



SUCCESS STORY

Helping Farmers Increase Crop Yields

Farmer multiplies production levels with irrigation and better planting techniques



Photo: USAID/Richard Nyberg

Senegalese farmer Moussa Sagna works his money-making patch, which he now tills in the off season.

“I eat well. I sleep well. I live well. And now I have employed five full-time workers to tend to my fields.”

—Moussa Sagna

A clear vision, a bit of help, a little luck, a few tips, a lot of water and a lot of hard work. That’s Moussa Sagna’s recipe for success as a market gardener.

Moussa speaks softly, but quickly and with intensity. A man of the soil, he tills his plot in Djifanghor, a village of about 2,000 people in southern Senegal’s lush Casamance region. Produce from his land helps feed his two wives and seven children. His motto: “If you work in large quantity, you eat, you buy and you save.”

But only three years ago he was still a small-time farmer with a 1,600-square-foot piece of land on a farm shared by 66 others. Today, he has nearly tripled the size of his land, to 4,300 square feet as a result of hard work and new systems that have greatly improved Moussa’s crop quality and output.

USAID and its partners have assisted Moussa and other farmers in Casamance by improving irrigation and introducing new planting techniques. A pedal pump was installed that has almost tripled users’ crop yields, and specialists demonstrated different methods of cultivation that would help farmers make better use of the soil.

Moussa now plants three times a year instead of two and has crops available when other fields are fallow. His income has increased accordingly. Earnings from his plot risen from \$500 in 2000 to \$1,800 in 2004. He now employs five full-time workers to tend his fields and aims to hire at least five more over the next five years. “You have to take a close look at what you want to accomplish. What I earn I will reinvest in material to ensure good harvests,” Moussa said.

These plans sound good to his wife, Fanceney Badji, who carries water on her head from collection basins filled with pumped water, almost incessantly, to keep the plants thriving. She hopes for more income, and perhaps a bit more time to rest.