

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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The Paraa

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

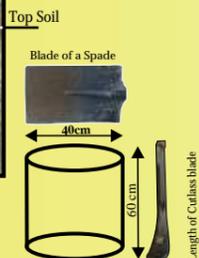
MAY 2010

2010 PLANTING STARTS

Having being informed of the planting target for the year 2010 during the first staff general meeting of the Rubber Outgrower Unit by the Project Director, staff immediately knew that 2010 would be very challenging. With the launching of the fourth phase of the project, the unit is supposed to assist rubber outgrowers prepare four thousand hectares (4,000 ha) of land and plant same by the end of June. Land preparation therefore began in January with several prospective rubber outgrowers undertaking their under-brushing of their lands. It is informative to note that, between January and April, most outgrowers could complete all the operations involved in land preparation and that their lands have been lined and pegged. Before any field planting is done, planting holes should be prepared well ahead of time. Some of the objectives of holing are to obtain a block of loose soil, to facilitate root development at a critical stage, to remove rocks and other hard materials which may be hidden in the soil, to remove root disease source if any and to facilitate application of basal fertilizer (rock phosphate) among others. Outgrowers are therefore reminded of the holing dimensions of 60cm by 40cm by 40cm. Stumps planting are scheduled to start from 10th May and end by 25th June. Meanwhile, stump in poly bag planting began in April on outgrower farms which are directly accessible by vehicle or tractor. It is also instructive to note that, re-placement planting would be carried out alongside field planting. For this reason, outgrowers who planted in 2009 are to prepare their re-placement holes so that when the planting activity is scheduled for a particular location, both the field and re-placement plantings could be done together.



Holing dimensions



Planting being carried out



Planted stump

RUBBER OUTGROWER UNIT (ROU)

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THE POWER OF RUBBER MONEY

Currently, rubber production could be said to be one of the most lucrative agricultural venture in Ghana. The lives of rubber outgrowers gives credence to the vision of the Outgrower Projects which is economic empowerment through rubber cultivation to alleviate poverty in rural communities. One of such communities where the inhabitants have benefited tremendously from the outgrower projects is Yediyesele in the Nzema East Municipality of the Western Region. Yediyesele was established in 1964 by the late Nana Kwame Esoah I. He was then staying at Ewoku also in the Nzema East Municipality. The then paramount chief and the elders of the Lower Axim Traditional Area authorised Nana Kwame Esoah as the caretaker whose first farm land is the present day Yediyesele. The late Kojo Mama from Techiman in the company of several farmers from Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions also arrived at Yediyesele and acquired large tract of land for cocoa, oil palm and coconut cultivation. Unfortunately, the land was not good for cocoa and with the onset of the coconut disease, the major cash crop for the area was being destroyed by the Cape St. Pauls Wilt Disease (CSPWD). This brought great hardship on the growing community resulting in high cost of living in the village. Several of the settler farmers then decided to go back to their various home towns in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions. Then suddenly came the good news. In 1994, GREL workers living in Yediyesele, notably Richard Tashiru, brought the news that, individuals who wanted to plant rubber were going to be assisted to do so. On hearing the news, some of the farmers submitted their application letters to express their interest in the programme. On the 5th of March 1995, Messrs Emmanuel Akwasi Owusu and Bartholomew Kangachie met the interested farmers and inspected their lands. On the 25th of June 1995, eight (8) farmers were planted for and in the subsequent years, several farmers subscribed to the project. To date, there are one hundred and ten (110) rubber outgrowers in Yediyesele with thirty one (31) being women. The economic lives and social status of most of the farmers who are now producing rubber have changed drastically. Whiles some are sending their children to very good schools and even to pursue higher education, others are pulling down their mud houses and replacing them with cement block houses. Presently, some of the farmers in production have purchased cars which ply Yediyesele to Axim. Such is what rubber can do for individuals and communities. Plan your future therefore by planting rubber trees.

Story by Ibrahim Marshall Yacoub (Rubber Outgrower)

Before the Introduction of Rubber and After →



QUALITY PLANTATION ESTABLISHMENT

The delivery of quality goods and services in an open market by service providers play a key role in determining customer satisfaction, thus influencing customer's choice especially in the face of competition. GREL therefore places much emphasis on delivery of quality inputs such as planting materials, fertilizers and tapping equipments as well as quality extension services to rubber outgrowers including self finance outgrowers. As field planting of rubber progresses, GREL is committed to supplying only viable planting materials to outgrowers. The practice of delivering planting materials in the night to outgrowers has also been nailed to the wall in 2010. This act which used to be the norm until last year was found to cause poor handling of the planting materials by the outgrowers resulting in the death of some of the materials. For this reason, management has earmarked eight (8) trucks which would be solely used for distribution of planting materials. Again, various meetings had been held with both the staff of the project and the planting labour and all lapses concerning planting operation have been addressed. All these steps have been put in place to minimize rubber stump mortality in 2010. Outgrowers are also advised to respect the technical instructions concerning all the operations leading up to planting in order that the goal of achieving less than 15% mortality in 2010 would be realized. For those in production, management of GREL deems it appropriate to boost the technical

support given to you. To achieve this, a very experienced executive staff in the person of Mr. Charles Ntow-Boahen would be working closely with you to organize a lot of training programmes aimed at improving productivity of your farms. In conclusion, outgrowers are to be rest assured that GREL is committed to quality rubber plantation establishment for you.



MR. EMMANUEL A. OWUSU
THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

7TH AGM OF ROAA HELD

The Rubber Outgrowers and Agents Association (ROAA) held its 7th Annual General Meeting on the 10th of April 2010 at Agona Nkwanta in the Ahanta West District of the Western Region. The meeting was on the theme "Global warming is real - Plant more rubber trees to sustain the environment". The guest speaker for the occasion was the Minister for Food and Agriculture, Mr. Kwesi Ahwoi. In a speech read on his behalf by the Director for Crop Services, Mr. Kweku Nicol urged farmers, organizations and financial institutions to promote and encourage cultivation of rubber trees to check and mitigate the effect of global warming in the country. Rubber trees, he explained reduce air pollution and help maintain ecological balance, protect human lives from the bad effects of climate change.

In his annual report, the General Secretary of ROAA, Mr. Paul L. Appiah stated that the association realized a net surplus of Gh. ₵ 39,381.53 from its operations between January to December 2009. He however bemoaned the rising theft cases on rubber plantations and asked the perpetrators to stop because they would be sent to the law courts if they are caught.

Jokes! Jokes!!

A man sobering up from the night before was sitting through the Sunday sermon, finding it long and boring. Still feeling hung over and tired, he finally nodded off. The priest had been watching him all along, noticing his apparent hangover and was disgusted. At the end of the sermon, the preacher decided to make an example of him. He said to his congregation, "All those wishing to have a place in heaven, please stand". The whole room stood except, of course, the sleeping man. Then the preacher said even more loudly, "And he who would like to find a place in hell, please STAND UP!". The weary man who caught only the last part boldly stood up, only to find that he was the only one standing. Confused and embarrassed, he said, "I don't know what we are voting on here, Father, but it sure seems like you and me are the only ones standing up for it!".

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Our Environment, Health and Safety

Planting rubber trees is an activity which is by itself an eco-friendly operation. The already depleted forest which is being restored through rubber plantation establishment will help maintain the soil properties especially on slopy areas and also improve rainfall in the areas where the rubber is being planted. The rubber trees also contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions by acting as a carbon sink. It has been established that rubber trees undoubtedly contributes twice as much to carbon emission reductions. This is because the rubber tree is basically made of carbon. Using the wood as fuel reduces the dependence on fossil fuel, and using the wood for lumber contributes to storing carbon for a longer period of time. It is estimated that one (1) hectare of rubber trees fixes six (6) to eight (8) tons of atmospheric carbon dioxide (Co₂) per year. Again, the rubber produced by the tree is a "fuel" and this burns quite well because it is made mainly of carbon. Furthermore, It is estimated that one (1) ton of dry rubber fixes 3.2 tons of Co₂. However, there are other activities on an outgrower farm, if not controlled may have a negative impact on the **environment**.

The use of agro-chemicals such herbicides and fungicides to control Weeds and other pests are helpful for the outgrowers but may also be detrimental to lives and water bodies.

For this reason, outgrowers are advised to use only authorized products in the recommended quantities. It is also necessary to respect the utilization instructions to protect the sprayer. Again, the empty chemical containers, plastic sheets used as ground sheets, water sachets, as well as the poly bags must be disposed off properly. Your **health**, as well as the health of your workers is equally important. The productivity of a sick person always falls below the expected. A sick person is unable to discharge his/her duties well resulting in low levels on one's income. It is important to maintain a clean **environment** in order to prevent diseases such as cholera. It is also necessary to clear bushy surroundings so as not to serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes

which cause malaria. Sleeping in an insecticide treated net is one sure way of preventing malaria. HIV-AIDS which used to be very deadly can now be contained through the use of anti-retroviral drugs. Outgrowers are therefore encouraged to know their HIV status and that of their family members so that one can take a definite action to lessen the harmful effects of the disease if he/she is found to have the disease. However, if one tests negative, it is important to take steps to avoid contracting it because prevention is always better than cure. Those who have not also registered for the National Health

Insurance Scheme (NHIS) are also entreated to do so.

Finally, **safety** at work and outside work is also extremely important.

An injured person is unable to work. Outgrowers could even be held responsible for accidents involving their workers on their farms. Adequate protection is needed for tappers. Outgrowers must endeavour to supply them with wellington boots and goggles. During spraying with herbicides, it is important wear goggles, gloves, wellington boots, an overall and face mask



Mr. Marc Genot
Managing Director of GREL

in order to avoid direct contact of the chemicals with the skin.

It is also important to undertake Maintenance of your farms regularly as this will minimize the risk of snake bite which could be lead to death.

Transportation is also recognized as a major risk. Do not hesitate to complain to a driver to slow down if he is over speeding. If he does not listen, it is better to disembark from the journey because "it is always better to be late than to be called the late". Pedestrians are equally at risk. Being attentive and walking on the left side of the road can help you see the danger as early as possible and avoid it. So let us consider seriously that, by adhering to some few simple instructions, we can all reduce the risks posed to our **environment**, our **health** and our **safety** as well as the health and safety of those around us.