

**E-mail from Dawn Berkelaar, ECHO Development Notes staff member  
(Ft. Myers, FL):**

Norman,

Here is another report that we received about SRI. It is from Ann Elyse Merrit, who was an intern at ECHO several years ago and is now working in Benin, West Africa. The relevant portions of her e-mail are below. They did a fairly small plot but had extremely encouraging results.

Dawn

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2002 6:10 PM

To: echo

Subject: SRI report

I'm working together with a Beninese man named Leon, who has a really good grasp of conducting experiments scientifically (control plots, etc.) We read the article on SRI in the January 2001 issue of EDN and decided to plant 10m x 10m plot of rice using the SRI technique. Our results were fantastic! We transplanted the seedlings at the age of 8-15 days in rows of 20 cm x 40 cm, giving an average of 12.5 plants/m<sup>2</sup>. The transplants were planted singly in the test plot, whereas there were 7-8 plants per clump in the control plot using traditional methods, with an average of 12 clumps/m<sup>2</sup> (98 plants/m<sup>2</sup>).

The first weeding was done 10-15 days after the seedlings were transplanted, the second weeding 2 weeks after that. (We built a mechanical weeder based on the diagram in the article, but didn't have great success with it, so they did most of the weeding by hoe). Donkey manure was mixed in with the soil before transplanting.

Leon counted an average of 18 tillers/clump in the test plot (range 6-27). The control plot had an average of 4 tillers/clump, range of 2-8. Our final yields were 7.5 t/ha for the test plot (SRI method) vs. 1.6 t/ha for the control plot. Quite a difference! We plan to plant all of our rice using this method next year, and Leon brought some local rice growers to our test plot to show them the results.

We hope to perfect the mechanical weeder so that we can use it to better aerate the soil, and we plan to mix more compost in with the soil next year.