

IITA participates in second agricultural conference and fair in South Sudan

The second agricultural conference and fair of South Sudan took place on 27 and 28 November at the Freedom hall and Nyakuron Grounds. This year's theme was "Food Security is the Other Side of Human Security."

The conference brought together local, regional, and international stakeholders including farmers, farmers' groups and unions, cooperatives, investors, private agribusinesses, government agencies, and international donors to discuss the

challenges and opportunities in the sector. The conference was merged with the Annual State Governors Forum due to joint interests in agriculture and food security. The Vice President, H.E. Dr. Riak Machar Teny, chaired the combined event.

The second agricultural fair brought together stakeholders from the 10 states of South Sudan. Government agencies, NGOs, and international donors displayed goods, products, produce,

and services, and ways to further realize the huge agricultural potential of South Sudan.

According to the organizers, one of the main purposes of this event was to showcase what farmers have accomplished so far and what their challenges are in turning subsistence farming into commercial farming and creating food security for the country.

In addition, South Sudan's products and vast natural resources were showcased while national and international entrepreneurs came together to explore possibilities in agriculture, forestry, livestock, and fisheries. Participants discussed the facilitation of commercial interests in the agriculture sector in the country. The fair also featured new technologies and services to one of the fastest growing markets in East Africa.

IITA was represented by Carol F. Mango from IITA-Tanzania.

The IITA booth received many visitors who were eager to know about IITA. They expressed appreciation at IITA's participation in the fair and hoped that IITA will, in the near future, bring its expertise and R4D solutions to South Sudan and thus help local farmers fight the battle against poverty and hunger.

The agriculture fair and conference were an important platform for IITA to make its presence felt and build inroads for future partnerships and collaboration with the government, NGOs, and other institutions in the Republic of South Sudan.



The IITA booth drew crowds of participants during the agriculture fair.

IARSAF holds workshop on stat applications

IARSAF-IITA conducted a workshop on the use of Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) from 11 to 14 December 2012 at the Vigna Training Room, IITA Ibadan. The four-day workshop was attended by members and non-IARSAF members. Richardson Okechukwu was the resource person.

The workshop aimed to:

- orient participants on the use of statistical packages, MS Excel and SPSS.
- develop computer skill among participants in using these packages.
- make participants understand the theoretical background of the statistical option intended to be used and the interpretation of the result.

The course covered some theories on statistics, terminologies, analytical tools, and the use of the tools; use of MS Excel, including introduction to Excel, data entry, using Excel options, usage

of formulas, concatenation, formatting, plotting and editing of charts, and data management; SPSS package, including intro to SPSS, data entry, plotting of charts and analysis of data, e.g., using frequency, correlation, linear regression.

Microsoft Excel versions 2003 and 2007 were used with SPSS version 17.

Participants thanked the course organizers and expressed their appreciation to the facilitator for sharing knowledge and requested more training on other statistical packages. They also requested that such a training be well publicized to give room for more interested participants.



IARSAF organizes training for both members and nonmembers.

A MIRACLE success story

HIV and AIDS have stigmatized their victims, with physical deterioration making them less productive and unable to interact with other people and communities around them. When given an opportunity, such as an enabling environment, those who were stigmatized can reverse the situation and even serve as community models.

Jacob (not his real name), a 42-year old small-scale farmer in Mibenge agricultural camp in Mansa District, Luapula Province of Zambia, is a living testimony of how humans can rise above stigma. Like many of his friends, he used to be a drunkard and heavy smoker. In 2005, he tested positive for HIV. The doctors directed him to the Network of Zambian People Living with HIV&AIDS (NZP+) for counseling.

His HIV status was not known to his wife, 32-year old Generous (not her real name); he had been taking the antiretroviral therapy (ART) secretly for one year. However, as he continued to feel weaker and weaker, that he could no longer afford to do much farm work, he decided to open up to his wife, who cried in disbelief. With Abraham's encouragement, Generous went for a test, which turned out to be positive. She was saddened but she had already prepared herself to face the truth. Both Jacob and Generous decided to also subject their four children to a test, who all came out negative.

From 2006, Jacob just stayed home most of the time, feeling weak and tired. "I seldom talked to people because my entire family was shunned and discriminated by many," he said. "At that time, my wife seemed to be physically stronger than me so she was the one who went around looking for food. At least we managed to eat once a day."

As the MIRACLE project started its activities in Mansa District towards the middle of 2011, Jacob did not attend any of the introductory and community meetings, as he was still avoiding other people. Nevertheless, aware of Jacob's and his family's condition, the agricultural camp extension officer of Mibenge, Gift Mutale, insisted on approaching him. He discussed the MIRACLE project with him. "The only thing I understood at that time was that MIRACLE would want to target farming households affected by HIV&AIDS," he said. Mutale encouraged him to



MIRACLE helps farm families affected by AIDS to get back into mainstream society through productive agriculture.

participate, which he reluctantly did. He hosted one of the four baby trials for soybean varieties. As a host, he participated in several innovation platform workshops, and meetings and training sessions on the implementation and management of the soybean baby trial. This gave him the opportunity to interact with fellow farmers and extension workers many times. During field days, hundreds of farmers, community leaders, extension workers from both government and NGOs, private sector, and even some District officials were invited to visit and learn from the trials, including his. "I couldn't believe I was like a teacher telling people how to grow soybean," he enthused.

His behavior started to change from that point. He slowly regained self-confidence. He started to mingle with people, first with immediate neighbors, then a bit further. During the first quarter of 2012, he was invited to participate in a number of nutrition education sessions and the fruit and vegetable processing Training of Trainers (ToT) in Lusaka, after which he was part of the team that conducted the same training at the community level.

"I felt very proud that MIRACLE had picked me to be trained as a trainer to my fellow small farmers. I really felt wonderful. After that training, I found myself teaching people in my community,

including those who used to despise me and my family," he smiled. "Honestly, I don't know how I could be without the MIRACLE project," he said. "These days, I feel stronger. I go to work in the farm almost every day. I now do many things that I have not been able to do during the last 5-6 years. I am now socializing with the entire community. Many have actually come to our residence asking how I am managing. Those people who used to shun me are the same people who come to ask for advice. I and my wife have become some sort of counsellors and a source of motivation to other people in this community." Two months ago, Jacob was elected chairman of his community's Village Committee on HIV and AIDS, a committee that handles programs and activities related to HIV and AIDS. "Today, people are no longer afraid to openly talk about their HIV status," he continued. "I also would like to mention that just recently, the District Agriculture Office of Mansa also came to ask me for soybean seeds of different varieties for the District Agricultural Show, which I proudly shared because that was proof that I am now able to produce."

According to beneficiaries, being with the project before was like publicly stating somebody's HIV status. Today, beneficiaries are proud to be associated with the project.

Passages

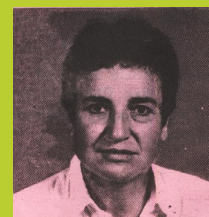
IITA alumni have passed on the news about the demise of former staff Dr Dennis Greenland, a former deputy director general (DDG) and member of the IITA Reunion Branch (Europe), and Dr Frances Margaret Quin, a former division director.

According to IITA alumnus Ade Aderogba, "Dennis and Mary were active members of the Reunion and Dennis had a distinguished tenure as DDG. When he returned to the UK he was appointed director general of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau

where he again left an outstanding legacy."

Dr Greenland passed away on 23 December among family at the Marie Louise care home, where he had been for nearly two years. According to his wife Mary, his death resulted from complications following a bad fall on 16 December in which he fractured his femur.

Margaret Quin, who was from New South Wales, Australia, was "particularly loved by the local staff who worked with her and, on many occasions, had given valuable advice in tackling challenging



Quin

died 10 December 2012.

She will be remembered for her "pragmatic approach to everything and her vast knowledge of plants and tropical agriculture."

labor issues." She was diagnosed with a brain tumor in August 2012, underwent chemo/radiation, and was admitted to hospital in October and from there to an assisted care facility. She