

2013 SYSTEM OF RICE INTENSIFICATION (SRI)

TRAININGS IN GHANA

REPORT

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Background

This report covers a series of trainings conducted by the Ghana Rice Inter-Professional Body (GRIB) to introduce members to the System of Rice Intensification, or SRI. SRI is a rice production methodology that allows farmers to increase yields while reducing purchased inputs through changes in how the crop and soil are managed. These management practices include: quick and careful plant establishment (at the two-leaf stage if transplanting); wide spacing (a minimum of 25cm in each direction); reduced plant density (typically only one plant per hill); enrichment of soils with organic matter; water management to maintain aerobic soils; and non-flooded weed control.

The Ghana Rice Inter-Professional Body (GRIB) is a national umbrella organization of rice stakeholders that was duly incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in accordance with the Companies Code (1963) Act 179 in October 2004. Membership of GRIB consists of the private stakeholders in the rice sector. The current membership, representing roughly 9,000 stakeholders, comprising 184 registered individuals and groups in the following categories; Rice farmer Based Organizations, Rice millers groups, Women Rice Processor groups, Rice Brokers/Marketers organizations, Input dealer, Machinery Service Providers.

SRI training was first done for GRIB members on an SDF-funded project in 2012 in 6 out of 10 regions in Ghana. GRIB also worked on another project with ADVANCE-USAID in 2013. The training started by first making demonstration plots of both the traditional system and the SRI system. After harvesting, classroom trainings shared farmer experiences and presentations on the technology to each other to answer questions from farmers and discuss their difficulties and bring out particular solutions that would be well adapted to their respective environments.

Farmers participating in the project reported initial yields from their SRI demonstration plots of 6-8.5 t/ha, far better than the national average of 2.4 t/ha.

Regional Reports

Reports from the six regions that participated in the trainings follow below.

UPPER EAST AND NORTHERN REGIONS

The demonstration fields can be located in both irrigated areas (Golinga in the Northern Region and Tono in the Upper East Region) and in 4 communities under rain-fed namely Gbullung, Pagaaza and Dunyin in the Northern Region and Wiesi in the Upper East Region.

The FBOs identified in the communities in the 2 regions are Golinga Food Growers Cooperative Association, AgroFarms, Pagaaza Sugro Mbori Buni Farmers, N_gawani Rice Farmers Association and TICFU on the Tono Irrigation Project from which lead farmers are working with group members on the demonstration fields as part of the training. Among these FBOs, 13 lead farmers have been chosen and supplied inputs (seeds, fertilizer and chemicals) to establishment the demonstration fields.

Apart from the lead farmers benefiting from the innovative way of closing the yield gap in field days have been organized to enable the members of various FBOs with over 109 rice farmers benefiting from the field days. Among the 109 rice farmers, 22 were females, and 87 were males from Tolon and Tamale districts in the Northern Region. Farmers were trained on nursery preparation, transplanting and the appropriate use of agro chemicals in the rice fields so far. The field days have also afforded the farmers to see the progress of the crops, appreciating the difference at every stage of the crop compared to their traditional methods.

Four different field days have been organized in 4 communities namely Chuchuliga (ICOUR Zone T) in the Builsa North District, Biu (ICOUR Zone V) in the Builsa South District, Weisi in the Fumbisi – Builsa District and Wuru (ICOUR Zone A) in the Kasena Nankana District in the Upper east Region. In all 437 farmers participated from the field days that were organized. The ratio of male to female is 227 and 210. Seventeen visiting farmers from Northern Region, Tamale, participated in an exchange learning visit to Tono 72, 87, 91, and 187 farmers participated the field day in Wuru, Wiesi, Chuchuliga, and Biu respectively.





Visiting farmers from Tamale participated in a field day in Bui (ICOUR Zone V)

VOLTA REGION

In the Volta Region, lead farmers were randomly selected from Farmer Based Organizations in the communities. A field day was organized in 4 different communities in the Volta Region: Akpafo Mempeasem, Wegbe, Okagyakrom in the Jasikan District, and Kolenu on dibbling and appropriate usage of agro chemical: Solito 320 EC.

The 30 rice farmers of Dimaonse Rice Farmers and the lead farmer, Joyce Adade at Akpafo Mempeasem have benefited from the SRI trainings (demonstration fields) in the community. Thirty-five farmers in the Unique Rice Farmer Association have also benefited from the competitive rice production in the Wegbe community. Seven of the Unique Rice farmer group took part in a chemical application for the control of weeds in the rice fields.

A farmer association in Okagyakrom in the Jasikan District with a total number of 100 farmers are also working on the demonstration fields. Thirty-three farmers benefited from the SRI trainings and the various field days that has been organized; 9 female farmers and 24 male farmers participated in the trainings.



Photos from Volta Region

WESTERN REGION

Three demonstration fields have been established in the Western Region. The communities are Afere, and Sefwi Asafo. Lead farmers in the various communities and farmers in the communities have attended and taken part in transplanting and chemical application training.

Eighteen farmers from Sefwi Asafo have taken part in field days organized as part of the training; 16 of them being males and 2 females.





Field days with farmers nursery preparation and proper chemical application on rice fields in Western Region

ASHANTI AND BRONG AHAFO REGION

GRIB has established four rain-fed SRI demonstration plots in the Ashanti Region under the SDF/Covet Project. Two of the demo plots are located in Woranponso and Kurofa in Asante Akyem North. The rest are located at Kensakrom and Kuffour Camp in the Atwima Mponua District.

Field days have been organized for the farmers in the areas where the demo plots are sited. These field days have been attended by about 100 rice farmers comprising 70 males and 30 females from across the communities to learn and participate in appropriate use of chemicals and fertilizer and its effects; safer ways of handling chemicals and disposing used containers among others.

About 50 farmers were conveyed from the Brong Ahafo Region (Dawadawa & Cheranda) and Western Region (Afere &Asafo) to the Ashanti Region to participate in the field day event. The objective of this exchange visit was to enable farmers learn from one another and share knowledge on best practices taught and adopted that worked for them as well negative practices that must be avoided. The exchange visit gave the farmers' opportunity not to only learn from one another new experiences but it also gave them the opportunity to engage in business relationships as well. More of such visits will be organized for farmers in other communities.

The main objective of SRI is to increase yields of farmers as well as their revenues and therefore GRIB believes that education and interaction among one another is integral to the achievement of this objective.



Photos from Ashanti Region

In Brong Ahafo a demonstration plot has been developed together with rice farmers in Cheranda. The farmers have been taken through dibbling and transplanting as well as chemical application. A total of 50 farmers have undergone the training. The farmers also took part in an exchange visit to Krowfa and Wramponso in the Ashanti Region to learn from what the other participating farmers have (in Ashanti region have also done). The community has over 250 farmers growing rice in the community and will benefit from visits to the demonstration plots as well the final training sessions (classroom training).



Photos from Brong Ahafo Region

1. Implementation

9.1 Methodologies used (*brief description of how the training was conducted e.g. classroom sessions, small groups sessions, practical exercises, study visits, demonstrations use of audio visuals etc.*)

The training methodology involves setting up demonstration fields with lead farmers selected from rice growing communities within regions. The lead farmers are given seed, fertilizer and chemical and are taken through what, to do on field days. They implement the tasks together with the trainers, the extension agents and facilitators on the demonstration fields together with other farmers on the field days.

Classroom trainings will be organized at the end of the harvest, which will bring together farmers from the communities to learn from the trainers and facilitators as well as from their colleague farmers who have worked on the demonstration fields. This is to increase the rate of adoption of the technology as farmers learn best from their colleague farmers.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation of the training, GRIB will undertake a study on the rate of adoption of the technology in the implementing areas by farmers.

	Activity	Achievement	Duration
Demonstration fields	Nursery & transplanting or dibbling	Learn the importance of nursing and transplanting seedlings on irrigated lands or dibbling 2 seeds at appropriate distances as means of reducing wastage of seeds and increasing germination on rice fields. Planting at correct distances enables plants to grow well, tiller and have bigger heads. It also improves the efficiency of agronomic practices such as weeding, fertilizer and chemical application.	July to November 2013
	Fertilizer application	Learn the best way to apply fertilizer to increase utilization by plants and reduce wastage.	
	Chemical application	Learn proper weedicide and pesticide use and how to effectively treat rice diseases.	
	Water management	Learn effective water management for rice cultivation	
	Harvesting and storage	Expected to teach farmers about harvest, post harvest handling and storage.	
Data collection and analysis from fields			December 2013
Classroom training	2 days classroom in specified locations		December 2013

2. *Brief comments on closing session and summary of participants impressions*

The evaluation will be implemented during the class room training to be organized after the harvest. However farmers are so far happy with what they are seeing on the fields (in terms of the appearance of the fields compared to their traditional methods. though the fields are yet to be harvested, the farmers can tell there will be more rice from the demonstration fields than from their traditional methods.

Below are some classroom trainings done after harvest in all the areas where demonstration plots were done

