

## DG Sanginga: IITA Onne is set to incubate agribusiness platforms

Impressed with the progress made in the revitalization of Onne Station in Rivers State, Director General Nteranya Sanginga said: “The station is ready to outscale agricultural research and serve as an incubation center for agribusiness in the South-South and South-East zones of Nigeria in addition to research activities. There has been tremendous improvement from the last time I visited. I am delighted to see a group of determined people that will achieve this goal and it is good that you are primed to become the pride of IITA.”

Commending the Plantain and Banana Improvement Program under the supervision of Josephine Agogbua (Postdoc Plantain/Banana Breeder), Sanginga said, “...I have been hearing of a Banana ripening room but don't know what it does, but today I learned how to ripen banana and extract seeds.”

In a dialogue with staff members, IITA Onne Farm Manager Francis Adunoye pleaded with the DG to help secure the environment and set up basic amenities for the station, where scientists can



*Dr Agogbua (far right) explains the process of Banana seed extraction as DG listens with keen interest*

work with zero disruption for effective research delivery. He also mentioned that the funding cut made by the US Government has alarmed staff and asked what strategy the Institute had to cushion the effects. Other staff members appealed for an increment in salary due to the high cost of standard of living in the State.

In response, the DG stated that IITA Onne has potential for business opportunities such as a banana/plantain seed system, postharvest value addition, and banana juice and plantain wine production, hence he said that “no IITA station/hub will be shut down.” He, however, encouraged staff to always do their best for maximum performance.

## IITA-Malawi hosts USDA-FAS, US Embassy delegation

On 3 November, IITA-Malawi hosted a delegation from the Department of Agriculture–Foreign Agriculture Service (USDA-FAS) and the US Embassy in Malawi who came to find out about IITA's work in the country, particularly on aflatoxin research and Aflasafe development. The delegation was headed by the Deputy Administrator of the USDA-FAS, Office of Capacity Building and Development (OCBD) Ms Jocelyn Brown. She was accompanied by Ms Holly Monster, Economic and Commercial Officer, US Embassy;



*Visitors at the IITA Malawi Station.*



*Jocelyn Brown (second from right) listens to a technician's briefing during the lab visit.*

Mr John Ellenberger, Senior Vice President, Land O' Lakes International Development; and Mr Timothy Nzioka, Land O' Lakes Country Director and MSIKA Chief of Party. Also in attendance were Ms Naomi Kamanga, MISST Chief of Party, and scientists from IITA and the Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS).

The delegation was welcomed by David Chikoye, IITA Regional Director for Southern Africa, who briefed the group about IITA's work in the region. This was followed by a short talk by Arega Alene, IITA-Malawi Country Representative, about the ongoing research activities at the station.

Dr David Kamangira, DARS Deputy Director, discussed the government's role in technology development and regulation. In the case of Aflasafe, he emphasized that it must go through the Agricultural Technical Clearing Committee (ATCC) for evaluation before release.

Joseph Atehnkeng presented on the development of Aflasafe MW02

(Malawi-specific product) and Aflasafe MWMZ01 (regional product), which he said had been evaluated in farmers' fields for the past two years. He added that both products have been shown to reduce aflatoxin by up to 99% in maize and groundnut. After data analysis is completed, a complete dossier for registration will be submitted to the ATCC for review and registration. The mode for commercializing the Aflasafe products will then be determined with the local stakeholders.

Brown, in her remarks, said that research was key to achieving food security and safety. She commended IITA in Malawi and partners for the outstanding work being done on aflatoxin and Aflasafe development. She emphasized that aflatoxin is not only a problem in Africa but also in the USA. She was keenly interested in the Aflasafe commercialization models and opined that the private sector is key to technology transfer and adoption. She was especially impressed with the results of the initial efficacy field trials, and encouraged IITA and DARS

to work together to have Aflasafe in the hands of farmers as soon as possible. To assist in this process, USDA-FAS, working with the Malawi national program, African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), and IITA, is providing guidance for harmonization of biopesticide registration in Malawi.

After discussions, the delegation toured the Aflasafe training and research laboratory at DARS.

Aflatoxin is a poison produced by *Aspergillus* fungi which resides in the soil and in dead or decaying organic matter in the field. Exposure to aflatoxin-contaminated food increases the risk of liver cancer, suppresses the immune system, retards growth in children, and reduces the quality of crops which leads to low market values. IITA-Malawi, with current funding from USAID and past funding from USDA-FAS and technical backstopping from USDA-ARS, is implementing research work on aflatoxin and development of Aflasafe.

# NEPC seeks collaboration with IITA Onne to improve standards of export products

The South-South Regional Coordinator, Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Ms Azuka Ikejiofor has lauded the efforts of IITA in its research on high-yielding and pest and disease resistant crop varieties that meet international market specifications. Therefore, she called on the Institute to partner in the capacity development of small/medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in producing high quality products for export.

According to Ikejiofor, the call to improve the standards of export products was due to the challenges of poor quality export products after the government organized a program tagged "One State, One Product" on products that have a comparative economic advantage in the state. She said that they have identified cassava and fisheries as the major produce in Rivers and Bayelsa states and are interested in the postharvest processing and value addition of the products. "We've come to IITA to guide us to produce quality exports that can stand competitive international market specifications," she said.



*Dr Okechukwu with the NEPC delegates.*

In receiving the NEPC South-South regional head, who was accompanied by Ms Esther Udusi and Ms Kobo Evelyn (Principal Trade Promotion Officers), Onne Station Head Richardson Okechukwu said IITA has developed a book of standards with SON for export products that meet international standards. Thus, in postharvest export, a value chain must be sustained for products to continue to thrive in the

international market. Trainees will also learn how to lower their production costs and have higher yields to reduce the cost of raw materials.

Okechukwu reiterated that IITA is open for partnership and has customized training capability depending on the need of clients. He also stated that the station will kick-start commercial production of "garri" and NEPC could tap into it for export.

# Leading Nigerian finance company explores areas of collaboration with IITA

Representatives from GTI Capital Limited visited IITA Ibadan recently, to explore business ideas that can emanate from IITA's research and knowledge and identify potential areas for collaboration.

A delegation comprising Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GTI, Abubakar Lawal, and his Chief Operating Officer, Kehinde Hassan, was received by IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery Kenton Dashiell; IITA Director, Country Alignment and Systems Integration Kwesi Atta-Krah; and CEO of IITA Business Incubation Platform (BIP) Frederick Schreurs. DDG Dashiell highlighted IITA's achievements and major breakthroughs over the past 50 years, while emphasizing the need for collaboration. "We welcome you



*Ranjit Bandyopadhyay welcoming Mr Lawal.*

to IITA where our core belief is that for agriculture to improve, it must happen through business. The government can create the environment but the real driving force is agribusiness; be it in production, processing, marketing,

or transporting," he said. In addition, Schreurs pinpointed the role and importance of BIP in Africa as he emphasized areas for intervention and support to help advance research in IITA.

Concurring on the need to move the transformation agenda forward, CEO Lawal stated: "I am curious to see how well GTI can impact Nigeria from the research platform of IITA and to give your thinking a measure of initiative that can help scale up your innovative research products for the end users."

While going around IITA, which included the aflasafe™ production plant, and NoduMax, Yam aeroponics, Plantain multiplication, and semi-autotrophic

hydroponics (SAH) facilities, Lawal said, "...This is unique. We found the tour very revealing, and we have seen a lot of opportunities here; clearly, without a doubt, we have identified areas of collaboration that we can use and build on to make commercial sense out of it."

Lawal added: "Today, which is my first visit, I have learnt countless things; we came knowing little about IITA but now we are enriched. The educational

tour is an eye opener; it has further given credence to our own thought process... By the time we package some of our experiences, it is going to be incredible, and I am certain we are going to build on these and make good sense of these experiences."

GTI is a leading Nigerian investment banking group with proven expertise in financial advisory services, securities dealing (fixed income and equities), asset management, and private equity.

## IITA affirms adherence to international publishing standards and legal deposit obligations

IITA recently affirmed compliance with international publishing standards and legal depository obligations. All IITA publications carry an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for books, reports, monographs, and e-publications or an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) for serial publications such as newsletters, journals, and series of publications. In addition, IITA requires 10 copies of every publication for legal deposit within Nigeria; three for the National Library of Nigeria based on the National Library Decree of 1970, two for the State Library, and five for our Knowledge Center. This cost is borne by the author/publisher.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has taken steps towards ensuring that such global standards are maintained in the publishing industry in Nigeria, including enforcing the compulsory deposition of published materials with the National Library of Nigeria (NLN). The major mandate of the NLN is to serve as the memory of the nation, by collecting all publications emanating from Nigeria, publications about Nigeria, and any authored by Nigerians anywhere in the world.

Recently, NLN held one in a series of sensitization workshops on legal deposit/ISSN & ISBN with the theme: International standards for Publishing and Legal Deposit Compliance in



*Librarian Louis Anajekwu with Prof Aina (wearing cap) and other delegates.*

Nigeria for the southwestern zone of the country in Lagos on 15 and 16 November. Participants included stakeholders in the publishing industry with papers presented by librarians, publishers, booksellers, academics, and printers who highlighted their peculiar challenges in legal compliance. IITA was represented by the Communication Unit and the Knowledge Center.

In his welcome address, the National Librarian, Professor Lenrie Olatokunbo Aina, emphasized that the NLN has the responsibility to make all publications available to researchers and the public. He said, "It is expected that all our

publications are made available for public consultations to further serve as the basis for research and information."

The ISBN numbering system is used worldwide by publishers to identify their work with a standardized 13-digit format. The ISSN is an eight-digit serial number used to uniquely identify a serial publication and is especially helpful in distinguishing between serials with the same title. Copies of all literary works and non-book materials including videos, films, and electronic publications are expected to be deposited. At the moment, the NLN does not have a repository for e-books, so hard copies need to be sent.

# Inspector General of Police visits IITA

On 16 November, the Assistant Inspector General of Police Agboola Oshodi-Glover along with other officers from Zone XI Command Headquarters, Oshogbo, visited IITA to familiarize themselves with the Institute and reaffirm their efforts towards ensuring a safe and habitable environment.

AIG Glover was received and welcomed by the Deputy Director General, Corporate Services, Hilde Koper-Limbourg with the Institute's

Security Manager and Superintendent, David Oluwadare and James Adedayo, respectively. The visitors watched a short video to introduce them to IITA and some of its research.

Stating the purpose of the visit, the AIG said: "Having heard a lot about IITA, I came to see the wonders that are being done here, and to know how the police and security personnel here have been doing in providing security for the staff and property within the Institute and beyond."

Oshodi-Glover and the other police officials were taken on a tour of IITA research facilities.

The AIG asserted, "The people here in (IITA) are very warm and receptive, and the environment is very homely. At this point in Nigeria, we need to establish more partnership grounds with IITA for a better appreciation of farming."

AIG Oshodi-Glover is in charge of Zone XI Police Headquarters comprising Ondo, Osun, and Oyo states.



*Delegation at Cassava processing unit.*

## Announcements

- **R4D Week**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 20–24 November
- **Board Meeting**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 20–24 November
- **Science Conference** on Food and Nutrition Security: Foresight and Futures, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 24–25 November
- **Open Day**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 25 November
- **ATTC annual project review meeting**, Senegal, 27–29 November
- **Introduction to Liquid Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry**, IITA, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 26–29 December

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to [iita-news@cgiar.org](mailto:iita-news@cgiar.org) or Katherine Lopez ([k.lopez@cgiar.org](mailto:k.lopez@cgiar.org)) and Uzoma Agha ([u.gha@cgiar.org](mailto:u.gha@cgiar.org)) for headquarters and Western Africa, Jeffrey T. Oliver ([j.oliver@cgiar.org](mailto:j.oliver@cgiar.org)) for Southern Africa, Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)) for Eastern Africa, and David Ngome ([d.ngome@cgiar.org](mailto:d.ngome@cgiar.org)) for Central Africa.