Although only 4 farmers were doing this, the implications of the practice are worth noting. When farmers plant one type of sesame in their field, the sesame tends to ripen all at once. From the time the sesame ripens, the length of time that farmers have for cutting the sesame before the pods shatter is usually 10 to 15 days. This short cutting period often forces farmers to mobilize laborers (paid or communal) to cut their sesame as rapidly as possible. Serious labor bottle-necks arise because of the high demand, and farmers often have to pay high wages to obtain the necessary labor. This may force the farmers to take out a loan from a merchant to cover the labor expenditure.

By mixing seeds of sesame with different maturation lengths, the farmer is assured that the field does not ripen all at once. This spreads the labor requirement, allowing the farmer to harvest his crop over a longer period of time. This longer period also enables the farmer to cut his sesame field by himself and/or with the help of his family rather than paying for a large number of laborers.

In addition to mixing seeds, farmers use other strategies to ease the strain on labor for sesame cutting. First, to lengthen the duration of sesame cutting in a field, farmers will plant sections of the field at different times. They may plant one part of the field after one rain, and then wait until the next rain before planting another part. Second, farmers will often plant sesame on soils with different drainage patterns so that the crop doesn't mature all at once. For instance, the sesame planted on well-drained slopes will mature faster than the sesame planted in depressions where water accumulates. Third, farmers will go through their sesame field and cut the bottom stems of the plants first since they tend to ripen first. Then they will go back through the field and cut the top stems. This cutting strategy ensures that the ripest stems are cut first, so that little seed is lost due to pod shattering. All of these strategies have been adopted to help alleviate the labor constraints associated with sesame cultivation.

Farmers in the three villages have different sesame cultivation patterns. In El Kharta, 64 percent of the land cultivated was in sesame, and 93 percent of the farmers surveyed grew this crop (14 of 15). Baladi/danameet was the dominant type planted, followed by jabarook and HireeHri. Five farmers grew more than one variety in their fields, and 3 mixed seeds of two different types before planting.

In El Geifil, 54 percent of the land cultivated was in sesame, and all farmers interviewed grew some of it in their fields. In contrast to El Kharta, farmers in El Geifil planted more jabarook than the other two types. Thus far, we are unable to account for this trend. In addition, 60 percent of the farmers in this village planted some HireeHri. This percentage is much higher than in the other two villages. Fifty percent of the El Geifil farmers grew more than one type of sesame, and only one farmer mixed seeds before planting. El Geifil's unique cropping patterns bear further investigation.