

## AGRA Impact Series



# Eat Ghana Rice Campaign Opens Market for Local Rice Producers

November 2020

**A campaign to promote the consumption of locally produced rice has opened new markets for rice farmers and processors in Ghana.**

Ernest Ansere and his wife Felicia Ansere, joint owners of the Abians Rice Mills and producers of the Abians Rice brand at Akuse in the Eastern Region of Ghana attest to this. They have since 2019 sold over 600MTs of locally produced rice and are poised to sell over 1,000MTs in the coming year.

“The campaign to promote the consumption of locally produced rice is yielding great results,” says Ernest Ansere, an Agronomist with over 36 years of experience. “In 2011 when we opened our mill, people were not interested in consuming locally produced rice because it was riddled with stones and chaff as a result of the drying and processing methods,” he adds.

To address this challenge, the 1.5MT per hour capacity Abians Rice Mill was installed with a destoner, sorting and grading machines. However, for Abians and the over 40 Ghanaian rice brands, consumers’ perception of locally produced rice as being inferior to imported rice has over the years affected sales and production.



*Ernest Ansere display a bag of Abians rice*

The increasing demand for Abians Rice and other locally produced rice brands is a result of the “Eat Ghana Rice” campaign embarked upon by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) Rice Consortium and implementing partners for the Public-Private Partnership for Competitive and Inclusive Rice Value Chain Development: Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) – The Rice Chapter.

The campaign was showcased during the five-day National Farmers’ Day Celebrations and Best Farmer Awards ceremony held in December 2019 in the Volta Region where locally produced rice brands were the star of cooking contests and tasting sessions for over 5,000 people who attended the event from across the country.



**Local rice brands exhibited at the AGRA Rice Consortium's stand during the 2019 national farmers' day celebrations.**

The campaign received a huge endorsement from the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo during the best farmer awards ceremony. The President directed state institutions to use local rice for state functions and urged Ghanaians to consume locally produced rice and other foods, saying, "We must eat what we grow to motivate our farmers, and support the development of the local food industry."

As part of the campaign, AGRA and members of the Rice Consortium presented brands of Ghana rice to the former President of the Republic of Ghana, Jerry John Rawlings and the First Lady, Rebeca Akufo-Addo, as champions of the campaign. The rice brands were produced from Breeder seeds of the Jasmine-85 and AGRA-Rice varieties developed with grant support from AGRA under the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) funding window of the Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA).



**AGRA officials and members of the Rice Consortium present brands of Ghana rice to Former President, Jerry John Rawlings (middle) at his residence as part of the Rice marketing Campaign**



**Members of the AGRA Rice Consortium and Millers present brands of Ghana rice to the First Lady Rebeca Akufo-Addo (middle)**

Chris Adjanyo of Hopeline Institute, member of the AGRA Rice Consortium noted, "It is the Consortium's mandate to create market linkages for actors in the rice value chain from farmer to miller, and support them to produce to meet demand. The 2019 National Farmers' Day celebrations offered us a good opportunity to get people to taste locally produced rice and compare it to imported ones, and the response has been overwhelming."

Following the campaign, demand for local rice has increased with millers and retailers recording shortages. Edward Faakye, owner of EDCEY's, retailer of local and imported food products at Maamobi in Accra remarked, "Customers who tried the local rice brands are returning for more but, I ran out of stock on some brands. I will increase my stock this production season to meet the growing demand."

Felicia Ansero says, "We are happy Ghanaians have come to accept locally produced rice and are placing orders ahead of production. Consumers have tried and seen that locally produced rice no longer has stones, it is tastier and affordable."

To sustain the interest generated in locally produced rice, the AGRA Rice Consortium has trained rice processors including Abians on quality standards developed by the Ghana Standards Authority and the Food and Drugs Authority. Over 80,000 rice farmers have been mobilized and registered for support to increase production. An additional 2,418 smallholder farmers have been sensitized on the use of agricultural business development and financial services to enable them to access financing to expand their operations.

The Rice Consortium together with a Technical Coordinating Committee established with support from AGRA is holding stakeholder dialogues with rice importers to encourage them to source about 30% of locally produced rice to boost the production of paddy. They are also advocating for a government stimulus package to support local rice millers to enhance the quality and quantity of milled rice in the country. The Consortium has also catalysed a \$20million Public-Private-Partnership financing model with the Agricultural Development Bank and the Republic Bank for mechanization and infrastructure development of some selected rice schemes in Ghana.

Dr. Solomon Ansah Gyan, Deputy Director, Crop Services Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and member of the Rice Consortium says, “Ghana needs to be self-sufficient in domestic rice production by 2023 to reduce the huge import bill. Government cannot do it all, partnership with the private sector and support from AGRA is what is going to help us to achieve this objective.”

For Abians and the over 128,000 rice farmers and processors targeted under the project, the interventions of the AGRA Rice Consortium provides them with a ready market and increased

access to financing to acquire dryers and milling plants to expand production for more income, food security and improved livelihoods.



*Visitors sample local rice prepared during the 2019 Farmers' Day Celebrations in Ho, Volta Region*

