

A Healthy Appetite for Ofada Rice



"My business was mentioned in one of the national dailies covering PrOpCom's Stakeholder Meeting and that really gave me exposure"

Jumoke Ogundipe, CEO of Abiding Grace Ventures.

Jumoke Ogundipe, is the CEO of Abiding Grace Ventures and is involved in the processing and marketing of her own "Eppy Ray" brand of Ofada Rice in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Apart from her small factory with five employees in Abeokuta, Jumoke now operates a small restaurant serving prepared Ofada Rice to walk-in customers and offering outdoor catering at parties and events.

Jumoke started this business after leaving banking. She originally bought her rice as a finished product from rice processors in Ogun State and with the help of part-time staff, she manually cleaned (de-stoned) and packaged the rice into one-kilo and half-kilo packages for her small group of urban, middle-class, professional clients (some of whom were her ex-colleagues at the bank). Her product was well received because it was cleaner and more conveniently packaged than other products available in the market.

In 2006 she attended PrOpCom's first Ofada Rice Stakeholder's Meeting in Abeokuta. At this event she became aware of the possibilities for marketing Ofada rice on a large scale and started working towards expanding her business. She attended several PrOpCom organised events at which she expanded her network of Ofada rice producers and broadened her knowledge of Ofada rice production & processing.

Jumoke now buys paddy directly from farmers in Ogun state to ensure the authenticity of the rice variety itself. She pays for it to be parboiled under her supervision, thus she is able to ensure a better quality end-product: her unique selling point. She then takes the parboiled rice for milling and de-stoning. *"I benefit from the mill PrOpCom installed for RIFAN at Iboro. Rice*

obtained from that mill is fairly stone-free which makes the final de-stoning work in my factory easier." She points out. Finally the rice is taken back to her premises for more de-stoning (with a mechanical de-stoner she recently purchased) and packaging.

The rice is packaged in half-kilo boxes which are sold for ₦ 220 per pack, slightly higher than the market average of ₦ 180 per half-kilo. She is able to command this premium for her brand of rice due to the quality she assures her customers. *"It is through the stakeholder meetings I got to know that the quality of the processed Ofada as a determinant of premium price."* She says.

Jumoke is not alone in her experience. Sola Adegbesan of Adonai Community Empowerment Society (ACES) in Lagos also states that at the Ofada Stakeholder Meeting organised by PrOpCom in October 2008, she met representatives of UAC Foods, owners of the Mr. Biggs fast food chain, and they are now her single largest customers, buying Ofada rice from her at ₦ 350 per kilo. "PrOpCom made me realise that there was a demand for Ofada." Says Sola.

