

January/February 2009

# African Farming

and Food Processing

Europe €14.50 - Ghana \$1.30 - Kenya (KSH) 150 - Nigeria N200 - South Africa R18 - UK £3 - USA \$15

## KENYA

A passion for fruit farming

## POULTRY

Healthy housing for hens

## RICE

Nerica brings new hope



Women welcome mobile threshers

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# Farewell to the pestle!

Conditions are set to improve for women and children in Niger thanks to the work of the local Alvan Blanch representative OTS (Overseas Trade Services).

**E**VEN TODAY, MANY African women are occupied for hours on end with the task of hand threshing crops in order to put food on the table of their families. This is despite the fact that Alvan Blanch have been exporting small-scale mechanical threshers throughout Africa for the past 30 years.

Thanks to the introduction of the first machine by OTS in Niger, this mechanisation is also set to be extensively introduced to this part of the sub-Saharan region after the demonstration by Managing Director Ms Nadège Payet to a community near to Niamey in December 2008, in the presence of government ministers, agriculturalists and even a television crew from a nation-wide channel.

Nadège Payet says "By choosing AB threshers, I want to provide THE solution for Women in Africa, particularly in Niger. This machine will significantly change their lives, by avoiding the threshing of crops like millet several hours a day in the harvest season. Their development is important for this country. All personalities (government, NGOs, private) are involved in this change and say 'Adieu au pilon' (good bye to the pestle). My company is devoted to help those people by finding the appropriate solutions for their sustainable development."

## Gainful employment

The Honorable Mrs Bibata (Minister for the Promotion of women and children - Niger) said on the televised broadcast "The thresher will free women to enable them to engage in more rewarding activities: young girls will no longer have to help their mother in

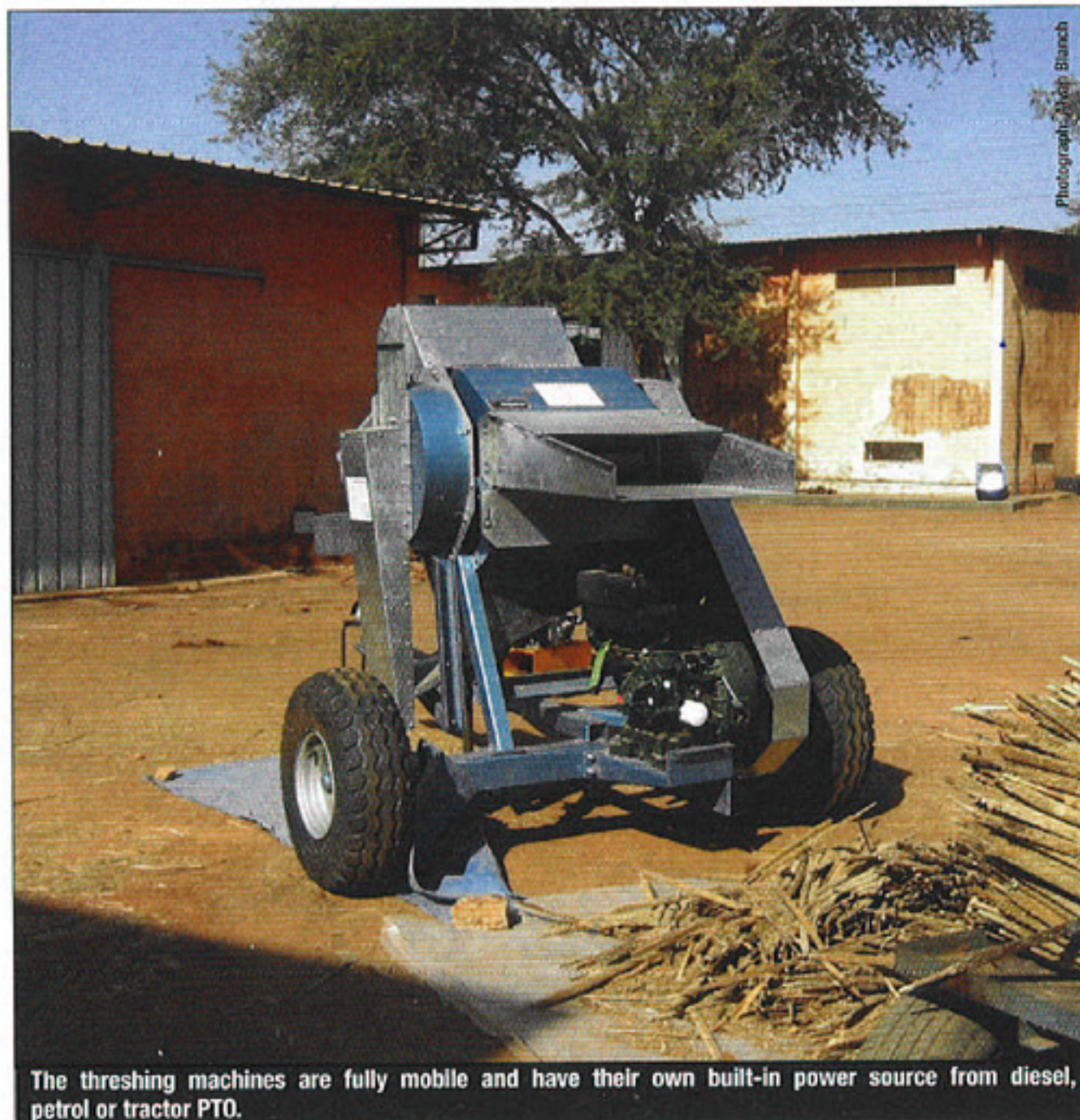
hand threshing so that they could go to school; and women can find more gainful employment."

Alvan Blanch work exclusively with OTS in the territory, with French speaking support in the UK export office. Alvan Blanch have recently cooperated with other governmental initiatives elsewhere in Western Africa, such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone, to increase agricultural output through the supply of crop threshers. The renewed success of this well established machine has also been assisted by extensive work at Alvan Blanch to drive down the cost of the equipment through improved design, modern manufacturing techniques and competitive worldwide sourcing of components.

The key to Alvan Blanch's success in Africa can be attributed to the simplicity of design and robust construction of their products. This is illustrated by the brief description of the operation of the threshing machine:

"As the cut crop is fed into the drum from the feeding table, the beating action of the drum releases the grains that fall through the concave via a chute into the aspiration chamber, where a precisely adjustable airflow removes the chaff, leaving the clean grain to discharge into the collection boxes provided. Meanwhile straw is discharged onto the unique air assisted straw screen, where loose grains are recovered."

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The threshing machines are fully mobile and have their own built-in power source from diesel, petrol or tractor PTO.



Ms Nadège Payet, Managing Director of OTS, demonstrates just how hard it is to use a traditional pestle.

## Mobile machines

There are two models available, the 'Aspra Master' and the 'Aspra Major,' with capacity of 1,000kg/hr and 1,500kg/hr respectively on wheat (slightly higher on maize). These fully mobile machines have their own built in power source from either diesel or petrol engine or from tractor PTO.

The Alvan Blanch range of threshing machines are suitable for many crops including rice, maize, sorghum, wheat, millet, beans, peas, sunflower among others.

This machine represents the first phase in Ms. Nadège Payet's vision for the future advancement of women in Niger society, along with milling machinery and solar powered ovens so that the manual intervention in traditional post harvest crop processing methods have been almost completely eliminated.

The equipment is supported by her own regular visits to the region, and her employment of local engineers trained in the operation and maintenance of the machines.

The charity CARE (Christian Action Research and Education) in Niger simply says: "This marvellous machine will mean a happier way of life for the good women living in the rural areas." 