



## Beekeeping improves livelihood of cashew farmers in Ghana and Benin

Most families in Ghana's and Benin's rural areas are solely dependent on farming activities. Their work is often very exhausting but less lucrative due to low quality produce. When ACi started trainings on good agricultural practices, cashew farmers profited from the production of higher quality nuts and improved their livelihoods. A rather new but promising activity in cashew plantations is beekeeping. Through pollination of cashew trees, yield and quality of raw cashew nuts increase.

### *Becoming friends with the bees*

Dr. Kwame Aidoo, a beekeeping specialist from the Agriculture Department of the University in Cape Coast, conducted a study on how beekeeping activities increase farmer income and livelihood. During his research he met Mr. Kwesi Owusu, 48 years, cashew farmer in Ghana and Mr. Theophile Akpo, 38 years, cashew farmer in Benin. Both are engaged in beekeeping activities on their respective farms.

### *The story of Mr. Kwesi Owusu*

Mr Kwesi Owusu profits from 75 bee colonies on his 5.2 ha farm, 20 in his own farm and another 55 in his neighbours farm. In 2011/2012, Mr. Owusu harvested 41,600 kg of raw cashew nuts at a selling price of USD0.53 per kilogram. He earned more than USD2,200 from cashew nuts alone. A lucrative by-product from keeping bees is honey production. Mr Owusu harvested 1,012.50 liters from all hives at a unit price of USD5.90, which is an extra income of USD5,960. Also, he profits from the beeswax production, earning another USD143 from 48 kg of beeswax. His annual income from all activities amounts to more than USD8,300.

### *The story of Mr. Theophile Akpo*

In the same season, Mr Theophile Akpo harvested 500kg of cashew nuts from his 2 ha farm in Benin selling it for USD0.70 per kilo and earned about USD 350. From his 60 bee hives, he harvested 500 liters of honey that gave an extra income of almost USD1,800 selling it at USD3.59 per liter. Opposed to Mr. Owusu, Mr. Akpo uses a concrete kenya top bar which is a little more heavy but also less likely to be destroyed or stolen. The 2 ha cashew farm, including the beekeeping activities, gives Mr. Akpo an annual income of about USD2,150.

### *Farming activities facilitate investments*

Both farmers increased their annual income through beekeeping activities. Mr. Kwesi Owusu bought two plots of land, sent two of the seven children to boarding school and bought a motorcycle for his farming operations. Mr Theophile Akpo started building a 5 room house for his family and paid the school fees for his children.



Cashew Farmer in Benin with bee comb

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