# english black

# Package 90, Script 7

April 2010

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**Scarecrows and cassette tapes protect rice fields against bird pests**

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### **Notes to broadcaster**

**The fight against crop and harvest pests is complex and expensive. It requires significant human and material resources.**

**Agriculture is the basis of human development. In Mali, agriculture accounts for 43% of gross national income and 30% of export income. Three quarters of the work force is involved in farming. So the importance of agriculture in Mali’s economic development is obvious. However, considering the state of Mali’s agriculture, there is still a long way to go to achieve food security and self-sufficiency.**

Farmers experience significant losses of cereal production every year. The causes are well known to farmers: unpredictable weather and attacks from all kinds of pests – mainly grain-eating birds, rodents and weeds.

This script is an actual interview with a female rice farmer from Mali. She talks about how she uses scarecrows and cassette tapes in her field in order to drive out bird pests.

This script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

**Characters**

Assétou Sidibé, host

Kamboula Sakiliba, rice farmer

Lassana Sidibé, rice farmer

*Signature tune*

**Host:** Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the show. Our theme today is rice farming, in particular the fight against bird pests.

*Signature tune, then fade out*

**Host:** The number one challenge for rice farmers in Mali is the fight against the bird pests that cause so many problems. But for any difficulty, a solution can be found.

Ms. Kamboula Sakiliba’s solution is to use statuettes and audio cassette tapes to protect her fields.

Traditionally, the fight against pests was carried out in different ways. Lassana Sidibé is a rice farmer. What were those methods, Mr. Sidibé?

**Lassana Sidibé:** We used to scare away bird pests with home-made slings. We would form groups and hide in trees. When we saw birds come, we would throw stones at them with our slings and they would fly away immediately.

**Host:** Did you use any other instruments?

**Lassana Sidibé:** Yes, we also built an instrument called a balafon. We would go to the forest to cut branches and make this instrument, whose sound is very soft. As with our slings, we would climb onto trees and play this instrument when we saw birds come. This would drive them away too.

*Musical break*

**Host:** Kamboula, you are a rice farmer. When do bird pests start coming into rice fields?

**Kamboula Sakiliba:** They start coming into the fields when the rice has grown enough and the panicles start ripening. Then, the birds come and suck up the milky grains and swallow them. If you don’t drive them away then, nothing will be left in the field.

**Host:** How do you fight them?

**Kamboula Sakiliba:** We scare them away by disguising tree trunks. When birds see these tree trunks in the fields, they think they are persons because we put clothes on them like scarecrows. This scares them. We have another method involving cassette tapes. We collect old cassettes, we remove the tape, and we tie the tape onto the rice crops. When the wind blows, the tapes make sounds that scare the birds away. Even if there is very little wind, the tapes stay in motion because they are so thin.

*Musical break*

**Host:** Are these the only methods you use to drive away bird pests?

**Kamboula Sakiliba:** There is also the chemical method using insecticides. But this method is dangerous. It can affect human and animal health, especially if there is an overdose. If you use insecticides in rice fields and birds swallow the grain, they may die. We know that kids wander everywhere, even in fields. If they see birds fall, they cook them to eat them. They may get seriously sick and even die because of the poison contained in the birds. Domestic animals such as oxen, goats and sheep that pass by may also graze on rice crops, and be harmed.

Personally, I have never used this method. I use the scarecrows and the cassette tapes.

**Host:** How did you discover this method using the cassette tapes?

**Kamboula Sakiliba:** It was the children who showed it to us. They used to pick up old cassettes, remove the tapes and turn them into kites. The kites would make noises that amused them a lot. We thought that they might be a good way to drive birds away from our fields. So, we did a test and it went well. Now, people tie up cassette tapes everywhere in the fields.

**Host:** What advantages do you get from this method?

**Kamboula Sakiliba:** The advantages are huge, because this reduced our workload a lot. Kids don’t need to go into the fields any longer to drive birds away. And the yields improved a lot too.

*Musical break*

**Host:** Kamboula Sakiliba, we thank you for sharing your experiences with us.

Dear listeners, we were in Kamboula Sakiliba’s field. She shared with us her experience with fighting bird pests in rice fields.

We thank you for your attention.

Good bye!

*Signature tune, then fade out*

**Acknowledgements**

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Kamboula Sakiliba, rice farmer, interviewed on October 30th, in Kalban-Coro/Bamako.

Lassana Sidibé, rice farmer, interviewed on October 30th in Kalban-Coro/Bamako.

**Sources of information**

* The daily newspaper *Essor*: [www.essor.gov.ml/](http://www.essor.gov.ml/)
* Site Office Riz de Ségou (Mali): <http://officerizsegou.org/ORS3/accueil.html>
* Site Office du Niger Ségou (Mali): <http://www.anpe-mali.org/news/office-du-niger-segou>

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