

Although farmers provided us with several names for the kinds of groundnuts they grew, these are essentially several different names for the same type, Barbatee<sup>22</sup> is the most commonly used name for the type of groundnuts grown in this area, but alternative names used include jukki and baladi.

As expected, differences did exist between the three villages regarding groundnut cultivation. Only 5 farmers in El Kharta grew groundnuts (33%) and only 2 in El Geifil (20%). Traditionally, these villages are not in areas where groundnuts are grown. However, a few farmers grew groundnuts this year because of a government sponsored program to encourage farmers in these areas to start growing this cash crop. The Farmer's Union based in El Obeid had distributed groundnut seeds provided by the Government<sup>23</sup> to some farmers in each of these villages. Only a small number of farmers from El Kharta and El Geifil participated in this program, which was reflected by the few numbers of farmers in our sample who grew them.

In Umm Ramad, groundnuts have been grown by farmers for many years. Eighty percent of farmers surveyed grew this crop (12 of 15). Twenty-two percent of the land cultivated in this village was in groundnuts. The importance of groundnuts in Umm Ramad can be partially explained by the more favorable environmental conditions to which it is exposed. This village receives more rainfall and has access to more clayey soils than either El Kharta or El Geifil. These conditions are favorable to groundnut production. For this reason, groundnuts are considered to be just as important to a farmer's cash earnings as sesame. This second cash crop gives farmers in this village more flexibility as far as cropping decisions are concerned. The opportunity to grow two cash crops as well as two subsistence crops (millet and sorghum) allows these farmers to plant several different combinations of crops. This added diversity makes farming in Umm Ramad more viable than farming in El Kharta or El Geifil. Farms with only a few crops are more vulnerable to environmental hazards like pests. Reliance on four crops instead of two increases the chances that one of the crops will succeed. Likewise, farmers with two cash crops are less vulnerable to yearly fluctuations in market prices than farmers who only grow one. For this reason, groundnuts are a very important crop to farmers in Umm Ramad.

Aside from cash earnings, groundnuts also serve other functions as well. First, they are a source of food. Farmers often consume them raw, roasted or boiled as a snack between meals, or use them in soups and other main dishes. Second, groundnuts are sometimes used to produce an oil used in food preparation.<sup>24</sup> Third, the leaves of groundnut plants are used as a

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<sup>22</sup> Barbatee was the name farmers used for barbiton.

<sup>23</sup> This program was sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Office of Extension for Kordofan Province.

<sup>24</sup> Farmers in these three villages rarely use groundnuts to produce oil. They usually use sesame for this purpose.