowers whose major occupation is basically farming may decide to tap their own rubber instead of engaging the services of other tappers. The rubber trees can be tapped very early in the morning, after which he/she may proceed to his/her other farms. Where the services of a tapper is engaged, it is important to ensure correct task size by adhering to the Rubber Outgrower Unit's (ROU) field technical instructions on task size. Again, ROU has prepared a new stimulation schedule for Outgrowers in production. With the same number of tapping days in the year and the same levels of bark consumed per taping, it should be possible to increase your production without endangering the rubber trees. Outgrowers are also advised to undertake line cleaning and inter-row slashing themselves rather than contracting them out to contractors. Dear Outgrowers, with improved productivity, you can increase and sustain certain levels of income.

ROU Holds End of Year Dinner for Staff

The aim of every organization is to be able to meet its set targets. At our first general staff meeting in January 2008, the Project Director communicated the department and individual objectives to staff. Indeed, they were quite a daunting task if we were to achieve them. Both field and office staff tried to contribute their quota to the achievements of the set targets. It was therefore not surprising that at the end of the 2008 planting campaign, the unit had planted more than twice the total hectares planted under the Rubber Outgrower Plantations Project I from 1995 to 2000. Following the successful achievements of both the Department and individual objectives, the Rubber Outgrower Unit (ROU) of GREL organized an end of year dinner for staff and their spouses. In his speech, the Project Director congratulated all staff and appealed to their spouses to bear with them (staff) whenever they have to leave home at dawn for work. The guest of honour for the occasion was the Managing

Director of GREL, Mr. Marc Genot. Various categories of awards were also given to deserving extension officers for their hard work. Mr. Augustine Adetey and Mr. Isaac Ackah-Blay were adjudged the best safety-conscious extension officers for the year. Mr. George Wofemenu was adjudged the overall best worker for 2008.



High table

Honour was also given to the ROU football team for being able to hold their GREL counterparts to a 1-1 drawn game. In the euphoria of their performance in Cote D'Ivoire, the camp of the GREL team appeared to have overlooked the potential threats from the ROU camp. Playing under the guidance of the garage supervisor, the GREL team pulled a goal before the half time, causing the ROU team to panic. The goal seemed to have energized the home team in the second half as they kept the pressure on the ROU team. Few substitutions were effected in the ROU team. Spectators could not help as they witnessed total football being displayed by the ROU team. Fully inspired by the presence of the Project Director, the Project accountant and the Field Operational Managers, the ROU team scored the equalizer about 10 minutes before full time.

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Census Is On-going

Usually, people think of census as an official periodic enumeration of a population. Census comes from the Latin word "censere" meaning "to assess, or to tax". Counting of the rubber trees is an annual activity undertaken by the Project staff to know inventory of the rubber tree population density (number of trees per hectare) and also to give a fair idea about the total stumps required by the Outgrower to carry out replacement planting one year after planting. In the field, census results are written on the spot with pen or pencil onto a census sheet. Counting of the

rubber trees is done line by line, tree by tree until the last tree is counted. The line number and number of trees in the line are written at the bottom of each line. There are four (4) main types of census undertaken by the Project team. Initial census is conducted to determine the tree population per each field at planting (year 0). It is carried out on a special form to locate the planting positions of each tree on the field. Census for replacement is also normally carried out one year after planting to assess the mortality rate. The number of trees to be replaced is therefore determined for replacement planting to be done accordingly.

Normal census is also carried out during the immature stages of the rubber from planting year one to year six to determine the number of trees per hectare. Another type of census is called special census. It is conducted periodically when a new farm is about to be opened for tapping and special census is conducted to determine the number of tappable trees in order to deliver the required quantity of inputs to Outgrowers or when there is an outbreak of fire or diseases on Outgrower farm and census is to be conducted to determine the number of affected trees.

Scenes from year end activities! Scenes from year end activities!! Scenes from year end activities!!!



A section of staff and food table



The ROU team with team manager



Time for boogie



Mr. Emmanuel A. Owusu
The Project Director

On behalf of the Rubber Outgrower Unit of the Ghana Rubber Estates Limited, I wish you a happy 2009. For more than four (4) consecutive years, rubber Outgrowers have continually enjoyed progressive increase in rubber prices. As with all commodities, they have irregular

Do Not Panic!

price cycles, as prices may go up or down depending on what is happening on the global market. It is therefore not surprising that since October 2008, the prices of rubber had been gradually falling. This is mainly due to the financial crises which have affected various sectors of the economy on the global markets.

It is anticipated that prices of commodities in 2009 would not be as good as 2008. Outgrowers are therefore encouraged to look beyond the contemporary happenings and focus on the long term prospects of rubber.

The tyre manufacturers do not have any real substitutes for natural rubber for the production of tyres especially for truck and heavy duty tyres. This is the time to even plant more rubber trees. GREL assures Outgrowers of quality and sufficient planting materials in 2009. There is going to be increased support given to micro nursery operators to also produce quality and enough planting materials for planting by other farmers. It is hoped that prices of rubber would bounce back in the near future and the more trees you have, the better your income would be.



A felled farm ready for lopping.

Time For Land Preparation

To achieve maximum and effective utilization of the land, reduce incidence of pests and disease and for free movement of personnel, inputs and equipments, then serious attention must be given to land preparation. Land preparation starts with demarcation of the land boundaries. This is ensured by cutting traverse on the boundaries and measuring the size of

the land. Clearing of the vegetation is then started. Complete clearing of all the vegetation is ensured with emphasis on brushing the undergrowth to a height of 15cm, manual felling of small trees and bushes and mechanical (chainsaw) felling and lopping of trees. After stacking the debris for 21 days, the debris is burned.

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Burning is carried out after the vegetated matter is well dried. After the first burning, cross-cutting of tree trunks is carried out, piled and burned again (second burning) A second piling should be carried out around the tree stumps where possible and burned again to reduce the number of tree stumps on the farm.

The prepared land may be seeded with cover crop (*pueraria*). Seeding cover crop has some benefits which include prevention of erosion, conservation of moisture, controlling of weeds, fixing of nitrogen into the soil and improving the structure of the

soil. Where there is intention of inter-cropping the rubber farm, it should be well organized within the inter-rows, about 1 to 2metres away from the rubber trees. Suitable inter-crop includes plantain/banana, cereals, legumes, vegetables and/or pineapple. After harvesting the inter-crop, *pueraria* may be seeded at 2metres intervals in the inter-rows. It should be noted that cassava is not recommended for inter-crop because it is an alternate host to root rot diseases (*Fomes* sp.)

FIRE PREVENTION

Outgrowers are reminded to protect their farms against fire outbreak. Before a newly cleared field is burned, fire belt should be created around it. Controlled burning of a newly cleared field could be achieved by starting the burning from high risk areas when the speed of the wind is low. Fire beaters should be made from palm fronds and provision of adequate water made. Outgrowers are cautioned to stay at a safe place until the whole farm is completely burned and quenching the fire at the edges of the farm which could cause bush fires. Outgrowers are also to caution palm wine tappers, hunters and charcoal makers against the possibility of any fire outbreak.

Good Growth Recorded In C/R written by Mr. Joseph Adu-Boahen

Every investor has a dream of reaping dividends from his/her investment which includes time, labour and capital resources. This dream becomes a reality when the set objectives are achieved within a specified time frame. It is therefore apparent that rubber Outgrowers would wait until the seventh year when their investment will begin to yield the much needed returns from the toil of their labour. A mature rubber tree ready for tapping attains a girth of 50cm, 1m from the ground in the seventh year. This is possible when the annual growth rate is at least 7cm. Girth measurement enables the project staff

to monitor, measure and analyse annual growth rate of rubber trees from two years after planting. This activity is conducted annually from October to December. The results of the just ended and the first girth measurement conducted in the Central region has revealed that the growth rate of trees in some of the Districts are above average. The average growth rate of 72% of farms planted in 2006 was 15cm. This is above the expected girth of 14cm. Upper Denkyira District however recorded the outstanding girth of 20 cm while Assin North District recorded the least girth of 11cm. Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira,

Asikuma Odoben Brakwa and Agona Enyan Essiam Districts recorded girths of 16 cm, 16 cm and 13cm respectively. Similarly, three farms planted in 2005 as pilot project in Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District recorded a girth of 25cm as compared to the average of 21cm. Annual growth rate of 10cm has been observed in a number of well maintained farms in the Region. As good growth is a function of high and well distributed rainfall, good field maintenance and good fertility, we therefore wish to recommend to our farmers to take their farm maintenance activities seriously in order to promote good growth and enjoy the fruit of their labour at the right time.

Appreciate Little Things

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months, he had admired a beautiful benz car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could afford it, he told him that was all he wanted. As graduation day approached, the young man presumed that his father had purchased the car.

Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his room. His father told him how proud he was to have him as son and how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful wrapped gift box.

Curious, but somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold. Angrily, he raised his voice to his father and said, 'With all your money, you give me a Bible? And stormed out of the house, leaving the Bible.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go and see him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received a message that his father had passed away and willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things.

When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse saying that, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall be added to you". As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the benz car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words...PAID IN FULL. Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; but remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for... APPRECIATE LITTLE THINGS; THEY DO LEAD TO ATTACHMENTS!!!

Make Safety Your Goal

Story by Mr. Robert Kofi Appiah

Safety has remained important in industrial circles as it was several years ago and has become even more important with the advent of globalization which places the human resource at the centre of productivity.

It can simply be described as being safe from all events, acts, exposures and occurrences that are non desirable and causes health or economic loss to the affected person(s). The agricultural sector is one of the most hazardous occupations in the world with high risks

Of occupational injuries and diseases, fatalities and damage to property.

Exposure to pesticides and other agrochemicals constitute the major occupational risks. The Rubber Outgrower Unit of the Ghana Rubber Estates Limited is therefore extremely concerned about the safety of rubber Outgrowers and their dependants.

The only guaranteed way to safety is to observe and practically demonstrate all safety measures. Outgrowers are therefore entreated to be safety conscious by adhering to some of the

safety measures herewith under listed.

- Use of Wellington boots when going to farm.
 - Wearing of filter mask during spraying.
 - Chemicals such as herbicides and stimulant must be properly stored.
 - There should be neither smoking nor eating nor drinking during chemical application.
 - Prepare for the unexpected.
- You are kindly reminded that you have only one short life so do not shorten it. Be safety conscious