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Rice Farming & Production in Nigeria & How to Make it Big

October 15, 2016 by Steve Olorun-Ni



Do you wish to learn how to start your own **rice farming business in Nigeria**?

If yes, then this article is for you.

In this article we'll be sharing with you how you can be part of the Rice Production in Nigeria and become a successful rice entrepreneur

You're welcome to the **Africa Business Classroom** (ABC).

I started my first business before I was a boy of 15. Today I run my company in Lagos and operate in different states of Nigeria.

Make sure you read every word of this post...

(We have earlier discussed how to start [snail farming business in Nigeria](#), [how to start poultry farming business](#), [how to start pig farming business](#), and [how to start fish farming business in Nigeria](#))

You will agree with me when I say that the [agricultural](#) sector in Nigeria is most times ignored, particularly, rice farming.

And these are because we assume or see it as a toilsome and tedious process and then we shy away from it without thinking of how [lucrative business](#) the rice farming and production could be in Nigeria.

That's why we concentrate so much on the importation of rice, which happens to be the most consumed food in Nigeria.

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying it is stress-free to plant and grow rice, but there are ways you can dramatically make it interesting and stress free. Which are among the many things I will include in this article.

In this article, I will be writing a step-by-step guide on how to **start a lucrative Rice farming business in Nigeria**. So please, you can get a note and a pen or bookmark this page so you can come back to read whenever you want or when you want to check back on things that are unclear to you.

Now before we start discussing on how to start rice farming business, let's talk about how lucrative Rice production in Nigeria could be.

How Lucrative is rice farming in Nigeria?

Wondering why I really want to talk about this?

Yes, we have to, because we need to emphasize how remunerative rice business could be. And it would really be such a shame if you enter into this business without knowing its true worth.

Before we continue, permit me to inspire you with the story of a man who made name and fortune by becoming the owner of Nigerians 2nd largest Rice farm.

Rotimi Williams, a 36 years old Nigerian and owner of Nigerians 2nd largest farm knew exactly what he would be entering into and as a result of that, he became massively successful.

The interesting thing we should know about Rotimi Williams is that; he did not study [agriculture](#) in school.

He was a former journalist and banker but working with [Euromoney Magazine](#) exhibited his insight on the possibilities, realness's and how profitable agriculture is in Africa. So he entered into Rice production in Nigeria.

How then did Rotimi Williams learn about rice farming?

He did exactly what you are doing now; surfing the net and reading pieces of works about rice production in Nigeria! He learned it through the internet! Interesting right?

In his own words;

"I learned it all on Google. I downloaded every article I could find on rice production, consumed it and then practiced it on the field."

How inspiring! Today, Rotimi Williams is a proud owner of **Kerekusk Rice**. He also has a 45,000 hectares large rice field which has about 100 hundred workers. He mostly sells his rice to major milling companies in Nigeria.

What I'm trying to bring out from the above story is that you need to be ready and well informed to be successful in the rice farming business in Nigeria.

Another point we need to know again is;

How high is rice consumption in Nigeria?

I am sure you know what I wanted to say; Rice is the most popular food in Nigeria

Here we are, in the most populous country of Africa.

Over the year, Nigeria rice consumption has been massively increasing. And the number one reason is because rice is one of the major types of food which almost every Nigerian takes.

Every year, Nigerians consume about 5.5 million tons of rice. But only 3.6 million tons of these 5.5 million tons are locally produced. And most of the farmers who produce rice, do it for their personal consumption.

Many of them really don't go into the rice farming business with the knowledge and technicality it requires to succeed, that's why most just produce local Nigerian rice, i.e Ofada Rice.

From this, we can see that the production demand on rice is exceedingly high. This is a very good reason why you should invest in rice production because it is a legitimate way of **making huge money**.

The List of the Rice Producing States in Nigeria



Image credit;
latestnigerianews.com.ng

By now you must have been aware that **the richest man** in Nigeria is into Rice farming. Yes, **Dangote** rice is coming to dominate the market.

That's not to scare you. The sky is big enough for every bird to fly.

For now, this is the list of the states in Nigeria where Rice planting and production is much more (than other states) and the names they call their Nigerian Rice;

1. **UMZA Rice – Kano State**
2. **Mas Rice Mill – Gombe State**
3. **Mama Happy Rice – Niger State**
4. **Labana Rice – Kebbi State**
5. **Ebonyi Rice – Ebonyi State**
6. **Anambra Rice – Anambra State**
7. **Olam Rice – Nasarawa State**
8. **Ofada Rice – Ogun State**
9. **Igbemo Rice – Ekiti State.**

What education qualification do I need to have before starting up my rice farming/production in Nigeria?

This, sometimes is what kept people from going into rice farming business. They believe that one should have studied agricultural in school in order to make it.

Well, am glad to tell you that you don't need any special educational knowledge to start up your own rice farming business in Nigeria. All you need is the knowledge of what I will be teaching you soon and then, you can go and practice it in the field. Just like Rotimi did.

Now you are certain of the good lucrative business to do in Nigeria, let us move to the main point;

How to Start Rice Farming Business in Nigeria



Image credit; pixabay

Things we will be looking at are;

1. Choose the right land for your rice farming
2. Prepare the land for rice production
3. Choose right varieties of rice to plant
4. Plant your rice at the right time
5. Use appropriate method of planting
6. Apply fertilizer appropriately
7. Control weed in your rice farm
8. Control the pest in your farm
9. Harvest your rice

Having carefully stipulated out the major steps, I will explain each of them one after the other.

1. Choose right land for rice farming

To have a successful rice production in Nigeria, the choice of land that you use in planting your rice REALLY matters. If you want to stay in the rice farming business for long, it is advisable that you select a site in ecological zones where rice is grown traditionally.

It could be in the east, north, south or western part of Nigeria. And it will be also better to soil survey your land to avoid any risk.

Choose lands that are fertile and are high in water retention capacity; lands that are swampy (clayey) and/or contains organic matter like loamy soil.

2. Prepare the land for the rice production

To prepare your land for rice production in Nigeria, you should do it from November to February. During this time, there will be less rain in Nigeria so your land should be ready from February when raining season might start approaching. Clear and pack bushes, using a hoe to remove bushes and weeds and to expose the rhizomes of perennial weeds to the heat of the sun.

But if your land is in the Savannah region, your land preparation can start in February.

For those who are using forest areas or new areas; cut and stump big trees and roots before ploughing. After that, disc harrow twice with the first rains from late February to an early March to make good slope if the land is flat. (Plough twice and disc harrow once if land is sloppy.)

Before final harrowing, apply basal fertilizer. Divide the field into plots of 50 or 100m². And also level the land to reduce erosion. Choose right varieties of rice to plant

Some popular varieties of rice grown in Nigeria are Upland rice, Lowland rice, and Fadama rice. It is important that you manually chose your rice to prevent choosing an unhealthy type.

If you need recommendations on the varieties of rice to plant, then you should visit any [International Institute of Tropical Agriculture](#) (IITA) nearest to you. They will be glad to help.

3. Choose the right variety of rice

There are different varieties of rice and their growth and yield are different as well. Choosing the right variety could help you with a more productive rice harvest.

4. Plant your rice at the right time

The planting time for the forest area and the savannah area differs a little.

In the forest area; Plant rice in mid-March to mid-April, after 3 good spots of rain.

In the savannah area; Plant rice in mid-May to Mid-June.

5. Use appropriate method of planting

You can either practice direct seeding into the farm or you can first plant it in the nursery then transplant it to the farm.

For direct seeding; This processing is either by broadcasting or dibbling. Start by dividing the field into plots of 50 or 100m² and then construct small bunds. For your seeding rate; it can be 60 kg/ha by dibbling, 80–100 kg/ha by broadcasting and 50–65 kg/ha by drilling in rows spaced 30 cm apart.

The major problem of this method is weeds. Apply herbicides to control them.

For Nursery rising; put seeds into gunny bags and soaked in water for 24 hours. After soaking, place it under shades still covered in gunny bags. Sprinkle water over seed after intervals and turn with hands about three times in a day for adequate aeration and to avoid heat damage.

After about 36–48 hours, the seeds sprout and are ready for sowing. Then broadcast them in seedbed on a puddle nursery field. Construct drainage canals for proper water removal if need be. Also, add decomposed organic manures and a small amount of inorganic fertilizer as basal dose may also be added to the nursery.

Transplanting of nursery seedlings to farmland; this starts after 21 days. This is done by uprooting the seedlings. Uproot seedlings by holding at the same times between thumb and forefinger at the base of the culms and pull sideways. Transplant 2–3 seedlings per hill. Spacing should be 20 cm between rows and 15–20cm between plants.

Note* (Transplant early maturing varieties 15 cm apart and transplant medium or late maturing varieties 20 cm apart.)
Do not forget to flood the beds while uprooting.

6. Apply fertilizer appropriately

For transplanted seedlings; Apply 200 kg/ha (4 bags) of NPK 15:15:15 carefully puddle in the soil prior to transplanting. Then after transplanting, apply another 100kg (2 bags) of Urea per hectare broadcast at 30 days.

For direct seedlings; Apply 100kg of 15-15-15 per hectare (2 bags/ha) as basal fertilizer, 2-3 weeks after the appearance to facilitate an integration of fertilizer into the soil.

You can also apply 50 kg (one bag) of Urea per hectare—5weeks after sowing. In areas where acidity is high, (do NOT use Sulphate of Ammonia but use other sources of nitrogen e.g. urea.) If you are confused, you can visit any agro store for a better recommendation.

7. Control weed on your rice farm

The sooner the first weeding is done the better. The first weeding can and should be done within 2 to 3 weeks after appearance, using hoe instead of a cutlass.

The second weeding should be done 6 to 7 weeks after the appearance. (You can do a weeding a third if you want.) Chemical control of weed; you can also use chemicals like TamariceTMPL, RonstarTMPL, GramoxeTM or RisaneTMat to control the weed. (Choose the one that you think will work best for you).

8. Control the pest in your rice farm

Birds, rodent, termites and armyworm are most times the problems that you might face.

For Birds control; you can scare them away manually by employing people to this from 6 am to 7 pm first two weeks after planting, and from heading to harvesting

For Rodent control; you can kill them with snap traps.

For termites control; destroy all dead woods and plant deposits by burning. And you can also Locate termite mounds and destroy them by spraying Nogos 50 at the rate of 30 ml per 4.51 (one gallon) of water.

For armyworm control; spray Gammalin 20 or Carbaryl (Vetox 85) at the rate of 1.68 kg in 225 liters gallons) of water per hectare.

Harvesting

9. Harvest your rice

You can harvest your rice in the next 4 month when your rice turn from green to brown(straw colour). Thresh carefully immediately after harvest to avoid losses. You can Use wacking frames or mechanical devices. Thresh on a mat or tarpaulin over the concrete floor by beating rice against the floor, or against a stick or drum.

Note 1* Do not thresh on a bare floor. Thresh carefully and avoid dehusking the grains. Damaged grains become stained and coloured after parboiling and milling.

Note 2* After rice harvesting, you should grow leguminous plants like beans, peas, lentils, soya etc and also plow rice residues into the soil; this serve as organic matters and helps in maintaining the soil nutrients for another planting.

Expected Yield of the Rice Farming

If above steps are followed carefully coupled with enough rainfall, your yield should be an average of 2.5–3.0 t/ha paddy.
Drying

Use mechanical dryer if you can. You can also manually dry paddy by spreading them on a clean concrete floor, mat or tarpaulin. 2–3 days of slow sun-dry is enough to reduce breakage during milling but on a sunny day, sun-dry for one day only.

Storage

Store your paddy in containers or in jute bags that is dry, rodent-free, airtight condition.

Processing

Your rice is not yet ready, it is called paddy rice.

For parboiling; Soak paddy in hot water at 70 degrees for 5 to 6 hours. Remove all floating empty grains. Then parboil rice by steaming soaked paddy put in a jute bag for 10 to 16 minutes. You can stop parboiling when rice husks start to split open. (When you see Chalky grains or white centers it means incomplete parboiling, which may cause breakage of grains during milling.)

For Milling; this can be done in a milling machine.

Rice production and Packaging in Nigeria

Now your rice is ready. You now have a full modern made in Nigeria rice. Package your rice to your choice and market it and see your income flowing.

Challenges You May Encounter During Rice Farming in Nigeria

As it is in any business, rice farming in Nigeria comes with its own challenge. Here are some of them;

Land issues; you can rent or buy an adequate portion of land. Make sure you have all the required documents when you buy or rent your lands to avoid any issues,

Fund; some people might be interested in rice farming but don't have funds to back them up. You can get a loan from the government, any Microfinance banks or cooperative societies. They will be glad to help since this has to do with **agriculture**.

Just makes sure you have a **business plan**.

You can even get our business book about how to get capital [here](#)

Transportation; Make sure that the roads that connect to your farm are mobilizable for easy transporting of your rice. Now you know how to start your rice farming business in Nigeria _____ start putting it into practices.

Be among those that are proud to be into rice production in Nigeria.

PS; This post could be downloaded as PDF (Rice Farming in Nigeria PDF)

Join the team of smart entrepreneurs who decide to feed our nation and make money doing so.

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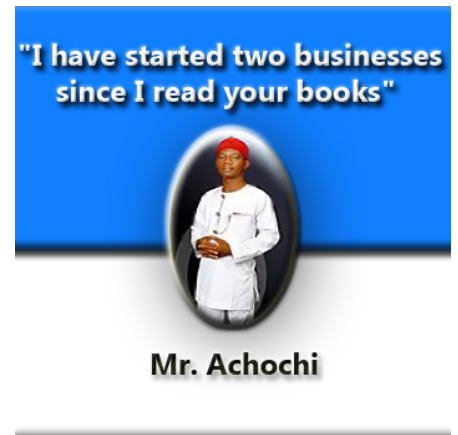
Snail Farming in Nigeria (Detail Post + Free practical training on our farm)

Steve Olorun-Ni



I Started my first business before I was 15 years old. I ran away from school when I was 21 years and 6 months, to fully go into the business world. I have started more than 7 businesses of my own. I and my beautiful wife live in Lagos where I run my company (BCV). If you stay long enough on this blog, you may become like me. If you need me as your business consultant or you want me to come and speak in your church, organization or company, call my secretary on +2348100446044. Download my free business book [HERE](#). I Love You.

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