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Post-Harvest Jubilation



As the Nile course runs through Al Maragha city of Sohag in Upper Egypt, its silt-carrying waters engulf Al Shoraneya, an island in the middle of the Nile that has seemingly dropped off the surrounding world's radar, rendering it one of Egypt's best fertile lands. Yet it remains underdeveloped because its inhabitants, who survive on farming, lack the technical know-how to exploit the potentials of the land to the fullest. They aspire for means to better their living standards.

The USAID-funded Advanced Marketing and Agribusiness Logistics (AMAL) project saw the opportunities for development of this island's soil while it was reaching out to the green bean growers in this region through their local association, the Rural Woman Community Development Association in Shoraneya. This association, through its small farmers, has been supplying green beans to Green Egypt Company for the past 12 years through forward contracts. AMAL has designed to extend extensive technical assistance to small farmers throughout the entire agricultural process, from seed planting through harvest. To this end, the project engaged the consultation services of potential researchers and specialists in vegetables growing and fielded expatriate plant pathologists in the flowerage stage. It further fielded an international harvest expert who trained women harvesters on minimizing harvest losses and complying to export standards.

Ms. Taa'zim Helmy Osman is a 60-year old widow farmer in Shoraneya who cultivates her 0.21 hectare of land to look after her three children. Some Shoraneya farmers grew green beans before AMAL began working with them, but Ms. Taa'zim grew only traditional crops because they were least risky, given her lack of training on alternative crops. After she learned about the technical assistance offered through AMAL, Ms. Taa'zim decided to try growing green beans, given that the technical support will be

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available to her throughout the different stages of cultivation.

Ms. Taa'zim has had significant success in green bean cultivation. This season, her land's yield was as good as 14.7 Tons/Hectare. Ms. Taa'zim followed AMAL recommendations in the various stages of cultivation including land preparation, bed shaping, distances between plants, following the proper irrigation and fertilization schedules taking into consideration optimizing the use of the amounts required as well as harvesting.

Taa'zim is pleased with the gains she made. She sold 100% of her produce to Green Egypt and her gross margin reached 1680 \$/Hectare. Taa'zim will use the money generated for her younger son's education and to cover her health care expenses. Taa'zim intends to teach her eldest son the same cultivation practices, and is hoping he will lead farming the family land in the future.

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