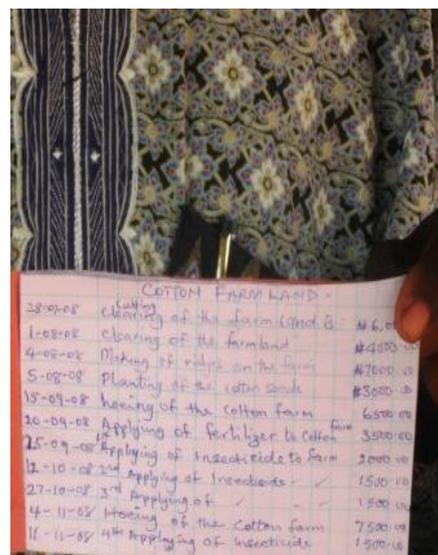


## *The Price of Rice is Nice in Abeokuta*

PrOpCom and its partners trained thirty consultants from various backgrounds to deliver the Nigerian Agricultural Enterprise Curriculum (NAEC) to an audience of farmers, processors and agricultural input suppliers. As a result, three NAEC trainings were delivered to farmers in and around Abeokuta in early 2008. The farmers were taught how to plan for the year ahead, keep records of purchases and sales, assess costs & benefits and even how to organise and participate in membership groups.

Since then, many of the farmers who underwent training have applied what they learnt to their daily lives and have experienced successes to speak of. To begin with, some of the farmers speak about how they now plan for the year ahead and are able to apply the concept of farm business cycles to their plans. As a result, they now spread the processing of their paddy over the period November to January, selling it during and beyond this period. In the past, they would process and sell it in August/September immediately after harvest when supply is highest and price is lowest. Pastor Bode Adenekan, the chairman of the Rice Farmers Association (RIFAN) in Ogun State explained how he was able to command a higher price for his produce, simply by waiting a few months until after the “harvest glut” was over.

Another farmer who grows rice, cotton and melon, Mr. Adams Elegbede showed us his records from previous years now documented and saved with which he is able to determine the best time to start planting. He also confirmed that by holding on to sell his paddy, he was assured of a better price. With this improved income, he was able to pay school fees for his children this year without borrowing.



*“My income has increased such that I was able to pay school fees for my children without borrowing this year”*

*Mr. Elegbede showing off his record book with which he was able to plan for the year resulting in improved earnings.*

Most remarkable is the story of another rice farmer Mr. Sikiru Popoola who claims that by planning for the year ahead, he was able to purchase his inputs earlier (when they were cheaper) with the result that the output from his farm rose sharply from 10 bags of paddy in 2007 to 100 bags 2008. He is now recognised by his peers as one of the biggest rice farmers in the state.

And finally, some farmers have also been able to present their certificates of training to the government agricultural bank, NACRDB, as proof of their record keeping, planning & savings skills and thus secure loans for their farming businesses. Interestingly, there were no discussions between the NAEC partners and NACRDB on this issue before hand, rather this was a direct result of negotiations between the farmers and the bank itself.