

PRESCO**News**

The house journal of Presco Plc

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PRESCO PLC

Producer of Specialty Fats and Oils

Presco is a fully integrated agro-industrial establishment with oil palm plantations, palm oil mill, palm kernel crushing plant and vegetable oil refining plant. It is at present the only one of such in West Africa.

Presco specialized in the cultivation of oil palm and in the extraction, refining and fractionation of crude palm oil into finished products.

Presco supplies specialty fats and oils of outstanding quality to customer's specification and assures a reliability of supply of its products all year round. This is made possible by the integrated nature of the company's process.

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Editorial :

Towards a better investment climate in Nigeria

Significant progress has been made in the last five years to improve the investment climate in Nigeria, but there remain opportunities for improvement in some critical areas.

Taxation

In many countries primary industries, agriculture in particular, because of their importance in self-sufficiency objectives, are granted tax concessions. In some cases this is in the form of a lower than normal corporate tax for qualifying businesses. Additionally agriculture is often accorded VAT-free status on both inputs and production because of the primary producer nature of the industry. To be able to compete favorably in the increasingly competitive global market, Nigeria must make its own products internationally competitive.

While tax incentives in the form of pioneer status are in place, there are no incentive packages for expansion of existing businesses. There should be additional incentives for established and expanding businesses.

Companies operating in rural communities take on added responsibility of providing basic needs of the people such as building schools, providing electricity and water infrastructure, etc, which are normally the responsibility of government. However, such projects are not tax deductible and as such are a double taxation cost for the company carrying out these good works. Such approved projects should be tax deductible.

The Federal Government also needs to address the taxation habits of state and local governments. For example, many states levy veterinary and produce inspection fees on agricultural produce claiming that inspectors are controlling the movement of pests and diseases in the federation. In the vast majority of cases the personnel manning inspection posts are unqualified to carry out an inspection. As a result, no meaningful inspection is carried out – they are merely revenue raising exercises of no benefit to the agricultural industry and are an impediment to investment.

Despite the clarity of the Taxes and Levies Decree 1998 and the work of the Joint Tax Board, there remains a confusing and growing array of taxes and levies, particularly at the state and local government levels. For example, there are at least six different annual vehicle taxes/levies due in Edo state, some of which are charged by the state and others by the local government. A single annual road use/vehicle tax would be simpler for road users and reduce the opportunity for confusion.

Interest rates

Interest rates for borrowed funds remain very high in Nigeria. Whilst improvement of interest rates for borrowers is beyond the scope of legislative change, it must be emphasized that this is one of the key constraints to economic growth.

Agriculture is unique in that it generally has longer gestation periods from investment to profit than other industries. This discourages banks from investment in the industry. Government needs to find ways and means of encouraging investment in agriculture.

Control of importation of vegetable oils

There is a shortfall in domestic production of all fats and oils. Importation is required to make up the shortfall. In some industries (e.g. cement) the licenses and permits for importation to make up such a

shortfall are granted to those that have invested in productive capacity in the industry, and not simply to traders. The same incentive should be granted to the vegetable oil industry, as those with vested interest in the industry will ensure that only the correct amount will be imported so as not to jeopardize domestic production.

Infrastructure

There is a worrying lack of investment in maintenance and capacity improvement for the two most important infrastructural elements: roads and electricity.

As a result of poor roads, industry is paying more for the running and maintenance of transport, which in turn reduces returns on investment. In 2007 the Lagos-Benin Expressway was in such a poor condition that it was virtually closed for several months and traffic had to be diverted through Akure.

The lack of a reliable power supply means that industry must invest in its own power generating capacity and reticulation, which is effectively a further tax. Even small companies are obliged to own and run generators to ensure business continuity.

Security and freedom of movement

A low general level of security and poor law enforcement means there are significant additional costs for companies operating in Nigeria. Security concerns affect the freedom of movement for all individuals as well as the movement of raw materials and products. Additionally, the general freedom of movement of people and goods within the federation is hampered by roadblocks, most of which serve more as revenue collection points than security check points. Government needs to do more to check this trend.

Importation and exporting

The process of importation of items into Nigeria is becoming more complex. Promises of change and improvements seem to have resulted in more delays and increased costs to importers, which become a disincentive to investment.

Although Presco is not expecting to export any of its products in the foreseeable future, it is understood that the process of exportation is complex and costly.

Currently there is too great a concentration of import-export traffic through the Lagos ports. There needs to be considerable investment (both private and public) in existing port facilities and future investment in new ports to relieve the congestion in Lagos and spread more evenly the import-export load to other sea ports.

Future investment

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the population is growing, which makes Nigeria very attractive to both domestic and foreign investors. With aspirations to be one of the twenty largest economies in the world by 2020 the Federal Government, in conjunction with state governments, needs to articulate clearly what will be done to make the investment climate more conducive to investors and then make it happen.

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UPDATE ON THE PRESCO BOILER

Work on the new 30 tons steam boiler is in progress and nearing completion. The last edition of Presco news reported a 35% completed foundation works on the new boiler.

Why a new steam boiler?
What components make up the boiler?
What stages make up the completion of the boiler project?

Work in progress on the new boiler

The new steam boiler

A boiler is a closed vessel in which water is transformed into steam by the application of heat. Technically, we say that the chemical energy in fuel is converted into heat, and it is the function of the boiler to transfer this heat to the water in the most efficient manner to form steam. The new boiler is designed to absorb the maximum amount of heat released in the process of combustion. The heat is transferred to the boiler water at the radiation and convection parts

Boilers are used in the vegetable oil industry for electric power generation and industrial process heating.

Presco at present has two operational boilers, a Titan boiler and a Vyncke package boiler with installed capacity of 12 tonnes per hour at 17 bar and 4 tonnes per hour at 12 bar steam generating respectively.

The two boilers are expected to produce steam to heat up the factory process (that is operating the mill and the refinery) without being able to generate electric power to run machines. So much money therefore goes into alternative fuel (diesel)

for power generation to cater for the plant need. With the commissioning of the new 30tonnes per hour at 25bar capacity boiler, Presco will be able to generate its own electric power as well as steam for process. Before this can be achieved however, a complementary component of the boiler, the steam turbine, is required and this will form the next phase of the project.

Components of the boiler

We simply classify the components of the boiler into five; the feeding part, radiation part, convection part, exhaust and other auxiliary equipment (fans, pumps, water treatment plant, conveyors etc).

The fuel silo is part of the feeding system where the fuel made up of factory waste (fibre, shell and empty fruit bunches) is fed into the combustion chamber inside the radiation part.

At the combustion chamber the heat generated by the fire heats up the water inside the radiation part. From there, the water goes to the convection part where it undergoes indirect heating by the flue gases.

The convection part comprises a steam drum, economisers, which supply preheated air to the boiler through primary and secondary air fans, and a super heater.

The exhaust part transfers all the flue gases from the boiler after they have been filtered of ashes at the deduster. The ashes are taken and conveyed by screw conveyors for disposal. The flue gases are exhausted to the atmosphere through the chimney.

Accessories like fans, airlocks, water pumps, water treatment unit, sensors, automation, etc control all necessary and important parameters of the boiler and keep it operational.

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Stages in the boiler project

The stages are made up of foundations, boiler body erection and assembly, building erection, machinery installation, piping, electrical/instrumentation works and testing/commissioning. It is worth mentioning that logistics and material procurement, preparation of contracting/bidding documents, execution and supervision are interwoven in all the stages of the job.

Boiler project status

At the moment, about 70% of the project has been completed. The electrical, instrumentation and other auxiliary equipment are about to commence.

Engr. Sam Obakpororo Agbahwo

Work in progress on the new boiler



NEWS FROM COWAN ESTATE

Presco sponsored NYSC community development projects commissioned in Cowan

Two community based projects undertaken by Batch A 2007 National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving in Omat-eye College, Ajagbodudu have been commissioned by the State Coordinator/Chief Executive of the NYSC in Delta State.

The projects, bus stop shelter and sign board were initiated and executed by Mr. Mohammed Dutse, Mr. Chukwudi Mba and Miss Yetunde Orenuga and were wholly sponsored by Presco Plc.

The two projects are sited at the PHCN road junction on the Koko road. Indigenes of the benefiting communities commended the Corps members for their initiative and foresight on the bus stop shelter, noting that it would bring succour to all users of the road during rainy and dry seasons. This is because it is the only shade provider within two kilometer radius of the location.



The bus stop shelter

The State Coordinator of NYSC, Mrs. Foluso Kolajo, observed that the projects were of great importance to the users of the road and Presco staff alike as evidenced by the array of dignitaries that graced the occasion, which include the Cowan

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Estate Manager, Mr. David Onayifeke, who represented Presco. While thanking the Corps members for their initiative, she enjoined all stakeholders to jealously guard and routinely maintain the projects to ensure that the dream of the executors are kept alive.

The occasion featured traditional dances by students of Omateye College, Ajagbodudu.



The state coordinator of the NYSC commissioning the project

Outgrower scheme kicks off at Cowan

The outgrower oil palm development scheme finally kicked off around Cowan Estate in Delta State after three years of its successful implementation in Edo State. Under the pilot scheme, which started during the 2007 planting season, 24 farmers from Ajagbodudu and Oghareki in Warri North and Ethiope West local government areas respectively were assisted by Presco Plc with planting materials, such as high breed tenera oil palm seedlings, fertilizer, cover crops and technical assistance to establish a total of fifty hectares of oil palm. The farmers' contribution is land and labour.

The success of this effort by Presco can be seen from the number of letters and personal visits to our Cowan Estate office to show appreciation by existing and intending beneficiaries of the scheme. Applications for consideration under the 2008 season have continued to pour into Cowan Estate office unsolicited. It is hoped that the Delta State Government would see the need to partner with Presco so that more farmers would benefit from the scheme.

The outgrower scheme is an initiative of Presco Plc aimed at assisting farmers around its nucleus

estates to establish oil palm plantations as a sustainable means of livelihood and economic empowerment

The scheme was originally intended to be a tripartite programme involving the Delta State Government, the participating farmer and Presco Plc as implementing agency. Proposals to this effect were sent to the Edo and Delta State governments in 2003. While the Edo State Government embraced the scheme and has been providing the required funding for the fourth year running, no response was given to the proposal sent to Delta State by relevant authorities in the State at that time.

Godfrey Itsekure

Ologbo and Ajagbodudu communities join Presco scholarship scheme

Four students, three from Ologbo in Edo State and one from Ajagbodudu in Delta State have joined the Presco host community scholarship scheme. They are Master Victor Oritsemayomi Akra (Bowen University, Accounting) from Ajagbodudu Community and Miss Edamwen Namuna (University of Benin, Agric Extension) from Imasabor community. Others are Master Sunday Uhunoma (University of Benin, Civil Engineering) from Ologbo and Osaretin Godspower Omorodion (University of Benin, Electrical/Electronic Engineering) from Oghobaye, Ologbo. They will each receive a scholarship grant of N50,000 each academic year for the duration of their programme.

The host community scholarship scheme is open to students from the company's immediate host communities around the Obaretin, Ologbo and Cowan project areas undergoing first degree or higher national diploma courses in Agriculture, Agric-Economics, Engineering and Accounting in any tertiary institution in Nigeria.



Oritsemayomi V. Akra



Sunday Uhunoma



Miss Edamwen Namuna



Osaretin G. Omorodion

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PRESCO LOSES PIONEER DIRECTOR



Late J.J. Mansholt

A founding member of the Siat Group, Mr. Jacobus Johannes Mansholt, is dead. He passed away on 14 February 2008 in the Netherlands after a protracted illness. A pioneer member of the board of directors of Presco Plc, Mr. Mansholt was at various times the Director of Operations of Presco Plc. Mr. J. J. Mansholt, (Jaap as he was fondly called) was an easy-going man, rarely stirred to anger. He dedicated his life to agriculture and will be remembered throughout the Siat Group for his contribution to its growth and success.

A requiem mass was held in his honour at the Obaretin Estate on Wednesday 20 February 2008, the day his body was cremated in Groningen, the Netherlands.

May he rest in peace.



Faces at the requiem mass for JJM

COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITIES FOR 2007

In keeping with our corporate social responsibility, the following contributions were made towards impacting positively on our host communities in Edo and Delta States.

Edo State

Obaretin and Ologbo Estates

Education

Support for educational improvements continued during the year with the **payment of stipends to teachers** in Osawende Primary School, Obagie-Nokenkporo and Agbomoba Primary School.



Rehabilitated Osewende Primary School

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School **benches** for pupils and **chairs/tables** for teachers were also provided to meet the expanded needs of Agbomoba Primary School, following the completion of the additional classroom blocks.

The **rehabilitation of Osawende Primary School**, Obagie-Nokenkporo was carried out during the year.

Two students from Ologbo community were granted scholarship to pursue first degree courses in engineering at the University of Benin, Benin City. They are Sunday Uhunoma and Omorodion Godspower Osaretin. They will each receive a scholarship grant of N50,000 each academic year. Master Daniel Idehen, of Uroho and Abel Aigbe of Owanoba communities also received their scholarship grants during the year. Daniel Idehen is an accounting student of the University of Benin while Aigbe is studying mechanical engineering at the Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.

Road maintenance and water boreholes

Our host community road maintenance work received attention during the year. In addition to the routine maintenance of the Azagba/Obagie/Uroho/Okha road, the road linking Obagie with Utesi was opened up during the first quarter of 2007 at the request of both communities. Extensive work was also carried out at the request of Obagie and Agbomoba communities for the opening up of land for development in their villages.

The water supply sources to Obagie, Uroho, Agbomoba, Ekosa and Owanoba received attention during the year.

Outgrower scheme

The outgrower scheme continued during the year with farmers from communities around the Ologbo and Obaretin estates cultivating a total of 75ha. At the end of the 2007 planting season, 118 farmers participating in the scheme have cumulatively planted 213 hectares under the scheme.

Efforts to get the present government in Edo State to continue the funding of the scheme received very encouraging response.

Stipend to community elders

The payment of monthly stipend to community elders as an incentive to promote social goodwill continued during the year, with the inclusion of

elders from Ologbo dukedom.

Electrification

Efforts at finding a solution to the electrification of our host communities continued in the course of the year. Discussions held with the various arms of the Edo State government did not translate to action. To fast-track the process of actualizing this very sensitive subject, Presco decided to scale down the scope of the project to include only her immediate host communities of Obagie-Nokenkporo and Uroho. It is expected that work on this project would commence within the first quarter of 2008 to be financed by Presco.

Igieduma Estate

Igieduma community also received financial contribution in support of their community development effort.

Delta State Cowan Estate

Pilot outgrower scheme

Presco initiated a pilot outgrower scheme in Delta State using its own resources. This approach was adopted after all the proposals for partnership made to the Delta state government failed to receive the desired response. In the course of the year, 50 hectares of oil palm were planted for 24 farmers from the immediate host communities of Ajagbodudu and Oghareki.

It is hoped that if the present government in Delta state buys into the scheme, it will be expanded to accommodate more farmers from Ethiope West and Warri North Local Government Areas as is currently done in Edo State.

Educational support

Support to the schools at Ajagbodudu continued during the year, with regular payment of stipends to teachers at the two primary schools. There were no students under the scholarship scheme during the period even though the two communities (Oghareki and Ajagbodudu) were reminded of their quota under the scheme waiting to be filled.

Stipend to community elders

Payment of stipends to community elders continued throughout the year. Due payments were made to the Oghareki community in line with the ex-

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isting agreement, while other community related requests were met.

Electricity

Presco continued to pay for the energy consumption cost for Ajagbodudu community residents.

The primary school at Ajagbodudu was connected to the national electricity grid, to power the water borehole within the school premises.

Road maintenance

Routine grading of earth roads within the communities in Ajagbodudu and Oghareki were carried out in the course of the year.

Invitations to social events received from the communities in Edo and Delta States were honoured and goodwill gestures extended to the communities at such events and during festive periods.

Staff News

NEW EMPLOYEES



JOSIAH A. OKE:

Mr. Oke was employed on March 1, 2007 as Technical Officer. He holds a Higher National Diploma in Agricultural Technology, obtained from the Federal College of Agriculture, IAR&T Moor Plantation, Ibadan, in 2003. He hails from Sapon in Abeokuta South Local Government Area of Ogun State.



MR. JOSEPH I. OGUNTOLA:

Mr. Oguntola was engaged by Presco Plc as Technical Officer on March 1, 2007. He holds a Bachelors degree (B.Eng) in Agric Engineering obtained from University of Ilorin, Kwara State in 2004. He hails from Idepe in Okitipupa LGA, Ondo State.



MR. LUCKY E. IYEN:

Mr. Iyen was recently employed by Presco as Production Officer. Before joining Presco, he had worked with Ihechiowa Oil Palm Company Limited, Abia State as Estate Assistant. He hails from Ehor in Uhunmwonde LGA, Edo State. He is married with children.

Staff News

MARRIAGES

Helena and Dirk on their wedding day



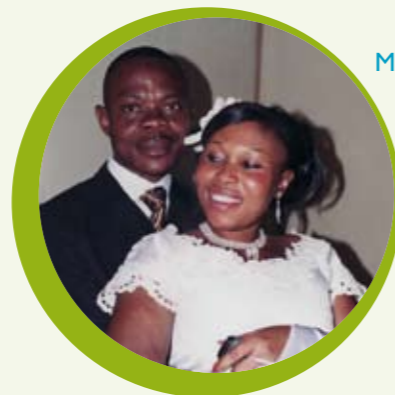
Helena Vandebeeck joins the "Noble Institution"

Saturday the 4th of August 2007 was indeed a very special day not only for Helena and Dirk but also for the Vandebeeck and Lambrecht families. It marked the day when Ir. Helena Vandebeeck, a member of the Board of Directors of Presco Plc, joined the noble institution of marriage with Dirk Lambrecht.

The marriage ceremony in the Carolus Borromeus Church in Antwerp, Belgium, was followed in the evening by a colourful reception attended by guests who came from different parts of the world to be part of the very special occasion.

Presco News joins in wishing Helena and Dirk a blissful and fruitful union.

Mr. Emmanuel Ikechukwu Onwuatogwu, chairman of Presco Senior Staff Association (PSSA) tied the nuptial knot with former Miss Patience Ndidi Okonkwo. The marriage took place on 2nd February, 2008 at Church of God Mission Provincial headquarters, Asaba, Delta State. Presco News joins in wishing the couple a happy and fruitful married life.



Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Onwuatogwu on their wedding day

Mr. and Mrs. Chidi Okoro receiving their marriage certificate from the Rev Fr.



Mr. Chidi Lawrence Okoro of the maintenance department also wedded former Miss Martina Chioke Ibe at St. Peter Catholic Church, Mpan Ahiazu Mba-ise, Imo state.

Presco News rejoices with them and wishes them blissful married life.

Staff News

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the 2007 training year, some staff of the company benefited from the following courses organized during the period as part of the Company's routine training and development programme.

Mr. Iykeoretin Obayuwana (Assistant Internal Audit Manager) attended a three-day course on audit, control and management of computer based accounting system in March 2007. Others are **Mr. Osaretin Emwionmwusi** (Accounts Supervisor) three-day course on practical approach to computerized accounting March 2007. **Mr. Peter Ikenweazu** (Financial Accountant) four-day course on accounts payable and accounts receivable for higher efficiency April 2007, **Mr. Joseph Osahon Idemudia** (Assistant Manager Information Technology) five-day course on MS SQL Server 2000,

design and implementation June 2007, **Mr. Isaac Ona** (Company Secretary) two-day ISCAN conference in September 2007, **Mr. Augustine Erie** (Treasurer) five-day annual accountants conference in October 2007, Mr. Andrew Ogbebor (Human Resources Manager) three-day Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (IPMN) conference in October 2007, **Mr. Osaretin Emwionmwusi** (Accounts Supervisor) three-day course on application of computers in accounting and finance functions in October 2007.

DRIVERS' ROAD SAFETY COURSE

The following drivers and operators attended a one-day workshop on road safety driving which took place on August 18, 2007.

In attendance were: Messrs Moses Erhinwingbovo, Sebastine Chukwu, Imade Lucky, Felix Imade, Egbele Joseph, Uzochukwu Okonkwo, Monday George, Macaulay Eyekpokpo, Patrick Osagwu, Paul Omoigui, Lucky Ogbeide, Igbinigun Osayomore, Vin-

cent Edosomwan, Monday Agbusi, Matthew Agbonlahor, Samuel Azeta, Lucky Iyamu, Monday Arabome, Friday Udoh, Lucky Osafanmwun, Frank Mebuliaghanje, George Etim, Richard Onoka, Francis Efevwerha, Champion Edokun, Uhumamure Imade.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKSHOP

The underlisted staff attended a workshop on occupational health and safety held August 30 to September 1, 2007. Miss Helen Aligbeh, Messrs Victor Adugbe, Israel Ehimhen, Emmanuel Maidoh, James Monday, Samuel Igiebor, Ghadafi Virtus, Emmanuel Onwuatogwu, Francis Ogiogho, Saturday Osayande, Kehinde Agbontaen, Godspower Otuoba, Hycent Ihua, Precious Uruefe, Osakpamwan Osarugiagbon, Lawrence Uwumanrogie, Frank Ehibor, Kehinde Osigbekhai, Morgan Eguavoen, Peter Igbe, Festus Owenaze, Edwin Unuagbie, Friday Ilebor, Peter Omeni, Friday Ehiorobo, Felix Aganmwonyi, Believe Okerenkporo, Francis Anigara, Monday Okhilua, Charles Enaboifo.



Group photograph of participants and trainers at the workshop

Plantation staff and the Presco News editor



Aude receiving a gift presented by Presco



Official visit by members of Edo state house of assembly committee on environment



Trainees from Real Oil Plantations (left and centre) discussing with Presco's Production Manager (right)



Chairman and representatives of Delta state government



MD with shareholders at the AGM



MD and the Ovie of Oghara's representatives at the Pre-AGM cocktail



Official visit by Special Assistant to Edo State Governor, Ms Uwa Osunbor



Study visit by student officers of Command and Staff College, Jaji



Official visit of Edo state Agric Commissioner, Barr. Ken Ihensekhien



Chairman and MD in a chat with the Oba of Benin's representative and Ikpoba-Okha LGA Chairman



Staff News :

EXCURSION VISITS

In 2007 Presco played host to several schools who made excursion visits to the company.

Amongst the schools hosted were: Nosakhare Model Education Centre, Benin City (March 15, 2007), Idia College Junior School, Benin City (March 29, 2007), Ebenezer Secondary School, Benin City (May 23, 2007), Graceville College, Asaba, Delta State (June 12, 2007), Hopeland International School, Benin City (July 12, 2007), Students of the Chemical Society of Nigeria, University of Benin Students Chapter, University of Benin, Benin City (August 17, 2007) and Divine Educational Institute, Benin City (October 16, 2007).



Students on excursion to Presco Plc

LONG SERVICE AWARDS 2007

MR. ISRAEL E. OKOH: Friday, September 28, 2007 was a very memorable day for Mr. Israel E. Okoh of the Agric. Department as he was honoured with a befitting and well attended long service award ceremony held at the Training Centre.

Israel Okoh joined the company on 14 September 1987 as a plantation headman and by hard work, commitment and dedication to duty; he has risen to the position of Technical Officer.

After his secondary school education at Osadebey High School in Asaba, Delta State, he furthered his education at the Federal College of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, from where he obtained HND in Agricultural Extension and Farm Management. He is married and blessed with children.

As the most senior Technical Officer in the Agric. Department, he has since 2005, consistently acted for the Estate Manager in his absence.

Mr. Okoh is the immediate past Chairman of the Presco Senior Staff Association, a position he held for three years.

Present at the ceremony were the Director of Operations, Director of Agricultural Services, Estate Manager - Ologbo, Field Technical Officers and Headmen of the department.

The Director of Operations who presented his

long service award cheque to him congratulated him for good work done. He advised all workers of Presco Plc to work assiduously to increase productivity assuring that management will continue to reward hard work.

Other employees in the senior and management cadre who have put in not less than ten years of dedicated and meritorious service to the company were also rewarded with cash.

Those who put in ten years service are Mr. Spencer Emeri (Maintenance Manager), Mr. Cletus Chiowa (Technical Officer), Mr. Ignatius Okonkwo (Asst. Workshop Manager), Mr. Sylvester Agu (Workshop Officer) and Mr. Moses Udeh (Workshop Officer) as well as Mr. Samuel Ugiagbe (Stores Controller).

Presco management wishes them many more fruitful years of continued dedication and loyalty to the company.



Mr. Israel Okoh receiving his award from the Director of Operations

Staff News

RETIREMENTS

Five employees retired in December 2007 after putting in many years of meritorious service. They are Mr. Moses Aneke (Asst. Workshop Manager), Mr. Julius Amune (Technical Officer), Mr. Henry Otohile (A/C Electrician), Mr. Jonathan Agbe (Power House Attendant) and Mr. Sebastine Okeke (Tank Farm Operator).

They received in addition to their retirement benefits, a cash equivalent of a colour television set.

Presco Plc wishes them happy life in their retirement.



Mr. Julius Amune receiving a gift from the Director of Agric Services

Features

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS 2007

Estate FFB tonnes	65,769
Outgrowers' FFB tonnes	1,648
Total FFB tonnes	67,653

Mature area hectares	7,458
Immature area hectares	1,648
Total planted area hectares	9,106

CPO production tonnes	13,206
CPKO production tonnes	828

Sales RBDO tonnes	3,431
Sales olein tonnes	4,725
Sales stearin tonnes	2,172

INVESTMENT WATCH 2007

Presco's share price ended 2007 at N14.55, an increase of 39% over the same time the previous year (N10.45). Since the IPO in October 2002, investors have seen an increase of 191% in their share value. Coupled with this there have been dividend payments of 50 kobo per share in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and 60 kobo per share in 2006 and 2007.

Features :

PRESCO WORKERS MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY (PVMCS) WAXING STRONGER

PVMCS, which was registered in 2002 with 28 members, now has a membership strength of 141. Its primary objectives include serving as a savings scheme for its members, assisting members with easily accessible soft loans with humane repayment conditions and assisting members acquire assets.

There is no gainsaying that the cooperative has surpassed the expectations of its members as it has not only met the above objectives but has consistently paid handsome interest on members' savings. In the last two years, not less than 50 workers have been granted loan to buy motorcycles. Many have also been assisted to acquire income generating assets through the long-term loan, which allows for a 36 months repayment period.

In order to sustain the growth of the cooperative, its management committee has invested in blue chip companies and also ended its 2007 year with the acquisition of a Mack trailer for the haulage of Presco products to customers in Lagos. This is in



Cross section of members at 2007 AGM

addition to other trucks in its fleet for fresh fruit bunches collection from the fields to the mill.

Highlights of the cooperative society's performance as reported at its AGM in August 2007 showed that total members savings at 31st December 2006 stood at N14.5 million, total loans outstanding was N13.4 million while dividend/interest on loans paid out was N2.5 million.

TRANS FATTY ACIDS - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Trans fatty acids, or trans fats, are considered to be one of the least healthy of the fats found in food (particularly manufactured food products). Trans fats can raise levels of "bad" low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, while reducing levels of the "good" high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. High levels of LDL and low levels of HDL have been shown to increase the risk of heart disease. Food manufacturers are therefore looking to reduce the trans fats in foods without affecting product quality, while minimising the saturated fat content.

Using examples from the bakery industry the choices facing food manufacturers can be illustrated. In a relatively soft product such as bread, a baker can use vegetable oil (an oil is liquid at room temperature). In products such as biscuits which are relatively hard, some proportion of fat (a fat is solid at room temperature) is needed in the ingredients. It is difficult to produce biscuits with (liquid) oil, because the biscuit breaks up and crumbles without

some (solid) fat to bind it together.

There are two ways for food manufacturers to obtain the more solid fats they need for products such as biscuits. One is to take a vegetable oil and **hydrogenate** it. The other is to take a versatile vegetable oil, such as palm oil, and **fractionate** it.

The problem with hydrogenated oils is that the chemistry of the fatty acids is changed and some of the resulting fatty acids are of the "bad" trans type, which can have harmful health effects.

The other option is fractionation, a process that physically separates the fatty acids in an oil by means of their different physical characteristics. Fractionation is generally applied to palm oil, which contains about 50% saturated fats. Fractionation produces no trans fat. By judicious blending and processing, fractionation can produce oils and fats that perform as well or better than hydrogenated versions and have no adverse health effects.

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PALM OIL & HEALTH

There is a great deal of misinformation about palm oil. To set the record straight:

- Palm oil contains NO cholesterol. Cholesterol is only produced by animals.
- Palm oil in the diet lowers "bad" low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and increases "good" high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol thus lowering total blood cholesterol.
- Palm oil contains equal proportions of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids.
- Palm oil is the richest known source of vitamin E, an anti-oxidant. Vitamin E is essential for a healthy body.
- Palm oil is one of the richest sources of carotenoids (vitamin A) - 15 times more than carrots and 50 times more than tomatoes. Vitamin A is essential for a healthy body.

The three basic dietary elements are protein, carbohydrate and fat. Of course these must be in the right balance. The main concern with regard to

dietary fat intake is that too much fat in the diet (whether animal fat or vegetable fat) can lead to the human body producing more cholesterol than is normal. This in turn can contribute to cardiovascular disease and in particular arteriosclerosis (blocking of arteries) and arterial thrombosis (formation of blood clots in arteries).

In general, fats rich in saturated fatty acids tend to promote arteriosclerosis and thrombosis, while oils rich in unsaturated fatty acids inhibit their development. Palm oil is a balanced fat because it has about 50% saturated and 50% unsaturated fats.

Research carried out as long ago as 1971 by Dr. G. Hornstra and others found that despite the 50% saturated fatty acid content palm oil unexpectedly showed an anti-thrombotic effect. This suggested that palm oil may contain certain substances, which can over-ride the pro-thrombotic effect normally associated with saturated fatty acids. Further research in 1984 confirmed the earlier findings.

GYPHOSUM TRIALS AT PRESCO

Soil compaction in agricultural systems is a worldwide concern that impairs root development and therefore may be responsible for low crop production. The processes and factors that control soil compaction can be mechanical compression pressure and/or the water content of the soil.

The soils at Presco's Ologbo and Obaretin Estates are classified as ferric acrisols (FAO/UNESCO). Acrisols are found throughout West Africa. Prolonged weathering and advanced soil formation have led to a predominance of kaolinitic clays and a general loss of nutrients. These soils often suffer from aluminium toxicity and strong phosphorus fixation. Acrisols are characterised by a surface accumulation of low activity clays, providing a distinct clay increase with depth, and have a low base saturation. The ferric character points out the relatively high content of iron in the soil. A particle size analysis of a soil survey at Ologbo and Obaretin Estates in 2005 revealed a general soil structure of about 75% sand and 25% clay. These characteristics in combination with a high iron and aluminium con-

tent in the soil can cause soil compaction in the dry season.

During the two last visits of Dr. Bonneau from CIRAD in 2006 and 2007, soil compaction was observed at Ologbo Estate beginning at a depth of 30cm. This compaction was observed one month after the start of the dry season and increased with the length of the dry season. Compaction during the dry season may in part result from the deformation of clay particles. However, the contribution of this process must be limited, given the low clay content of the material and the high proportion of quartz grains within the clay fraction. The major contributing factor associated with compaction was probably due to lubrication, the planar-shaped clay minerals helping the sand grains slip against each other.

Another main problem with acrisols is the high aluminium saturation. Once the pH of the soil drops below 5.2, this aluminium becomes "free" or exchangeable (Al³⁺) (Fig 1) and becomes toxic for most plants and impairs root function. Although oil

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palms, in general, are not very sensitive to high aluminium contents there may still be disadvantages.

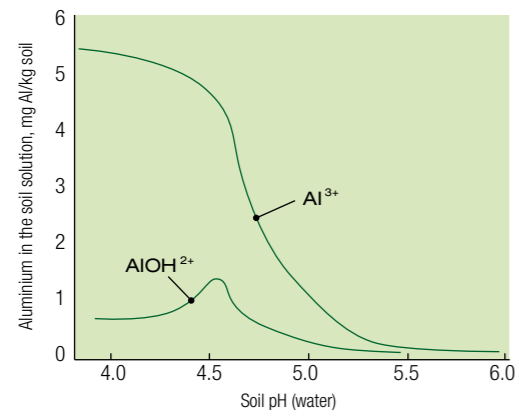


Fig. 1: Aluminum species in solution in relation to soil pH

Some of the problems that can occur with exchangeable aluminium are:

- Al^{3+} interferes with phosphorus metabolism (ATP, DNA, replication, phosphorylation)
- Restricts root cell wall expansion
- Coating of the roots which interferes with uptake of other minerals
- Adsorption of phosphorus fertilization
- Competition with other positive cations (Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , K^+ , ...) for binding to the clay minerals.

To help solve the soil compaction and the aluminium toxicity, a gypsum trial plot will be established in April 2008. The purpose of this trial is to test different cultural techniques (sub-soiling, gypsum application and empty fruit bunch (EFB) spreading). Sub-soiling consists of breaking the horizon and creating downward paths for water and roots. Applying EFB organic fertilizer helps to enrich the topsoil with organic matter, which improves soil structure and water-holding capacity. This paper will explain the mechanism of gypsum application. Gypsum is a very soft mineral composed of calcium sulfate

dihydrate ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) that is available in Nigeria. Gypsum may just be the answer to help break up and loosen the soil structure. The calcium component of gypsum encourages the soil clay particles to flocculate (group together) thereby improving soil structure. Flocculation occurs because the fine components of the soil (clay and organic matter) normally carry negative charges and attract calcium, which carries two positive charges. Water molecules act as a bridge between the two, so the clay particles become linked together. Flocculation of small particles into larger aggregates facilitates the easier movement of water and nutrients into and through the soil profile. A less compact soil allows easier root penetration.

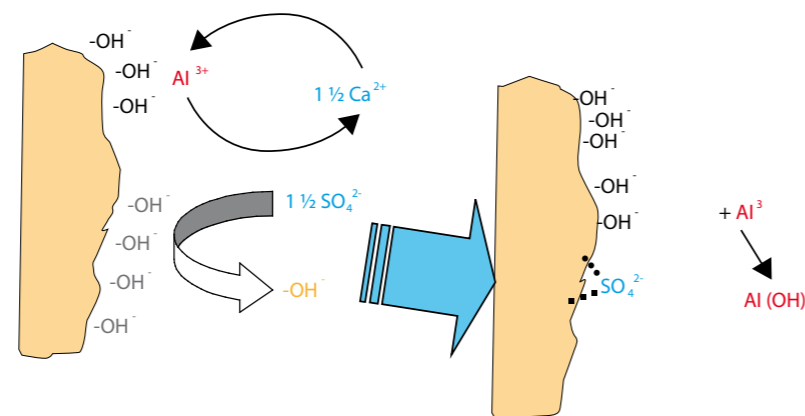
A second important advantage of applying gypsum is that it will result in a decrease of the exchangeable Al^{3+} that will create an environment where the aluminium will be bound as $\text{Al}(\text{OH})_3$ (Fig 2). This is crucial so that bound aluminium is not toxic to plants! The choice of gypsum over lime is because the vertical movement of lime is extremely slow compared with gypsum.

The bottlenecks of this gypsum trial plot may be the increased calcium content of the soil where the calcium content in the oil palm leaves is already high, the competition between calcium and other minerals (e.g. potassium, magnesium), the slow rate of subsoil amelioration, etc.

However, scientific research in the past has proven the long term beneficial effect of gypsum. Even after 16 years, the gypsum effects will still be clearly visible although this is strongly dependent on the soil characteristics. It seems that more intensely weathered soils, like those at Presco, are more susceptible to gypsum treatment. The long-term effect makes it highly economic because the initially high cost can be amortised over an extended period.

The outcome of this trial plot leaves a big question mark as to whether the obtained data gives a better insight into the interaction between oil palms and their environment. Only time will tell.

Fig. 2: Possible mechanism for deep "liming" with gypsum. Gypsum ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) will dissolve into Ca^{2+} and SO_4^{2-} . Ca^{2+} will compete with toxic Al^{3+} for the clay binding sites. SO_4^{2-} will "free" OH^- which will bind with Al^{3+} into non-toxic $\text{Al}(\text{OH})_3$.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF COVER CROP IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Background

Broadly defined, a cover crop is any annual, biennial or perennial plant grown to improve several conditions associated with sustainable agriculture. Cover crops are fundamental sustainable tools used to manage soil fertility, soil quality, water, weeds in the agro-ecosystem.

A well-established cover crop

Farmers choose to grow specific cover crop types and to manage them in specific ways based on their own unique needs and goals. In this article, attention will be given to how cover crops are instrumental in the management of oil palm.

Soil fertility

Cover crops can be called "green manures" and are used to manage a range of soil macronutrients and micronutrients. For example, the cover crops *Mucuna* and *Pueraria* (velvet bean) have been found to increase the availability of phosphorous in soil after a farmer applies rock phosphate. In addition, leguminous cover crops fix nitrogen and help in the provision of nitrogen for crop production that might normally be applied in chemical fertilizer form. In fact, the impact that cover crops have on nitrogen management has received by far the most attention by researchers and farmers because nitrogen is often the most limiting nutrient in crop production.

Soil quality management

Cover crops can improve soil quality by increasing soil organic matter through the input of cover crop biomass over time (when they decay). Increased soil organic matter enhances soil structure, as well as water and nutrient holding and buffering capacity of soil.

Another important function of cover crop in soil quality management is the prevention of soil erosion, a process that can irreparably reduce the productive capacity of an agro-ecosystem. Dense cover crop stands physically slow down the velocity of rain before it contacts the soil surface, preventing soil splashing and reducing surface run-off. Cover crops also help anchor the soil in place and increase soil porosity, creating suitable habitat networks for soil macrofauna.

Water management

Because cover crops reduce erosion, both the rate and quantity of water that drains off the field is reduced and thus the environmental risks to waterways and ecosystems downstream are reduced. Cover crop biomass allows rain to steadily trickle down through the soil profile. The roots of such cover crops also result in soil pores and thus provide pathways for water to filter through the soil profile rather than draining off the field as surface flow.

Weed management

Thick cover crop stands compete with weeds during the cover crop growth period and can prevent germinated weed seeds from completing their life cycle and reproducing. Even when the weed seed germinate, they often run out of stored energy for growth before building the necessary structural capacity to break through the cover crop mulch layer.

Pest management

Some cover crops are used as so-called 'trap crops' to attract pests away from the crop value and towards what the pest sees as a more favourable habitat. Trap crop areas can be established within farms or within landscapes. The limited areas occu-

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ped by those traps can be treated with pesticides, once pests are drawn to the trap in large enough numbers to reduce pest population.

Cover crop types

At Presco two cover crops are used. Pueraria is slow to establish but long lasting. Mucuna is quick to establish, but only lasts one season. In the plantation the two types are used together. Mucuna covers the felled vegetation and allows rapid decomposition, while Pueraria provides a long-term cover.

Conclusion

From the facts considered above, cover crop is an important part of any cropping system due to the range of ways cover crops the sustainability of agro-ecosystems.

Oguntola Joseph

Technical Officer

Obaretin Estate

ICOPE CONFERENCE

Aude Verwilghen was present at the ICOPE (International Conference on Oil Palm and Environment), held in Bali, Indonesia on 15-16 November 2007.

The objectives of this conference were to highlight environmental issues in the oil palm industry and to share experience gained on possible solutions and resources for the benefit of the environment, and also for the industry itself in terms of efficiency, cost, etc.

Key topics addressed where related to regulations and norms related to the oil palm industry, oil palm extension and how to minimize environmental damage notably on biodiversity, ecological potential of oil palm cultivation, oil palm R&D activities, and environmental economics of the palm oil industry.

A paper on the Ologbo project was submitted (VERWILGHEN A., RENEVOT G., SOENGAS LOPEZ B., CHAMBON B., MCALEER V., 2007. Green Ologbo: an integrated project for sustainable development of oil palm plantation. Paper presented at the International Conference on Oil palm and Environment, Bali, 15-16 November 2007, 17 p.) and a related Powerpoint presentation was made during the conference. The Ologbo project was recognised as leading the way for sustainable oil palm expansion, in practicing well balanced conservation and development.

Abstract of the paper:

Abstract:

Presco Plc, a member of the Siat Group, is a company operating in Nigeria producing and processing oil palm for the domestic market. The company decided to extend its plantation and implement a sustainable project, the "Green Ologbo" project, promoting biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services as well as enhancing local development and social well-being. The project is carried out in collaboration with Cirad (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development), with support from many other stakeholders. This paper aims at sharing experience gained on this project about oil palm extension and minimization of environmental and social negative impacts.

A first step, in addition to investigations about agricultural capacity, was to conduct environmental and social impact assessment, with emphasis on high conservation value (HCV) areas identification.

Results of these studies were integrated into planning, with the production of a land use map of the concession, integrating conservation areas into the oil palm plantation and the development of a conservation action plan.

An active protection policy was implemented to combat the threats to the conservation areas. In addition,

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an environmental and conservation awareness/education programme has been initiated among surrounding communities so as to strengthen the protection efforts. Besides this, the company is progressively supporting local development of these communities through employment, social actions and development of an outgrowers scheme, in order to enhance positive social impacts of the new development of Presco and to reduce pressure on the protected area by providing alternative economic activities.

With a view to guiding the action, ecological and socio-economic monitoring has also been initiated to assess the impacts of the Ologbo project both on the human and natural environment and to measure progress made.

Although this project is so far quite an achievement, some difficulties were faced and questions raised, mainly linked to biodiversity and social issues.

This specific field case has shown that oil palm growers, in coordinated efforts with all interested stakeholders can, and definitely have to be actors of conservation. But it also reminds us of the complexity and sensitivity of integrating social issues as the key to success for sustainable development. Indeed, it is not easy to change our mindset in order to move from a "sustainable production" approach to the sustainable management of a complex agro-socio-ecosystem.

Key words: *conservation action plan, environmental and social impact assessment, high conservation value, land use map, Nigeria, oil palm.*

ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL UPDATE

The 5th Roundtable Meeting (RT5) on Sustainable Palm Oil is the 5th annual RSPO meeting that brings together RSPO members, stakeholders and partners to discuss the latest developments on meeting the RSPO objectives as well as seeks inputs, concerns, ideas while building constructive dialogue. Held from 20th to 22nd November, 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, RT5 was attended by about 540 participants from 28 countries.

The RT5 Objectives:

- To provide the platform for stakeholders along the palm oil supply chain to review the progress made in the production and use of sustainable palm oil, with specific focus on:
- Results of trial implementation of the RSPO principles and criteria (P&C) for sustainable palm oil production
- Outcome of the review of the RSPO P&C
- Effort by various palm oil producing countries in implementing the RSPO P&C
- Development of guidance for implementation of the RSPO P&C by smallholders
- Protocols for verification and certification of sustainable palm oil

- Supply chain mechanisms for trade and branding of sustainable palm oil
- To review the progress of RSPO projects on better management practices and capacity building
- To strengthen the role, cooperation and support of various stakeholders in working towards the production, certification, trade in and use of sustainable palm oil

The main outcomes of RT5:

The 5th Roundtable Meeting (RT5) witnessed the launch of the RSPO Certification System for Sustainable Palm Oil. With the certification system in place the market is expected to see the availability of RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) in the first quarter of 2008.

National interpretation of P&C: in some areas of the world (notably in South Asia), national indicators and guidance are now available and are to be the basis for certification. Where no national interpretation is available, the generic P&C are to be considered.

Review of RSPO P&C: the generic P&C, which have

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been approved by the executive board, are to be reviewed every five years. Input from research on more robust and scientifically based indicators is welcome.

P&C and Smallholders: a draft of P&C and guidance for smallholders is now available and considered by the national interpretation working groups to work on.

Next challenges:

- Managing expectations (many stakeholders, many agendas)
- Managing a credible CSPO certification system

- Urgent need to get the smallholders involved
- NGO: from criticisms to engagement
- Addressing climate change issues (greenhouse gas, peatlands)
- Engaging governments

Siat/Presco involvement:

Aude Verwilghen, from Presco, as well as Gert Vandersmissen (SIAT) and Anke Massart (GOPDC) attended the meeting.

Gert Vandersmissen made a presentation of the Okumaning (GOPDC) and the Ologbo (Presco) projects, as case studies in implementing the RSPO P&C.

Environmental, health and safety news

INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Introduction

It is a proven fact that safety awareness is the single most important factor in the prevention of accidents.

Safety awareness may be defined as recognition of hazards and alertness to danger. This is a strong influence on the actions of individuals because of their desire to remain alive and uninjured.

What is safety?

Simply defined, safety is total freedom from danger. Therefore, the acceptable target for safety is 100% and unless this is achieved on a continuous basis, no one can boldly assume that he has excelled in this field.

Safety policy

With good understanding of the importance of safety in our business environment, safety policies geared towards promotion of safety of lives and property within our work environment. This understanding informed the setting up of Safety Committees in both Obaretin and Cowan Estates.

Members of these committees, sectional heads and

supervisors ensure that these policies are adhered to by workers in order to prevent industrial accident.

To make workers appreciate the importance of industrial safety and accident prevention a workshop on Occupational Health and Safety for workers was organized in August 2007, in collaboration with the Industrial Training Fund (ITF). This workshop highlighted the importance of industrial safety and accident prevention in our work place. Participants at the workshop were drawn from different departments.

Another remarkable area is that of fire prevention and control. Emphasis was placed on training and retraining of workers on fire prevention and control, with fire extinguishers and warning signs placed in strategic places within the premises. Fire surveillance teams were also set up to patrol the plantations particularly during the dry season.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Company did not lose sight of the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to workers who need them. This has helped in preventing industrial accidents.

Victor O. Adugbe

MEDICAL CARE FOR WORKERS

In order to cater for the health care needs of its workers, Presco Plc has two clinics, one at Obaretin Estate and the other at Cowan Estate, Ajagbodudu, Delta State. Both clinics provide 24 hours services to workers.

Staffing

Obaretin Clinic is managed by four qualified nurses, with a senior nurse in charge, while Cowan Clinic is managed by two nurses who are double qualified.

Presco also retains the service of a medical doctor who pays routine visits to the estate clinics to review and advice on cases as may be required from time to time.

Facilities

Provision is made in both clinics for admission and management of cases such as malaria, typhoid fever, injuries, traumas, etc with appropriate drugs. Obaretin Clinic has a two bedded ward, while Cowan Clinic has ten beds.

Common ailments

The peculiar nature of plantation work, e.g. harvesting, slashing, pruning, etc exposes workers to health hazards such as injury from machete or

pruning knife cut, snake bites, scorpion stings, eye problems from foreign particles or traumas, malaria fever, typhoid fever, general weakness and bee stings. These cases are treated at the clinic with good result, while more serious cases are referred to the appropriate medical centres.

Referrals

Cases requiring special attention are referred to the appropriate medical centres in Benin City. These cases are either referred to UBTH, Irowa Medical Centre, Niger Optical Services and Oriaifo Memorial Hospital for bone cases. A stand-by ambulance is available for the movement of patients with emergency cases.

Nurse Helen takes the BP of an employee



Cowan safety committee



Obaretin safety committee



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○○○ A CHAT WITH AUDE VERWILGHEN

Presco News: Who is Aude?

Aude: I'm 33 years old, I have one junior brother and one senior sister. I was born in France but I am a bit of a Nigerian in my heart as I grew up here from seven years old and then left at about the age of 14. But I still came back often thereafter, for internship and to see my parents, as my father was working here in Nigeria in oil palm plantations in Rivers State (Ubima and Elele mainly) and in Okomu, where some people still remember him. So my coming back to Nigeria three years ago to work with Presco was a kind of "retour aux sources" as we say in French!

Presco News: What is your mission in Presco?

Aude: I am working for Cirad (the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development), established in Montpellier. Cirad has had a strong partnership with Siat for many years, with focus on oil palm agro-industrial sector development. The partnership aims at contributing as effectively as possible towards sustainable and eco-friendly oil palm development in producing countries. We have established a scientific collaboration programme focusing on studies and research for plantation design and practices that most effectively integrate environmental challenges (land development, cultural practices, etc.). This collaboration is the focus of my assignment in Presco, to work within the framework of the Ologbo plantation extension project.

I also have some responsibilities in environmental matters, in advisory and internal auditing capacity but my main mission in Presco is to implement the Green Ologbo project. The aim of this project is to ensure that the company's new development in the Ologbo area is sustainable, promoting biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services as well as enhancing local development and social well-being.

The first step, in addition to investigations about agricultural capacity, was to conduct environmental and social impact assessment, with emphasis on high conservation value (HCV) areas identification. Results of these studies were integrated into planning, with the production of a land use map of the concession, integrating conservation areas

into the oil palm plantation and the development of a conservation action plan. In collaboration with Dr. Liz Greengrass, an active protection policy was implemented to combat the threats to the conservation areas. In addition, an environmental and conservation awareness programme has been initiated among surrounding communities so as to strengthen the protection efforts. Besides this, as a general policy of the Siat group, the company is supporting local development of these communities through employment, social actions and development of an outgrowers' scheme, in order to enhance positive social impacts of the green Ologbo project and to reduce pressure on the protected area by providing alternative economic activities. With a view to guiding the action, ecological and socio-economic monitoring has also been initiated to assess the impacts of the project both on the human and natural environment and to measure progress made.

In the framework of this project, external expertise, both local and international, from non-governmental organizations, research institutes and universities was called in, such as AP Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), UNIBEN, FUTA, Centre National d'Etudes Agronomiques des Régions Chaudes (CNEARC), Ecole Nationale du Génie Rural, des Eaux et des Forêts (ENGREF), Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Environmental Education Unit of the College of Education of Ekiador, etc.

Strong collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the Forestry Department in Benin, has also been set up.

Presco News: To what extent has your mission been accomplished?

Aude: Although some difficulties were faced and questions raised, mainly linked to biodiversity (biodiversity assessment in the field is quite tough!) and social issues (it is not easy to reconcile conservation and local development!), I believe we can say that this project is so far quite an achievement and we can be proud of what was accomplished here for sustainable oil palm development. I think that one of the major lessons of this Green Ologbo project, as a pilot project, is to have shown that oil palm growers, in collaboration with all stakehold-

ers can, and definitely have to be actors of conservation. And I am quite confident in the future of this project. The recruitment of Dr. E.G. Greengrass, who will take over from me, is a major step, and the commitment of Presco/Siat to this project further strengthens my confidence that I can go back home in peace and hope. And I might come back some times to say hello and have a look at how things are going on!

As final word, I would like to say that it is true that it is not easy to change our mindset in order to move from a "sustainable production" approach to the sustainable management of a complex agro-socio-ecosystem, but it's a great challenge for all of us and for such avant-garde company as Presco/Siat.

Presco News: Any comment about the people with whom you interacted in the course of your work?

Aude: I must say that during my stay here I have enjoyed kindness from everybody, be it at professional or personal levels. And one must admit also that most Nigerians are very hard working.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank in

particular all those with whom I worked closely and in general all Presco employees. I will surely remember all of them (even if not by name with the passage of time, because I have a very bad memory for this, but I will keep their faces and kindness in mind).

Presco News: Is there any memorable event or occasion you will always remember?

Aude: I cannot remember any specific event or occasion, whether good or bad.

I have enjoyed lots of good times, e.g. parties and drinks at the club house; swimming under the stars at night; walking through the deep forest (specially the thick swamp forest, Amechi, Chiowa and Raymond will surely remember some of it); evening and nights in the villages with the communities in the framework of survey, chatting around the kerosene lamp; etc. And I will go back with me in my heart all those good moments, along with the sounds, scents, and colours of this African country that I like so much.

Presco News: Thank you very much for finding time for this chat. We wish you all the best.



Presco news editor in a chat with Aude

