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## Rice farmers ask Government to adopt SRI

1st November 2011

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Asutware (E/R), Nov. 1, GNA – Rice farmers operating under the Kpong Irrigation Project at Asutware in the Eastern Region, on Tuesday called on Government to adopt the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) as a policy to help increase rice production.

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The SRI is a set of farming practices developed by farmers in Madagascar to ensure maximum use of land and water as well as other resources, based on the development of healthier, large and deep-rooted practices that could make crops to resist drought, water logging and wind damage.

Mr Moses Guamah, National Best Irrigation Rice farmer told the Ghana News Agency at Asutware that the cost of production under the SRI is low as compared with the conventional method of rice production.

He explained that under the SRI, farmers are expected to apply composite manure, which could result in yield of between 30 and 35 bags of rice per acre as compared with at most 30 bags of rice per acre with the application of fertiliser.

“This helps some of us to get money to address our family challenges, especially, our children’s education issues,” Mr Guamah said.

He noted that rice cultivation is faced by challenges such as inadequate machinery, storage facilities, drying space, dryers, poor drainage systems on farms, lack of market and poor road network.

Mr Akpoka Philip, Regional Best Rice farmer, said farmers in the country had benefited from Government’s fertiliser subsidy and called on the authorities to assist the Kpong Irrigation project rice farmers to increase production.

He appealed to the various rice farmers’ co-operatives in the Asutware area to solicit loans to establish mechanised centres to facilitate their farming activities to minimise their dependence on Government.

The General Agriculture Worker’s Union in collaboration with ActionAid Ghana, an international non-government organisation has supported farmers to implement the SRI under the Asutware Rice Irrigation Project and the Ashiaman Rice Irrigation Project, to promote sustainable agriculture.

The Union has in the past three years trained and supported farmers operating under the irrigation projects to implement the SRI on pilot basis.

The evaluation of the SRI is aimed to identify and collate the experiences of farmers and needed to be supported towards the implementation of the system.

GNA

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