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Rice Production, Processing and Marketing - Creating Additional Income for the Rural and Urban Population in Benin

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Abstract

Rice plays an increasingly important role in feeding the rapidly growing population of Benin. With an annual per capita consumption of over 25 kg, only about half of the domestic demand can be met by local production. The existing potential of rice farmers could not be exploited, due to lack of access to fertiliser and seeds and lack of knowledge of sustainable cultivation techniques. Lack of processing capacity meant that the value addition through processing and marketing was not done in the region.

Since 2010, the rice value chain has become a key factor for improving the income of the population in northern Benin. The production of paddy rice has improved through a self-administered fertiliser fund by the rice farmers' association and the application of improved farming methods. The area under rice has increased by almost 20 percent in 2011 compared to the previous year. At the same time yields per hectare have increased by almost 50 percent from less than 2.7 t to almost 4 t. As a result, rice production has increased by nearly 75 percent.

Paddy rice is now processed within the region. Predominantly women process paddy into quality parboiled rice, which is in high demand. About 2,800 women were trained to attain the quality standard of the parboiled rice label "Riz Nati", which was recently introduced in Benin. Consequently, about 15,000 t of parboiled rice were commercialised in 2010 alone. Training led to improvement in the quality of parboiled rice and an additional income of 0,22 € kg⁻¹ of parboiled rice.

Additionally, due to the collaboration between the rice farmer associations and private investors, seven new rice mills process paddy rice to white rice. The mini rice mills with a capacity of 10 t day⁻¹ have created more jobs in urban areas.

Rice farmers' associations, women's groups and private investors were supported through development-cooperation partnerships with the programme Promotion of Agriculture.

Keywords: Benin, improving income, rice, value chain promotion