

distribution programs.<sup>100</sup>

### C. Chemical Inputs

Although farmers have integrated chemical inputs into their farming practices, they are not using them to the full extent that they could be. This underutilization is due to lack of resources and/or lack of information regarding the inputs proper use. In addition, some farmers are using chemical inputs which are potentially harmful to crop production. Both these tendencies adversely affect yields.

#### Compensating Strategies (Minimal Input Use)

1. Most farmers use DDT around their sesame drying piles to control for ants and termites. DDT is also used occasionally around sorghum and millet threshing piles. Farmers mix DDT with groundnut shells to economize on DDT purchases.
2. A small number of farmers are putting seed dressings on their seeds before planting to protect them from ants, termites and other pests. In most cases, farmers restrict the application of these dressings to sesame and groundnut seeds. Lack of resources and/or lack of information account for farmers' underutilization of these substances.
3. Some farmers are using salt on their millet and sorghum threshing floors to protect these grains from termites. Although effective against termites, salt build-up in the soil adversely affects crop germination and growth. Continual use of salt in a field is detrimental to crop production.

#### Recommendations

1. We do not recommend that herbicides and fertilizers be introduced into this area as government subsidized farm inputs. We believe that this would be too costly a program for the Government to maintain.
2. More farmers should be encouraged to use seed-treatment dressings on all their seeds prior to planting. Two steps need to be taken to accomplish this task. First, farmers need to be provided more information regarding the proper use of such substances. Possibly the Agricultural Extension Office or some

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<sup>100</sup>This recommendation appears well-advised for the el-Obeid area. We are not so keen on the idea of using merchants for distributing farm inputs in areas of the Sudan where historically the merchants have formed a predatory caste, separate from the farmers. This kind of situation has been described for parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile provinces, for example. In the el-Obeid area, by contrast, village merchants are typically farmers themselves and for the most part they are ethnically indistinguishable from other farmers.