

Rice Farming in Nigeria

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Introduction

Rice is also known as *Oryza sativa* (botanical name) is the most economically important food crop in many developing countries and has also become a major crop in many developed countries where its consumption has increased considerably. It has become necessary to meet the demand of the world current population growth rate and it is the world's second most popular crop after maize. It is an important food security crop as well as an essential cash crop in which the small-scale producers consume only 20% and sell 80% of the total production.



Despite the oil, agriculture remains the base of Nigeria economy, providing the main source of livelihood for most of the Nigerians. The most consumed staples in Nigeria is rice,

in which 32 kg per capita was consumed. Therefore, Nigeria is one of the enormous producers of rice in Africa, the largest rice importers in the world, and the highest continents of rice consumer. Thus, Rice provides more income than any other cash crop for Nigerian farmers in the country.

Nigeria is the largest producer of Rice in Africa with an average production volume of 8 million metric tonnes. As of 2019, Nigeria ranked as the 14th largest producer of rice in the world with China being the top producing country.

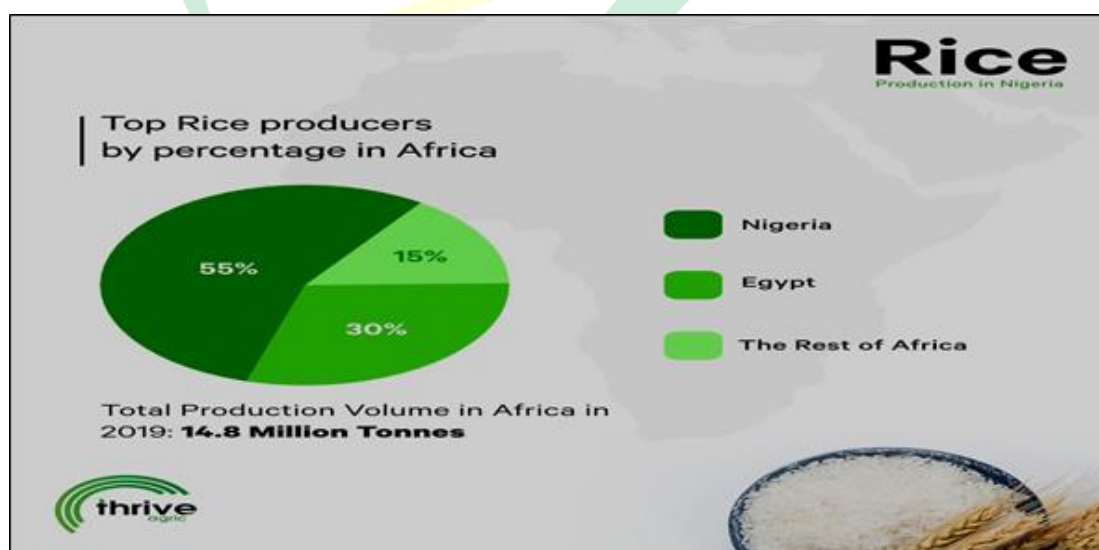
It has become the highest rice productions country in West Africa and the third-largest in Africa, after Egypt and Madagascar.

As of 2019, Africa had a total production volume of 14.6M, Nigeria produced about 55% and Egypt produced about 30% of the production volume.

Rice Farming in Nigeria will help to reduce Nigeria dependency on rice imports and improve food security.

Areas where rice can be grown in Nigeria

Depending on the variety, rice can be grown in all the geographical zones of Nigeria, Probably Nigeria can cultivate about 5 m hectares and according to the survey, the land area used for cultivation of rice is proportionally about 2 m hectares.



In some parts of Nigeria, specifically northern part, rice can be grown in Lowland areas which includes fadamas (inland valleys) and in the area, water is readily obtainable for

4-5 months while in some areas the water is obtainable for more than 5 months. The other area is Upland areas, which contain good soil and over 700 mm rainfall.

Example of Some rice varieties grown in Nigeria

- Fadama rice
- upland rice
- Indigenous red grain specie (*Oryza glaberrina*)
- Lowland rice.

Constraints of Rice farming in Nigeria

Besides all this, several factors are militating against rice production/processing in Nigeria which affects local farmers these are lack of appropriate modern rice farming tools, implementation, equipment, irrigation and water, harvesting skills are some of the constraints facing the local rice farmers. Besides this, the modern equipment available were too expensive for the average farmer. Most farmers depend on minimal, labour, and other hand tools which are time-consuming includes hoes, slashers, sickles, axe and rake for various farm purposes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Farming of rice in Nigeria generates more promises for a future business person. The climate of Nigeria was good for rice production and it has a convenient market to engulf the production. Thus, Rice provides more income for Nigerian farmers compared to other cash crops in the country. The rice quality would like to be improving to provide engendered rice that will compete with foreign rice by using modern rice technologies to comfort labour in production and improve the nutritional qualities in processing and production of the rice.