

merchants (12 of 25). Only one farmer obtained DDT from the government. No real difference existed between the three villages regarding DDT use.

Although effective in pest control and relatively inexpensive, DDT is a highly poisonous substance. Unfortunately, the techniques employed by farmers in using DDT expose the sesame seeds directly to this toxic material. The mixing of DDT with sesame during threshing is unavoidable. As a result, the sesame that is sold to oil mills and urban populations contains high levels of DDT. It is very difficult to discourage the use of DDT because of its low cost. If it should be discouraged, substitutes have to be provided which are also inexpensive and effective in ant and termite control. Convincing farmers that they should not use this substance would be facilitated by offering a viable alternative.

As for dressing, only 23 percent of the farmers interviewed were doing this. Aldrex-T (or Dawa Suweit) was used most frequently on groundnuts (7 of 9). Only four farmers surveyed used it on all their crop seeds. Not surprisingly, these were more affluent farmers. There was a tendency for less well-off farmers to use seed dressing on only one crop (usually groundnuts) because of its expense. Eighty-nine percent (8 of 9) of the farmers who used a seed dressing purchased the chemical from the El Obeid market. Only one farmer obtained this substance from a local merchant. No farmers interviewed acquired it from a government agency. Comparing the three villages regarding the use of this material, Umm Ramad had the greatest number of users (6) followed by El Kharta (3). No farmers in El Geifil used seed dressing.

A seed dressing helps protect seeds from ants, termites and millipedes (surfa) when they are first planted. Unfortunately, it is a relatively expensive input for poor farmers in this area. Another factor contributing to its infrequent use is the lack of adequate information. Our experience has been that most farmers know about it, but they often are not aware that it can be used on other seeds besides groundnuts. We believe that farmers in this area should be encouraged to use seed dressing and that information regarding its proper use should be disseminated through any means possible. Ways should be considered on how to provide it to farmers at a lower cost than they are presently paying. Lowering the cost would definitely encourage greater use.

Another input used by some farmers in this area is salt. Fifteen percent of the farmers surveyed use salt to protect their millet and/or sorghum drying piles from termites (6 of 40). All six of these farmers are from Umm Ramad. These farmers indicated that they have been using salt for years, and that its use is a well established farm technique in the area.

Although it may be effective against termites, salt adversely affects soil fertility. Continuous use of salt on the same field will significantly lower production. In fact, farmers themselves have acknowledged that their crops do poorly in areas of the field where salt was previously applied. Unfortunately, the application of salt is a strategy with short-term benefits but long-term detrimental consequences for the environment. Therefore, the use of salt by farmers should be discouraged. However, once again this