



Sesame Opens New Opportunities



A new sesame variety introduced through ACDI/VOCA doubled and tripled farmers' yields. Volunteer consultant Marten Mason provided technical assistance and training to sesame farmers throughout Egypt.

Aly Hassan Zaglol is a smallholder farmer living in Armant El Het in Luxor, Egypt. He owns a farm of four feddans and ordinarily cultivates crops that are traditional to this region: sugarcane, okra, hibiscus, etc.

Aly is an avid story teller, and he enjoys sharing the story about how he joined the USAID funded Global Development Alliance GDA project, when he learned from one of his neighbors that the Islamic Charity Association would help any farmer interested in growing sesame.

Aly visited the association himself, and learned about the GDA and the forward contract opportunity with El Rashidy El Mizan company. Aly decided to cultivate one feddan of sesame as a trial. Since this

was a new crop for him, Aly received, like other farmers in the GDA, a new variety of white sesame developed by the Agricultural Research Center in Sohag.

Aly was careful to apply all of the recommendations he received from USAID-ACDI/VOCA's staff and master trainers. He explains that most farmers in his area cultivate sesame using the 'basin irrigation system', where they scatter the seeds freely, and apply fertilizer very liberally. ACDI/VOCA showed the farmers how to plant sesame with specific plant spacing. Aly and his neighbors were given irrigation and fertilization programs. They were also taught how to avoid overusing chemicals by implementing integrated pest management programs.

Bi-weekly visits from ACDI/VOCA staff and/or master trainers assured that Aly followed recommendations correctly. He achieved an astounding 7 ardab (840 kg) of sesame compared to the usual yield in Egypt, 1.5 to 2 ardab (180-240 kg) for traditional sesame varieties. Other farmers with the GDA averaged 4 to 5 ardab.

After spending only 1500LE in production costs to cultivate one feddan of sesame, Aly netted 4800LE: the market price was 900LE per ardab. Aly has already informed the Islamic Charity Association that he intends to grow sesame again next summer, and that he will increase the acreage under cultivation.

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