

GHANA

Strategy Support Program



Session 10: Commercializing Agriculture

SESSION SUMMARY

Chair: Samuel Adams

Panel: Shashi Kolavalli, Suresh Babu, Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto

The stories of three farmers and how their business is done were told.

Hilary is a subsistence farmer in the Upper East region of Ghana who cultivates 3.3 acres for millet, sorghum, groundnut, cow-peas, soya, maize and vegetables. His production has remained at the subsistence level and is representative of many farmers in Ghana. He does use some modern inputs including fertilizer and new seed varieties but his knowledge in how to use these inputs well is limited. Peace corps volunteer, Sonia, has been observing his farming practices and recording the story.

Samuel Mahamdu [\[video\]](#) told us how he dreamt of being a farmer and has realized that dream, starting with 1 acre at the age of 22 and now cultivates 550 acres 20 years later. He has been recognized as one of the best maize farmers in his region and reminded us of the entrepreneurial spirit required to make farming a profitable business.

In somewhat of a contract, Kofi Anku and partners recently began farming high-value tomatoes for the urban Accra market. Advanced technologies have been deployed to ensure high productivity and quality of product. The business has benefited from its partnership with a real estate company. The business is built around an identified market opportunity of high-end Accra supermarkets where the markup on fruit and vegetables is considerable.

Their stories highlighted that what distinguishes successful farmers tends to be self-motivation and hard-work [\[GSSP Discussion Note #027\]](#). The case of Samuel Mahamdu demonstrates that successful farmer can start small with little capital. What is common across the two successful commercial cases is that they have used extension advice intensively and are willing to adapt to improved farming technologies.

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