



# GHANA'S TAAT-S BEYOND A QUANTUM LEAP



**THE STORY OF CUDJOE ABIMASH FARMS**



The Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation in the Savannah (TAAT-S) Programme started in 2018 in Ghana with only four (4) farmers cultivating 87 ha as a pilot. Based on the successes of the pilot, eight (8) additional farmers were enrolled in 2019 bringing the total number of farmers to 12 and cultivating an area of 1,341 ha. The interest of many farmers was awakened as

many farmers applied to participate in the commercial production of maize and soya. Out of the lot, 64 additional farmers were selected bringing the total number of farmers to 76 cultivating 8,148 ha in 2020. The year 2021 experienced a further increase in the total number of farmers from 76 to 118 cultivating a total area of 13,364 ha made up of 10,181 ha of maize and 3,183 ha of soyabean. Productivity over the years has increased significantly from 1.9mt to 6.6mt/ha for maize, 0.5mt/ha to 2.5mt/ha for soya and 2.5 mt/ha to 6.3mt/ha for rice. Cumulatively, over 330,000 mt of grain has been produced contributing to about 7.4% National food security in the country. (2021)



**ALHAJI MASHUD DISPLAYS HIS HONORS AS 2021 NATIONAL BEST FARMER**

Alhaji Mohammed Mashud was one of the pioneers of the TAAT-S programme even though he had already been in agriculture for over 16 years. Over the years Alhaji Mohammed Mashud has grown from a subsistence farmer to a large-scale commercial conservation agriculture farmer.

His efforts were crowned after he emerged Ghana's national best farmer for the period 2021-2022. In 2006, Alhaji Mashud started farming at the subsistence level while pursuing his career as a teacher. Farming came naturally to him as he followed in his father's footsteps. His father would often take the family along to the farm. Alhaji Mashud's passion for farming started nurturing during this period.

Agriculture as in many African countries has been Ghana's backbone throughout the years since independence. Many people still look at it at the subsistence level and farm just to feed themselves and to sell the excess like Alhaji's father did. Often, when there is drought or a change in rainfall patterns as a result of climate change, farmers suffer the consequences.

But there is a saying that when the stars align for you, there is syzygy. The African Development Bank's Feed Africa Strategy identified the need to unlock the potentials of Africa's Guinea Savannah, a land mass of 400 million hectares and supports the livelihoods of 239 million people. The Technologies for African Agriculture Transformation in the Savannah (TAAT-S) orchestrated and facilitated this.



In Ghana, the Savannah Zone Agricultural Productivity Improvement Project (SAPIP) is championing this climate smart technology for agriculture development to pilot TAAT-S in Ghana. SAPIP fits into Ghana's agricultural policy framework under the government flagship programme, (Planting for Food and Jobs) initiative. Alhaji Mohammed Mashud is a direct beneficiary of the programme. According to Alhaji Mashud *“Large Scale Conservation Agriculture is the way to go. We are involved in every part of the value chain. It will interest you to know that apart from the commodities of maize, soybean and rice, we do large scale rearing and production of poultry, small ruminants, cattle, turkey, geese and fish farming. We have been able to construct 5 dams for 5 communities within which we operate, taking inspiration from government's One Village One Dam project.”*



**AFDB OFFICIALS PROMOTE HIGH 5 CAMPAIGN DURING MISSION TO TAAT-S FIELDS IN GHANA**

When Alhaji's application to join SAPIP's TAAT-S Project was approved, he thought it was just one of those projects that will come and go without any major impact. But TAAT-S for Alhaji Mashud was the game changer. The support in the area of land development has been phenomenal. Out of the 453ha of land developed, the Project financed the development of over 380ha. This served as the biggest incentive for Alhaji Mashud and greatly promoted his journey towards full scale commercial agriculture. *“Before the inception of the Project we usually cultivated between 5-10ha. However, in our first year with the project, we did 31ha. In the second year, we expanded to 253ha and 320 ha in the third year and the fourth year, 2021, we cultivated 453ha. Currently we are on course to cultivate a cumulative of 1600ha. So, you can see the quantum leap or something more than a quantum leap.*

*We have grown over 1,000%. It means our involvement with the project is something which we can't even quantify because they have done marvelously well. They have helped us in the area of land development and provided us the needed technical backstopping. We have learnt a lot and benefitted a lot from the project.”* Alhaji Mashud states.



**ALHAJI MASHUD INTERACTS WITH HIS OUT-GROWERS**

One of the criteria for commercial farmer selection is the existence of small holder farmers. Alhaji Mashud's Cudjoe Abimash farm has an out-grower scheme of over 36,000 small holder farmers out of which about 7,000 are supported by the Project. Most of these small holder farmers are women and the youth. In terms of employment, an enterprise that started with just 4 casual workers now has 51 people in permanent employment and over 1,000 casual workers.



**FERTILIZER STOCK FOR TAAT-S COMMERCIAL FARMERS**

As a result of the use of improved inputs and technology, Alhaji Mashud's productivity has increased from 1.9mt/ha to 5.3mt/ha and 0.5mt/ha to 1.75 mt/ha which are 180% and 250% for maize and soya respectively. The small holder farmers' productivity has also increased from 1mt/ha to 2.3mt/ha and 0.4mt/ha to 1mt/ha an increase of about 130% and 253% for maize and soya respectively.



**PNEUMATIC PLANTER IN OPERATION**

In 2019, the Alhaji Mashud purchased two (2) planters, two (2) boom sprayers and ten (10) tractors and a mounted combine harvester facilitated by the Project on hire purchase. Cudjoe Abimash currently provides mechanization services to his out-growers and other commercial farmers.

*"I owe a debt of gratitude to the African Development Bank. On a trip to Ghana somewhere in 2019, Dr. Martin Fregene of the AfDB challenged all of us farmers under the SAPIP Large Scale Conservation Agriculture Project to not limit ourselves even to the sky. This challenge was catalytic and served as a motivation to most of us and I must thank the African Development Bank team, ably led by the task team manager in the person of Philip Boahen for this."*



**AERIAL VIEW OF CUDJOE ABIMASH FACILITY**

A visit to a 20 acre of land acquired by Alhaji Mashud at the outskirts of the northern regional capital of Tamale is proof of the manifestation of integrated farming inspired by Dr. Martin Fregene. On this piece of land is a poultry farm (Layers, Broilers and Guinea fowls), a rice mill, a feed mill, a blast freezer, a cold room, a warehouse for the storage of various farm produce and the office complex of Cudjoe Abimash. A shed professionally constructed for the safe keep of all farm equipment acquired can also be found here. There is a reserved track of land where sheep, geese, turkeys, ostriches and exotic breed of ducks roam freely.



**BANK OFFICIALS ON A MONITORING VISIT**

Alhaji Mashud's story proves that with the right government policies and incentives, support from development partners, hardwork and sincerity on the part of African farmers, the continent can feed itself.



**A SNAPSHOT OF ALHAJI MASHUD'S POULTRY FARM**



**A SNAPSHOT OF ALHAJI MASHUD'S FARM**



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